Tuesday, 24 May 1983

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 2.7 p.m. and read the prayer.

NEW MEMBERS

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) announced that he had received a return to the writs he had issued on 7 April for the election of members to serve for the electoral districts of Swan Hill and Warrnambool in the place of the Honourable Alan Raymond Wood, resigned, and the Honourable Ian Winton Smith, resigned, by which it appeared that Mr Barry Edward Hector Steggall had been duly elected for the electoral district of Swan Hill, and Mr Adam Kidman Kempton had been duly elected for the electoral district of Warrnambool.

Mr Steggall and Mr Kempton were introduced and sworn.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT LAND TRANSACTIONS

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—In relation to the sale of Government land and the purchase of land for Government use, will the Premier inform the House whether his Government abided by the recommendations of the Gowan and Frost inquiries with respect to the purchase and sale of land?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—So far as I am aware, the recommendations and procedures laid down following that Royal Commission have been observed by the Government. The Minister concerned in the area can perhaps enlighten the honourable member in more detail.

MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Premier to a matter I brought to his attention previously about his holding two portfolios, that of Premier and, at the same time, Attorney-General. I pointed out to the Premier the problems that could face him in holding two such portfolios, as has been demonstrated in New South Wales. If a similar set of circumstances should arise in Victoria, it would put the Premier in an embarrassing position. With the New South Wales situation, which has come to our notice in recent weeks, will the Premier now give serious consideration to handing over the responsibilities of the Attorney-General to another Minister?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The first part of the question is hypothetical, but the latter part of the question is in order.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I believe I have made very clear the situation regarding the allocation of portfolios in this Government. I am prepared to stand on the record of achievement of this Government in all responsibilities and in all portfolios and, so far as my portfolios are concerned, in regard to those areas in particular.

I ask the Leader of the National Party, other honourable members and other gratuitous critics to examine the record of what has occurred in the portfolio of Attorney-General in the past thirteen or fourteen months and compare it with any other record and come to whatever reasonable conclusion they may. So far as the first part of the question is concerned, which you ruled out of order, Mr Speaker, I resent the implications contained in it.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Mr SHELL (Geelong West)—Will the Premier inform the House of the effect on Victorians of the economic statement by the Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The consequences of the economic statement are very important for Victorians. The first thing that should be noted is that it is in keeping with the strategies and initiatives taken by this Government since it came to office. I do not suggest that what was decided in Canberra last week is any substitute for the forthcoming Budget. It recognizes that immediate action was necessary. We had to get some control on the Budget blowout which had been misrepresented by the previous Government in such mammoth proportions. There had to be an emphasis about jobs, and a concern for jobs was not evidenced

by the previous Government. The statement was the first step in recognizing the initiatives and decisions made at the Summit conference. I welcome it for those reasons. Other matters that I believe are worthy of note are the emphasis on job stimulation, and the creation of some 70 000 jobs in Australia will make a significant impact on the economy of this country and on this State in particular.

More than $60 million has been allocated for job creation programmes in Victoria. Those programmes will supplement the job creation programmes that have been so competently implemented by my colleague, the Minister for Employment and Training. Housing has also received a significant financial boost, which the Victorian Government welcomes because that assistance will support and complement the action that this Government has been taking since it came to office.

The Government welcomes the decision taken in regard to the overseas borrowing powers of the Australian Wheat Board. It is the hope of the Government that similar provisions will apply to State authorities, which the Government has been urging for some time, especially for the large State instrumentalities. The Government will be taking that matter further at the next Premiers Conference. It is true that there are some aspects of the economic statement which the Government would have preferred not to have existed, but the package taken as a whole is a great boost to this State and it confirms the initiatives taken by the Victorian Government to get this State moving.

PAYMENT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES USED IN ELECTIONS

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I refer the Premier to his earlier response on the misuse by the Australian Labor Party of a Ministerial media officer at the taxpayers' expense in the Warrnambool by-election. Is the Premier aware of evidence that the media officer was used for campaign publicity rather than Ministerial work, and will the Government therefore insist that the Australian Labor Party reimburse all costs of the officer's travel, accommodation, salary and allowances?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I am not aware of any such thing. I made it perfectly clear on the previous occasion that Mr Guest was the person who was there to service the requirements of Ministers. He carried out that function, as I believe he should properly have carried it out. I am not prepared to take this matter any further beyond saying that I have suggested that guidelines should be prepared on the functions to be performed and the costs that should be designated to those functions not only by officers of the Government or Ministers, but also by the Opposition and the National Party, and the way in which State resources are used by all political Leaders and by all parties in furtherance of campaigns for either by-elections or general elections. I will be making that information available to the House in due course.

MEDICAL STUDENTS AT HOSPITALS

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Is it a fact that the Minister of Health has announced that he intends to reduce the number of interns in public hospitals in future? If so, what will be the number and what action does the Minister of Health intend to take to assist those medical students who are presently completing their six-year courses in public institutions at the taxpayers' expense and who may not have jobs at the completion of those courses?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—At a conference on health manpower held more that one month ago, I explained to the delegates present that it might not always be possible for the State to provide positions for every person who graduates from either Melbourne or Monash universities. As a result of those remarks, the Australian Medical Association asked whether we would be prepared to receive a submission on the subject.

Last Friday, I telephoned the association and reminded it that it had still not provided that submission. There appears to have been a misunderstanding within the Australian Medical Association, which resulted in material not coming forward. Once we have that material, we will be able to further reconsider the matter. However, let me say that, in the present financial situation of public hospitals, it would be wrong to suggest that only those graduating in

medicine have an entitlement to continued employment when, unfortunately, in a number of areas, such as nursing and so on, there are major difficulties.

I hope the association will put a proposition that enables all interns to be taken on next year, as I understand it is attempting to do.

PAY-ROLL TAX

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—Can the Treasurer inform the House of the likely impact on the State's finance of the abolition of pay-roll tax in Victoria?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I note that the Leader of the Opposition has been advocating the abolition of pay-roll tax. His inconsistency and lack of economic responsibility are obvious when, in one breath, he speaks of a deficit of $600 million and, in the next breath, he seeks the abolition of $1000 million of pay-roll tax collections. How can the honourable gentleman reconcile those two statements? Any honourable member who is acting responsibly on this issue must present alternative revenue raising devices, but the Leader of the Opposition has not suggested any alternatives.

The Government has taken the appropriate course and has referred the matter to the committee of inquiry into revenue raising. When that committee has examined the taxation system as a whole, including the pay-roll tax system, the Government will make its judgment.

VICTORIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—Will the Treasurer inform the House whether it is a fact that the Government transferred money from the Victorian Development Fund to the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd the day before that company went into receivership; if so, how much money was transferred, and is it a fact that the Treasury knew of the imminent collapse of the company but forgot to inform the Premier?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—In respect of the Victorian Development Fund, bank bills were involved with the trustee company.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—If Opposition members will listen, they will learn that those bills were backed by the bank concerned, and the money that was involved is now back in the Victorian Development Fund.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Mr FOGARTY (Sunshine)—Can the Minister of Health inform the House what action the Government is taking in relation to the treatment of diseases such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other infectious diseases?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The Government is concerned at the occurrence of cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome in Victoria. The Health Commission learned of the first case the week before last, and it learned officially of another case last Friday. In addition, other suspected cases are being examined.

For the benefit of honourable members who are not aware of it this disease causes the breakdown of the body's immune system and has resulted in a high fatality rate in the United States of America, where approximately half of those who have so far suffered from the syndrome have died; 70 per cent of those who had the syndrome in 1980 have died from it.

Acting on the advice of officers of the Health Commission, the Government last week declared this syndrome a notifiable disease, so medical practitioners who come across cases of it must notify the commission. The first case in Victoria went unreported for some considerable time and could have had serious results had it been a more severe case.

Further action is being taken to ensure that hospitals also must notify the commission of cases of this syndrome. A deficiency exists because the Hospitals and Charities Act can be interpreted to mean that hospitals may or may not notify the commission's Public Health Division of notifiable diseases. Action will be taken to ensure that hospitals notify the commission of diseases such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome. The importance of notification is demonstrated by a recent outbreak of hepatitis B in a country area where the hospital concerned failed to notify the Health Commission of details in a particular case.

Acting under the conditions of the Act, I instructed material to be made available and more than 40 cases of hepatitis, many of

which were unknown to the Health Commission, were discovered in that area. It is hoped that some of the problems that have occurred in the United States of America and Europe may be avoided, but the community must be prepared for a significant increase in the number of cases of the syndrome that will occur over the next few months.

REPORT OF CASINO INQUIRY

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—I ask the Premier: What was the basis on which the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Landeryou, was apparently excluded from Cabinet discussions on the report of the casino inquiry.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Minister for Industrial Affairs took the view that he should not be involved in any discussions regarding the casino report and any action that the Government proposed to take on that question. In view of the contentions that had arisen about remarks he made late last year, he took the view that there should not be any suggestion that he was involved in the decision of the Government.

Among a number of the wild assertions made by the honourable member for Wantirna and others last year, I recall that such a suggestion was made, and the honourable member for Wantirna recalls having made it. The Government believes the Minister's action was a perfectly proper response and one that was readily agreed to.

HEALTH FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—As the Minister of Health has recently made a statement to the committees of management of some hospitals that there may be significant curtailment of health funding for public hospitals in this State, will he undertake to indicate to all committees of management the timing of the funding for the hospitals and the estimated amounts for each hospital, as this is causing a great deal of concern around the State?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The honourable member for Mildura would be aware of the remarks I made during a recent visit organized by him to the Mildura Base Hospital, which is one of the hospitals taking appropriate steps to remain within its budget. This is the first time that the hospitals have been expected to remain within their budgets.

I have had to inform hospitals that the amount of money available for the next financial year will depend on the arrangements entered into for the introduction of Medicare. There will be a meeting of health Ministers in Canberra on June 15 which will finalize discussions occurring presently between the Commonwealth and the States.

I hope additional funds will be made available to this State to avoid a situation where cuts would have to be made in health services. Unfortunately, Australia is still operating under the Fraser health arrangements that cut funds to this State for health purposes. I am hoping that our Federal colleagues will remedy some of the damage done to Victoria's health system—and criticized by my predecessor as well as by myself—at that meeting to be held on June 15.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mr KIRKWOOD (Preston)—Will the Minister for Local Government inform the House of decisions taken in relation to the local government elections for 1983?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—There is a long and a short answer to that question. Because of the delay in the passage of the legislation introducing the most important change in local government in the past 50 years—honourable members will recall that the Bill was introduced in October or November last year and failed to pass through another place because of an adjournment—it is now necessary for the Government to make the decision to hold local government elections this year on 5 November.

This decision results from the immense task of preparing the rolls and was based on the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer, who was a member of the task force responsible for drawing up approximately 780 rolls to be distributed throughout the municipalities in the whole of Victoria incorporating some 2·2 million names. In addition, the clerks of the municipalities have the responsibility for the preparation of their rolls, which have to be married to the rolls supplied to them by the State Electoral Office.

Because of the time factors involved and the requirements of the Act, it is not possible to hold the election before 5 November this year. As a constitutional change is involved, it is necessary to proceed with that constitutional change immediately, as honourable members will know. This year, local government elections will be held on 5 November and from 1984 elections will be held on the first Saturday in August.

STATE FINANCES

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I ask the Treasurer: What are the estimates for 1983-84 of the impact of quarterly wage adjustments and the 9·1 per cent wage catchup as demanded by the Australian Labor Party administrative committee on public sector employment on Victoria? Will the honourable gentleman also advise the House what increases in taxes and charges will be necessary if this sort of figure has to be met without a further increase in the major deficit that the Government now faces?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The whole of the latter part of the question is hypothetical. The former part is in order.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I would say that the first part of the question is also hypothetical because the statements wanted by the honourable member require assessments to be made about the size of any tax increases or changes to accommodate such a position. Before one can make a realistic assessment, one would have to do a total projection on revenue and cost and use of cash management account. Therefore, it is a nonsensical question.

INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN GAMES

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—I ask the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation whether the Government is considering a proposal to stage the inaugural Australian Games in Melbourne.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I had discussions with the committee of the Australian Games organization approximately a fortnight ago and with the acting chairman, Mr Jim Barry, about staging the first Australian Games in Melbourne in 1985. The Australian Games initiative is a proposal to have combined games in Australia alternating between the capital cities each two years, held between the Commonwealth Games and the Olympic Games, to enable Australian athletes to compete together and with overseas athletes. Talks have been held this year with Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations committee. While they are only preliminary talks, I hope that the first Australian Games will be held in Melbourne in 1985.

WAGES

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—I ask the Treasurer, in order to remove uncertainty in the business community about the cost of wages in the public and private sectors, to explain why the Government has refused to state publicly whether it will either bow down to or oppose the renewed push for higher wages.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The honourable member is asking for the views of the Government. I will give the views of the Government on this issue.

I have made the position clear on this issue and I should have thought that the honourable member for South Barwon would have been aware of it. It is time he was made aware of it and that all other honorable members and the Leader of the Opposition were made aware of it. This Government's economic and wages policy has been consistent, coherent and fair.

We have said a number of things. We have said that we support the Summit Conference, and where does the coalition stand on that? We support a centralized wage fixing system. Where does the coalition stand on that? We support the authority and the integrity of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Where does the coalition stand on that?

What we sought on wages and the economy has been endorsed in the electorate over and over again. "Mr 27 per cent" across the way ought to know what the electorate thinks of his party, and when he was thrashed three weeks ago he wanted a coalition.

The facts are that members of the Opposition stand up and ask these nonsense questions because they have no wages policy of their own. What is the wages policy of the Opposition? Does anybody know what it is? The Treasurer is responsible for

finding the money, but the Government makes the decisions about its wages policy.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I am having difficulty in hearing the Premier's reply to the question, and I ask all honourable members to behave themselves.

Mr CAIN—I am sorry, Mr Speaker, that you had to get to your feet to bring honourable members to order, but the disarray over in the Opposition is apparent for all to see, because members of the Opposition cannot live with a Government that knows where it is going, that says what its policy is, and implements it. The most important thing is that when the Government makes a decision, it sticks to it. The Opposition when in government never did that and did not know how to do it. I ask the House to be aware of the policy of the Government, but what is the coalition policy? I think it is time that we were told. The Opposition has no policy about wages or anything else. It received a thrashing in the electorate—27 per cent! It must be a world record! Who else lost 27 per cent in an electorate in thirteen months? It is 2 per cent a month. It would have to be a world record! If anybody can find anything in any other document that tells me it is wrong, I would like to hear it.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I respectfully suggest to you that the Premier is debating the answer and, as you are well aware, Standing Orders do not allow for that.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I must uphold the point of order, and I advise the Premier that his rhetorical questions will not be answered either.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I have nothing further to add.

HOSPITAL WORKING HOURS

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Can the Minister of Health confirm to the House that a reduced working week of 38 hours will be introduced for hospital staff from 1 July? Because of the enormous cost to all hospitals by this move, which cannot be justified, and because of the financial constraints which the Minister has placed on all hospitals, can the Minister indicate to the House how this will be justified and what arrangements in offsets have been made with the unions?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The honourable member will recall that similar questions were asked three or four weeks ago by the honourable member for Benambra. Since that time negotiations with the trade union movement have been continuing because it has been our concern to ensure that if there is a shorter working week in the hospital field there are appropriate offsets. The Minister of Labour and Industry and myself met with the unions again last week to further discuss the question of offsets, and further discussions will be occurring.

We inherited from the previous Government a proposal to introduce a 38-hour working week into the public employment area. At present the only employees in the public sector who do not have a 38-hour working week are those in the area of health. They have had to wait a considerable time. Provided that suitable offsets are agreed to between the Government and the trade union movement, it is intended to have the 38-hour working week commence on the first pay period in July, which would be about 4 July. The Government has agreed that this cost will be borne by all Government activities, not simply health, as has occurred with all shorter working week arrangements negotiated by our predecessors and negotiated by us since coming to office.

WENDOUREE HIGH-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN (Ballarat South)—Can the Minister of Public Works inform the House what action is being taken by his department to provide permanent facilities at the Wendouree High-Technical School which has been housed in temporary accommodation for many years?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—At the outset I wish to say that I believe the people of Ballarat made an excellent choice in April last year when they elected the honourable member for Ballarat South.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I hope the Minister does not intend to debate the subject.

Mr SIMPSON—I mention that matter because of the great interest by the honourable member for Ballarat South in all areas pertaining to Ballarat. The matter that he raises with me today and has raised with me on several occasions indicates that interest. The Wendouree High-Technical School has been equipped with mainly temporary accommodation since 1977 and 1979 and the people in that area have been clamouring for many months to have permanent facilities provided. The previous administration was unable to provide the facilities that were requested by the parents and teachers, because of the lack of funds from the previous administration.

I visited the school last year and listened to the complaints that were put forward, accepting the validity of those complaints, and at that time I was also happy to announce stage 3 of the programme. Stage 4 is now very advanced, and my department intends to call tenders in September of this year for that stage. Stage 4 will cover new facilities, including science, library, art, business and education facilities. As a result of a decision by this Government, stages 3 and 4 will total about $3·5 million. I point out to the honourable member that this Government is extremely concerned about all areas of Ballarat, and is taking remedial action.

SALE OF VICRAIL LAND

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I ask the Minister of Transport whether it is a fact that in the recent disposal of VicRail-owned land at Doncaster, the same people through commonly owned companies, namely Surrey Developments Pty Ltd, Surrey Holdings Pty Ltd and Bondax Pty Ltd, all of 170 Warrandyte Road, Ringwood North, purchased 12 allotments and that a further 17 people purchased 47 allotments. In other words, 59 of the 78 blocks available went to multiple purchasers, and several hundred people missed out. If this is a fact, does the Minister admit that neither was the method of disposal used fair to the hundreds of people who waited for days and missed out, nor was the highest price possible obtained?

Will he now place upon the table of the Library the files relevant to this matter, for all honourable members to peruse?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—Dealing with the last part of the question first, I thought the honourable member had been provided with the files. This matter was raised in the House some weeks ago, in a somewhat rude way, by the honourable member for Balwyn, and I have made available the files and a briefing by the officers concerned to those members who were prepared to ask for them with a reasonable degree of politeness, of which the honourable member for Westernport is one. That offer remains open, even for the honourable member for Doncaster.

The fact is that it was felt by the Railway Construction and Property Board that the limitation of the number of blocks to three to any one buyer was not an unreasonable process to follow in the circumstances. It may well be that one single entity has used its corporate guises to buy more than three lots. The honourable member for Westernport has cited only one case of four associated corporate entities purchasing three lots each. The fact is that the purchase price obtained for the land was in excess of the Valuer-General's valuation and of the independent valuation, in every single case.

We were surprised by the degree of interest shown in the sale, and during a debriefing, if you like, of the exercise, it appears that our sale of land was coincidental with the increase in rivalry between the city's two major newspapers, the *Herald* and the *Age*.

That caused quite a remarkable degree of free publicity to be given to that land. Despite the fact that a similar block on the corner had been on the market for some months, as I am informed, which was unable to be sold, the increased publicity caused the queues. The next sale of similar land in the same vicinity, which is due in the near future, will be carried out by public auction.

SMOKE-OUT DAY

Mr WALSH (Albert Park)—As an ex-smoker, I ask the Minister of Health whether he can inform the House of the steps being taken to ensure that smoke-out day, which is tomorrow, is a success?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I thank the honourable member for his question and for the example he has given of

how one is able to give up smoking and still remain a courteous, mild-mannered person. A whole range of actions has been taken by the Government, with the support of many groups in the community, to make smoke-out day a success. It has been pleasing that members of Parliament of all political persuasions are behind the idea, as are a number of sponsors of major commercial organizations throughout the State.

It is also supported by a range of celebrities, including people like Peter Allen and Spike Milligan.

Mr A. T. Evans—And Mr Roper.

Mr ROPER—I am sure that if any other honourable members wish to join us in the Mall tomorrow, they are more than welcome to do so. If they believe they are able to wear the appropriate garb, they will certainly be provided with T-shirts and the like.

The Government wants the smoke-out day to be a success, because smoking is a major health problem in this State. In fact, Victoria's smokers puff their way through some 26 million cigarettes a day. With the community support we have received, we hope smokers will give up tomorrow for the day, and continue not to smoke thereafter. We also hope that the material that has been made available to assist people in giving up smoking will be successful. In this instance, there has been a getting together of groups and people who often do not agree with one another, and I should like to thank Mr Derek Shaw, of the Hospital Benefits Association, and Dr Santoro, of the Australian Medical Association, for their support in the exercise. This shows that, with such a public health issue, there is much community concern. If the response to date is any indication, smoke-out day will be a tremendous success, and the number of smokers in the community will be reduced.

POKER MACHINES

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I ask the Premier: Is it a fact that on or about 10 May 1982 he told David Hirst or anyone else that if a solid suggestion of impropriety was made in connection with poker machines or if undesirable elements were found to be associated with them, poker machines would be out of the question?

Mr CAIN (Premier)— I cannot offer any answer to the honourable member for Doncaster. I do not know to whom he is referring or the occasion to which he is referring. If he will provide me with details about the matter, I will endeavour to answer the question.

REGISTRATION OF MOTOR CYCLES

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—Is the Minister of Transport aware of difficulties experienced by individuals in securing registration of the three-wheeled balloon tyre motor cycles of which more than 1000 units are sold in Victoria? The modest registration fee has been about $80 a unit. The Government is missing out on significant funds and I ask the Minister to carry out an investigation or offer a reason why difficulties are experienced by individuals seeking registration of these vehicles.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I am mildly surprised at the form of transport used by the residents of the Western District. Until the honourable member raised the matter with me, I was not aware that people were having difficulties registering three-wheeled balloon tyre motor cycles. If the honourable member will provide me with details of the matter, I will determine what can be done to remove the difficulty.

POLICE AND ETHNIC COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond)—Will the Minister for Police and Emergency Services inform the House whether his department has taken measures to ensure more effective relations are brought about between the police and ethnic communities?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member for Richmond and all members of the House will be delighted to know that Mr Ivan Kolaric has been appointed as special adviser on ethnic affairs for the Victoria Police. Mr Kolaric is well known to many honourable members as the former senior assistant director of the former Ministry of Ethnic Affairs. His appointment to the Victoria Police will have the effect of further improving what are already extremely good relations between the police and members of the various ethnic communities. This move is extremely important because many members of ethnic communities come from

countries with traditions of policing which are very different from Victoria's system.

It is necessary that the confidence of those people be won before they are able to take advantage fully of the many services the police are able to make available to them. Mr Kolaric will be intimately involved in Operation Ethos, which is a special effort the police are currently mounting to strengthen relations between themselves and ethnic communities. It is part of the overall pattern of activity by the Police Force and the Government in ensuring that police community relations in all their forms and ramifications are made as strong as possible.

CAMPAIGN FUNDS

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—Will the Premier reaffirm that the Labor Party will accept no donations to campaign funds with any strings attached?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The question is out of order. If the honourable member desires to rephrase it, I will hear him.

Mr JONA—Will the Premier give an assurance that the Government that he leads —which is represented by the interests of the Australian Labor Party—will in no way accept funds towards the furtherance of that Government's activities which have any strings attached?

Will the Premier also give an assurance that no member of his Government or any member directly supporting his Government who is a member of the Australian Labor Party is either directly or indirectly a member of the poker machine lobby?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member for Hawthorn will get to the question.

Mr JONA—Despite the sensitivity of the Premier and the Deputy Premier to the matter, I ask the Premier to give an assurance that no such money has been received from the poker machine lobby.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—All the sensitivity to the question rests on the Opposition side of the House. We have consistently asserted the desirability of a full disclosure of all campaign donations, but that suggestion has been strenuously resisted by both opposition parties—members of the "coalition"—on all occasions, so far as I can recall.

I have said that candidates for Parliament from the Government party have no authority to accept donations from anyone, and they do not. If anyone wishes to make a donation to this party, that is a matter for him or her. That person can make a donation to the State office and will then receive a receipt and will also be told that a receipt will be received. That is a matter between that person and the party.

No strings will be attached to any donation that anyone has chosen to make. If anyone wishes to donate moneys to any political party, it is a matter for that person, those people or those organizations who may donate moneys for a host of reasons.

Never will this party or this Government be in a situation where any donation carries with it an obligation to do or not to do something. I make that perfectly clear. I add the offer that was made a month ago, which was also made twelve months ago and which again I make today, that if members of the Opposition wish their political party or parties to disclose all sources of donations, this party will do likewise. One in, all in. If members of the Opposition wish to be in it, the Government will be in it.

That is the way it is carried out in my party. A receipt is given to the donor and if any member of the Opposition wishes to go to the State Office and make a donation to the party, he or she will receive a receipt like anyone else. Just imagine this coming from the Liberal Party, which sold a building to its own organization when it was in government. It had all this money secreted away and knowledge of that fact came into the House in a circuitous way. Imagine the Liberal Party talking about political donations! Stan Guilfoyle came in, he presented all the money that was on deposit to the Liberal Party in various deposits around the country. Just imagine the Liberal Party being concerned and pontificating about political parties receiving donations. What humbug that is! If members of the Opposition want disclosure, it will be carried out on all sides of the House.

PETITIONS

The Clerk—I have received the following petitions for presentation to Parliament:

Shop trading hours

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, M.P., AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE

ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth the concern of the members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia, Victorian Division, and residents of Williamstown, Parkdale, Pascoe Vale, Prahran, Sorrento, South Melbourne, Wandin North, Wantirna, Werribee and Yarra Glen at the Victorian Liberal Parliamentary Party's Policy of Deregulation of Trading Hours for Retail Shops in Victoria, as such action would increase costs, aggravate inflation and unemployment in the retail industry, discriminate against labour intensive small firms employing full-time skilled employees in favour of the giant self service retail chains mainly employing junior staff at casual rates, which we believe is not in the best interests of the community.

We respectfully submit that deregulation of trading hours would seriously impact the "quality of life" of the small business owner/manager and the "quality of work life" of employees of small and independent firms.

We respectfully request that the Victorian Government's policies supporting small business and the non-extension of shop trading hours be strengthened and that penalties for breaches of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 be enforced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr Stirling** (616 signatures)

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, M.P., AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth:

The concern of the members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia, Victorian Division, and residents of Churchill, Drouin, Korumburra, Leongatha, Mirboo North, Trafalgar and Warragul at the Victorian Liberal Parliamentary Party's Policy of Deregulation of Trading Hours for Retail Shops in Victoria, as such action would increase costs, aggravate inflation and unemployment in the retail industry, discriminate against labour intensive small firms employing full-time skilled employees in favour of the giant self service retail chains mainly employing junior staff at casual rates, which we believe is not in the best interests of the community.

We respectfully submit that deregulation of trading hours would seriously impact the "quality of life" of the small business owner/manager and the "quality of work life" of employees of small and independent firms.

We respectfully request that the Victorian Government's policies supporting small business and the non-extension of shop trading hours be strengthened and that penalties for breaches of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 be enforced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Miss Callister** (476 signatures)

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, M.P., AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth:

The concern of the members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia, Victorian Division, and residents of Footscray at the Victorian Liberal Parliamentary Party's Policy of Deregulation of Trading Hours for Retail Shops in Victoria, as such action would increase costs, aggravate inflation and unemployment in the retail industry, discriminate against labour intensive small firms employing full-time skilled employees in favour of the giant self service retail chains mainly employing junior staff at casual rates, which we believe is not in the best interests of the community.

We respectfully submit that deregulation of trading hours would seriously impact the "quality of life" of the small business owner/manager and the "quality of work life" of employees of small and independent firms.

We respectfully request that the Victorian Government's policies supporting small business and the non-extension of shop trading hours be strengthened and that penalties for breaches of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 be enforced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr Walsh** (600 signatures)

Anti-discrimination legislation

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia, Victoria respectfully showeth;

That we support and affirm the purpose of the family unit as created by God and recorded in Genesis Chapter 1 verses 27 and 28. "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him. Male and Female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth".

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will reject proposals that are contrary to the well being and not supportive of family life, and at variance with God's law and purpose.

We consider that anti-discrimination on the basis of sexual preference will be legislation that is detrimental to the well being of the family, will open the door to teaching in our schools that will threaten the dignity and virtue of our children, and will give credence to what God called an abomination (Leviticus 18 v 22 and 20 v 13).

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will reject such proposals.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr Walsh** (93 signatures)

The Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, Ballarat

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria sheweth that services provided by the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre at Ballarat are under threat of curtailment.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the Government of Victoria take appropriate steps to liaise with the Board of Management of the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre to ensure that there is no reduction of services to the elderly and infirm of the Ballarat and Central Highlands region.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr A. T. Evans** (155 signatures)

Equal opportunity legislation

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria respectfully showeth:

That the proposed amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act to include discrimination on the basis of sexual preference:

1. Will legislate against the majority of citizens rights and responsibilities.

2. Make life harder for homosexuals, as the non-homosexual majority will not like being fined or jailed on account of what could in practice become preference for homosexuals.

3. Will produce dishonest Government if Labor M.P's were not allowed a conscience vote on what is in fact a moral issue.

4. Should be made available to interested persons and groups to enable informed public discussion.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will shelve the proposed legislation until it has been proved conclusively that there is a need for it.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr Ramsay** (38 signatures)

Firearm registration

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

This, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria, shows our concern that the Government has indicated its intention to legislate compelling the registration of privately owned firearms and abrogating the terms of its claimed mandate by failing to consult with representatives of shooting organisations and by imposing Charges and restrictions contrary to its specific election promises and, accordingly, we respectfully ask Parliament to deny passage of firearm registration legislation or alternatively to restrict the passage of firearms registration legislation to the terms of the Government's claimed mandate obtained in response to specific public election promises that firearm registration would be notational only that it would be implemented at no extra cost to shooters in view of the recent 150 per cent increase in shooters licence fees and that representatives of shooting organisations would be consulted prior to legislating and your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr McNamara** (38 signatures)

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

PUBLIC BODIES REVIEW COMMITTEE

Future Structures for Water Management

Mr MILLER (Prahran), Chairman, presented a report from the Public Bodies Review Committee on "Future Structures for Water Management—final report on the central and regional management of the water industry", together with appendices, extracts from the proceedings, a minority report and a list of major recommendations.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table and that the report, extracts, minority report and appendices be printed.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Medical Practitioners (Private Hospitals) Bill

Mr ERNST (Geelong East), Chairman, presented the final report from the Social Development Committee on the Medical Practitioners (Private Hospitals) Bill, together with an appendix and minutes of evidence.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the report and appendix be printed.

COMMAND PAPER

Mr CAIN (Premier) presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor, the Report of the Board of Inquiry into Casinos in Victoria.

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

PAPERS

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

Building Societies—Report of the Registrar for the year 1981-82—Ordered to be printed.

Community Welfare Services—Report of the Department for the year 1981-82—Ordered to be printed.

Dried Fruits Act 1958—Report and Statement of Accounts of the Victorian Dried Fruits Board for the year 1982.

Land Conservation Act 1970—Final Recommendations of the Land Conservation Council for the South-Western Area, District 1—Review.

Police Regulation Act 1958—Determination No. 386 of the Police Service Board.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
Companies (Administration) Act 1981—No. 92.
Education Service Act 1981—Nos. 86 to 88.
Estate Agents Act 1980—No. 81.
Evidence Act 1958—No. 93.
Farm Produce Merchants and Commission Agents Act 1965—No. 91.
Financial Institutions Duty Act 1982—No. 84
Hospitals and Charities Act 1958—No. 95.
Motor Boating Act 1961—No. 83.
Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968—No. 85.
Police Regulation Act 1958—No. 94.
Public Service Act 1974—Nos. 96, 97; PSD No. 22.
Supreme Court Act 1958—Nos. 89, 90, 98, 99.
Veterinary Surgeons Act 1958—No. 82.
Town and Country Planning Act 1961:
Bulla—Shire of Bulla Planning Scheme 1959, Amendment No. 89 (1982).
Geelong Regional Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos. 66, 69, (two papers).
Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos. 172 (Part 2A), 185 (Part 2B), 186 (Part 2), 189, 190 (Part 1), (five papers).
Mildura—City of Mildura Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 50 (1982).
Mornington—Shire of Mornington Planning Scheme 1959—Amendment No. 152.
Pakenham—Shire of Pakenham Planning Scheme (Part 1), Amendment Nos. 4, 10, (two papers).
Sherbrooke—Shire of Sherbrooke Planning Scheme 1979 (Rural Areas), Amendment Nos. 11, 11A, (two papers).
South Gippsland—Shire of South Gippsland Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 46 (1980).
Tallangatta—Shire of Tallangatta Planning Scheme 1956, Amendment No. 6.
Woorayl—Shire of Woorayl Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 56.
Victorian Dairy Industry Authority—Report for the year 1981-82.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Casinos Board of Inquiry

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I wish to make a Ministerial statement. I have presented for the consideration of the House the report of the board of inquiry into casinos.

On 18 May 1982, Francis Xavier Connor, QC, was appointed by his Excellency the Governor of Victoria, by and with the advice of the Executive Council, to be a board of inquiry into casinos. Mr Connor's report, that is the board's report, was presented to His Excellency the Governor of Victoria on 29 April 1983.

The terms of reference, as amended, called upon the board to inquire into, report on and make recommendations upon whether a casino or casinos should be established in Victoria. Since the amending Order in Council of 3 August 1982, the inquiry was conducted on the basis that it must, as far as possible, disregard machines commonly known as poker or slot machines.

The board has recommended that casinos should not be permitted in Victoria. This recommendation extends to casinos of whatever variety, and at whatever location.

The Government has examined the report and has decided that it will not seek to change the law to license or permit the establishment of a casino or casinos in Victoria.

The thoroughness with which the board examined the issues, the breadth of the evidence obtained by it and, therefore, the strength of its recommendations are compelling.

The report is divided into nineteen chapters and there are ten appendices.

The board also submitted a confidential report. This was done as some of the material contained refers to current police investigations. The board considered that to refer publicly to it may inhibit those investigations and, equally, may inhibit the fair trial of those being investigated. Other material refers to confidential evidence given principally by police officers concerning organized crime. Yet other material contains commercially sensitive matter which, if publicly disclosed, may give unfair advantage to commercial competitors of the organizations to which the material referred. The board indicates in the report

that it would have made all the findings set out without hearing the confidential evidence.

It is necessary to indicate that, throughout the report, the purposes for which casinos might be introduced into Victoria were reduced to four principal classifications. An initial description of each classification will assist in the understanding of the subsequent content of this statement.

"Maximum revenue casinos" are open public casinos established for the purpose of generating maximum revenue for the State.

"Single entertainment/convention casino" is a large open casino situated in inner Melbourne, developed within a large entertainment complex, having exclusivity within a stated radius of the General Post Office for a designated term of years. The proposed Southgate casino would fit this description. In that instance, it was proposed that the operator have the responsibility for erecting and running at its own cost a 4000-person capacity convention centre, the success of which might have been dependent upon a casino.

"Resort casinos" are open public casinos to promote tourism in resort or provincial areas, the operators having an obligation to erect or provide tourist facilities.

"Unobtrusive casino" is a single, low profile, stand-alone casino, probably in Melbourne, designed to meet an unstimulated demand for casino gambling. It is proper to suggest that the board's recommendation in relation to this type of casino is somewhat less firm than with the other types. Its argument that unobtrusive casinos would have a tendency to grow inexorably into larger casinos and then bring with them attendant, undesirable, social problems, is very persuasive.

The above classifications are contained in chapter 2 of the report, entitled "Scheme of the Report". That chapter also outlines the matters considered in each of the substantive chapters and appendices and, in addition, sets out a number of commonly used casino terms, providing an explanation as to their meaning.

I turn now to specific matters. The first particular matter on which the board was to inquire into and report was the likely social effects of any casino or casinos, including the steps, if any, which should be taken to prevent or mitigate any likely adverse social effects. These matters are dealt with in chapter 14 of the report. It was considered by the board that some beneficial, social effect would follow the introduction of casinos, but they would be far outweighed by the adverse social effects.

The board has examined the intrusion of organized criminal elements into Victoria and previous efforts to suppress that intrusion. It was assisted by the Costigan commission, its own examination, and evidence obtained both here and overseas. It came to the view that such elements do exist in Victoria, very often with interstate and overseas links.

This finding is of itself alarming to the Government. Some steps have already been taken to deal with some of the matters raised by Mr Connor. I shall return to this point later in this statement. The report details the likely impact of organized criminal elements upon the various types of casinos. The report concluded:

(*a*) Maximum revenue casinos were unlikely to be able to operate free of organized crime either directly or indirectly;

(*b*) A single entertainment/convention casino may, with great difficulty, expense and eternal vigilance be able to operate free of organized crime;

(*c*) Resort casinos should be able, with difficulty and expense and eternal vigilance, to operate free of organized crime; and

(*d*) An unobtrusive casino had the best prospect of operating crime free and, if appropriate safeguards were taken, should be able to do so.

The Government is not prepared to expose this State and its citizens to the avoidable risk of introducing a facility upon which organized crime could prosper. The board concluded that the confidence of certain police witnesses as to their ability to control organized crime was misplaced. The Government has confidence in the Victoria Police. But it cannot disregard the conclusions of the board that a casino would be highly susceptible to the overtures of organized crime and that such elements would

extend their overtures to any regulatory body established to supervise casinos.

We do not propose to test the capacity of the Police Force or any regulatory body which the Government might establish to supervise casinos and therefore have come firmly to the view that no casino of whatever variety should be set up in this State.

The second particular matter on which the board was to report was the likely economic effect of any casino or casinos, including any such effect on the public finances of the State. These matters are dealt with in chapter 15 of the report.

It was considered by the board that a single entertainment/convention casino could be expected to generate about $78 million additional economic output for Victoria and additional employment for about 2200 people. For other casinos both the figures were likely to be lower; and an unobtrusive casino could be expected to make little appreciable difference in these respects.

The board emphasized the difficulty of making such predictions and treats them with extreme caution. It must also be conceded that there could be some significant rearrangement of the gambling dollar and perhaps a more significant drop in Totalizator Agency Board revenue. Current employment levels arising from other forms of gambling could be reduced.

With respect to the effect on public finances, the initial question the board faced was the method of taxation to be employed. It concluded that if revenue was the principal consideration, on the basis of figures considered by it, the further promotion of lotteries and the invigoration of the racing industry would make far more sense than the introduction of casino gambling. In arriving at this conclusion, the board considered, *inter alia,* the various percentages taken in tax on different current forms of gambling, and the possibility that some casino gambling revenue may be derived from moneys which would have been spent on those other forms of gambling. The board also considered the present impact of illegal bookmakers.

In considering the economic effect of casinos, the board, as a sidelight, drew certain conclusions about the viability of a convention centre of a certain size. The Government considers that Melbourne needs a first-class convention centre of appropriate size. This matter is currently under active consideration. The board's conclusions do not diminish the Government's interest in establishing a convention centre and its conclusions about the viability of a certain size convention centre will be taken fully into account.

The third and fourth particular matters on which the board was to inquire into and report upon were—

(*a*) the legal and administrative measures, if any, which should be adopted to control and supervise the operations of any casino or casinos which may be established; and

(*b*) the measures, if any, which should be taken to prevent undesirable persons from having a financial or other connection with, or being in a position to influence, any aspect of the operations of any casino or casinos which may be established.

These matters are dealt with in chapter 16 of the report, and are dealt with jointly. There was no dispute before the board that if a casino or casinos were to be introduced, their establishment and operation should be strictly controlled by Government.

Included in the specific points made in this chapter are the following:

(*a*) Control may be ineffective because it is corrupt; it may also be ineffective because it is incompetent albeit honest;

(*b*) It would be of inestimable value to have a bipartisan policy on casino gambling;

(*c*) It was absolutely essential to have sound legislation and a well chosen licensing and investigative authority in place before inviting application for casino licences;

(*d*) An independent casino authority should have the licensing power rather than a Government Minister; and

(*e*) A Government Minister who administered casinos should not have responsibility for raising revenue or for tourism.

Included in other recommendations in this chapter are ones with respect to the composition, powers, practices and procedures of the licensing body; and the creation of an investigation, surveillance and auditing mechanism.

Paragraphs 37 to 39 of this chapter include a discussion of present practices of "laundering" money, including through the Totalizator Agency Board, and the matters

raised therein are obviously of concern to the Government. I shall return to this matter toward the end of this statement.

The fifth and sixth particular matters on which the board was to inquire into and report upon were—

(*a*) whether such casino or casinos should be established by the Minister, an agency of Government, or private enterprise; and

(*b*) whether such casino or casinos should be operated by the Minister, an agency of Government, or private enterprise.

Both these matters are dealt with in chapter 17 of the report as many of the matters considered apply to both establishing and operating casinos.

It was considered by the board that if any casino other than perhaps an unobtrusive casino were to be established, it should be by private enterprise. The cost involved was a major factor in the board's coming to this conclusion.

As to whether casinos should be operated by Government or private enterprise, the board concluded that if established they should be operated by private enterprise. Government operation was not ruled out on the ground of incapacity. The board considered that other factors, for example, the fact that if Government itself becomes the operator it becomes a judge in its own cause, had to be considered.

I now set out the principal recommendations as contained in chapter 18 of the report:

I recommend that maximum revenue casinos not be established in Victoria for the following reasons:

(*a*) They would be likely to stimulate casino gambling to an unacceptable degree;

(*b*) There is no substantial demonstrable demand for them;

(*c*) There would be a substantial risk that in one way or another they would be infiltrated by organised crime elements;

(*d*) They are likely to be accompanied by an unacceptable level of street crime;

(*e*) They are not, by comparison with certain other forms of gambling, likely to be efficient producers of revenue for the State of Victoria.

I consider that the above considerations outweigh any likely benefits such as increased economic activity, increased State revenue and social enjoyment.

I recommend that a single entertainment/convention casino not be established in Victoria for the following reasons:

(*a*) It would be likely to stimulate casino gambling to an unacceptable degree;

(*b*) There is no substantial demonstrable demand for it;

(*c*) There would be an appreciable risk that in one way or another it would be infiltrated by organised crime elements;

(*d*) It is likely to be accompanied by an unacceptable level of street crime;

(*e*) It is not, by comparison with certain other forms of gambling, likely to be an efficient producer of revenue for the State of Victoria;

(*f*) No case has been made out that Melbourne needs a convention centre which will cater for more than 2500 delegates and a convention centre up to that size can be established without recourse to a casino to give it the necessary financial backing.

I consider that the above considerations outweigh any likely benefits such as increased economic activity, increased tourism, increased State revenue and social enjoyment.

I recommend that resort casinos not be established in Victoria for the following reasons:

(*a*) They would be likely to stimulate casino gambling to an unacceptable degree;

(*b*) There is no substantial demonstrable demand for them;

(*c*) It would not be possible to rule out with confidence that they would operate free of organised crime and street crime;

(*d*) They are not, by comparison with certain other forms of gambling, likely to be efficient producers of revenue for the State of Victoria.

I think these considerations outweigh any benefits such as increased economic activity, increased tourism, increased State revenue and social enjoyment.

As to an unobtrusive casino I consider that it would not stimulate casino gambling to any appreciable extent, there is a demand for such a casino, there is a good prospect that organised crime and street crime would not be associated with it. At present the casino gamblers in Victoria have to go to Tasmania or Northern Territory or even further afield in order to gamble. They are entitled to complain that every opportunity is given to persons interested in other forms of gambling while none at all is given to them. The British Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming, 1949–51 (Report H.M.S.O. Cmd. 8190) said:

"We therefore consider that the object of gambling legislation should be to interfere as little as possible with individual liberty to take part in the various forms of gambling but to impose such restrictions as are desirable and practicable to discourage or prevent excess."

For the reasons I have set out in many parts of this report I think that casino gambling should be restricted

to an unobtrusive casino in order to prevent excess in the form of stimulation. In order to interfere as little as possible with individual liberty, it might seem, therefore, that I should recommend such a casino; and I have given very serious consideration to doing so.

There is a countervailing consideration, however, which weighs heavily with me. It arises from the material in paragraphs 9.26 to 9.39 concerning the introduction of Tattersalls in 1953 by the then Premier, the Hon. John Cain and in paragraphs 9.40 to 9.41 concerning the introduction of the Totalizator Agency Board in 1959 by the then Premier, the Hon. Henry Bolte. I think it plain that each Premier sincerely thought he was introducing a very limited new gambling form for a very good reason and with more than adequate safeguards. In the first case the purpose was to prevent the flow of money out of Victoria and to use that money for hospitals and mental institutions. In the second case it was to provide an alternative to illegal bookmaking and to assist the hospitals. The subsequent history of each facility speaks for itself and one reads the original debates as though they were "once upon a time" fairytales. And yet each of these gambling forms could reasonably lay claim to being a "soft" form of gambling by comparison with casino games which are the most concentrated, undiluted form of gambling.

In view of Victoria's track record in this field, "you would have to be carved out of chocolate", to borrow Mr. Ollington's colourful expression, to take the view that an unobtrusive casino would for long retain its original characteristics; or would be anything but a springboard for further agitation by the casino lobby for more casinos; or that all the restrictions, which would make such a casino safe and would be the indispensable conditions of its introduction in the first place, would not be abandoned one by one over the next 20 years. I am not prepared to take the responsibility of recommending even an unobtrusive casino, even though I think it could be introduced initially in a satisfactory form. It is admittedly a "thin end of the wedge" argument; and such arguments are not always soundly based. This one however is not plucked out of the air and I believe it is necessary to fly in the face of Victorian history in order to reject it.

I turn now to consider some of the matters revealed by Mr Connor during the currency of his inquiry. I have referred to the use apparently made by some persons of the TAB to launder (black) money. Mr Connor exposed the method as to how this is done in the report.

The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, who is responsible for this body, has already put in place procedures which will prevent the TAB being used as a laundering device. I shall not reveal the nature of those procedures. To do so would only assist those with a criminal intent.

The board has referred to the nature and scope of starting price bookmaking at race meetings conducted in Victoria. These transactions are illegal and provide shelter for criminal activity and represent a loss of revenue. Since assuming office, the Government has been concerned about these illegal activities. As a result, the police are now cracking down on illegal gambling and betting with greater vigour.

The report adverts to a possibility that instant lottery games may have been susceptible to unlawful interest. Arrangements for the printing of these tickets have been put in place. I can assure the community that the Government has received assurance from the Australian companies concerned that production of those tickets is sound and there is no reason for public concern. To ensure that there is no scope for any residual concern about this in the community, I have requested the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to examine this assertion and have him fully inform his department of the circumstances made known to the board.

I have raised with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services those findings which relate to the documented activities of criminal elements within Victoria. The Government would like to express its appreciation in support of that already given by Mr Connor for the candour expressed by certain members of the Police Force in their evidence. Again I shall not detail the actual police activity in this area as to do so would be to forewarn those who might have been engaged upon illegal enterprises.

The Minister for Economic Development, who is responsible for tourism, is currently considering the trenchant criticism expressed in the report of the Melbourne Tourism Authority and its executive director.

I have felt obliged to refer those sections of the report dealing with Telecom to the appropriate Federal authorities, that is, the Minister for Communications and the Minister in charge of the Australian Federal Police. Again I shall not prejudge or impinge upon the results that may follow from those references.

As to the recommendation that the Government establish a social support mechanism for pathological gamblers, I have also

notified the Minister of Health of this recommendation and asked him to examine it. Public comment on this matter would be welcome.

The board's recommendation that the Government consider arrangements to measure the social and economic effects of gambling is being considered by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation.

I referred earlier in the statement to the confidential report. While accepting the advice of the board that it should not be tabled, there is one matter raised by the board to which I wish to allude.

An arrangement had been made between a prospective vendor and purchaser for purchase of a possible site for a convention centre. In a separate and unrelated arrangement, provision was made to pay a significant premium by the purchaser in the event the Government decided to approve a licence for a casino. The existence of the second arrangement could not be gleaned from the first.

The board observed that on one view of these transactions, it might have appeared that a situation had been created which would enable a highly motivated vendor to place considerable pressure on the Government to grant a casino licence, particularly if the convention centre did not prosper and Government had in the meantime accepted a recurring obligation to fund it.

The Government shares fully the board's concern about the potential implications of these arrangements. Since the Government will not issue a licence for a casino, the question does not now arise. I wish to make it quite clear, however, that such proposals are completely unacceptable to the Government. It has not dealt with and will not deal with groups in the community on such a basis.

My Government thanks the board, and those who assisted it, for the exemplary manner in which it approached what was clearly a very difficult task. Its conclusions are clear, unequivocal and strong. The Government has considered the report and decided that no casinos will be introduced into this State.

The issue of introduction of casinos into Victoria is now closed.

By leave, I move:

That this House takes note of the Ministerial statement and the report.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—On behalf of the Liberal Party Opposition in this State, I congratulate Mr Connor, QC for the way in which he has conducted himself and the commission inquiring into the need for, or arguments for and against the establishment of a casino in this State.

There is no doubt that Mr Connor, QC, had to fight tooth and nail during the course of the inquiry to obtain the capacity to conduct the inquiry as he saw fit. Unprecedented restraint was placed on Mr Connor, QC, by the Government, the Premier and the Attorney-General against the proper functioning of the commission.

The inquiry which was established by the Government on 17 May 1982 has now been proceeding for just over twelve months. There is no doubt that in the opinion of the Opposition, Mr Connor, QC, must be considered to be one of the most deeply knowledgeable people within the community—on a Victorian, Australian or world wide basis—on the operation of casinos throughout the world. There is no doubt the experience he gained by travelling has been invaluable and is an integral part of the report the House is now discussing. There is also no doubt that his ability to bring into Australia witnesses from overseas assisted Mr Connor, QC, in coming to the recommendations now before the House.

The Opposition accepts the findings without reservation and congratulates Mr Connor, QC. I also place on record the fact that the Opposition congratulates the Government for accepting and fully embracing the recommendations of the commission. That is not to say that it totally accepts the way in which the Premier has obviously overlooked some of the most binding criticisms of the commission in his Ministerial statement today. Of course, it comes as no surprise that those criticisms are directly levelled at the Premier and one of his Ministers.

There is no doubt that the Premier has presented a biased statement. Reference is made in the report to discrepancies. Reference is made on page 17 of the report to the Minister who was responsible for tourism

and criticism is expressed of the Melbourne Tourism Authority and its executive director.

Apart from establishing the fact beyond question that crime is associated with the introduction of another gambling facility in this State, the most stringent criticism is levelled at the Premier and the former Minister for Economic Development, Mr Landeryou.

One need only turn to appendices A to F in the report of the board of inquiry, starting at the letter "C" where one whole chapter is devoted to Ministerial criticisms of the inquiry and how the commissioner Mr Connor, QC, felt about such interference and lack of support by both the Premier and the former Minister for Economic Development, Mr Landeryou.

Not one word in the Ministerial statement refers to something about which the commissioner felt so strongly that he had to devote a whole chapter to it. As the Leader of the National Party states by interjection, there was not one word about that in the Ministerial statement.

The Premier was prepared to talk about misdealings and allegations that the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation or the Minister for Economic Development is looking into in terms of the Melbourne Tourism Authority and its director. The Premier did not have the courage or the honesty to refer, in any part of his Ministerial statement, to the most trenchant criticism of his own handling of the commission and his own political involvement and that of the former Minister for Economic Development at the time, Mr Landeryou.

I refer to those chapters because the Opposition demands that the premier publicly apologize to Mr Connor, QC, in light of the Premier's acceptance today, and congratulatory remarks, of the way in which the inquiry was conducted. The Premier now owes to Mr Connor, QC, and every other person that may be associated with a Royal commission, a public apology, especially to Mr Connor, QC for the way in which he placed his impeccable character in question and attacked the legitimacy of the commission. I invite honourable members to look at some of the things to which Mr Connor referred.

It is hard to know where to start. At appendix C.06 of the report, Mr Connor states:

> I turn now to the statement made by the Premier the Hon. John Cain. On 14 January 1983 Mr Stuart Rintoul, a journalist with the Melbourne *Sun*, rang me and told me that during the day the Premier had made a statement at a press conference that he was very concerned at the massive increase in the cost of the Casino Inquiry, that when the overseas trip had been announced it was expected to cost about $30,000 but that the figures now showed that the trip undertaken by the Chairman and two counsel had cost about $70,000, that the Premier, when asked how the increase had come about, had said that he had done everything he could to keep costs down. Mr Rintoul said that this seemed to have intimated rather strongly that the Premier had thrown it back to me and the costs that I had incurred. Mr Rintoul added that the figures released by the Law Department showed that at 29 April 1983 I would have received about $260,000 for the eleven months of the Inquiry and that the total for the Inquiry would be $1·03 million. Mr Rintoul then said that what did seem to have happened was that the costs had got out of hand and he was wondering what I thought about that.

It is easy for the Premier to laugh about such a serious matter as an allegation made by a former judge in this country. The Minister of Public Works is sitting at his side revelling and treating lightheartedly some of the most savage criticisms ever rendered by a commissioner. I suggest the Minister read the report before making interjections.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! The honourable member will ignore interjections.

Mr KENNETT—The Premier states that it is not the report. Is it any wonder he is trying to run away from the criticism in the document? The senior law officer in this State is being criticized for his interference and performance by a former judge.

Mr Ross-Edwards—It is the Premier.

Mr KENNETT—It is hard to say whether it is the Premier or the Attorney-General. It is the question of the split personality once again of this man who tries to throw aside easily the criticism of a senior judge. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition states, it is the most devastating criticism that has ever been levelled against an Attorney-General in this State since the land boom days of the 1880s. The Premier of the day, Sir James Munroe, discovered that the only way

to avoid the penalties about to be levelled at him and the accompanying embarrassment was to board a boat to London with his family. He resigned on the way to England and appointed himself as Agent-General in London!

This Premier is being criticized in a way that must call into question his ability to hold the portfolios of Premier and Attorney-General. Honourable members should examine the comments of Mr Connor concerning the Premier–Attorney-General who tried to use his authority to totally undermine the commission and its chairman. If it means anything to his reputation and the decency of Mr Connor's report, which he tried to destroy, the Premier should come clean and make a long-overdue apology. At Appendix C.09 the report states:

> It was apparent that a professional journalist and a member of the public were each left with the impression from what the Premier had said that I was in some way or other to blame for the cost of the Inquiry, that the cost was excessive and that I had been unjustly enriched by the fees payable to me as Chairman. As many others may have taken the same view I believe I have been placed in a position in which I have no choice but to defend the Inquiry against these innuendoes. It is an unusual position for a Chairman of a Board of Inquiry to encounter. In the unlikely event of an attack of this nature on a Royal Commission or a Board of Inquiry the Commissioner or Chairman is not normally called upon to say anything because the Minister of the Crown responsible for his selection and appointment will say what needs to be said on his behalf, including an explanation to Parliament and the public of the reasons why the Government has granted the Inquiry an extension of time. In this case it is that Minister who has chosen to mount the attack.

Imagine the position of a chairman of an inquiry having to write in the report that he believed that he as chairman and the independence of the commission were under attack and that he normally would have looked for advice to the Minister who appointed him. However, in this case he found that the Minister in question—whether it be the Premier or the Attorney-General—leading the attack against him was the Minister who had appointed him.

It is no wonder that the Premier happened to overlook the sort of findings and fears that Mr Connor referred to in the inquiry. The Premier apparently did not have room to fit this into the 18-page Ministerial statement. It was a lopsided and dishonest Ministerial statement. The Opposition welcomes the findings and the Government's acceptance of these findings. The Opposition totally rejects the way in which the Premier has totally refused to address himself to the criticism levelled at a Premier and an Attorney-General of this State by a senior judge appointed by the Premier and Attorney-General of this State. The Premier and Attorney-General has not been big enough or good enough to admit to the criticism. Of course, he has not been big enough to apologize. The Opposition demands that out of his own decency, at the very least, the Premier publicly apologize to Mr Connor for the way in which, as Premier and Attorney-General, he interfered and put the commission at risk.

The Opposition also demands that the Premier and Attorney-General separate his responsibility and give up his role as Attorney-General. He is not competent to handle both roles. The Premier has not been competent with respect to the time that needs to be taken by a Premier to lead this State during an obviously difficult economic time. The Premier is also not competent in the assessment of one of his legal colleagues—a much more senior colleague than the Premier in terms of experience, although the Attorney-General is the most senior law officer in the State.

The Premier is not competent to be Attorney-General any longer. He cannot walk away from the criticism by a senior legal officer of the most senior legal officer in this State over matters about which the most senior legal officer should have more knowledge and understanding. Appendix C.17 of the report which deals with Ministerial criticisms of the inquiry states:

> My fees and counsel's fees were fixed and authorized by the Government. It was open to the Government not to authorize any of these things.

However, the Government did authorize further expenditure and authorized further expenditure because the Opposition and my colleague in another place, Mr Peter Block, continually raised the matter of how Government Ministers had interfered with the inquiry and the Premier–Attorney-General—whatever hat he was wearing—was trying to restrict the inquiry from doing the work it wanted to do.

Mr Maclellan—He wanted a quick "yes".

Mr KENNETT—This is right. The Premier wanted a quick and cheap inquiry. He was not interested in giving the man he had appointed the sort of report for which we all compliment him today. In the words of the Premier, the Premier wanted a speedy and low-cost inquiry. As Mr Connor said, this was false economy in the long run. Mr Connor thought that one put at risk fairness and thoroughness if one made sacrifices along the way. A senior legal officer is telling the Premier that he is putting speed and cost before the long-term interest of the terms of reference of the inquiry.

How can the Premier walk away from the criticism that he was prepared to throw down the drain, fairness and thoroughness, and to reduce the ability of the inquiry to perform the task that it was originally charged to perform? How can the Premier walk away from criticism of that action caused by his desire to have a speedy and low-cost inquiry?

The report goes on to state that, if the Government of the day is going to authorize these expenses, "I do not think the Government should authorize them and then complain afterwards about the cost of what it authorizes". It is to be hoped that the Premier has taken note of what another legal person has said about his performance.

The Premier charged Mr Connor, QC, with a task to perform but the Premier immediately set out on a path of restricting the ability of Mr Connor, to investigate certain matters. What is even more extraordinary is that Mr Connor, was one of the original participants in the rebuilding of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Connor, walked away from the attacks made by the Leader of the Government in another place, the Minister for Industrial Affairs. However, Mr Connor, did the job he was charged to do not only in the interests of all Victorians but also in the interests of every future Royal Commission in this State.

The report of the inquiry implies that the Premier is incompetent because he has put at risk the fairness of any future Royal Commission in this State by attempting to move for a speedy and low-cost inquiry. The Premier put at risk the fairness and thoroughness of the inquiry in order to save a few dollars.

What was at risk? What was the inquiry investigating? The inquiry was investigating the alleged crime associated with gambling around the world. Who was the gentleman who last week came out publicly in support of the establishment of a crimes commission? None other than the Premier. The Premier interjects and says "No". However, one can understand that what the Premier says today is not what he meant to say yesterday.

Having called for the establishment of a crimes commission, the Premier announced the establishment of a special inquiry to be headed by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. The newspaper headlines declared, "Top probe into crime". However, in the process of spending $1·3 million on an inquiry into gambling, the Premier sacrificed fairness and thoroughness for speed and the saving of a few dollars.

The Premier has been referred to in many terms in this State but one of the terms used to describe the Premier has been that of a suburban lawyer, and a penny-pinching suburban lawyer at that. That has been the term used both inside and outside the Parliament to describe the Premier. However, the Premier, as a lawyer, should know the law and he should have given the inquiry the freedom to inquire into gambling, but as a penny-pinching suburban lawyer he said that costs came first with the inquiry. The inquiry has been held, but in the past few days in the newspapers, Mr Meagher, QC, has pointed to the evidence of widespread crime and the Premier, once again, has rushed into print and expressed his concern, quite rightly, about crime in this State. Victoria is to have appointed two more crime diggers—"Policemen Plod"—represented by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. What will those two Ministers look into? What resources will they be given? What has been the involvement of those two Ministers with the poker machine lobby? Those two Ministers are simply not fit to look into organized crime in this State. Those two Ministers are not fit because one cannot have someone in the political arena inquiring into crime when that person could be placed in a position of conflict. Both of these Ministers, who have

been appointed by this Premier, are in a position of conflict.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the term he used.

Mr KENNETT—I do not withdraw because this State now has a Premier who has been absolutely disgraced by the report of the casino inquiry and who has now appointed two other Ministers——

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I find the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition directed against me grossly offensive and I ask that he withdraw those remarks.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I withdraw whatever the remarks were. Let me reiterate that I am talking about the concern——

The ACTING SPEAKER—I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw without reservation the remarks he made.

Mr KENNETT—I withdraw without reservation. On the one hand, the Premier has been absolutely slated by the report. On the other hand, the Premier has expressed his concern about crime in this State and has appointed two Ministers to conduct their own inquiry into allegations of organized crime. That is referred to in the *Sun* newspaper of 19 May this year. Mr Connor, QC, supports the view many times over that it is wrong for a Minister to inquire into organized crime when that Minister is in charge of gambling facilities. I am stating to the House, without qualification, that neither of these two Ministers is qualified to inquire into organized crime because each has a conflict of interest.

Mr Trezise—You said they were personally unfit.

Mr KENNETT—I also say that you are personally unfit because it is the same thing.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I find the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition offensive when he says that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and myself are personally unfit to carry out an inquiry into organized crime in this State.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw without reservation the remark he made.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I withdraw. If a person is unfit, that person must live in the same body as the one that I am referring to generally, and I cannot separate the physical from the spiritual. If someone, because of the position that that person holds and his involvement in that position, is not fit to conduct an inquiry, that person is not fit, and I cannot separate the two.

What does one have today in this State? One now has a situation where there has been the most telling, open inquiry into crime, thanks to the strength of Mr Connor, and not due to the commitment of the Premier.

Even though Mr Connor was tempted to support the establishment of one form of casino in Victoria, on balance, he said that even the unobtrusive casino ran too many risks. The most in-depth investigation into potential crime in this State has now taken place.

Mr Trezise—Do you support it?

Mr KENNETT—I support it and congratulate the inquiry on its findings. The policy of the Liberal Party was to welcome casinos only after a full judicial inquiry had taken place. That was stated in May last year.

The Opposition congratulates the inquiry on its findings and congratulates the Premier on accepting the broad thrust of the inquiry not to establish casinos. The Opposition demands action as to the performance of the Premier who, on the one hand, states publicly that he is concerned about crime, but, on the other hand, through his own actions has now been slated by the chairman of the inquiry as to his own performance.

The report of the Board of Inquiry into Casinos calls into question the competence of the Premier to hold down positions of both Premier and Attorney-General. It is no longer acceptable that the honourable gentleman should hold those positions. He cannot walk away from the criticisms contained in the report; he cannot fail to accept that his performance in the past year as Attorney-General has probably led to the collapse of the Trustees Executors and

Agency Co Ltd. Had the Attorney-General been on the ball and doing the job he should have been doing, there is no reason why that collapse—which will affect literally hundreds of thousands of people throughout Australia—could not have been solved by a merging of arrangements. That has been done with building societies and large financial organizations, and four or five of them took place in the last year of the Liberal Government.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! Have these comments anything to do with the Ministerial statement?

Mr KENNETT—They do, as the Opposition is calling on the Premier to recognize that he has been rejected by a senior legal officer in this State, Mr Connor, who calls into question the performance of the Premier who does not recognize the understanding that must go between a Minister who commissions a Royal Commission and the fact that the Minister should support the commission and not be seen to publicly criticize it. The Premier has presented this report today as Attorney-General and he has been seen to criticize the commission both as Attorney-General and Premier. The argument for the Premier to stand down from the role of Attorney-General is beyond challenge.

There will be a lot of debate about this inquiry and its report. There will be even more debate on further investigations into crime in Victoria and one wonders—I guess it is no wonder—why Mr Connor was not allowed to examine the issue of poker machines. Obviously, the job he had to do was large. One can only wonder where the Premier will now go in terms of other commissions he is currently holding as to their value and how much direction he will give to get the results his Government may want. There is no doubt that the poker machine lobby in this State and interstate did not want a casino established because it believes its future lies with poker machines.

If organized crime can be associated so simply with casinos, one must question whether there is any further value in spending more of the community's money on a further extension of gambling facilities. That must be questioned by the Government of the day.

The Opposition demands the resignation of the Premier as Attorney-General. If he does not resign, he will be mocked and ridiculed, not only by others in the legal profession of his own capability, but he will be called into question time and time again by the community.

There is no way that the Minister of Housing can accuse me of being out of touch because he probably has not even read the report dated 29 April. In the report, there is an absolute rejection of the performance of the Premier and Attorney-General. If that is out of touch—an independent assessment by a man appointed by the Premier and Attorney-General—then I will go "he".

Further, and more importantly, the Opposition demands an unequivocal apology from the Premier, as Premier and Attorney-General, to Mr Connor to restore the reputation of that man and the independence of commissions established by Governments, regardless of what they are appointed to inquire into and regardless of which political party they are appointed by. Mr Connor deserves the thanks of every Victorian. He has shown that the independence of the law and the commission is above and beyond the interference of premiers, regardless of their political flavour. He has given a reason to every Victorian to have confidence that there are people outside the political system who, at times, are more prepared to look after the interests of Victorians than are the politicians.

The Premier and Attorney-General was prepared to sell out the interests of Victoria in the interests of getting a speedy and low-cost decision. Mr Connor said he would not stand for the interference of the Premier.

Mr Fordham—This is the third time we have heard this.

Mr KENNETT—It may start to get through.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I ask the House to come to order. Ministers are out of their places and the House is becoming unruly. I ask members of the Opposition to also cease interjecting.

Mr KENNETT—Members on this side of the House have nothing to be ashamed of with this inquiry. We welcomed it and we welcome the results. The Government, and the Premier and Attorney-General can

take no comfort whatsoever from their performance when one Minister of the Government has said that Victoria will have casinos despite some difficulty with a particular judge. One reads in the report of the inquiry how Mr Connor had to consider the opportunity to give up his commission given that sort of approach and interference by the Minister. Thank God he did not!

Thank God Mr Connor said, "What is more important than the bleatings of the Labor Party and the Government Ministers is the need and concern to meet my responsibilities as charged." Mr Connor has proved that he has acted independently, in good faith and with great ability in bringing down a report that must be seen for what it is—a great concern to all Victorians in terms of criminal activity and the potential for an increase in criminal activity; an overwhelming accusation that the Premier and Attorney-General is simply not good enough to do the job he has been charged with; and an overwhelming criticism levelled at the former Minister for Economic Development.

I ask the Premier, if there is a decent bone in his body, to publicly apologize to Mr Connor. I ask the Premier, if he is a decent man—and so many seem to say he is—to recognize that, because of the pressures on his job of managing the State, he is just not competent to handle the role of Attorney-General.

How much longer is the Premier going to persist with hanging on to both portfolios? It is already costing many Victorians a great deal of money through the Premier's failure with the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd, and this State is not going to get the administration that it so desperately needs.

I say again, we congratulate Mr Connor. We accept his findings. We also congratulate the Government for being prepared to implement and to accept wholeheartedly the findings as determined by Mr Connor.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The first thing that struck me on reading the Ministerial statement was what a poor statement it is. It was obviously hurriedly put together after the Government's party meeting this morning, when presumably this matter was discussed and debated. The Ministerial statement lacks breadth and it comprises statements taken straight from the inquiry.

If one has to depend, as we do, on this Ministerial statement, it makes it very difficult to debate because it is not a true summing up of the inquiry. It said nothing about the shortcomings of the Premier and of the Minister for Industrial Affairs.

Another matter that disturbs me is the very pertinent and accurate comments that appeared in this morning's newspaper. Supposedly the security concerning the report should have been good and the report should have been confidential. Enough nonsense went on today about the security of the document but, as I said to one public servant earlier today, "I read most of it in the *Age* and I presume it is true", and as it turned out it was accurate indeed. The security of such a report is a serious matter. People knew the result of the inquiry before the Ministerial statement was tabled in the House this afternoon.

As I have said on other occasions when Ministerial statements on Royal Commissions and boards of inquiries have been made, it is difficult to have a worth-while debate immediately on the tabling of, in this case the board of inquiry report, but if this debate does not take place today another opportunity will not come during this winter. With that in mind, I will make some comments which I believe are relevant.

I commend the Honourable Xavier Connor for his report. He is a man who is held in high regard by all those who know him, despite the fact that one of the Premier's Ministers described him as a troublesome judge, or words to that effect. This inquiry took approximately twelve months and it heard evidence both in Australia and overseas. It is impossible for me to make a detailed comment on the report, but detailed comment will come in the hours and days ahead from all sections of the community. That is where the Parliament will gain most from the report.

What I find baffling is that the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania have either got casinos or are getting them. The Tasmanian casino was authorized by a Labor Government. In South Australia the decision was taken by a Labor Government, and the New South Wales Government has nearly made up its mind concerning a casino. The Queensland

decision was made by a Conservative Government. Those other States and the Northern Territory have decided that casinos are a good thing for Australia, and I will make a forecast that within three years the other five States of Australia, together with the Northern Territory, will all have casinos.

It baffles me somewhat to hear such trenchant criticism of what could happen in casinos when other States and the Northern Territory have proceeded with them. There is no real danger of organized crime becoming involved with casinos. Whether the board of inquiry has overstated the risk is not for me to say at this early stage.

I take up the point made by the Leader of the Opposition of the criticism made in the report of Mr Landeryou, the Minister for Industrial Affairs, and the criticism of the Premier. It must be remembered that this board of inquiry was set up by the Premier wearing his other hat as Attorney-General, but during the course of the inquiry Mr Connor severely castigated both the Minister for Industrial Affairs and the Premier. He had correspondence passing between the *de facto* Attorney-General, Mr Howard Nathan, and the inquiry. It is an incredible situation where an inquiry is set up by the Attorney-General, and then the person holding the inquiry, Mr Connor, is criticized by the Premier and then Mr Connor criticizes the Premier. On the other hand, the Attorney-General set up the inquiry and then had a public argument with Mr Connor and the police.

There is a very interesting statement by Mr Connor in the report. He was obviously on the verge of retiring from the inquiry. He was advised by a former fellow judge to get out. He believed that his position, to use the word of the day, had been compromised because if he gave a decision in favour of the Government he would appear to have been stood over by Mr Landeryou, the Minister for Industrial Affairs; if he gave a decision the other way, he would be criticized for being upset by the Minister for Industrial Affairs. Mr Connor gave serious consideration to whether he should retire from the inquiry. Eventually he decided he would not retire for two reasons, firstly, that the parties appearing before the inquiry wanted him to continue, and secondly, in the interests of the public, and because of the tremendous amount of money that would have been wasted if he had retired from the inquiry, he decided against so doing. Therefore, on what I have read in the report at this early stage, the decision taken by the inquiry could hardly have been any different from what it is. However, I would like an opportunity of studying the report in greater detail to ascertain how serious and how real could be the involvement of the criminal element in the casino scene.

I regret that Mr Connor was not allowed to look at poker machines during the course of the inquiry. That obviously would have saved this State a lot of money if, while he was in the United States of America where poker machines and casinos are operated side by side, he could have inquired into the effects of poker machines being introduced into this State. If crime groups are involved in the casino sphere, are similar crime groups involved in poker machines?

Mr Williams—Yes.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The honourable member for Doncaster says, "Yes". It would have carried a lot more weight if Mr Connor could have given his version of what he believed to be the case.

The report highlights a matter that I have directed to the attention of the Premier and to the Government ever since the Government came to office. I did so gently and without malice. It is a dangerous and stupid move by the Premier to carry out the duties of both Premier and Attorney-General. I gave him that advice without any criticism in the early stages of his Government, but he is a stubborn and difficult man and refused to take notice of my advice. The same advice is being given to him by all sections of the community. The Premier has no need to take offence at a message that has come from New South Wales in recent days, and there was no criticism in the question asked earlier today on the correctness of what has happened until the present time.

A criticism has been made in regard to casinos, which I will deal with later. Until now, no criticism has been made of the Premier's character or the correctness of the way in which he is carrying out his duties. The relevant point is what has happened in New South Wales. An accusation can be made that causes an embarrassment. In New South Wales, an accusation was made against the Premier resulting in the

Attorney-General making an individual decision to set up a Royal Commission. What would happen if the same set of circumstances occurred in Victoria? The same man is wearing the two hats of Premier and Attorney-General. If he were Attorney-General, and not Premier as well, it would be hard to find a more capable person for that portfolio. However, he is Premier as well and as such has placed himself in an embarrassing position during the inquiry. He set up the inquiry as Attorney-General and then entered into a public brawl with Mr Connor, with the Premier making accusations against Mr Connor and Mr Connor making criticisms of the Premier. The Premier should realize that what he is doing is extremely dangerous and not in the best interests of good government. He should reconsider his position before the situation becomes worse.

The incident of today was the first real example of the embarrassment that can occur. An embarrassment would have occurred in New South Wales two or three weeks ago if the same person had been holding both offices of Attorney-General and Premier. I am interested to read the report on casinos. I commend Mr Connor for the way he has carried out his duties. Like many other honourable members, I shall be making my own inquiries in the days and weeks ahead following the tabling of the report and I shall read the report in detail. I find it hard to comprehend how casinos can be free from crime in other States and the Northern Territory.

Mr Williams—They are not free from crime anywhere.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—That argument has been put forward by reputable Governments in the past. No doubt, those Governments will be interested to read the report of the inquiry in Victoria.

On the motion of Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick), the debate was adjourned.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until next day.

I do so on the assurance that the debate will be resumed at a suitable time.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I am prepared to support the motion and indicate that the debate can be brought forward at some time in the future if it is of mutual convenience to all concerned. As the Leader of the National Party said, I am sure consultation will be held with interested community groups as a consequence of the report. Perhaps at some stage in the next sessional period the House can negotiate the appropriateness or otherwise of the motion before the House, or the other parties may wish to initiate a motion in their own terms which would perhaps circumscribe this motion for wider debate on the issue.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until next day.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169 (*b*), moved for leave to bring in a Bill to vary and extend the exemptions from stamp duty, to remove anomalies in stamp duty and to make additional provisions with respect to certain interests in and dealings relating to marketable securities and for those purposes to amend the Stamps Act 1958 and the Motor Car (Mass and Dimension Limits) Act 1981, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Victorian Institute of Secondary Education Council

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I have received the following communication from the Minister of Education:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Section 5 of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education Act 1976 provides that three members of the Council of the Institute shall be members of the Parliament of Victoria who have been recommended for appointment by a joint sitting of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by the Members present at the sitting.

A vacancy has arisen on the Council of the Institute caused by the resignation of John Ingles Richardson, Esq., M.P., who was serving a term of office ending on 10th January 1985.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly to recommend a member for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute

of Secondary Education for the remainder of this term of office.

I have addressed a similar letter to the President of the Legislative Council.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT C. FORDHAM, M.P.

Minister of Education

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That this House meets 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 the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, and proposes that the place and time of such meeting shall be the Legislative Assemby Chamber tomorrow at 20 minutes past 6 o'clock.

The honourable member for Forest Hill has resigned his position on the council and he would hope the shadow Minister of Education, the honourable member for Hawthorn, would take his place.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that a message be sent to the Legislative Council acquainting them with the foregoing resolution.

SALINITY COMMITTEE

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

That Mr Ramsay be appointed a member of the Salinity Committee.

The former member for Swan Hill was a member of the committee and, following his resignation, the honourable member for Balwyn has been suggested to take his place.

The motion was agreed to.

HOUSE COMMITTEE

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

That Mrs Patrick be appointed a member of the House Committee.

A vacancy has arisen on the House Committee and the honourable member for Brighton has been chosen to fill that vacancy. I wish her well on this appointment.

The motion was agreed to.

GRIEVANCE DAY

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

That Standing Order No. 59 be suspended for Thursday next so far as to allow debate under that Standing Order to be limited and that Mr Speaker do put the question—

"That grievances be noted" at 1 p.m. on that day.

In explanation and following discussion between representatives of the House, in an endeavour to expedite the business of the House it has been proposed that the grievances debate be curtailed on Thursday. For the interest and edification of honourable members, it has been anticipated, as suggested earlier, that the House will need to meet on Thursday night with a view to completing items that were discussed between the parties earlier today.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Deputy Premier is, I suppose, putting the best face on the discussions that were held this morning. I must say that I reacted with some horror to the information I received in those discussions about the number of Bills to be introduced into the House. It is the intention of Government that those Bills be passed during the next three weeks.

Those proposals do not allow sufficient time for consultation. To assist the Government, we suggest that we might limit the Grievance Day debate until lunch time because the Government will have second readings of Bills during the latter part of the same day. The Leader of the House indicated that the nature of the Bills was confidential. I do not know whether the Bills are still a matter of confidentiality.

Mr Fordham—No.

Mr MACLELLAN—The Minister says, "No". The Government has the idea of introducing and passing 26 Bills, sight unseen so far as the House is concerned, during the next three weeks. Any suggestion of passing 26 Bills during the next three weeks is fraught with difficulties, given that those Bills are matters of substance. I presume they are matters of substance, otherwise they would not be introduced into Parliament at this stage. It appears that the legislative programme of the Government must be in utter shambles. At this stage, it is the intention of the Government to sit for the next three weeks and to threaten to sit on Thursday

nights and Fridays in order to wrap up the programme, so to speak, but the Government is still at a stage when it has not introduced the legislation which it proposes to pass.

This week, 26 Bills will be introduced and the Government has suggested that presumably they be adjourned briefly. Naturally the Opposition will want an adjournment of a fortnight for all the Bills unless there is some pressing reason or justification for a shorter adjournment. One cannot imagine what the reason could be for the Bills that have been suggested.

The Opposition supports the motion for the limit on the grievances debate from the normal 4 hours to 2 hours. I give early warning to the Government and the House that if it is the intention of the Government to try to ram proposed legislation through the House without the Parliament of the people having adequate time to consider and discuss it, the sacrifice of the Grievance Day debate is a pointless exercise. The sacrifice would be an attempt to assist the Government out of the muddle in which it has found itself.

The House has sat one week in the past six weeks due to a whole range of extraneous reasons, but it is not the fault of the Opposition that the proposed legislation has not been introduced earlier. It is not the fault of the Opposition that Parliament will face something of a crisis if the Government really intends to adjourn briefly and pass 26 Bills during the next three weeks. The Opposition is making an offer of a reduced time in which to raise matters in the grievances debate to assist the Government and to ensure that Parliament is not abused in the way which seems to be the intention of the Government.

The motion was agreed to.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) announced that he had received messages from His Excellency the Governor recommending that appropriations be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the following Bills:

Management and Budget Bill

Liquor Control Bill

State Film Centre of Victoria Council Bill

Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (No. 2)

Railways (Amendment) Bill (No. 2)

Transport Bill

Racing Bill

Racing (Amendment) Bill

SUPPORTING PARENTS CONCESSION BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) 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 Supporting Parents Concession Bill.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Motor Car Act 1958 and the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973 with respect to concessions to be made to supporting parents within the meaning of the Social Security Act 1947 of the Commonwealth.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PUBLIC ACCOUNT (ADVANCES) BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) 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 Public Account (Advances) Bill.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 4 of the Public Account Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SUPERANNUATION (FUND CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) 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 Superannuation (Fund Contributions) Bill.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 32A of the Superannuation Act 1958 and section 8C of the Pensions Supplementation Act 1966.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On behalf of the Attorney-General, I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is a much needed and overdue measure to simplify the processes of administrative change within Government. It will also alleviate some of the unnecessary legislative burden which now falls upon the Parliament and allows more time for consideration of matters of substance.

Members of the Parliament will be familiar with the range of minor Bills which have been necessary over the years to give effect to a variety of administrative changes. Many of these have not involved the creation of major new administrative units or portfolios, but rather the transfer of functions between departments.

Governments of the present day cannot afford a leisured approach to questions of administrative efficiency. They must marshal their resources quickly and effectively to meet new demands and challenges as they arise. In this, governments are no different from any other large business enterprise. New South Wales and the Commonwealth have had legislation to similar effect on their statute-books for a number of years.

The Bill deals essentially with housekeeping changes in the structure of Victorian Government departments and Ministerial portfolios. Other changes may be of such an order that specific legislation would be required to give effect to them.

Situations dealt with by the Bill include the following: Where there ceases to be a Minister, department or officer of a particular description; where the administration of an Act or part of an Act is transferred from one Minister to another, and where there is a transfer of a function from one Minister, department or officer to another.

The Governor in Council is empowered to make orders in relation to administrative changes so as to enable references to Ministers, departments and officers in Acts, subordinate legislation, instruments, contracts and agreements to be construed as references to Ministers, departments and officers by another description. Whenever there is an administrative change, the Governor in Council may also make an order dealing with matters that are incidental to or consequent upon that change.

A procedure is also established to overcome the considerable administrative difficulties which currently arise with appropriations when administrative arrangements are changed, resulting in the abolition of departments or the transfer of existing functions to one or more other departments.

This provision will enable orders to be made transferring appropriations or parts of appropriations for the performance of functions which have been transferred from one department to another.

The Bill does not permit the expenditure of moneys on purposes or services for which there has been no appropriation, nor does it permit the expenditure of moneys exceeding the amount appropriated by Parliament. Other difficulties which will be overcome are those problems which arise in relation to the continuing appointment of persons carrying out duties connected with the incurring of expenditure and the checking and payment of accounts.

The Bill will ensure that where a person holds an appointment under the Audit Act or regulations, such appointment will continue to operate until such time as other appointments are made. Orders made pursuant to the Bill will be published in the *Government Gazette* and will take effect from the day of publication, or an earlier or later day specified in the order.

A safeguard is provided for any problems that may arise as a result of Orders made with retrospective operation. A person's existing rights will not be affected by such an Order and an Order will not invalidate anything done or omitted to be done before the

day on which it is published in the *Government Gazette.*

Nothing in this Bill will prevent the transfer of administration of Acts as customarily transferred between portfolios. The Bill is a measure which will provide Governments with the administrative flexibility needed in modern times. It is a measure long overdue and one which will significantly assist the cause of efficient government in this State. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I suggest that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick) (*By leave*)—On the question of time, I want to assist as far as I can, but the Bill will obviously have to be the subject of consultation with the Public Service Association and others and will have to be considered by the various parties. I ask the Deputy Premier to agree to an adjournment of the debate for a week with additional time, if required. If that is satisfactory to the Minister, I shall accept his suggestion; if it is not satisfactory to him, I suppose we shall have to discuss the matter and we may have to discuss it with respect to all 26 Bills. I do not want to do that, but I cannot agree to the resumption of the debate on this Bill in one week. I cannot guarantee that the Opposition will be ready to proceed with the debate next Tuesday and I ask the Deputy Premier to agree to an adjournment of the debate for one week, with a guarantee of further time if it is required.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) (*By leave*)—If it is found by next Tuesday that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, or whoever else from the Liberal Party is handling the Bill, requires an adjournment of the debate for a further day, I shall ensure that that is granted. I also assure him that co-operation will be given by the Public Service Board and any other officers of the Government with whom he wishes to consult.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 31.

STATE INSURANCE OFFICE (EXTENSION OF FRANCHISE) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to extend the franchise of the State Insurance Office so that it can enter into all classes of insurance business as a totally competitive commercial enterprise.

There has been a public sector insurer in this State since 1914 when the State Accident Insurance Office commenced operation to write workers compensation insurance. In the almost 70 years since its inception, the State Insurance Office has served the people of Victoria well. However, in all its years of operation, the State Insurance Office has been hindered by its inability to offer the public a full range of insurance cover. In the fields of statutory insurance, workers compensation and motor vehicle compulsory third party, it has most responsibly always served as the residual insurer for the State, providing insurance cover for those citizens who, for various reasons, have been unable to obtain cover from another insurer. In fact, it now holds 100 per cent of compulsory third, party business because of the inability of private insurers to commercially underwrite this class of business.

The State Insurance Office has been hampered in the market-place by the restrictions imposed by Government on the range of insurance it could offer. This, in turn, has deprived the consumer of freedom of choice as far as purchase of insurance is concerned. It is the Government's intention to change this situation by permitting the State Insurance Office to operate in all classes of insurance. There are good and sound reasons for effecting this change.

The Government can see no reason why the full potential of the State Insurance Office should not be realized, particularly in view of how much the office has contributed to the public economy of Victoria and how well it has made its mark in the market-place, even though it has been so severely restricted in its operations.

In widening the franchise of the State Insurance Office, the Government wants to make certain points very clear. It wishes to redress the adverse situation in which the office has been forced to operate, but it also

wants to allay any fears that private sector insurers may have that there will be unfair competition. The State Insurance Office will compete on equal terms in the market-place.

By expanding the insurance functions of the State Insurance Office, there will be a new competitive force in the market. This will be to the benefit of Victorian consumers and will mean that the external market pressures on the State Insurance Office to be an efficient and effective organization will be even greater than before.

The State Insurance Office will be required, under this Bill to operate on a competitive, totally commercial basis with no commercial advantage, particularly as regards taxation and charges. It will continue, as it has done for many years, to pay all the rates, charges, taxes, sales tax and so on that a normal insurer would pay. The difference, of course, would be that, where an amount would be paid by an insurer to the Commonwealth, the State Insurance Office would make its payment to the State Consolidated Fund at the same rate and under exactly the same conditions.

Whilst it is not bound by the provisions of Commonwealth insurance law, the State Insurance Office, as a point of principle, complies and will continue to comply with the solvency margin requirements. The only exception will be compulsory third-party insurance where it does not determine the rates of premium. Similarly, it will continue to supply the statistical returns requested by the Australian Insurance Commissioner. However, because of the compulsory nature of much of the business handled by the State Insurance Office which is not handled by private insurers, it is not appropriate that the full provisions apply. The requirement in the Bill that the office comply with Commonwealth insurance laws has been moderated to this extent.

The State Insurance Office conforms to the provisions of the Trade Practices Act. It obtains no services or assistance from any Government agency, State or Commonwealth, for which it does not pay a full price.

I will now deal with some of the specific points in the Bill. The franchise of the State Insurance Office will be widened to permit it to offer any type of insurance. This is not to say that it will offer every type of insurance immediately. Like any prudent insurer, it will have to carry out the necessary and proper research before it can decide to enter any class of insurance, develop computer systems and procedures, and recruit or develop the technical staff it will need. Entry into other classes must of necessity be gradual and balanced.

Such an approach is reinforced by a further requirement in the Bill, that the State Insurance Office must operate on a totally commercial basis. Even where it is required to carry out any function on behalf of the Government, the Bill requires that such activities do not cause economic disadvantage to the office. This is in accord with this Government's philosophy of "user pays" and contrasts with the former situation wherein the Insurance Commissioner could have some function imposed on him with the office not always being reimbursed the true costs of performing that function.

The other major feature of the Bill is the inclusion of the most important recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee's "Report on a study of the Audit and Reporting responsibilities of Public Bodies in Victoria". It is the Government's intention that such changes will be incorporated progressively in the legislation for all Government bodies of whatever type. Such changes have already been included, for example, in the State Electricity Commission (Amendment) Act 1982.

In line with the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee, therefore, the Bill specifies the objective of the State Insurance Office, its functions and the detailed method by which it reports on its activities. The reporting provisions are in line with the model reporting requirements for all Government bodies, and are quite comprehensive. In fact they actually go beyond the reporting requirements imposed upon public companies under the Companies Code.

It is the Government's intention to present further legislation in the next session of Parliament relating to the corporate structure of the State Insurance Office.

Nevertheless, it is considered that it is very much in the public interest that a full public sector insurance facility be made available immediately and that is the purpose of the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Bill is a very considerable departure from the previous practices of the State Insurance Office. The Treasurer has outlined the Government's reasons for introducing the Bill. However, many people in the community will be vitally concerned about the import of the measure and, to give proper time for members of the House to consult with those persons, I am confident that a two-week adjournment of the debate would be the minimum that the House should request. I am not at all satisfied that an adjournment of the debate until Thursday week, which is a mere eight or nine days away, is anywhere near adequate for the consideration that will be needed to be given to it.

Further, the Treasurer has indicated that it is the intention of the Government to initiate further legislation relating to the corporate structure of the State Insurance Office and, in those circumstances, perhaps the consideration of the whole matter of the extension of franchise and the corporate structure of the State Insurance Office should be considered as one whole in the next session of Parliament.

I urge the Treasurer to grant at least a two-week adjournment of the debate on this Bill as the very minimum for its consideration. When debate is resumed, the Opposition may well urge that the whole matter should be held over until the next session of Parliament. There is no way I could regard Thursday week as an adequate adjournment of the debate on this Bill.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The honourable member for Balwyn under-estimates his own capacity in being able to handle this measure. I have no doubt about his capacity to make contact with the industry on what is a very modest and small Bill. It is only a Bill of four and a half pages and it is not as if it is a mighty tome that requires hours and hours of study and consultation.

The honourable member for Balwyn is conscious of the planned schedule for the completion of the Parliamentary sessional period. The Government believes the measure can be considered between now and Thursday week. The Government will make available officers of the State Insurance Office to consult both with the honourable member for Balwyn and with the representative of the National Party so that they will have available expert advice as they wish. That will facilitate their consideration of this very small measure.

If between now and then they wish to discuss further with me any complications that arise, I will be happy to meet with them as Leader of the House to facilitate any difficulties. However, I am confident that they will be able to handle this debate when it resumes on Thursday week.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—It is reasonable that the honourable member for Balwyn has objected to the shortage of time that is available for consultation on what is a very important Bill. The Opposition was in government for a very long time not so long ago and I can remember very clearly the now Minister for Local Government, when in opposition, getting up and berating the then Government for the fact that it was ramrodding legislative measures through the House and ignoring the proper role of Parliament. He was very vocal at that time in supporting, on behalf of the people of Victoria, the principle that a proper, reasonable and decent amount of time should be given to adjournments of debate on Bills in order to allow the smooth working of Parliament in the passage of those Bills.

Now, the Government can hardly say that legislative measures should proceed speedily in the dying hours of Parliament because Parliament has hardly sat. It has sat for only one week in the past six weeks and the Government suddenly finds that it needs to hurry through its very messy legislative programme.

I am not certain of the total number of Bills, but I understand that 26 Bills are to be introduced this week. Already, several Bills are on the Notice Paper and there is a rumour that more will be introduced. If nearly 50 to 60 Bills are to be debated in the last three weeks of the Parliamentary session, one is talking of time.

Mr Fordham—Do not waste it.

Mr AUSTIN—The Government has wasted a good deal of time over the past six weeks when the House could have been sitting and when these Bills could have been introduced. Now, the House is being asked to rush Bills through almost at a moment's notice.

It has always been accepted by the House that the proper workings of the legislative programme should allow for proper consultation with those persons who will be affected by proposed legislation. The Government is showing an utter contempt for the workings of the Parliament by giving such short adjournments for the debate on Bills.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Government came to power on the pretext that it would show the people of the State how to run a government properly. The Government has been in office now for more than a year and in what the Government says are the final days of this sessional period, new Bills are being introduced. From what I heard of the Treasurer's second-reading speech, there are many minefields in the proposed measure for taxpayers. The taxpayers will probably end up by being blasted by this measure. It is only reasonable that the Opposition, on behalf of taxpayers, demands that it has feedback from the community that will be affected by the measure and an adjournment of the debate until Thursday week does not give the Opposition that time.

Members of the Opposition have no objection to Parliament sitting longer. Why not extend the Parliamentary sessional period for another week or two if necessary? Parliament has never sat less than what it has under this new Government. What is the problem that forces Bills to be introduced in what the Government says are the dying days of the sessional period? It is not fair for the Opposition in its role of representing the views of taxpayers and it is not fair to taxpayers whom equally the Government has the responsibility to represent to have inadequate time for consultation.

If the Opposition runs out of time in getting the feedback from the community which is required, which I envisage will happen, I am sure the Opposition will be able to hold the Deputy Premier to an undertaking that time will be extended. By interjection, the Deputy Premier says that he did not say that time will be extended and makes it clear that there is no latitude on the Government's stand of an adjournment of the debate until Thursday week. That is unreasonable and unacceptable to the Opposition. It is a short time to study a Bill that has long-term consequences and possible ramifications for the community. It is a measure that is socializing the State Insurance Office—it is as simple as that.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member should not debate the Bill. The debate concerns a question of time and I ask members of the Government party not to be provocative by interjecting.

Mr BROWN—On the question of time, members of the Opposition are unaware whether the plan is to socialize the State Insurance Office. We need time to establish what is the total purport of this Bill. The only way, in fairness, to get that is to send the measure out to the community and the entities directly affected by its intent. Then the Opposition will be able to represent the views of the community on the matter. That is how the system operated over the past 27 years when the Liberal Party was in office. The Opposition requires time for this consultation to take place, and that is only fair and reasonable.

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—Members of the Opposition have been told that 31 Bills are to be dealt with and that 26 of those Bills are machinery measures. Although the Government has said that they are machinery measures, some of the titles of the Bills lead me to believe they are far from machinery Bills. There is a total of 31 Bills—these five Bills and 26 more—that the Government wants to get through before the end of this sessional period. Why were those 26 Bills held up and then suddenly produced and why is the Opposition not being given plenty of time to consider the Bills, time to go out into the community and ask people what they think of the provisions of those Bills?

This State and this country are over-legislated. This Government, that has stated time and again that it believes in open government, in consultation with community groups and interested groups, is now giving the Opposition an extremely limited time in which to consider the Bills. This is a scandal. The Government is thumbing its

nose at the people of Victoria. I believe with conviction that this is far from an open Government. This Government wishes to push through the legislation by stealth. The latin expression is *res ipsa loquitur*. If there are 31 Bills to be considered before the end of this sessional period of Parliament, the facts speak for themselves. It is a scandal. The Government must give the Opposition time to consider the Bills, to go to the community and to the interested groups and to canvass properly what is in the Bills.

It is not as though members of the Opposition have been given advance copies of the Bills and have been asked to be ready with their input. That is not the case. Members of the Opposition have had to wait until the Bills were tabled and then have been given a limited time in which to consider the measures. This Government should take a good hard look at itself because the people of Victoria will not put up with this kind of chicanery.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—This Bill was listed for second reading last week. It is not the fault of the Opposition that that second reading did not occur; it is the fault of the Government. Either the second-reading speech was not prepared or the Bill was not printed. If the Minister wants to blame the Government Printer, he may do so, but he cannot expect the Opposition to be prepared, when the Government did not have its legislation ready and printed for presentation to the Parliament before it rose for a fortnight's adjournment, to agree now to cutting down the time for consideration of the Bill.

The honourable member for Balwyn has asked for a reasonable time in which to consider the Bill. Through its bungling and incompetence, the Government was not able to introduce the Bill a fortnight ago when it was listed to be brought in. The Government found it could not get the printing done because it placed too much pressure on the Government Printer. That is the Government's problem and should not be the problem of the Parliament. If necessary, the Parliament will simply have to sit longer or, if necessary, should the matter not be sorted out here, it will have to be sorted out in another place.

In discussions with the Government, I sought copies of the Bills and copies of the second-reading notes to be made available to the shadow spokesmen of the Opposition and National Party, and the Deputy Premier will be able to confirm that that request was made before the fortnight's adjournment. I asked that if any Bill could not be produced and ready a fortnight ago it should be made available by the Government to the Opposition spokesmen to study so that they could at least start the consultation process and be in a position to assist the Government, understanding that sometimes the Government Printer is not able to prepare Bills at the time required.

The Treasurer has not taken advantage of that offer to make a copy of the Bill and the second-reading notes available to the spokesmen of the Opposition and the National Party, and the Government has decided to cut down the time of the adjournment to cover its inefficiencies in not being able to produce the legislation at the right time. It has suddenly introduced the measure today, I presume to limit the amount of public consultation that can take place on the proposed legislation. The National Party will make up its own mind on the question, but I ask that party to ensure that it obtains a suitable period of adjournment both here and in another place.

I cannot understand what justification the Government has for failing to bring in these Bills a fortnight ago. It chose to leave the printing of them so late or it did not organize the printing of them well enough. It chose not to take advantage of the offer by the Opposition and the National Party that, if copies of the Bills and the second-reading notes were made available directly to the Opposition spokesmen, the Opposition and the National Party would try to assist the Government in an early resumption of the debates. The Government also chose to ignore the requirement that the Parliament be a proper public Parliament in which there is the introduction of proposed legislation, the opportunity for the public to comment on that legislation and the opportunity for the Opposition and the National Party to consult with the public about the legislation.

I do not want to discuss the merits of the Bill but, on the question of time, I can say that this is not a simple machinery Bill. The Bill proposes to extend the operations of the State Insurance Office, in terms of the second-reading speech, to give it a full range of insurance business. I have never heard

the Government policy that the State Insurance Office should enter the life insurance field, but I think that is exactly what the Treasurer is saying.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I have indulged the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to some extent and I now ask him to return to the question of time.

Mr MACLELLAN—On the question of time, it is now necessary to approach a far wider range of community groups and companies operating in the insurance field than would have been necessary if the Government had a smaller measure of expansion of the State Insurance Office. If the Government is thinking merely of the State Insurance Office being able to enter into the fire insurance area, that would concern one group of institutions which would need to be consulted, but if it is intended to extend the area of the State Insurance Office interests into the full range of insurance business, obviously the range of consultation would need to be greater and the time needed for consultation greater

Therefore, I support the honourable member for Balwyn in his request for a further adjournment of this proposed legislation—further to the adjournment proposed by the Government—because it is the Government which failed to give the Bill a second reading a fortnight ago, and it was the Government which deprived the Opposition of the opportunity of consulting about the matter. The Government was the one which could not organize the Government Printing Office and it now wishes to inflict that penalty; not only on the Opposition and the National Party, but also on the people of Victoria. I cannot see how the Government can in any way hold up its head on the question of time when it is trying to introduce 31 Bills this week with the apparent intention of depriving the people of Victoria of the opportunity of being consulted about them. To deprive the Opposition, the National Party and the public of this opportunity is in contempt of Parliament—the Legislative Assembly—and the process of democratic Government. The Government should hang its head in shame, when its Ministers walk into this House today and make this request, after having ignored the opportunity of introducing this proposed legislation a fortnight ago when the Bill was listed for introduction.

I oppose the suggestion of the Government and support that of the honourable member for Balwyn. I inform the Government that the Opposition will be doing research on the views of Labor members on how much time is needed for adjournment of matters. I should like to hear the views of the Minister for Local Government about short adjournments of pieces of proposed legislation and whether he has ever faced Parliament in a situation where he was being told that there were 31 new pieces of proposed legislation to be discussed in three weeks, before the end of the sessional period. I can be quite sure that he never had 31 pieces of proposed legislation thrown at him. On the question of time, the time is precious not only for the Opposition and the National Party, but also for the public of Victoria, and it is the responsibility of the Government to introduce its proposed legislation in proper time, proper order and with a proper measure of respect for the institution of Parliament and the people whom we represent.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I support the general thrust of the argument put by the Opposition that, as from today, some 31 new Bills are to be debated, plus what is on the Notice Paper and which was left over from the last sitting week. That is an impossible situation.

I am not particularly worried about this Bill, because the principles are fairly clear. It is important and serious proposed legislation but the principles are fairly clear. I am worried about the mess into which the Government is getting itself. I see that the House is fortunate enough to have the presence of the Premier and the Deputy Premier and I request them to give some priority to the respective leaders of the three parties to settle down and pick out a short list of what is to be done. I can say clearly that the 31 Bills plus those that were left over from the last week of sitting, will not go through the Parliament of Victoria in the next three weeks. I am worried about the Liquor Control Bill, about which concern has been expressed from all sections of the industry, by the unions and the employers, which have made representations that they

were being unfairly treated. Let us be sensible about this.

I go along with the suggested adjournment of the debate on this Bill until Thursday week, but in no way will the Government's programme, as it has been explained, go through in that short space of time.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—It is a narrow question that is before the House. There have been seven speakers in the last 24 minutes. There were five against and two for the proposition that is before the House. Therefore, I am prepared to accept the question.

Mr Fordham's motion was agreed to.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

GRAIN ELEVATORS (AMENDMENT) BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) 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 Elevators (Amendment) Bill.

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to increase the borrowing powers of the Grain Elevators Board and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MINES (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In December the Government introduced a substantial Bill to amend the Mines Act 1958 and several other Acts. That Bill was designed to produce a series of important changes to the legislation and to help revive mining as an industry in the State.

The measure was a long and complex one because of the significance of the changes required because the Mines Act itself is in many areas turgid and archaic. For that reason the House agreed to adjourn debate on the measure until 15 February. At the same time the Minister for Minerals and Energy invited public comment on the measure by 11 February.

A substantial number of comments on the Bill have been received from mining companies, small miners, organs of Government and the Conservation Council of Victoria. Officers of the Department of Minerals and Energy have over the past three months carried out a careful study of the submissions which were received in time for consideration, and the Minister and officers have held discussions with some of the people who made submissions. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Minister, to thank all those who commented on the Bill in such detail.

A common theme in comments was that the existing Act and the proposed Bill were too complex. This is a problem recognized by all parties but not one which can be quickly solved. The Minister has asked that a review be commenced to develop new, simple, yet comprehensive modern mining legislation. This is a very substantial task which must be co-ordinated with a number of other reviews, but it is hoped new draft legislation will be ready for public review within three years.

In the meantime, it is essential to proceed with amendments to the existing Mines Act 1958. As a result of the study of the comments made on the Bill introduced in December, and of a review of the Bill by officers of the department, numerous drafting improvements and machinery changes were decided upon. After discussions with Parliamentary Counsel, the Government decided that a redrafted Bill should be introduced in place of the earlier Bill rather than move a large number of amendments to the Bill introduced in December. The Bill now proposed to be read a second time is basically a revised version of the earlier Bill.

The principles which were set out in my speech on the introduction of the 1982 Bill

have not been changed. A substantial number of drafting changes and wording improvements have been incorporated. Approximately 40 changes of a policy nature have been made on minor issues raised by various parties and I shall now outline the key changes.

The rights of the holders of miners' rights have been further protected in this Bill by a provision that samples removed from a claim by the holder of an exploration licence must be delivered to the claim owner after a reasonable time has been allowed for testing and assessing. The provision setting out the rights of a claim owner also provides specifically that a claim owner might construct a dwelling house or erect temporary accommodation on his claim, provided that the claim owner resides in the house or accommodation. In this, as in other areas, however, it is not the Government's intention that where a planning permit or some similar authority from a planning body is presently required, those requirements will cease to apply.

Under the present Act, an applicant for an exploration licence has the power to refuse to consent to the registration of a claim over the area subject to the current application. The Bill preserves that power, but protects the claim applicant's interest by providing that the claim application is to be held by the registrar as current if the exploration licence applicant does not consent to the claim's registration, until the licence application is determined; if the licence application is not successful, the claim application will have priority over subsequent applications.

The Bill introduced in December 1982 gave the holders of current exploration licences until 1 May to give notice of those parts of their licence areas they wanted to be protected from claims. Under the Bill, the period for such nomination is extended to 30 days after commencement of the Bill as an Act. Licensees are being asked, however, to honour the negotiated agreement between the various sections of the mining industry by indicating as soon as possible those areas that they will consent to being registered as claims.

Part of the negotiated agreement to which I have referred was that land could at the same time be the subject of an exploration licence and registered as a claim. The Bill introduced in December contained provisions relating to a general review of the rights of the claim owner and the licensee over such land. Under the Bill there will only be a review if the licensee applies for a development lease or mining lease, or if the claim owner wishes the depth of the claim extended beyond the 25 metre limit. In each of those specific reviews, both the claim owner and the licensee will be entitled to be heard.

Where a miner or mining company seeks a development lease for the purpose of assessing an ore body or anomalous zone of possible mineralization, the miner or company will be receiving no income from the lease and may face financial difficulty if the lease area is a large one, for example, if it covers a strata-bound deposit. The Bill provides that the Minister will in such cases have the power to reduce the rental otherwise payable for a development lease.

Last year the question was raised whether under the Act an exploration licence could be extended after its expiry date. To overcome any doubt in this area, the Bill provides that where an extension application is lodged in accordance with the Act and regulations, the licence continues in full force and effect until the extension application is determined.

A number of important revisions have been made to the Bill to protect the environment and sensitive land, and to take account of planning controls over land. To ensure that mining is controlled, the operations which may be carried out under a miner's right with no other authority under the Act will be restricted to the use of hand-held equipment: the use of machinery which disturbs the ground will require some other authority under the Act.

The provisions dealing with the lodging of bonds or securities and the rehabilitation of land, which were contained in the Bill introduced in December, are extended in this Bill to apply to exploration licences and searching permits. In addition, where an inspector of mines assesses the size of a bond or security before a title is granted, and at the end of a mining programme assesses whether the land has been rehabilitated in accordance with conditions of the title, he shall consult with those persons with power of management or control over the land and those persons with authority over use of the

land under the Town and Country Planning Act.

The conditions to which a claim is to be subject will be set by an inspector of mines after consulting with land managers and planners, and the inspector will also take into account any directions issued by the Minister; such directions may deal with claims generally or with particular claims.

Bonds or securities set in relation to particular titles may be varied if through the passage of time the amount becomes insufficient.

The Bill introduced in December provided specifically that certain titles could not be granted unless the applicant had first obtained the appropriate planning permission where this was required pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act. This requirement is extended in the Bill to tailings treatment licences and also to authorities to carry out activities to arouse public interest in prospecting and mining.

Under present legislation, certain land is exempted from prospecting and mining. By the Bill areas declared under the Reference Areas Act are also exempted because of their particular sensitivity to land or environmental disturbance, and the Minister for Conservation will be excepting under section 7 certain lands managed by the Fisheries and Wildlife Division. Owing to an oversight, it might have been possible under the Bill introduced in December for claims to be registered in national parks without the consent of the Minister for Conservation: Such a change in existing law was not intended, and an amendment is made in the Bill to the National Parks Act so that the effect of the existing law in relation to national parks is not changed.

The Bill introduced in December 1982 also recognized that certain land might require particular protection or even exemption because of its particular significance for aboriginal people. The Bill required notification to the National Aboriginal Conference or some equivalent body of certain applications under the Act. The Bill retains that provision but replaces reference to the National Aboriginal Conference with reference to a body which, in the Minister's view, represents the interests of aboriginals in Victoria; for example, the proposed Victorian Aboriginal Authority.

Several changes have been made in the Bill relating to the appeal provisions, and the consultation provisions. Under the Bill any party—not only a company—might appear before the mining warden by an agent. In addition, rather than prohibit representation of a party by a barrister or solicitor, under the Bill such representation is allowed if the mining warden gives his consent.

A further provision has been added in relation to appeals which are taken to the mining division of the Planning Appeals Board. As with other appeals to the Planning Appeals Board, the Minister for Planning may direct that the appeal be heard but not decided upon by the board. In such a case the board reports back to the Minister for Planning and the particular matter which is the subject of the appeal is referred to the Governor in Council for determination.

The Bill contains a provision which empowers the Minister to invite nominations for the positions on the Mining Consultative Committee from any person or body of persons. However, the Minister's broad discretion to appoint to the committee is retained. The Mining Consultative Committee is intended under the Bill to have a particular function in relation to matters presently handled by the Sludge Abatement Board. The Bill abolishes that board.

The Environment Protection Authority will be the sole issuer of licences for the discharge of waste. Any such discharges not subject to licensing by the Environment Protection Authority will be subject to tenement conditioning by the Minister for Minerals and Energy, after the usual consultation with land managers, and conservation and planning authorities. The Minister may, however, refer any matter arising generally or in relation to a specific title to the Mining Consultative Committee.

The final provisions of the Bill which I wish to mention are those dealing with the acquisition by the Crown of privately-owned minerals. The provisions in the Bill introduced in December have been revised so that the exemption and compensation provisions cannot be used for the purposes of land speculation, or to frustrate the development of the State's mineral resources.

There are many other areas in which the provisions of the Bill introduced in December have been revised before their incorporation in this Bill. In addition the Bill has been used as an opportunity to amend provisions in the existing Act which were not amended in the earlier Bill. As the preparation of a new package of mining legislation may take several years, it was thought that this opportunity to tidy up inconsistencies and abnormalities should be utilized.

As before, clause notes will assist members in their consideration of this long and complex Bill. Members will be aware that the demands for modern up-dated mining legislation have been coming from all sections of the mining industry.

The Government is fulfilling its election commitments in bringing forward this measure. It will not only revive the mining industry in this State, but also it will control mining so that the interests of the environment, conservation and responsible planning are taken into account. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr EBERY (Midlands), the debate was adjourned.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, June 1.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—On the matter of time, I find it almost unbelievable that honourable members have received a Bill that should have been read a fortnight ago but which has been delayed to this late stage either because it was not printed or for some other reason. It is the fault of the Government and not the Opposition that it has been delayed to this late stage.

The Bill comprises 147 pages. In his opening remarks the Minister stated that the measure was a long and complex one because of the significance of the changes required. The Bill covers 40 policy changes and the Minister is asking the Opposition to go through them in a bit over a week. That is unrealistic. It is completely irresponsible of the Government to expect the Bill to be debated in that time.

The Government has mouthed platitudes that it will allow sufficient time for the community to discuss the amendments to the Act. The Government says that it must have open government, yet it allows only a short time for community discussion on the Bill. It is an insult that the Bill has been introduced in this way.

The Minister for Local Government—when in opposition—spoke about the former Liberal Government being lazy and incompetent. It is unbelievable that it does not allow more time for community discussion on the Bill. I wonder what the honourable member for Bendigo will say to the people of Bendigo and the surrounding areas about their lack of opportunity to discuss the measure. The Sludge Abatement Board represents a major change of direction in the Bill.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member is well aware of the restrictions about debate on the question of time. I ask him not to debate the contents of the Bill or the second-reading speech.

Mr EBERY—Thank you, Mr Speaker. A fortnight ago the Bill was placed on the Notice Paper to be read a second time. That did not occur and the Opposition was not told the reason. Parliament has sat only five weeks out of the last ten weeks. We are supposedly speaking about a smooth and efficient Government. It is irresponsible for the Government to introduce a Bill as large and important as this and expect the Opposition and the National Party to be ready to debate the matter with a good knowledge of its contents within a few days. It is unrealistic that a Bill of 147 pages can be dealt with in that time.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I am disappointed that the honourable member for Midlands has taken this attitude. As he said, the issue has been a matter of community discussion not for a matter of weeks or months, but for a long time indeed. When the Liberal Party was in office, it grappled with the issue and a substantial Bill was prepared. However, that Bill was never finally dealt with.

As the honourable member for Midlands well knows, a Bill was initiated by the Labor Government in late 1982. Following community discussion, the Government had the alternative of doing one of two things; either introducing amendments during the Committee stage to amend the earlier Bill in accordance with that community advice or,

alternatively, to facilitate debate by withdrawing the earlier Bill and introducing this new Bill with the amendments incorporated.

I believe it was the universal view of the industry—large and small miners—and members on all sides that it was a more sensible approach to introduce a new Bill rather than having a series of amendments to the earlier Bill. The honourable member for Midlands knows that because he was a party to the discussions throughout.

The Minister for Minerals and Energy, who is in charge of the Bill, has kept in touch with his colleagues in the Liberal and National parties throughout the discussions with industry and they have been informed of the changes. They are in a good position to proceed with the Bill and for the debate to be resumed tomorrow week. I look forward to the resumption of the debate and I know that the industry as a whole is expecting the proposed legislation to be passed this session.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I am disappointed that the Deputy Premier has taken this attitude. The Opposition, which represents a large sector of the community, is asked to consider proposed legislation in a matter of days. The passage of the Bill will have an important effect, not only on the industry, but also on the aspirations of many small miners.

For the Deputy Premier to say that he cannot see why the Opposition will not be ready to debate the Bill in the prescribed time he has laid down is unreasonable, given the fact that the proposed legislation has been around for so long. The proposed legislation has been around for so long because of the consultation and the fears which have been caused by the Bill. The Bill proposes many changes. The Deputy Premier said that the Bill replaces an earlier Bill and that this Bill incorporates many of the amendments. However, amendments were made not only by industry, but also by Parliamentary Counsel. Therefore, there are many new changes.

To date, the discussions between the Minister and the opposition parties have not been full in the sense that the Opposition is in a position to competently put forward arguments on behalf of a sector of the community which may be at loggerheads with the Government.

I find it difficult to accept the criticism levelled by the Government against the previous Government about the organization of the management of the House. No one would disagree that the management of the House in this calendar year has been woeful. The House has sat less than ever before and the sittings have taken place for truncated periods. There has been nothing to stop Parliament sitting more often. The Government has had thirteen months in which to introduce the Bill. Unfortunately we will find ourselves in this situation many times over in the next few days as we find the Government allowing only a short time in which important matters can be considered before the resumption of the second-reading debates.

The second-reading speech of the Minister referred to the Bill as being long and complex. That is true. If the Premier is correct and is to be believed and trusted about his desire for consensus about the way in which Parliament should work, surely this new-found consensus could be tested by the Government by allowing ample time for the proposed legislation to be considered.

The Minister says that we have had two years in which to consider the legislation. However, this Bill has only now hit the table of the Parliament. It does not matter how many years of consultation have gone into the proposed legislation, the Opposition needs time to consider the matter because it was not part of the consultation process during the past twelve months leading up to the introduction of the Bill.

The Minister for Local Government, when he was the former Leader of the Opposition, used to refer to the former Liberal Government as being miserable, lazy and incompetent. There is no doubt how quickly things change. This Government is miserable about time because it will not allow the same opportunity that it asked for in opposition. This Government is lazy because it cannot introduce legislation to allow a reasonable time for community debate.

The Government is incompetent. Over the next three weeks the Government will subject the Parliament to a series of proposed legislative measures to which no due time will be given to allow for community consideration. If consensus means anything to the Government, it should provide more time for community consultation. If that

time is not provided, in the next sessional period the Government will have to produce another round of amendments to correct anomalies contained in the Bill.

The Government is no longer applying those standards of consensus it espoused when first elected. There is no doubt that the community will see the Government for what it is through the errors that will be found in this Bill, as was the case with the financial institutions duty legislation. More time is needed to consider the proposed legislation.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The National Party also opposes the adjournment of the debate on the Bill for eight days. It is not a question of whether the mining companies or prospectors are satisfied with the contents of the Bill. It is a question of whether individual honourable members are satisfied with the contents of the Bill. It does not matter how many discussions have occurred or who has been involved in those discussions. Each honourable member must be given an opportunity to examine the Bill and satisfy either himself or herself that the Bill, as it stands, should be passed.

Over a number of years, a series of Bills on mining measures have been introduced into the Parliament. Most of those Bills have come to an abrupt end because of the faults discovered in them. Those faults have come to light as a result of a close study, even though those Bills have satisfied the Government of the day. Surely in the first instance it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that the Bill represents the intention of the Government? It should not be necessary to introduce reams of amendments during the course of debate on a Bill.

The Bill involves principles that are close to the hearts of many Victorians. Indeed, the principal problems involving mining provided the foundation for the establishment of this Parliament. It would be beside the point to discuss the legislative programme of the Government. I am concerned only with the Mines (Amendment) Bill (No. 2). The Bill requires careful study. Each honourable member is entitled to a reasonable amount of time to study the Bill to ensure that its provisions are suitable.

The Bill will not affect the metropolitan area. It will affect only the rural areas. Those honourable members who represent rural areas have more responsibility to ensure that the rights and the properties of the people they represent are protected in every possible way. On those grounds, honourable members are entitled to have more time in which to study the ramifications of the Bill. Therefore, the National Party supports the comments made by the Opposition.

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—I agree with the honourable member for Gippsland East who said that it does not matter how much consultation has occurred on the Bill. It does not matter who has been consulted or how many interest groups have been consulted. That is not relevant to this place. Today the House has received a Bill containing a number of clauses. It is an insult to the Parliament to suggest that this Bill should be dealt within the time suggested by the Government.

The honourable member for Gippsland East said that the metropolitan area will not be affected by the Bill. It is true to say that not much mining is carried out in the metropolitan area. However, there are many people in the metropolitan area who, from time to time, do go prospecting and who collect gemstones and so on. Those hobbies are indulged in by many people.

I have not seen the Bill and I do not know what provisions are contained in it. Occasionally I like to go to Castlemaine and other areas and fossick around. How do I know what is proposed in the Bill? I have a shadow Ministerial responsibility for 211 municipalities. It may well be that some representatives of those municipalities might wish to write to me, saying that they do not approve of a particular clause in the Bill. The Deputy Premier is pointing to the Minister for Local Government, who also receives correspondence from representatives of municipalities, but so do I.

An adjournment of one week before debate on this Bill proceeds will not provide sufficient time for anybody to get in touch with me after the Bill has hit the deck. I cannot imagine why this place is not sitting more often. I for one am quite prepared to sit longer hours in this place.

Mr Mathews—You would be the first to complain.

Mrs PATRICK—I would not be the first to complain. This Government appears to be frightened to sit in this place. This two

weeks on, two weeks, off is a ridiculous situation for the sessional period. It may be that Ministers have more time to spend in their offices, but, so far as I am concerned, I am prepared to attend this place three days a week for the entire year. It is a scandal the number of days the Parliament has sat since the Government was elected to office.

When the Labor Party was in opposition, it often accused the Liberal Government of not sitting frequently enough. Now the Labor Party is in government, it will not sit but it produces 31 Bills to be passed in the remaining three weeks of this sessional period. It is time that the public of Victoria realized what kind of Government it has voted into office.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The proposal the Government has put before the House is a disgrace. It shows how bereft the Government is of organizational and managerial talent and ability. The proposition that this Bill should be brought into the House—a Bill, which the Minister for Police and Emergency Services admits is a long and complex Bill, comprising 147 pages and 113 clauses—and that this Government has the audacity to suggest to the House that eight days is an adequate time for proper consideration of this "long and complex Bill" shows the contempt that the Government has for the whole idea of Parliamentary democracy. It shows what contempt the Government has for the honourable members both of this place and another place. It shows the way in which the Government is prepared to ride rough-shod over the democratic process and indeed the principle of democracy.

The suggestion that the House ought to rush through a major piece of proposed legislation simply to get the Government off the hook because it has not been able to organize its affairs adequately, makes a mockery of this place and all that this place represents. This is a travesty. I am ashamed that I am a member of a House where a Minister will put that sort of proposition and then be supported by the Deputy Leader of the Government of this State. That the Deputy Premier should associate himself with a proposal to deny the process of Parliamentary debate and consideration brings into sharp question the fitness of the Government to handle the affairs of the State.

If it had some idea of how to organize its own affairs, the Bill would have been brought in sooner, and the Government would not have had to withdraw the earlier Bill and make corrections to it. Having made the mistakes, the Government then says that there are eight days for this "long and complex Bill" to be given consideration by the House; there will be no consideration given to it by people in the community, the mining interests, prospectors and fossickers and those who have an intense interest in this matter. Those people have been tossed aside by the proposition put before the House tonight. The Government says that those people do not count, but they do count and there are many thousands of people in the community who are intensely interested in the ramifications of this Bill and what is contained in the 147 pages and 113 clauses. With the arrogance of office, this Government says that those people are not important, toss them away.

This Government is so incompetent that it cannot organize its legislation in a proper way, so it must bring in this proposed legislation and say, "You have eight days to consider something of major importance." This Government is a disgrace; the Minister for the Arts is incompetent and the Deputy Premier has condemned himself by associating himself with the proposal before the House.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The lack of time that the Government proposes to give the Opposition to consider the Bill, on behalf of the community, is sheer, blatant and unadulterated hypocrisy. There is no question of that. When this Government was in opposition, the Leader at that time, the present Minister for Local Government, was almost made famous by the statement that the Liberal Party, when in government, could not run a pie stall. Today, the Government is proving that it cannot handle the sauce bottle because the reality is that it has been in power for more than one year and it has been in charge of the running of the State, not the Opposition. In the dying stages of this session, the Government has produced a major Bill for consideration by this House.

Regardless of how it wants to skirt around the issue, today is the first time the Bill has been tabled in this House for the consideration of honourable members. I have not seen the Bill prior to today and, in his

second-reading speech, the Minister indicated that there are issues that have to and must be considered by the Aboriginal community in this State. Besides being the shadow Minister of Housing, I handle the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs and I would like to know what negotiation the Government has had with the Aboriginal community regarding this Bill. The answer will be covered in one word—nil.

The role of the Opposition is to ensure that the Aboriginal community, and every other entity in this State that will be affected adversely or otherwise, must have adequate time to consider the measures enunciated in the Bill. As the Minister for Local Government said when Leader of the Opposition, time must be allowed for the community to receive the proposals. They have only been received in the House in the last half hour.

As I said earlier in regard to another issue, there are minefields in the matter before the Chair. Obviously, that is more than relevant in this debate, but members of the Opposition do not know how many mines and pitfalls there are in this Bill. This is the first time I have seen the measure and it has been advocated that there will be only eight days in which to consider it.

The Minister for Local Government, when in opposition, often abused the Government of the day for bulldozing through such measures. On occasions—I can recall two or three times a session—the gag would be removed and the Government would be berated mercilessly by the Opposition. What a change, what a difference! The scenario before the House tonight is that five new Bills have been introduced for the first time and before this session is finished—less than three weeks—an additional 26 Bills will be presented to the House. The Opposition is expected to swallow that tablet and pass the Bills this session. That is ridiculous!

The Parliament has never sat less in the time I have been in this House than it has under this Government. Honourable members have just had two weeks off. I do not know what the Ministers have been doing, but they have not been in this House. The House is now sitting for three weeks when there is no rush to conclude the session. I do not know why honourable members will be subjected to sitting for four days a week from now on. It has been indicated that the House will sit to the wee small hours of the morning—honourable members may even have breakfast here. Why cannot the sitting be extended for a week or two? I assume half the reason is that this Government wants to have the Parliament sitting for as little time as possible.

The question before you, Mr Speaker, is the question of time. The Parliament has never sat less in the four years I have been here than it is now. It is a disgrace and sheer hypocrisy on the part of any Minister of the present Government who says, "We are going to put before the Parliament 31 new Bills and, in three weeks, expect you to consider them and consult with the community that you are supposed to represent and to do the job adequately as the Opposition."

With two shadow Ministries within my responsibility, it is impossible for me to effectively represent the community. The primary responsibility of the Government is to represent the community and for the Opposition to exploit and highlight the inadequacies and inefficiencies of the Government. How do members of the Opposition know the inadequacies and deficiencies in the Bill when its members have only had it for half an hour and we are told that we will be debating it in eight days time. It will be bludgeoned through. It is totally and absolutely unacceptable.

Every member of the Opposition takes the view that for the two years remaining before we are returned to the Government, we have a responsible role in Victoria and I am not prepared to accept a situation where I cannot get adequate time to receive response from the community on any issue. I accepted the word of the Minister for Local Government—for whom I have a high regard—when he said, in opposition, "There is one thing we can assure you Liberals and that is that when we are the Government of this State, such things as that being debated now will never happen again." However, that is the situation now. It will occur with 31 Bills within the next three weeks.

That is not acceptable to members of the Opposition, not as individuals, but as representatives of the community. The role of the Westminster system, which I accept, is that the Opposition must search out and highlight the inadequacies and deficiencies in measures that Governments propose to implement.

I need time to consult with the Aboriginal community regarding this Bill. To do that effectively, I obviously need more than eight days. It is hypocrisy in the extreme for this Government to make this proposal in the dying stages of this sessional period with only three weeks of the sittings remaining. The Opposition says, "Extend the session and give us time to consult with the community".

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—The question is a very narrow one. As the House is already aware, the debate has been progressing for 30 minutes. Nothing new has been said. There have been five Opposition speakers and one National Party speaker against the proposition and two Government speakers, so I accept the motion.

Mr Fordham's motion was agreed to.

The House divided on Mr Fordham's motion that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday June 1 (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	40
Noes	29
Majority for the motion	11

AYES

Mr Cain	Mr Remington
Mr Cathie	Mr Roper
Dr Coghill	Mr Rowe
Mr Crabb	Mr Seitz
Mr Culpin	Mrs Setches
Mr Ernst	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Fogarty	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Fordham	Mr Shell
Mr Gavin	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simpson
Mr Hassett	Mr Stirling
Mrs Hill	Mrs Toner
Mr Hill	Mr Trezise
Mr Hockley	Mr Walsh
Mr Jolly	Mr Wilkes
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilton
Mr McCutcheon	
Mr McDonald	
Mr Mathews	
Mr Miller	*Tellers:*
Mr Pope	Mr Kennedy
Mrs Ray	Mr Norris

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr Maclellan
Mr Brown	Mrs Patrick
Mr Burgin	Mr Ramsay
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Reynolds
Mr Dickinson	Mr Richardson
Mr Ebery	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Evans (*Ballarat North*)	Mr Saltmarsh
	Mrs Sibree
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Steggall
	Mr Templeton
Mr Hann	Mr Wallace
Mr Jasper	Mr Whiting
Mr Jona	Mr Williams
Mr Kempton	*Tellers:*
Mr McGrath	Mr Leigh
Mr McKellar	Mr McNamara

PAIRS

Mr Gray	Mr Tanner
Mr Micallef	Mr Kennett
Mr Newton	Mr Lieberman

The debate was adjourned until Wednesday, June 1.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Victorian Institute of Secondary Education Council

A message was received from the Council acquainting the Assembly that the Council had agreed to meet with the Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to recommend a member of the Parliament of Victoria for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, and, as proposed by the Assembly, concur with the place and time of such meeting.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It contains a number of measures designed to streamline the planning process in this State, to facilitate day-to-day administration, to make provision for agreements entered into between responsible authorities and owners to be dealt with in a more defined way and to ensure members of the public have adequate access to such agreements for information.

The Government has announced the proposed abolition of the Planning Consultative Council in favour of more effective

consultative methods. The council was established to advise the Minister on request and to carry out duties under section 8C of the Act in relation to statements of planning policy and section 16 of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority Act in relation to regional strategy plans. The council was established early in 1981 with a full-time chairman, six part-time members and support staff of six.

The council has given good advice on the list of matters referred to it by the former Government, but the constitution of the council has been found in retrospect to be too restrictive to ensure that its potential was effectively used. Better arrangements are required. The Government believes the community should be consulted on planning issues but the Planning Consultative Council is not the best way to do it. When the Minister wants advice on matters he can go direct to the special interest groups involved. This will enable the Government to seek more effective advice on specific planning issues.

The chairman of the council or his nominee has also been chairman of the three member panels established to hear submissions in relation to planning schemes. Consequentially, there are amendments to the panel's constitution to provide that now all three members are chosen by the Minister. A consequential amendment to the State Co-ordination Council Act 1975 has been made to remove from membership of the council the Chairman of the Planning Consultative Council.

Amendments are proposed to the Act to enhance the existing power of responsible authorities to enter into agreements relating to development. Such agreements may run with the land and be enforceable, and provision is made for public notice.

The proposed amendments provide that agreements shall be under seal and may provide for certain matters including prohibition, restriction or regulating use or development, setting conditions, to achieve or advance an objective in a planning scheme which is either approved or deposited for inspection or a local development scheme which is deposited for inspection, and for ancilliary matters.

An agreement may provide that it comes into effect only upon the coming into operation of a specified interim development order, planning scheme or local development scheme, upon the grant of a permit or the entry into an agreement by the owner of land with a public authority to provide services or carry out road works and may lapse upon the happening of certain events.

No agreement shall require, authorize or allow a breach of a planning scheme, interim development order or permit, and panels established to hear submissions on schemes may report on any modifications or alterations to an agreement which they believe should be made.

A copy of an agreement shall be available for inspection at the office of the relevant responsible authority, and shall be lodged at certain places and a memorandum of the agreement shall be entered for affected land under the Transfer of Land Act 1958 by the Registrar of Titles on application by the responsible authority and for other affected land it may be registered pursuant to the Property Law Act 1958.

In the event of an owner being aggrieved by any provision in a proposed agreement, the making of which is a condition of the use or development of land or other matters under a planning scheme or interim development order, the owner may refer the matter to the Planning Appeals Board for a modification or variation of a provision of the proposed agreement.

Section 18 (2A) is to be amended to enable permits to specify the entering of an agreement as a condition. Section 11C is to be inserted into the principal Act to enable the Minister to delegate the enforcement and carrying out of his interim development order or planning scheme to some other responsible authority or to a council of any municipality in which the land affected by the order is situated.

Section 11D is to be inserted into the principal Act to permit the Secretary for Planning to delegate his statutory powers under the Act. This provision is designed to enhance administrative efficiency by enabling work processes to take place at their most appropriate level. Sub-delegation by the secretary of functions which he performs as a delegate will not be permitted.

The current requirement for the Secretary for Planning to certify the consistency of planning scheme with statements of planning policy prior to exhibition is to be

removed by clause 5. This is designed to streamline the planning process. Ongoing consultation between the department and the relevant responsible authority should ensure consistency before the scheme is submitted for approval, and should remove delay in the approval process.

Clause 7 is intended to clarify the date by which objections must be received when notice of a permit application is given. The actual date will now appear in the notice rather than referring to a 14-day objection period. This simplifies the notice and highlights the important closing date.

Under section 25 of the principal Act, a responsible authority, in exercising its powers under another Act which under the provisions of an interim development order or planning scheme requires a permit, must apply to the Minister for a permit. Clause 8 substitutes a new section 25 to provide that metropolitan councils are now to apply to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for such permits. Thus the principle of referral to a higher authority is retained and the expertise and detailed knowledge of metropolitan planning possessed by the board is utilized. The board and responsible authorities outside the metropolitan area will continue to apply to the Minister as at present. In addition, the amendment of section 25 clarifies that development as well as use is to be subject to a permit.

Amendments are made to simplify the method of paying members on independent panels established to hear submissions on new or amending planning schemes. Instead of the responsible authorities paying members and then being reimbursed by the department, members are to be paid directly through the department.

The provisions relating to the locations and the physical format of lodged copies of approved planning schemes are to be made more flexible. Copies shall be lodged at certain locations, including such locations as the Minister may specify. The form of the copy will be sufficient if it reproduces in substance the provisions of the scheme and is certified as such. This will reduce the cost to the responsible authority of producing copies of schemes by providing the option of a less expensive format while enhancing the accessibility of documents to users.

The availability of a common property inquiry application form removes the necessity to prescribe a separate form of application for a planning certificate under this Act. Clause 12 amends section 38 accordingly.

The fee payable for a planning certificate is to be set by reference to the fee under the Local Government Act, section 861 (1) (*h*).

As I said at the outset, the Bill is designed to streamline the planning process, facilitate day-to-day administration and enhance the power of responsible authorities to make agreements.

I commend the Bill to the House

On the motion of Mrs PATRICK (Brighton), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 31.

The sitting was suspended at 6.29 *p.m. until* 8.05 *p.m.*

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

> That the consideration of Order of the Day , Government Business, No. 5, be postponed until later this day.

I am anxious to discuss the matter further with the Attorney-General but he will not be available in the Chamber until later this evening.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—As I understand the situation, the second-reading notes are not the actual second-reading notes of the Bill—at least not in the appropriate form. I respectfully suggest to the Deputy Premier to leave the Bill until tomorrow. It could be dealt with then, and that would give him time to make sure that he has the proper second-reading notes. It is typical of the bungling of the Government.

The House has an urgent matter before it and yet the second-reading notes are not even available. The second-reading notes are inappropriate under the circumstances. I suggest that the Government take advantage of what little time it has overnight to ensure that honourable members receive the proper second-reading notes and a proper explanation of the Bill tomorrow.

The motion was agreed to.

WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITIES (RESTRUCTURING) BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 9, page 10, line 1, omit "Nothing" and insert "subject to sub-section (6), nothing".

2. Clause 9, page 10, after line 7 insert:

"(6) The Minister shall not submit a recommendation to the Governor in Council as to the making of such an order as is referred to in sub-section (5) in the circumstances referred to in that sub-section unless he has not less than 90 days before submitting the recommendation advised the relevant authority in writing of his reasons for making the recommendation and caused a copy of those written reasons to be laid before both Houses of the Parliament.".

3. Clause 19, page 16, lines 1 to 4, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—

"(2) Every person whose name is enrolled on a voters' roll prepared pursuant to section 85 of the Local Government Act 1958 in respect of an address, rateable property or principal place of residence in an electoral district of a Water Board shall be entitled without any application to have his name enrolled on the voters' roll for that electoral district.".

4. Clause 19, pages 16 to 18, omit sub-clauses (4) to (10) and insert—

"(4) Without in any way derogating from the generality of the provisions of section 58, regulations made under sub-section (3)—

(*a*) may include regulations based on the provisions for the time being contained in regulations made under section 149 (1) of the Local Government Act 1958 with such alterations and adaptations as are in the opinion of the Governor in Council necessary; and

(*b*) notwithstanding the provisions of section 58 (2) (*g*) may impose a penalty for any contravention of or failure to comply with a provision of the regulations not exceeding the penalty for the time being imposed for a contravention of or failure to comply with the corresponding provision of the regulations made under section 149 (1) of the Local Government Act 1958.

(5) Where the name of a person is enrolled more than once on the voters' roll for an electoral district of a Water Board, the person who pursuant to the regulations is responsible for the compilation of voters' rolls shall strike from the roll that person's name where it appears a second or subsequent time.

(6) At any election of members of a Water Board every person whose name is enrolled on the voters' roll for an electoral destrict of a Water Board shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each electoral district for which his name is enrolled.

(7) Subject to sub-section (8) and to any regulations made under sub-section (3), it shall be compulsory for any person whose name is enrolled on the voters' roll for an electoral district of a Water Board to vote at every election of members of the Water Board in respect of the electoral district for which his name is enrolled.

(8) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Act, it shall not be compulsory for an owner or occupier of a rateable property whose principal place of residence is outside the electoral district for which his name is enrolled on the voters' roll to vote at an election of members of the Water Board in respect of that electoral district.".

5. Clause 38, line 41, after "1958" insert "and unless he has not less than 90 days before submitting the recommendation advised the relevant authority in writing of his reasons for making the recommendation and caused a copy of those written reasons to be laid before both Houses of the Parliament".

6. Clause 55, line 5, omit "sub-section" and insert "section 54".

7. Clause 58, page 50, line 3, after "(*g*)" insert "subject to section 19 (4) (*b*),".

8. Schedule 2, page 56, clause 5 (1), omit "member of a Water Board" (where first occurring) and insert "person".

9. Schedule 2, page 56, clause 5 (1) (*b*), omit "indicatable" (where twice occurring) and insert "indictable".

10. Schedule 2, page 56, after clause 5 (1) (*c*) insert:

"(*d*) who is not a person referred to in section 48 (1) (*a*) of the Constitution Act 1975;".

11. Schedule 2, page 56, clause 5 (1), omit "(*d*)" and insert "(*e*)".

12. Schedule 2, page 56, clause 5 (1), omit "(*e*)" and insert "(*f*)".

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—During my second-reading speech on the Bill on 14 December 1982, I gave notice that when the local government elections Bills were passed, the Government would be seeking to amend the voting provisions for the urban water industry on a similar basis. The amendments proposed and agreed to in another place give effect to this announcement, correct the spelling of "indictable" and correct the reference to another section as a result of an earlier amendment introduced in this place on renumbering.

I refer to amendment No. 1. The present wording of clause 19 (2) of the Bill provides that every person who is entitled to be enrolled on the municipal roll of a municipality in respect of property which lies within an electoral district of a water board

shall be entitled to have his name enrolled on the voters' roll for that electoral district.

That entitlement was based on the previous provision of the Local Government Act. The Local Government Act has now been amended to provide for universal adult franchise. This proposed amendment to the Water and Sewerage Authorities (Restructuring) Bill will provide the same entitlement for enrolment to vote at elections for a water board as now applies for municipal council elections.

Amendment to No. 4 deletes sub-clauses 19 (4) to 19 (10) of the Bill relating to regulations for voting by post and compulsory voting, matters concerning the giving of notices and penalties for failure to vote, making false statements, and allowing the Governor in Council by order to require that voting shall be compulsory for any particular water board. It replaces that with provisions equivalent to those which now apply to elections for municipal councils.

In particular, the new sub-clause (4) provides that regulations made under the proposed Act may include regulations made under section 149 (1) of the Local Government Act, which deals with voting by post and compulsory voting. It also provides that regulations may impose equivalent penalties for any contravention of or failure to comply with the regulations.

New sub-clauses (5) and (6) provide that each person shall be entitled to only one vote in each electoral district of a water board. Sub-clauses (7) and (8) provide that voting shall be compulsory except for those owners or occupiers whose principal place of residence is outside the electoral district of the water board.

The sixth amendment is necessary as a result of an amendment introduced and agreed to earlier in this place. The reference to sub-section (1) (*b*) in clause 55 should be a reference to sub-section (1) (*b*) of clause 54. The proposed amendment will correct that situation.

I turn now to amendment No. 7. Clause 58 (2) (*g*) now provides for a maximum penalty of ten penalty units—$1000—to be imposed for any contravention or failure to comply with regulations made under the proposed Act. However, the penalties under the Local Government Act for contravention or failure to comply with regulations made under that Act for the conduct of elections are in some cases greater than this amount. The proposed amendment will allow the relevant regulations to impose penalties equivalent to those for similar cases under the electoral provisions of the Local Government Act.

I refer next to amendment No. 8. Clause 5 of Schedule 2 provides for the disqualification or the non-eligibility of persons in certain cases to be capable of being or continue to be a member of a water board. The proposed change of wording at the commencement of this clause is more appropriate for the whole of the clause.

Amendment No. 9 simply corrects the spelling of the word "indictable" as it appears in clause 5 (1) (*b*) of Schedule 2.

Amendment No. 10 seeks to introduce a new paragraph (*d*) in clause 5 (1) of Schedule 2. This sub-clause should be read in conjunction with clause 4 of Schedule 2, which now provides that a person who is entitled to be enrolled on the voters' roll is also entitled to be elected as a member of a water board.

The proposed amendment No. 10, if agreed to, will introduce a sub-clause which is exactly the same as has recently been agreed to for municipal councils—section 3 (*c*) of the Constitution (Local Government) Act 1983. At the present time the effect of this provision will be that a person who is not a natural born or naturalized subject of Her Majesty will be disqualified from becoming or being a member of a water board. When the Constitution (Qualification of Electors) Act 1982 No. 9826 is proclaimed the effect will be that a person who is not—

(*a*) an Australian citizen, or

(*b*) a natural-born or naturalized subject of Her Majesty, other than an Australian citizen, who was at any time within the three months immediately before the coming into operation of that Act enrolled on the electoral rolls specified in that Act;

shall be disqualified from becoming or being a member of a water board.

While it is still the Government's policy that a person who is entitled to vote should

also be entitled to be elected, the Government does not wish to make an issue of this policy in this Bill.

Amendments Nos. 11 and 12 are a consequence of the introduction of a new paragraph (*d*) in clause 5 (1) of Schedule 2.

Amendments Nos. 1, 2 and 3, which were written by the shadow Minister of Water Supply in another place, the Honourable R. J. Long, and accepted, provide that the Minister shall not submit a recommendation to the Governor in Council for the making of an order to abolish a body where the body does not make application for such an order unless he has given written reasons to the body 90 days before making such a recommendation and has caused a copy of those written reasons to be tabled before both Houses of Parliament.

A similar amendment was previously sought in this place by the honourable member for Westernport. The Minister has accepted this amendment in another place, and I have no objection to the amendment standing. I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition is pleased to see these amendments before the House. The amendments to clause 9 were moved by me representing the Opposition in this House some time ago, and at that time were rejected by the Minister of Public Works, who is at the table, so I am pleased that the responsible Minister in another place has seen the wisdom of the amendments put forth by the Opposition in this place and in the other place. There is no question that the amendments will make the Bill much more acceptable to the community because they were proposed on the basis that the Minister of the day must justify actions being taken to force amalgamations of water trusts and sewerage authorities. This matter has been debated at some length, and I suppose the Minister of Education would consider it to have been debated to an exhaustive degree, but it is the role of the Opposition to be vigilant. The Bill as it was originally proposed did not in the final summation give adequate protection to authorities that did not wish to be amalgamated and believed, as has been made evident to the House, for good reason that the amalgamations were not in the best interests of their ratepayers.

The acceptance by the Government of this amendment is on the basis that the Minister must set out the reasons why the authority or body should be amalgamated. Before he can force such an amalgamation he must have given at least 90 days' notice and tabled a copy of his written reasons in both Houses of Parliament. This is a most practical and reasonable amendment and I am delighted that the Government has seen the wisdom of accepting the Opposition's amendment.

The other amendments are common sense. Basically, they align the legislation with recent changes that were made to the Local Government Act. Again, the Opposition not only has no objection to them, but is happy to support them, particularly the one about which considerable debate took place when the Local Government Bill was before the House. I refer to proposed subsection 19 (8) which provides:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Act, it shall not be compulsory for an owner or occupier of a rateable property whose principal place of residence is outside the electoral district for which his name is enrolled on the voters' roll to vote at an election of members of the Water Board in respect of that electoral district.

That means if a person is a non-resident of a water board electoral district and does not vote when an election is held, he will not be fined. That is the main intent of the provision, and it is a reasonable proposition that it should not be mandatory for people who reside outside an electoral district to vote. In many cases people are not aware that an election is being held, and often are not aware that there are vacancies caused by the resignation of members of water trusts.

The Opposition is happy to support the amendments and is pleased that the Government has finally acknowledged the wisdom of accepting something put forward by the Opposition.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Members of the National Party support the amendments, albeit reluctantly, because we believe the Minister should not have power to force a water board to be established if the relevant authorities object to amalgamation or to the formation of a water board. I am disappointed that, in another place, the Liberal Party proceeded with its own amendment and did not support the National Party on that fundamental issue which concerns the

rights of local authorities to determine their own future.

A serious anomaly exists in the Bill. Clause 9, as amended, requires that a 90-day consultation period be allowed. When the Bill was dealt with by this House, clause 38 was amended to grant the Minister power to override where the responsibility was transferred to a municipality. It is now proposed to grant the Minister that same right to ignore the fact that no request is made by a municipality to take over that function. It is the belief of that National Party that, if a 90-day consultation power is to be added to clause 9, which relates to the formation of water boards, a similar provision should be included in clause 38 (2).

The Bill as drafted contains the anomaly that water boards are given a 90-day consultation period, but municipalities are not. Certainly, the matter must be referred to the Minister for Local Government, but that does not give the relevant authorities the right to 90 days' grace to consider the recommendation of the Minister. I will be interested to hear the Minister's comments on why the Government has not corrected that anomaly in agreeing to this amendment.

My colleague in the Upper House drew attention to the fact that the National Party does not believe compulsory elections should be imposed on the ratepayers of water boards. However, that is the Government's wish in order to bring this Bill into line with the amendments of the Local Government Act, and the National Party will support that proposal.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I would be acting inconsistently if I did not express grave disappointment that the amendments to clause 9, as proposed, were all that were achieved by way of improvement to the Bill in another place.

The amendment of clause 9 is a futile proposal. I ask honourable members to consider the situation that will apply. A waterworks trust, serving perhaps 200 or 300 people in a remote part of the State, may have serious objection to being merged with a bigger authority; it may believe that the bigger authority will overwhelm the wishes of the local community and it may have strong feelings on the matter. The amendment made to the Bill by the Legislative Council requires the Minister to state his reasons why such a waterworks trust should be merged with some other trust and to lay on the table of the House a copy of those reasons where they are to be available for consultation for a period of 90 days.

I cannot imagine this House becoming excited about the problems of some remote community of 200 or 300 people, to whom the effect of the merger may be very serious. A water supply is a basic requirement of any modern community, yet the community's right to have the type of water supply system that it seeks will depend upon this House being sufficiently concerned about those few residents in an isolated area to take the appropriate steps to disallow the Minister's reasons. The question of whether any member of the House, apart from the local member, will be bothered to read the reasons is perhaps one on which I should not say too much, but the whole proposition is a futile and puerile approach to what will be a serious problem for many isolated communities. Those communities should have the right to provide for themselves what is a basic essential for any community—a water supply. In many cases, the views, desires and aspirations of small communities will be overridden by neighbouring communities if mergers are forced upon those small communities against their wishes.

I am disappointed that clause 9 in its entirety was not omitted from the Bill and that it did not devolve upon individual waterworks trusts and other authorities to take the initiatives of seeking amalgamation with other organizations if that was in their best interests. Failing that, I do not believe the Minister or anyone else should have the right to override the wishes of small communities on the matter.

Mr HANN (Rodney) (*By leave*)—I stand corrected. The Minister has included the 90-day consultation period in amendment No. 5, and I apologize for my error.

The motion was agreed to.

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 5) on the motion of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Management and Budget Bill, as described by the Treasurer in his second-reading speech, is aimed at tying up the loose ends. From the

Government's point of view, the House can well recognize that it is an important housekeeping measure. It enshrines in legislation the office of the Director-General of the Department of Management and Budget, that department having been created by order of the Governor in Council on 12 October last year. Since that date, the office of director-general has not had any official legislative recognition, although honourable members would be aware that the present incumbent, Dr Peter Sheehan, has been carrying out the duties of that office in a manner that meets the requirements of the Government.

The House is now faced with establishing by legislation the office of the director-general, the manner of his appointment, the powers that he is to be given and his powers of delegation and with spelling out the position that he holds in this most senior appointment in the structure of government.

It is hard to imagine that any person holding public office could be given greater powers than those that the Bill enshrines in the director-general. A number of questions should be asked of the Treasurer, and the first relates to the appointment of the director-general.

The Bill states that he shall be appointed by the Governer in Council and shall not, in respect of his office, be subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act but for the purposes of the Public Service Act he shall be deemed to be the permanent head of the department. It is a term appointment, a term not exceeding five years but which is capable of renewal and the conditions and salary are capable of being laid down by the Governor in Council.

It is interesting to note that no provision is made for the dismissal or the termination of the services of the director-general should such circumstances arise.

This is a noticeable omission when the measure is compared with certain other statutes. For instance, the Ministry of transport appoints its Director of Transport along conditions similar to those prescribed in the Bill but there is provision in that Act for the termination or dismissal of the director should the circumstances arise. It is no reflection on the present incumbents in any of these positions to ask why the Bill is silent on the possibility of the need for termination.

Given the seniority of the appointment, it would be appropriate for a clause to be included in the Bill for this purpose and I urge the Treasurer to explain why the Bill is silent on this point.

Certainly, the powers of delegation of the director-general are extensive and they are spelt out clearly. They are what is regarded as a standard form of powers of delegation and undoubtedly in the very busy area of Treasury, which the Department of Management and Budget is basically taking over, it is important that there should be clear lines of authority and delegation of powers from the director-general to those officers whom he would be seeking to assist him in his work.

Those powers of delegation pale into insignificance in the following clause where the relationship between the Treasurer and the director-general on the use of the official seal is defined. Clause 6 creates an official seal for the Treasurer to use as a sign of the Treasurer's authority and makes it possible for the seal to be authenticated not only by the signature of the Treasurer but also by the director-general. The House should be aware that the authority for the director-general to act as the Treasurer in effect by authenticating this seal is not a power that is delegated to the director-general by the Treasurer but which becomes a power of the director-general as of right.

This clause places this public servant in an extraordinarily powerful position and I do not know whether the Treasurer has considered its significance. I know that the honourable gentleman has a high regard for the present incumbent of the office and it may be a matter he has accepted as a matter of course but if the Treasurer, in his desire to organize the running of the department in a particular way, seeks to delegate authority and wants to enable the head of that department to delegate authority there needs to be a clear line of delegation spelt out in the measure. The House should be concerned that there is no delegation of this power from the Treasurer to the director-general but that the director-general holds it in his own right.

A further provision in clause 6 states that a certificate signed by the Treasurer that any instrument or document purporting to be

made by him was so issued shall be conclusive evidence of that fact. The measure enables the Treasurer retrospectively to indicate that what the director-general had done had been done with the approval of the Treasurer. In a sense, the director-general does not need the Treasurer's approval because he has the authority to do this under the measure.

I seriously doubt in the long term whether such a provision should be enshrined in a legislative measure without the Treasurer being required in the first instance to delegate that authority to the director-general so that the Treasurer, if the circumstances should arise in the future—and I am not suggesting that they would—is able to revoke that authority if necessary. Those are the particular concerns I have about the measure.

Clause 7 makes transitional provisions, particularly regarding the position of the present Director of Finance, Mr Ian Baker, who has an impeccable record of service as Director of Finance in the former Treasury, provisions that are more than welcomed by the Opposition.

Following the passage of the Bill, I hope that the House can expect an increasingly improved flow of information about the financial affairs of the State as seen by the Department of Management and Budget. The Department of Management and Budget has a key function in the total operations of the public sector. It has an important overview of the entire operation of the Public Service because of its concern in the financial management of Victoria.

On more than one occasion, the Treasurer has indicated that it is his intention to ensure that there is an adequate and proper supply of information going not only to Parliament but also to the people of Victoria. I am concerned to note in my file that, as far back as March, I asked the Treasurer through the Department of Management and Budget to provide a range of information concerning such things as pay-roll tax, the financial institutions duty and matters relating to Tattersall's debt. A number of questions were put in a letter on the incorporation of certain trust fund accounts into the Consolidated Fund, a move that the Government has publicized widely but of which there are a number of details that are not generally available to the public yet.

I shall give one or two examples: What is the total amount of expenditure previously undertaken through the trust fund which will be undertaken through the Consolidated Fund in 1982–83; how much expenditure was incorporated in the Consolidated Fund in the month of Janurary? A number of questions were put to the Treasurer about the sources of funds in the Cash Management Account and the disposition of those funds; similar questions were asked about the State Development Account, the sources and disposition of funds.

The Treasurer was good enough to acknowledge my query very promptly and on 28 March indicated that I should expect answers to some of the questions where the information was readily available in the very near future.

Some of the questions might take a little longer. As at 23 May no answers have been made available. It could be argued that questions like this should have been put on notice and publicized on the Notice Paper. If it is not possible for the answers to flow in that way, that may be a step I will see fit to take. I mention it in this debate because the House is dealing with the Department of Management and Budget, a department which I think the Treasurer readily acknowledges is of key importance. I hope that sort of information will flow freely from the department in the near future, now that the loose ends to which the Treasurer referred have been tied up.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The National Party supports the Bill but its support is somewhat qualified, for two reasons, firstly that the present Government, in appointing as director-general of this new department a very able man has by-passed the former Director of Finance. The Government has brought in this new chief executive in a fairly unusual way and has virtually made him the new Director-General of Treasury. The Government has put him over the previous Director of Finance.

I have no reason to question the ability of Dr Peter Sheehan and my inquiries have revealed that he is a man of outstanding ability but he was very much a Labor appointment. I am disappointed to see from this Government something that should not occur in a democratic system—appointments on a party political basis. One may

question the accuracy of that statement as far as Dr Peter Sheehan is concerned but in every Ministry of the Government political advisers are being placed between the Minister and his department. That is why heads of departments are leaving early. They do not wish to put up with party political appointments between the Minister and themselves.

Many of these so-called Ministerial advisers do not have very much to recommend them, unlike Dr Peter Sheehan. Victoria is heading towards the American system in which, when there is a change of Government, there is a sweep out of public servants. This is unfortunate because the senior public servants of Victoria have served successive Governments honourably, honestly and with great loyalty. I make the point that probably few people are in a better position than I to see the loyalty and dedication these people have given to the respective Ministers of the day. All Ministers have their tough and bad days and the mistakes occur from time to time but the senior public servants of this State have given great loyalty. I advise the Minister at the table, the Treasurer, that at present some heads of departments are not happy because they are not trusted. They believe they are being spied upon, watched, and reported back on. We have lost some and we will lose more if this continues.

I understand that Dr Peter Sheehan is a man of outstanding ability. I feel sorry for the way in which Mr Ian Baker was treated. He is certainly a loyal public servant and would not complain about the treatment he has received. I share the concern of the honourable member for Balwyn. It is easy to delegate authority and when complete authority is delegated to the director-general, as in this instance, it is a dangerous step for the Government. I should like to hear the Minister's comments on this. I cannot understand why the full delegation should go to the director-general. He can redelegate that authority further down the line. The Minister would be well advised to look at this situation again. I have no personal criticism of Dr Peter Sheehan, but I do not think that sort of delegation power should be given to any public servant.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—This Bill is something new for the old-fashioned members of the Labor Party. I see the honourable member for Preston looking at me. He must wonder why the Labor Party needs to appoint academic economists from the University of Melbourne, who have never worked in a factory. I wonder what the honourable member for Glenroy thinks about running the country with academic economists. As the Leader of the National Party states, Victoria had an eminent Director of Finance in Ian Baker who worked his way through the Treasury and has the respect of everybody. I remember when I was chairman of the finance committee of my local council in its expanding days of over twenty years ago and the help I received from Mr Ian Baker when he was Coordinator of Works. He was a practical man who knew how practical affairs work in this State. Dr Peter Sheehan may have all the university degrees in the world but, so far as I am concerned, he has a lot to learn about real life.

The Treasury of this State has served Victoria loyally and well and now this financial supremo and the academic economists have taken over from the accountants. Accountants, because they have to be related to the practical world, particularly in the business sector, do not get carried away with all the airy fairy theories of the academic economists. They must live in the market-place. I am surprised that the Minister, with his background in the trade union movement, does not understand this. He must realize that one cannot get far in the trade union movement if one is not practical. We must get away from the confined academic cloisters. It is all very well to pontificate economic theories but it is also necessary to take account of human nature and the perverse and illogical facts of life. It is all very well to have economic summits in Canberra with the top brass sitting around back scratching, but it is back in the real world where the fun starts and where Mr Dolan, the leader of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, finds that he cannot get his cohorts to support him. Already he has blown the summit sky high with a demand for a 9 per cent increase in wages.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—This is a very important Bill which puts the finances of this State——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I do not deny the importance of the Bill but it in no way relates to wages. It clearly sets out the appointment and powers of the Director-General of the Department of Management and Budget. I direct the honourable member to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—With respect, Sir, I am trying to convey to this House that Victoria has been loyally served by a hard-working Treasury with accountants who have had some economic training. Now these men are to be replaced by academic theoretical economists and this will put the future of this State, the future employment of good workers, the good trade unionists of this State, at risk because those academic theorists are playing around with the economy.

In the real world there are conflicting interests that disobey all the laws of economics and all the theories that men, no matter how they intend it, put up because people want to be free. They want to live their lives in the way they want; they do not want to be dictated to by academic economists in the Treasury. Even card-carrying members of the Australian Labor Party will flout the policies of their own Government if they are not practical.

Politicians and economists have one thing in common. They are both concerned, particularly when they have to face the voters, about the unpredictable, paradoxical and not always rational human nature. That is why Budgets blow out and emergency legislation, such as mini-Budgets and so on are introduced. One of the greatest of all modern economists, Lord Keynes, pointed out that good or even competent economists are the rarest of birds. An economist must contemplate the particular in terms of the general and espouse both the abstract and concrete at the same time. As he pointed out, the very best economist will have his feet on the ground like the politician, not up in the clouds like the professor.

The same point of view was expressed by the greatest of all economists, Alfred Marshall, who said that without the aid of common sense, economics is of little practical use.

If Dr Sheehan and other imports who are brought in from the University of Melbourne do not espouse practical common sense, as do the honourable members for Preston and Glenroy and other stalwarts of the Labor movement, this State will get itself into a lovely mess very quickly.

For all his academic attainments, the Treasurer will be doomed to failure if he does not listen more to some of his hard-headed union leaders from the industrial suburbs and the Labor movement that surround him. If he does not listen to their down-to-earth advice and even the hard-headed comments of some businessmen in the western suburbs, his future as a Treasurer of this State might be cut short.

In an article on the weaknesses of economic theory that appeared in the *Australian Financial Review* of 17 May—which I recommend everyone should read—entitled "After the summit—the great economic Shoot-out", the writer repeats the advice of Alfred Marshall that he once offered new Cambridge undergraduates. He told them: "Be different and be critical of the claims made by economists." I hope the Treasurer is a politician first and an academic second, because if he is not, he will let this State down.

I probably share with the Treasurer a belief in the principles of Keynesian economics. In my view, the theories of Keynes have never been allowed to work—that is a bit like Christianity—because old Adam keeps surfacing in all of us. We want all the benefits of Keynesian economics, but will not submit to its disciplines in the balancing of interest, employment and money. Once wage rates get out of hand, countries cannot compete on the export markets and overseas payments cannot be balanced without heavy capital inflow, and this leads to excessive interest rates, which in turn can depress internal investments in the private sector, and that can create unemployment. Even worse, that can boost the money supply, which creates inflation.

Therefore, in my view, interest rates in this country are for too high. What the Treasurer, as well as Dr Sheehan, ought to realize is that we have higher interest rates because the economy of this State is in a state of disequilibrium. The only way in which one is able to obtain full employment is by having lower interest rates. That is

what Dr Sheehan and the Treasurer have to aim for. If they do not do so, we will never obtain full employment through job-creating investment in this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you have been extremely tolerant with me and I should not go into any more detail, but as an old-fashioned stalwart of the Labor movement, you would realize than human emotion is what matters in economics. It is optimism, animal spirits and the willingness to have a go, not theories, that are important. I wish the Treasurer well in his new department, but I urge him to ensure that he is surrounded by practical men with common sense and not to let Dr Sheehan and young university economists run this State as if they knew all the answers.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I thank honourable members who have participated in the debate. They have all recognized that, although this Bill is small, it is certainly important so far as the Government is concerned. It is vital to the Government's approach to economic and financial management within the State.

Most of the comments of the other speakers focused on the position of the office of director-general. The honourable member for Balwyn concentrated on the terms and conditions of the appointment and also the powers of delegation given to the director-general. The Leader of the National Party also focused on those issues, as well as raising the issue of the appointment of director-general. I intend to answer those queries here tonight.

So far as the appointment is concerned, the Government has made it clear that it is a Governor in Council appointment for a period not exceeding five years. I indicate to the honourable member for Balwyn that the conditions that attach to the position of the director-general are those that normally apply to Governor in Council appointments. Therefore, there is no departure from any principle that has been operating under this Government or under previous Governments.

The director-general can be dismissed from office by virtue of a decision of the Governor in Council, but the terms and conditions surrounding those dismissals would have to be negotiated with the person who held that office.

The honourable member for Balwyn and the Leader of the National Party were concerned about the powers given to the director-general under clause 6 of the Bill. Of course, they are referring to the fact that, under certain circumstances, the director-general can authenticate the Treasurer's seal. No one here has disagreed with the proposition that there should be a delegation of powers, because that is a sensible way in which to manage the State. To borrow a phrase from the honourable member for Doncaster, "It is a practical way of running the affairs of the State."

Clause 6 should be read in conjunction with clause 4 of the Bill because I make it clear to all honourable members that the director-general will be exercising authority delegation and the authority of the Treasurer only as a result of my decision. Clause 4 makes that position clear. It states:

> Subject to the general direction and control of the Treasurer, the Director-General shall—
>
> (*a*) exercise any powers and carry out any duties conferred or imposed upon him by this Act or any other Act; and
>
> (*b*) report upon any matter as required by the Treasurer.

Therefore, it is clear from clause 4 that the director-general must operate according to my general direction and control. That direction and control will be exercised in respect of the use of the Treasurer's seal.

The Leader of the National Party raised the matter of Dr Peter Sheehan being appointed director-general. Of course I note that he has no quarrel with the qualifications or expertise of Dr Peter Sheehan—they are well recognized both in the public and private sectors of the community.

The reason the Government appointed Dr Peter Sheehan to the position of Director-General of the Department of Management and Budget results from the fact that the Government has broadened the role of economic management of the State Government. The Government has gone beyond the role of any State Government in Australia. This relates to financial management, to the economic management issue, to capital evaluation and economic strategy.

The Department of Management and Budget will have a much broader role in respect of economic policy-making and

financial management than the Treasury formerly had in this State.

I make it clear that Mr Ian Baker will retain the position of Director of Finance in the new Department of Management and Budget. I pay tribute to the quality of Mr Baker's work. There is no doubt that without his full co-operation the economic and financial initiatives that have been taken by the Cain Government would not have been possible. I have nothing but glowing terms to apply to the way in which Mr Baker has carried out his functions and his position as Director of Finance, under the new Department of Management and Budget, will not result in a diminution of his role. In fact, because of the expanded role of the Department of Management and Budget, it will in effect mean greater responsibilities in the future.

I also indicate to the Leader of the National Party who raised this issue that the Government appointment of Dr Peter Sheehan to the position of Director-General of the Department of Management and Budget was done in full consultation with Mr Ian Baker. There was no question of Mr Baker being kept in the dark so far as this issue was concerned.

Over all, the Bill is very important. It enables the Government to put in place a very important change in the structure of government by the establishment of the Department of Management and Budget.

In conclusion, I wish to comment on the matter raised by the honourable member for Balwyn—that is, the information that he has requested from me in respect of a number of taxation matters and a number of financial issues. I will certainly seek a progress report on those matters.

Some of the issues drawn to my attention by the honourable member for Balwyn require a considerable amount of work and because of the pressure of time and the demand on the resources of the department it has not been possible to answer those issues. I assure the honourable member for Balwyn that I will seek a progress report tomorrow and furnish replies on the points raised as soon as possible.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 5 were agreed to.

Clause 6 (Seal of the Treasurer)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 6 provides for the Treasurer to have an official seal that is capable of being authenticated by the signature of the Treasurer or of the director-general or any person authorized by the Treasurer to that effect.

During the second-reading debate, the question was raised about the wisdom of having the director-general, as of right, being able to sign the official seal and to make it an official Treasury document with all the authority as if it had been signed by the Treasurer.

The Treasurer, in responding to the query about this matter, indicated that under clause 4 the director-general is subject to the general direction and control of the Treasurer and for that reason he was not concerned about the director-general being given the official ability to sign the seal to establish its authenticity. Also included in clause 6 is the ability of the Treasurer to delegate the authority for the authenticating of the seal to any other person.

I ask the Treasurer to consider, between here and another place, the desirability of removing from clause 6 this as of right privilege going to the director-general. It would have exactly the same effect if the Treasurer has an official seal which shall be authenticated by his signature or the signature of any person authorized by the Treasurer to that effect. The Treasurer could then, immediately on the Bill becoming law, issue such an authority to the director-general and it would have exactly the same result but without enshrining in legislation this as of right power going to the director-general. In spite of the director-general who is indicated in clause 4, clause 6 still stands on its own. As a matter of principle it is an unwise principle to be creating such an important position.

Will the Treasurer look at this matter and possibly introduce that amendment between here and another place. Were he to do so, I give an undertaking from the Opposition that on its return to this Chamber it would be a matter of seconds to have it verified.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The matter raised by the honourable member for Balwyn in respect of clause 6 relates, of course,

to the power of the director-general to authenticate the seal of the Treasurer. As the honourable member for Balwyn recognizes this can only be done in the context of clause 4 and in particular I draw the attention of the honourable member for Balwyn to clause 4 (*a*) because it makes it clear that the director-general and the control of the Treasurer relate to the powers and duties conferred on the director-general by the Act or any other Act of Parliament, so there is sufficient safeguard. Nevertheless I will take on board the proposition put to me by the honourable member for Balwyn in case there is any element of doubt in respect of the power I have over the director-general.

Discussions I had with the Director of Finance earlier this evening indicated that I have sufficient power to ensure that the seal could not be authenticated by the director-general if it was under my general direction or control.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 7 (Transitional)

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

Clause 7, page 4, line 3, omit "that office" and insert "an office in the Public Service of Victoria".

By way of explanation, this is a technical amendment done on the advice of Parliamentary Counsel. While the position of Director of Finance will be retained, it will not be the Director of Finance of Treasury, it will be the Director of Finance of the Department of Management and Budget. For that reason, it is necessary to make that technical change.

The amendment was agreed to and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was the remaining clause.

The Bill was reported to the House with an amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the consideration of Orders of the Day, Government Business, Nos. 8 to 15 inclusive, be postponed until later this day.

This proposal has been discussed with representatives of the parties, who understand the need for Order of the Day, Government Business, No. 16 to be brought on immediately.

The motion was agreed to.

RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

The debate (adjourned from May 5) on the motion of Mr Crabb (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—In his explanatory second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport said that this is a short, technical Bill to facilitate the raising of funds for railway purposes. Although that is correct, it is important that the Minister should provide the House with a full and proper explanation of the nature of the proposal that he is seeking to introduce.

There are two particular areas provided for in the Bill. There is the proposed legislative basis for leasing agreements to be entered into by the Victorian Railways Board and there is provision for the advance of funds to the Victorian Railways Board from the Victorian Development Fund, described in the Bill as the Public Account. Both of these areas are financed under the proposal announced. However, the House is debating a Bill to amend the Railways Act 1958, but at the same time there is listed for resumption of debate another Bill, one of the provisions of which is to repeal the Railways Act 1958. I am sure that W. S. Gilbert would have been most fascinated with this sort of situation in any Parliament in the Westminster system. This House is debating a Bill to amend an Act that will be repealed at 30 June next.

However, there is a good and proper reason for this, which undoubtedly the Minister understands, and it has something to do with the programme that he has already embarked upon, namely, disposing of railway property with the intention of leasing it back. That is a form of leverage leasing, which goes one step further than the situation where some new equipment is leased. The Government is turning around and disposing of property that it already owns in order to lease it back; the idea being to make available to the Government capital funds for immediate works and services.

The amount intended in the last Budget for the railways for this year was $162·5

million. I ask the Minister to fully explain to the House why, at this stage, the Parliament is required to pass a Bill, the provisions of which will apply only until the end of June this year, to authorize this particular action? Is this an indication that no leasing arrangements have been entered into by the Government so far? Is it because the Minister is looking at a period between now and the end of the financial year to lease back $162·5 million worth of railway equipment or is it because that figure in the works and services account of the Budget will not be realized this year?

The debate is a good opportunity for the Minister to live up to the undertakings the Labor Party gave on open government and to take the House into his confidence on how much railway rolling stock has been sold and leased back and how much rolling stock the Government expects to lease between now and the end of the financial year.

Is the Bill necessary to provide a Government guarantee to persuade people to enter into these purchase and lease back arrangements? Is the appropriation from the Consolidated Fund necessary to back up those guarantees before the proposed parties are prepared to sign on the dotted line or is there another reason?

It is clear from information provided by the Minister earlier this year that some leasing arrangements have already been entered into. Indeed, the information provided by the Minister to the Opposition—for which I thank the Minister—was that, as at 1 December last year, $28·27 million worth of railway rolling stock had been sold. That equipment consisted of 24 suburban electrical carriages and 31 country carriages. At the same date, repayments amounting to $826 883 were made to the State Bank of Victoria.

At the same time, in the general area of leasing, $24·62 million had been raised through the sale of 68 trams, which are not part of the provisions of this Bill, but which do indicate the type of action the Government has been taking. However, these figures indicate that nowhere near $162·5 million that the Government is depending upon from this source had been reached as at 1 December last year.

A later figure was made available by the Minister. The total income up to 17 March 1983 from VicRail equipment sold and subject to leasing is $77·7 million. That equipment consists of sixteen six-car Comerg suburban train sets and 39 "N" class country carriages. Lease payments made from 1 April 1982 total $3·02 million.

It is not perfectly clear from this information just how much of this leasing money is part of the $162·5 million; how much of it is from sale of existing railway assets; and how much of it is new assets brought into service with the railways as leased assets rather than purchased assets. I would value an indication from the Minister of the state of play in the leasing and releasing of railway rolling stock.

The second part of the Bill makes clear statutory provision for advances of funds from the State Development Fund to the Victorian Railways Board. Again, it would be helpful to have an explanation from the Minister as to why this provision has been deemed to be necessary. The amendments to the Public Account Act that have been put through have certainly made it clear that the fund is available for the uses authorized by the Treasurer. Is it that the Victorian Railways Board does not have the authority to use that money; if so, can the Minister assure the House that no moneys have gone from the State Development Fund to the Victorian Railways Board as of this date; if such funds have gone, under what authority have they gone; and why is that authority not adequate for the continuation of this proposal until the end of the next financial year?

They are some of the queries that come to the minds of honourable members as they consider this proposed legislation. The Opposition is not opposing the move; it recognizes that the budgetary undertakings of the Government require this to be done. However, the Opposition does have grave doubts about the ongoing wisdom of selling off an increasing amount of the assets of the Victorian Railways knowing the extraordinary difficulties that the railways has to achieve any semblance of a balanced budget in its operations.

It is clear to members of the Opposition that to give the railways the funds to meet the increased leasing charges on property that, in the past, the railways had as equity capital is placing an ongoing burden on the railways which must become harder and

harder to meet in the future. When the provision of the Bill introduces the power of the Treasurer to execute guarantees and, quite clearly, the sort of borrowings that the Government may well be looking at to pursue through this avenue of finance is way beyond anything that the railways could manage on its own account without such a Government guarantee—it does raise serious questions for the future financial viability of the railways system in Victoria. I hope the Treasury is not placing too great a burden on future Governments and future citizens of Victoria.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The Bill before the House has been outlined by the honourable member for Balwyn and is a strange piece of proposed legislation considering that it will be repealed, as has already been stated, when the new transport legislation comes before the House and is proclaimed, as the Minister hopes, by 1 July. The Minister has seen fit to bring this Bill to the House to provide for leasing arrangements and to gain approval to take money from the State Development Fund for various railway projects. I, like the honourable member for Balwyn, would like a few explanations from the Minister of Transport.

The question I raise with the Minister regards the leasing arrangements that may be drawn up. The honourable member for Balwyn outlined that an amount of $162 million is the budgetary figure for the railways. I want an assurance from the Minister that, under the leasing arrangements, there will not be an escalation of leasing machinery that will allow a blowout way above the $162 million. It is easy to enter into leasing arrangements and find oneself well above budget. If the Minister is looking to the parties in Parliament to agree to the proposed legislation, I would like some assurance that he will operate within the Budget in relation to the leasing arrangements to be undertaken, bearing in mind that if the Minister wants to purchase a new locomotive, considering its cost, he would probably need to enter into a leasing arrangement.

Passenger rolling-stock has been greatly improved and I give credit to the present Government and to the previous Government as moves were made to improve the rolling-stock for passenger purposes. Those moves were certainly well overdue. During my time in this place travelling to and from the country, I have noticed that the improvement in the passenger services in the north-west of the State over the past four years is considerable. The passenger rolling-stock of the day train is a comfortable means of travel and, with the improvements on the main line, the punctuality of those services has improved over the past couple of years. There has been a 20 per cent increase in passenger patronage on railway lines. I am sure that that patronage will continue to increase so long as the standard is maintained.

I return to other matters raised by the honourable member for Balwyn regarding the selling-off of some railway land and endeavouring to lease it back. One comes back to the point of not allowing leasing arrangements to blow out above the expected budget and I should like an assurance from the Minister on that aspect.

Another measure of the Bill proposes to take money from the State Development Fund. The fund has provided finance for many Government projects. Honourable members have already seen that the Education Department has taken significant amounts of money from the fund for facilities and projects. The Minister of Transport is planning to take money for the four different projects listed in the Bill.

I wonder whether the Minister can indicate what interest rate he is planning to pay to the State Development Fund for the loan of that money and what the repayment arrangements will be. It is easy to borrow money, but the debt has to be serviced and the money has to be paid back to the fund after a certain period.

I agree with the projects that the Minister has in mind. While I cannot comment on the Box Hill underpass, any means of doing away with a level crossing is a big advangage to the movement of transport in Victoria.

One project that the Minister has in mind is to upgrade the Ararat to Hamilton rail line. That is a significant rail line for the Victorian grain industry and any upgrading of that line has my wholehearted support.

The Grain Elevators Board has upgraded its facilities at Portland. Portland is the best deep water port in Victoria, and the use of

that port in moving exports to overseas countries must be supported by all parties.

This week I had a call to my office from a sleeper-cutter in the south-west of the Wimmera. He tells me that the railways are importing sleepers from New South Wales for the upgrading of rail lines. He claims that he could provide sleepers, possibly at a better rate, to VicRail and on site to the Ararat–Portland line, than can be supplied from New South Wales. That is something the Minister should consider.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Would the honourable member consider that matter is more appropriate to be raised under the Railways Works and Services Bill, whenever that is debated?

Mr McGRATH—Thank you, Mr Speaker, I accept your direction and I will not refer to it again. The other matter I wish to comment on is the upgrading of the Webb Dock facility to provide a better rail communication in that area. This is well overdue. Containerization is becoming more popular and the upgrading of the railway facilities to service Webb Dock also has the wholehearted support of the National Party. It is interesting that the State Development Committee recommended that the Webb Dock facility should be upgraded, but the committee suggested alternative railway proposals for access to Webb Dock. I am wondering which proposal the Minister will direct VicRail to construct to improve railway facilities to Webb Dock.

The National Party supports this Bill. I hope the Minister will take this opportunity of answering the questions raised by both the honourable member for Balwyn and myself.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—It is not my fault if this Government has so mismanaged its affairs that the Ministers are now moaning about my speaking in this debate. This is a most serious Bill and I have grave misgivings about it.

Our railway system is a great burden on this State and I know that the Minister of Transport would like to get rid of it to the Commonwealth. The sooner we get rid of our State railway systems to the Commonwealth the better. The railways are nothing but a burden on the ordinary men and women of this State.

I asked a question on notice of the Minister, and those who advised him gave an obscure answer. I should have drafted my question a little better. I learn the hard way. I wanted answers about passenger and other revenues from the railways in 1981 and the estimate for 1982–83. I was told that the total revenue in 1981–82 was $264 million, the estimate for this year was $376 million, but I think that that estimate should be severely downgraded. I think that railway revenue will be down this year compared with last year, and I ask the Minister to correct me if I am wrong. In the breakdown of that revenue, the Minister estimates an increase from $65 million in 1981–82 to $71·5 million this year in metropolitan passenger revenue. If the Minister has success in making people pay their fares and catches fare evaders——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise the honourable member that I am prepared to indulge him to some extent, but I am not prepared to accept that he can, by an occasional reference to the Bill, canvass the broader issues that he appears to be doing at this stage. In other words, I am saying to him to come back to the Bill, otherwise I will rule him out of order if he continues to go into detail which is better suited to the Railways Works and Services Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—With deep respect, Mr Speaker, I am endeavouring to show that railway finances are unsound; they cannot bear the burden of leasing finance. Leasing finance is dear finance; it is what I call "blue sky" finance, and one is in serious difficulties if one has to go on the money market for leasing finance. One has over-extended oneself if one has to do that. It is the same in the personal field. Anyone of us will go along to the bank and get a bank overdraft at 13·5 per cent.

The SPEAKER—Order! As I said at the outset of my remarks, I am prepared to indulge the honourable member to some extent but I ask him to use his skill in not testing my patience and to come back to the details of the Bill itself.

Mr WILLIAMS—You have placed an impossible burden on me, Mr Speaker, because I wish to explain to the House that railway finances are unsound, that revenue could well be under $250 million this year, and railway expenditures could be well over

$600 million this year, with a loss of $350 million. Victoria has a population of only 4 million or 5 million and a great burden will be placed on the people of Victoria, and a still greater burden if the Government buys expensive railway carriages and vehicles for transport.

As I anticipated, certain people in the Government have grandiose visions of entering into the private sector of road transport and all sorts of activities. If that is to be done through leasing finance, I, for one, protest in this place. High-cost finance cannot be used to fund an undertaking losing $300 million to $400 million a year with a population of 5 million. I am disappointed that the trained men in economics and accountancy on the Government benches have allowed this sort of proposition to go through.

I believe the Victorian railways should be cut back severely, and, better still, handed over lock, stock and barrel to the Commonwealth, otherwise the low income person in this State will pay more and more taxes, more and more fare rises, to keep an activity going that is just not worth the effort put into it.

There has been a great song and dance about the taxpayer meeting opportunity costs of Government undertakings and all the rest of it. The costs of leasing finance for the railways is too great a burden for the people of Victoria and I protest most strongly that the academic minds in the Labor Party, people like Dr Sheehan and others, have persuaded the Minister of Transport, with all his actuarial intelligence, to indulge in this sort of finance.

It will not do the people of Victoria any good. Victoria needs to be cutting back investment in the railways, not increasing it by expensive finance.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate, particularly those supporting the principles of the Bill. I will endeavour to answer the matters raised and to deal with the Jeremiah-like speech of the honourable member for Doncaster predicting the doom and disaster of the public transport system. The suggestion that railway finances are unsound contains an element of truth, certainly to the extent that railway finances are not extremely well organized and certainly require subsidy from the public purse. Honourable members in this House, and I as Minister, cannot be 100 per cent sure what that subsidy amounts to and what it achieves.

Mr Williams—It is time you found out.

Mr CRABB—I wish the honourable member for Doncaster had been saying that during the time when he was sitting on the Government benches.

Mr Williams—I am in opposition now. I have the glorious freedom of the Opposition benches.

Mr CRABB—The honourable member claims that he now has the glorious freedom of the Opposition benches. It is strange that he never mentioned his dire forebodings on leasing finance in 1978 when the first leasing of tramway buses was carried out. I know the honourable member for Doncaster was a frequent user of those buses and has often waxed poetic and long about the value of the new Volvo buses and what they did for the constituents of the Doncaster electorate whom they serve so well and much better than the old buses that serve the rest of the metropolitan area. I did not hear the honourable member objecting so violently to the use of leasing finance for those buses in 1978.

The use of leasing finance is not new. It has been used for the provision of public transport assets since 1978. I give credit to my predecessor and the Ministry of Transport for initiating leasing for railway rolling-stock which he was able to do, despite a Treasurer who was less sympathetic to his cause than the present Treasurer. The basis on which the honourable member for Doncaster criticized leasing finance was that it is expensive finance and much more expensive than any other type of finance. All of the leases that have been entered into by the Government or the former Government have been at interest rates less than that for the prevailing semi-Government securities for equipment. I make that statement categorically.

Mr Ramsay—What is the level?

Mr CRABB—It varies from time to time, depending on the market, but the fact is that on no occasion has either the present Government or the former Government paid a real interest rate in excess of the prevailing

interest rate for equivalent semi-Government securities. Therefore, leasing finance for public transport is an eminently sensible financial mechanism for meeting the rejuvenation of assets of the Victorian Railways and the Tramways Board that are so necessary.

If public transport finance is to be brought back into order, two moves need to be taken: One is re-organization, which is being done in another context; and the other is reinvestment. One cannot expect any organization to function efficiently or effectively with equipment that is 60, 70 or 80 years old. The honourable member for Lowan paid testimony to that in his comments on passenger services to the electorate that he represents, where the services have improved markedly, because of an initiative of the former Government which has been accelerated by the present Government, namely, the provision of new country rolling-stock that is leased. The new carriages and locomotives are leased and the way to manage to achieve the capital input to do that is by using leasing finance.

One of the options available to the Government was to wait until enough money was available in the Consolidated Fund to be provided as grant moneys. The product of that method of financing is the situation of a couple of years ago when no money was available to the railways to do anything and they had to exist on rolling-stock which gradually ran down to the state it was in a couple of years ago. The railways are still in a state in which up to 25 per cent of locomotives are unserviceable on any one day. The railways need a capital injection to rebuild locomotives, buy new ones and scrap old ones. The most efficient way to achieve that financial injection at present is by leasing finance.

The honourable members for Lowan and Balwyn raised concerns about a blow-out of lease payments.That is certainly a matter about which the Government is very conscious. Lease payments, like semi-Government borrowings, are nowadays of relatively short terms. Gone are the days when one could borrow money for 40 years. One now borrows money for 5, 10 or 15 years. If anything, leasing contracts tend to be of a longer duration than semi-Government borrowing contracts. In either case, one is required to pay money in a short time.

If one has an asset likely to be used for 30 or 40 years as in the case of public transport—especially railways rolling-stock—it is difficult to repay that over a short period. The asset is actually there over a longer period and one does not try to amortize it over the life of the asset. It is difficult to do in present financial markets, however one borrows money. It is a problem to the public transport authorities equally as it is a problem to the energy, water and sewerage authorities. We are all beset with the same problems.

Unless all Governments can find a way of getting longer-term borrowings and more stability in the market-place, we will have to curtail leasing programmes to avoid that short-term blow-out indicated as a concern by those two honourable members. I indicate to the House that at present there is no possibility of a blow-out as a consequence of either this year's or next year's leasing programmes, but unless long-term borrowing and longer-term amortization are found, we will have a problem.

I assure the House further that the Government is not using leasing finance to fund what is called the railways deficit. Leasing finance is being used in capital works programmes. In other words, money is borrowed on one piece of capital equipment to invest money in another piece of capital equipment. In no circumstances have we, or will we, use leasing finance in order to fund the revenue deficit. The revenue deficit in the Victorian railways, to the extent that revenue was not matched with expenditure outgoings, is met from the Consolidated Fund, as it always has been and as it always will be. It would be foolish for this or any other Government to sell off assets in order to pay for running costs, because that is a sure run to disaster. We are attempting to meet differences between revenue and expenditure by other means such as re-organization and rationalization.

The honourable member for Balwyn asks whether the Government had already entered into a leasing contract. We have, as had the former Government. The reason for the Bill coming before the House is to remove any last vestige of concern that anyone may have about the powers of the Victorian Railways Board to take such action, notwithstanding the fact that it has taken that action over a period that extends well

prior to the start of this financial year. On the matter of the guarantee by the Treasurer, this Bill is intended to remove any last vestige of doubt that may be in anyone's mind as to the capacity of the Treasurer to provide a guarantee on those contracts.

With regard to the advances from the Public Account, I point out that it was drawn to the attention of the Government that under an extremely strict legal interpretation of the Australian Railways Act, as it stands, it could mean that advances from the Public Account were not permissible. I find that peculiar from a common-sense rather than a legal point of view, given that the Public Account in one way or another picks up the tab for railways in any case. This matter is merely to clarify that point beyond any doubt. To my knowledge, moneys have not passed through the Victorian Development Fund to the Victorian Railways. It is a matter that would be caught up at the end of the year, which we are fast approaching—hence the urgency of the Bill.

I was asked by the honourable member for Lowan about the interest rate that is paid to the Victorian Development Fund. I cannot answer that question in specific terms, but the interest rate approximates to the interest rate payable on semi-Government securities. It is of that order. There may be a small margin but it is necessary because the investors in the Victorian Development Fund, which are other statutory organizations, are paid the same interest rate as they would obtain from investing in semi-Government securities. Equally we, as borrowers from that fund, pay the same interest rate as those borrowing from the semi-Government market. One is always on all fours with such contracts.

In general terms, the cash flow on the payments is a fifteen-year contract but in some situations it is varied, depending on the nature of the project. The project may produce a cash flow early or it may produce it late. It is varied around that basic principle.

I have responded to the matters that have been raised by the honourable members for Balwyn and Lowan, and I am pleased to hear the Deputy Premier agree with me. I thank all honourable members for their support of the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 4) was resumed on the motion of Mr Mathews (Minister for Police and Emergency Services):

> That this Bill be now read a second time.

and on Mr Ebery's amendment:

> That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "this Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to—(*a*) provide the necessary resources and expertize for the adequate education and training of applicants and holders of shooters' licences in order to promote the safe and resonsible use of firearms; and (*b*) reflect the Government policy on firearms, as announced during the last State election campaign".

Mr HANN (Rodney)—As has been indicated in earlier debates in the House on the Bill, the National Party is alarmed at the actions taken by the Government in introducing into Parliament Bills which have far-reaching ramifications for thousands of legitimate firearm owners around Victoria without any consultation. During the lead-up to the last State election numerous assurances were given by the Premier, the spokesman for the Government at that time and numerous Labor Party candidates throughout the length and breadth of Victoria—some of whom were successful and some of whom were not so successful—promising their electors through many advertisements that the Government would consult the various firearm bodies and shooting organizations before it introduced the proposed legislation.

I shall quote from one of those advertisements that was placed by the Premier in the *Ballarat Courier* on 10 March 1982. The advertisement appeared alongside a photograph of the Premier and was headed, "Shooters! This concerns you. From John Cain on the A.L.P. firearms Policy." The Government, which was in opposition at that time, was obviously concerned about the opposition it had received on the issue. The article quoted the now Premier as having said:

> The A.L.P. policy will protect shooters and the community from gun mis-use. The only significant change to present laws is the requirement for registration of weapons, which has the backing of the police. The

registration procedure will be very simple; it will be introduced after consultation with gun clubs, shooters, manufacturers and distributors, the police and other members of the community who are concerned about gun mis-use.

In the advertisement the Premier continued:

The A.L.P. will not—

CONFISCATE YOUR GUNS.

LIMIT THE NUMBER OF GUNS YOU MAY OWN.

CREATE A CENTRAL REPOSITORY (or storage place) TO HOUSE YOUR GUNS.

REQUIRE MEMBERSHIP OF A GUN CLUB AS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR GUN OWNERSHIP.

The key aspect is consultation. Despite the statements by the Minister in reply to the amendment that has been put to the House and despite the procrastination of the Minister, the fact is that consultation did not take place.

I shall quote to the Minister from two letters that I have received subsequent to the statement made by the Minister in the House. The first letter, dated 18 May 1983 is from the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Vic.), in which Mr W. Woolmore, the vice-president of the association, indicated as follows:

Statements in Parliament by members of the Government compel us to write to you and confirm that this association was not consulted, either directly or through the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria, in regard to the Firearms Amendment Bill 1983 prior to the second reading speech. We believe the Government is trying to deceive Parliament and the people if it is asserting otherwise.

In most cases the essential qualification of those few individuals, with whom we suspect 'consultation' is claimed, appears to be that they are dependable party suporters first and sport shooters second.

The Minister should be requested in Parliament to name those representatives of sporting organisations with whom he believes consultation took place.

The Minister has had the opportunity of naming those people because honourable members have already heard a long dissertation on consultation. The reality is that consultation has not taken place.

For the benefit of honourable members and the Minister, I shall read a letter I received on 9 May from the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria, subsequent to the debate. The letter states:

This is to inform you that at no time was this Guild approached by the Government or the Consultative Committee for information to be used in the preparation of the above Bill.

However, we did write to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on two occasions (June 21, August 23, 1982) and on April 12 of this year in response to the Minister requesting comment on the Bill following its second reading. Copies of this correspondence are enclosed for your interest and information.

It is interesting to read that letter. In answer to an interjection, the letter is signed by Neil G. Speed, the honorary secretary of the guild. It is interesting to read another of the letters which was addressed to the Minister and dated 21 June and which, once again, was signed by Mr Speed.

The last paragraph of the letter of 21 June stated:

We notice that you have recently formed an interim consultative committee to report to you on firearms legislation, and we respectfully request that should a larger committee be set up that the guild be accorded representation or be given the opportunity to place before you an expanded version of our ideas

In acknowledging that letter, the Minister was not prepared to include representatives of the guild on the interim consultative committee. All he indicated was that the examination was proceeding and that he had referred the submission to the committee for further consideration. The same story has come from all levels of Victorian firearms bodies and the various shooting organizations. The Shooting Sports Council of Victoria represents a large number of shooting organizations in Victoria, including:

Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)
Victorian Amateur Pistol Association
Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria
Victorian Field and Game Association
Australian Deer Association
Victorian Rifle Association

The Victorian Clay Target Association was a member but did not renew its membership for the current financial year.

I believe the Minister is arguing that the only person he consulted was the representative of the Victorian Clay Target Association. Therefore, on examining the list of various shooting organizations in Victoria, one would have expected that a Government which intended to consult with all the various shooting bodies, would have consulted with at least some of those organizations on the list.

The reality is that, prior to the introduction of the Bill, the Minister did not consult with any of those responsible bodies. If the Minister can prove to me that he consulted with any of the bodies to which I referred, I will be extremely interested. I would be interested to know what consultation took place with the Victorian Shooting Sports Council. Why were there not representatives of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria on the interim committee? That is what the Minister's colleague, the former Opposition spokesman, promised to do. The concern of the National Party really relates to the huge administrative nightmare which the Government is establishing. One acknowledges that we have a Government which tends to be anti-gun and anti-shooter.

Mr Spyker—It is pro-people.

Mr HANN—I suppose the Minister assumes that all people who have guns will have them to shoot only people. There are 400 000 gun owners and only a small number of gun accidents. It is interesting to examine a statement forwarded to candidates prior to the last election by an organization calling itself the Council for Control of Gun Misuse, which supports the Australian Labor Party gun policy. In a publication entitled *Gun Misuse News* its summary of the Australian Labor Party policy states:

> The A.L.P. produced its proposed Gun Policy several months ago, and it contains a number of important recommendations. These are:
>
> (i) Licences to be issued for 1 year only.
>
> (ii) Provided the applicant is competent in the safe handling of guns.
>
> (iii) Provided that the applicant can show a real guarantee of responsible use.
>
> (iv) Provided that the applicant can demonstrate that he can guarantee the security of the gun.
>
> (v) Provided that he is a fit and proper person to own a gun.
>
> (vi) One gun only allowed . . . Guns to be registered.

It is interesting to compare that with an extract from the *Bendigo Advertiser* in which an unhappy hunter draws attention to the Rules of Communism and points out:

> In May of 1919 at Dusseldorf, Germany the allied forces obtained a copy of some of the "communist rules of revolution".
>
> Now 60 years later, the reds are still "following the rule".

I will not go through all the rules, but item (*c*) states:

> Cause the registration of all firearms on some pretext with a view to confiscating them and leaving the population helpless.

Mr Norris—Who said that?

Mr HANN—It is from the Rules of Communism, which the honourable member is quite welcome to read. The last attempt was made by the former Federal Labor Attorney-General at the time, Mr Murphy. There is no doubt that if one examines the general thrust of what the Government is on about, it is looking at restricting the ownership of firearms. In his second-reading speech the Minister is aiming for a reduction in the number of firearms in the community. The Minister states that he wants to reduce the rate of increase. Does that not reduce the total number of firearms? Unfortunately, firearms become obsolete or become no longer useable. People need to be able to purchase new firearms freely. Obviously the Government policy is to restrict the right of firearms use.

From my experience as a sporting field shooter over many years—I have not done so recently because of other commitments—it is obvious that the Government is misguided in what it is trying to achieve with the proposed legislation. This phobia was exampled in the response of the Minister to the amendment proposed earlier in the debate.

I suppose the key argument he used was that by introducing the Bill and making it more difficult to purchase firearms in future, people like the late Dale Buggins would not be able to commit suicide. Surely the Minister is not imposing the burden of gun registration and the additional burden of permits and police approval on those who wish to own a gun to simply reduce the

number of suicides. As the Minister probably knows, by far the largest percentage of suicides occur because of the misuse of drugs.

The late Dale Buggins could have jumped out of the motel window and achieved the same result. He could have slashed his wrists and I suppose the Minister will want to register all knives and ban people from jumping out of windows!

The Government is also suggesting that the Bill will stop crime. The Government hopes to stop armed hold-ups by registering guns. If one examines the circumstances surrounding the 300 or 400 armed hold-ups each year—the number is increasing—one discovers that most of the weapons used would not be likely to be registered anyway. I suspect that very few persons concerned have shooting licences or would ever have them. Surely the Minister is not trying to suggest to the Parliament and the people of Victoria that criminals will go to police stations and ask to have their guns—which are illegal anyway—registered. The Minister suggested that introducing the legislation and increasing the powers of police to control the ownership of firearms would automatically reduce armed crime in Victoria.

Mr Spyker—We have a mandate.

Mr HANN—I will be interested to see whether the Minister of Consumer Affairs is in the Springvale Town Hall next Monday night. That will test his mandate because all of those present will be his supporters and they will quickly spell out whether they believe he has a mandate on this issue.

Mr Spyker—We won the election on it.

Mr HANN—The Minister of Consumer Affairs suggests that the Government won the election on the basis of gun registration. That is absolute rubbish. The reality is that the Government misled the electorate, as was spelled out by the very first quotation I gave the House tonight from an advertisement by the Premier in a key seat that the Labor Party set out to win—Ballarat South. The Government did win that seat, but under false pretences, because it did not honour the commitment that was given to those electors. No doubt the honourable member for Ballarat South is embarrassed about that. If a meeting were held in Ballarat South, one could highlight the situation there, too.

There are some interesting statements on the Government's policy. The Government suggests that the costs to the Government and to the community of gun registration will be small.

Mr Mathews—Registration will cost $1.

Mr HANN—I want to take it further because it is not so much the $1, but a question of the number of persons who will need to be employed to handle the work. It was suggested that it would require the appointment of two additional persons. My information is that the Central Firearms Registry currently has a backlog of six to eight weeks in handling shooters' licences. If one takes into account the fact that there are some 400 000 shooters, and presumably several million firearms, in Victoria, it can be seen that it will be an enormous and impossible task.

By interjection, the Minister of Health suggests that fees should be higher. I point out that it has nothing to do with the question of fees. It has to do with the fact that his Government is imposing this burden unnecessarily and falsely on the community and will not state what it is attempting to achieve.

I invite honourable members to consider the practical difficulties of ensuring that every shooter in Victoria registers every firearm he has in his possession. I ask the Minister to inform the House—because it is a basic principle in relation to the freedom and the rights of the individual—how he intends to ensure that every owner of firearms registers every firearm in his possession. Does he intend to send the police into private homes, sheds and throughout properties to search out these weapons? Can the Minister answer that question?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—He will be disorderly if he does so at this stage.

Mr HANN—That is the only way in which the Bill can be effectively implemented.

I have discussed the Bill with a police officer during the past couple of days and, as he sees it, a criminal who uses a weapon for illegal purposes will file the registration number off the weapon, so its registration

for that purpose will be useless. The police are also concerned that people will register one firearm but ensure that their other firearms are hidden away when they are not needed.

I will deal now with air guns because air guns will come under the Bill. My information is that it was the Minister of Health who moved the amendment at his conference to exclude air guns from the Labor Party's policy on the registration of firearms.

Mr Roper—That is not so.

Mr HANN—In that case, the quotation I have must must be incorrect. Presumably you were not the Minister at the time, but rather the Opposition's spokesman on health matters.

The ACTING SPEAKER—I ask the Deputy leader of the National Party to direct his debate through the Chair rather than across the table.

Mr HANN—I know that you, Mr Acting Speaker, are interested in the subject and the point I make is that the honourable member for Brunswick, the then Opposition spokesman on health, was responsible for having the amendment moved to delete the words "air rifle". In support of that amendment, he stated:

> We are going to stop the kids having any fun at all. Now possibly that is what we are about. But there is no need to tip the people off to that—

or words to that effect. The amendment was accepted and adopted by the State conference. It is then reported in a document produced by the Firearm Owners Union that:

> For that reason, the kids of Victoria must not be denied their rights of having any fun, and we urge that the air rifle provisions be deleted.

The air rifle provisions have now been included in the Bill. The Minister of Health problably did not raise the matter in Cabinet; it is a different story when the honourable gentleman is in government and is more concerned about health matters than about air rifles for the kids.

It is ridiculous that kids should have to register air rifles, and it is ridiculous to suggest that registration will prevent the misuse of firearms; it will not. The Government is imposing the dead hand of government upon the children of this State in trying to legislate in this area.

I mentioned earlier the question of consultation—a key area in the National Party's opposition to the Bill. The Firearm Owners Union also expressed concern in a submission which, I understand, has been forwarded to most honourable members, regarding the fact that, since the election, the Government has refused to arrange for the consultative committee to meet with the Firearm Owners Union of Victoria or with any other shooting body, and I have already raised that matter.

Another area of concern is that, as presently drafted, the Bill can include in the definition of "pistols" toy pop guns, bicycle pumps, spray and pressure pack cans, toy spud or potato guns and numerous other things that are currently not classified as firearms. For example, a child using his pop gun in his backyard could be deemed, under the new provision in the Bill, to have in his possession a pistol, and that is nonsensical.

Gun collectors are also concerned. Not all of those collectors are collectors of antique firearms; some collect more modern firearms.

In the restrictions that the Minister is imposing on the increased use of firearms in the future, in his own terminology, these people will be very restricted. They collect modern firearms—is not the Minister for Police and Emergency Services aware of these collectors? They come under a different category. These people want the rifles to be usable, not non-usable. The measure gives the Police Force discretionary powers on the issue of permits for the purchase of new firearms and it has already been stated that there are many people in the community to whom the Police Force would not issue firearms permits.

By interjection, the Minister asks whether I do not have any faith in the Police Force. I have a lot of faith in the Police Force but there are different ways for members of the Police Force to interpret what the Minister is intending and there are different attitudes amongst different policemen. The Minister is suggesting, in the introduction of the intended power to the Police Force, that it is his desire to restrict the rights of Victorians who own firearms and, if the Police Force is to implement that policy on his behalf, obviously, there will be difficulty. The task

of members of the Police Force will be difficult in assessing whether or not a person requires the use of that firearm.

The measure creates a quite unnecessary and stupid requirement for the future purchase of firearms. There is no proper mechanism in the Bill for policemen to determine, when issuing shooters' licences, whether the shooter actually has the ability to safely use the firearm. It would be a complicated procedure for policemen to determine that anyway, and to have the person concerned demonstrate the practical and safe use of the firearm. That in itself could create safety hazards, as the Minister for Police and Emergency Services would be aware.

A way around that, of course, is to provide greater financial support for the junior shooter programme, particularly in schools, which has been successful in a number of areas in Victoria. It should certainly be supported strongly in the future.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! The honourable member has 2 minutes.

Mr HANN—I have petitions which have been signed by several hundred persons in northern Victoria and more particularly from metropolitan areas such as Croydon, Lilydale, Mount Evelyn, Boronia, Essendon, Frankston, Vermont, Oakleigh and other various areas which are basically represented by members of the Government party. These petitions are signed by many hundreds of people who strongly object to the measure that has been introduced by the Labor Party Government.

The National Party will oppose not only the Government's Bill but also the Opposition's amendment for the simple reason that it will not support any aspect of the Government's policy on this question. The National Party is not convinced that the Government was being honest prior to the election. In fact, I suggest that it was being less than honest to the electors and was misleading them and the hundreds of shooters throughout Victoria who are Labor Party supporters and other shooters who genuinely believed there would be consultation and that it would be simply a matter of notational registration.

Mr Mathews—As there has been.

Mr HANN—There has not been consultation. The Minister has already spent a good deal of time in the House trying to give chapter and verse on consultation and has not convinced anyone yet.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr HANN—The National Party rejects the Bill.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—It has been extremely interesting and saddening to watch the performance of the few members of the Government party who have been present during this debate. I was saddened to observe the behaviour of the handful of Labor Party members who chose to be in the Chamber while the Deputy Leader of the National Party was speaking, because he was confronted by a barrage of cat-calls, silly interjections, giggling and the Labor Party members giving each other many pats on the back. It was a totally juvenile performance and one of which the House cannot be proud.

It was interesting to observe that those men who were behaving in that silly, juvenile and irresponsible way, are a group of people who exercise authority over this community and who have had the impertinence to claim that they are more responsible than the great mass of responsible shooters and hunting enthusiasts in the community. It would have been most illuminating for the community to have been present to observe the way in which members of the Labor Party behaved while the Deputy Leader of the National Party was speaking.

The Labor Party has been driven by ideology in this matter. It has hooked on to a slogan and, of course, that magic word "mandate" keeps cropping up as if it were some substitute for debate, reason, logic and sensible and responsible consideration of a matter. The Minister of Consumer Affairs kept squeaking out the word "mandate" frequently. The honourable gentleman was no doubt claiming that he has a mandate on behalf of the Labor Party because there was reference in the Labor Party policy to registration of firearms and a particular reference to adoption of South Australian firearms legislation. If the honourable gentleman is right in saying that the Labor

Party has a mandate to initiate this legislation, I would have thought that the magic word "mandate" meant that the Labor Party Government should keep the promises it made in opposition before the election which it won with a whole set of undertakings, but not many of those promises have been kept.

One which the Labor Party says it is keeping is gun registration legislation but it is not keeping the promise that it made. It is keeping another promise because the action that it is taking in this measure is different from undertakings it gave prior to the election. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services interjects that that is not so, but it is, because if the Labor Party were keeping the promise made prior to the election the Government would adopt the South Australian firearms legislation, which makes a number of exemptions.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—The time appointed by Sessional Orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), the sitting was continued.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—If the Government were serious about safety for the community in the handling of firearms, it would embrace the amendment which has been moved by the Opposition and which refers particularly to the need for training and educational programmes and for concentration on the safety aspects of firearm ownership.

Because the Labor Party Government is driven by ideology, I expect that it will reject the amendment and I would expect that the Government will reject the proposals which have been put by speakers from the Opposition and from the National Party regardless of how sensible they might be, regardless of how rational and tuned-in they are to the needs of the community and no matter how wide the consultation has been between members of the National Party and the Opposition and members of shooting and collector organizations and no matter how sparse the consultation has been between the Government and those organizations.

The great pity of the Government's intransigence on the matter is that it is clinging on to something that is quite unrealistic. The Government's proposition is that if one established a register of firearms and if one imposed the sorts of conditions contained in this measure, one imposes responsibility for safety and careful handling of firearms on the community so that there will be fewer accidents; and that if one has to have a permit and one's guns have to be recorded on a central register and one has to go through the procedures contained in the Bill to have a firearm, in some way that will reduce the number of firearms that will be available to criminals. Many honourable members have spoken about the obvious absurdity of that proposal.

Many have made the simple and obvious observation that criminals will not trot along to the police station and say that they are crooks and that they would like to have a gun, please, so that they can rob a bank or whatever. The absurdity of the proposal put forward by the Government is so evident that it should not be repeated, but the Government refuses to acknowledge the absurdity of its position and it seems to me that one needs to keep repeating that obvious observation.

I now refer to the collectors. Considerable representation has been made to the Minister from organizations within the community who comprise collectors of firearms and of antique weapons and historical weapons. It appears that the Minister has not taken any of those approaches seriously. He has been insulting in the way that he has failed to go through the simple courtesies in this matter. The organizations have made most generous offers to meet with him, or his officers at his convenience, and I understand in many instances they have not even had the courtesy of a response.

Mr Mathews—That is not true.

Mr RICHARDSON—If that is not true, I accept the Minister's word for it. Within this community there are many people who are intensely interested collectors of antique weaponry of all kinds, and firearms are simply one of those categories. There is already a register of antique firearms that is maintained by the collecting organization and therefore the imposition of a central register, as envisaged in this Bill, is another bureaucratic imposition upon a system

which works perfectly well already. The Bill will introduce much extra work for the Police Force. It will impose a bureaucratic burden on the community which will be nothing less than humbug because that burden will not solve the problems that the Government seeks to solve with this Bill.

Among the items of correspondence that the Minister has chosen to ignore have been a multitude of suggestions, many of which were eminently sensible. They were cast aside by this Minister who has either driven towards the goal with his eyes closed and is reaching for something that is unobtainable or illogical or he has been driven from behind by the ideology of his masters at the Australian Labor Party annual conference. Sensible suggestions have been made to the Minister and it is not known why he has ignored them. One of the suggestions was made to the Minister by the Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria. It read:

> As mentioned in our previous letter, the keeping of records in a register by the licenced collector is a form of registration and as the average number of arms held by collectors would exceed by many times those held for sporting purposes, the attached proposals would be a great saving in police time and money.

A proposal is attached which, it is suggested, would represent a great saving in police time and money. The Minister appears to have ignored that sensible suggestion and the fact that the collectors of arms and other weaponry will have a variety of weapons, usually far in excess of the number of firearms which would be held by a sporting shooter.

The object of collecting is to enjoy the collection, once collected, and then enjoy the pursuit of further pieces for that collection. Very few collectors of arms and weaponry are wealthy men and women, they are mainly ordinary members of the community who cannot dash off a cheque for several thousands of dollars when it occurs to them that they would like to acquire a particular piece.

What usually happens is that if there is an expensive piece which the collector would like to acquire, he goes back to his collection and works out how many items from his existing collection he would need to sell to be able to afford the new piece for his collection. He will sell a certain number of items from the collection to acquire one or two new items. In that way, collections are continually changing.

The Minister asks, by interjection, what the problem is. The problem is that the turnover of items within the collection is far greater than the turnover of firearms in the hands of sporting shooters. The acquisition of antique firearms is often made between collectors, whereas with sporting shooters, one would have thought that the incidence of exchange or sale within the fraternity would be less frequent than with collectors.

Similarly, there are items that are of interest to a collector which come onto the market through purely private channels, in addition to those coming onto the market through normal commercial dealer channels. Therefore, what I am presenting to the Minister is a set of circumstances involved with the collection of antique and modern weaponry, which is different from the circumstances that prevail in the ownership of firearms by most sporting shooters.

I am not setting out to promote the collectors at the expense of the sporting shooters. However, it seems to me that there has been a considerable amount of comment during the debate, over the period in which it has been conducted in this House, expressing a point of view relating to the sporting shooter. Less has been said about the difficulties that would be experienced by collectors if the Bill were to proceed in the way in which it has been presented to the House. No doubt there are others in the House who are better qualified than I to speak on behalf of the sporting shooters. Because I believe the sporting shooter has already been well supported by a number of speakers in the debate and because I believe less has been said on behalf of the collectors, I have put more emphasis on the collector and less on the sporting shooter.

Prior to the election, the Government announced that it intended to bring into the House legislation on this subject, as well as on a multitude of other promises it made. It won the election, it is the Government, and the measure is before the House. What the Opposition asks of the Government is that it takes on board the suggestions that have been made from a multitude of sources and that it realistically views the fact that it

will not prevent firearms coming into the hands of criminals through this Bill.

In fact, all the Government will do is to impose an unnecessary, thoughtless and quite silly burden upon a whole host of responsible owners of firearms. It will make the safe and responsible use of firearms more difficult, unless the Government embraces the proposal which is contained in the amendment that has been moved by the Opposition. My expectation is that the Government will not choose to follow the course that I have proposed. If it does not choose to follow that course, the consequences of its action will be brought home to it, and to it alone.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—I was interested to hear the Minister of Consumer Affairs stating that the Labor Party was elected to office on its firearms policy. That seems to me to be absolutely ridiculous. The National Party certainly had a mandate, and that was evidenced only a week ago, when it won the Swan Hill by-election.

The Government promised to have consultation with the gun clubs, and that has certainly not taken place. There is no doubt that that did not take place before the Bill was introduced into this House. Perhaps there was consultation after the introduction of the Bill, but there was certainly none while the Bill was being drafted.

It all comes back to the comments of Mr Bob Buchan, who has had no experience in the field of shooting other than being involved in a shotgun competition, no experience in rifle or pistol shooting and no experience with collections for museums or private collections. However, everything is coming back to what he said.

It seems absolutely ridiculous. Another interesting point is that, despite the election promises, the firearms legislation will affect everyone. Before buying a firearm, one is required first to convince an official that one has a good reason to own a gun. One has then to obtain a permit to purchase the firearm, which is another cranky idea. The Bill also creates the power to ban arbitrarily any type of firearm or ammunition. What is legal today will become illegal overnight. One must then hand over, with confidence and without compensation—which is confiscation—the firearm that has been made illegal. The Minister stated that the first types of firearms to be banned will be the military type, and shotguns with barrels that are less than 25·5 inches long. That astounds me, and it would probably astound most people. One is required to register all firearms, including airguns.

Another part of the trick is to force people to obtain a collector's licence, which costs an extra $20 a year. It is extraordinary that one is not to have more than the specified number of firearms and for the officials to dictate, with regard to the security, that one must have the firearms in one's own home. The fees rip-off continues to mount. Contrary to the election promises of the Government, the fees for shooters' licences are to be increased by 100 per cent, to $10, and will again be increased by 500 per cent in less than two years. If one examines the Bill further, one sees that some fees have been increased by 1000 per cent. These are more of the Australian Labor Party rip-offs. The farmer's permit is to be abolished, which means that the farmer is to be brought into the big squeeze on guns and firearms. It will be interesting to hear what the Minister has to say about it.

An assurance was given about the confiscation of firearms. The Bill provides that any firearm ammunition may be declared prohibited by this proposed legislation. That means that any firearm that is prohibited must be confiscated. The Bill contains no provision to allow people to keep firearms. The New Zealand and West Australian legislation contains such a provision. Nor is there any provision for compensation to be paid, as there is in New Zealand. If the Government is prepared to confiscate a firearm it should be prepared to pay for it.

The next matter I raise relates to air rifles. I agree that some laws relating to air rifles should be strengthened. Perhaps that can be done by enforcing the present law. Persons who own an air rifle should be eighteen years of age, should hold a permit and the guns should only be sold through sports stores and gun shops and not through toy shops as at present.

A few things have happened since the election. On 9 December last, the Minister in answer to a question reported in *Hansard* at page 2615 stated that in the forthcoming session of Parliament the Government proposed to introduce new legislation to control the purchase and possession of firearms.

The Minister stated that the legislation would turn on the principles of justification, education, registration and the establishment of a proper appeals tribunal.

Firearm owners are not rare or unusual people. They are more numerous than would first appear. The 430 000 firearms owners represent 14 per cent to 15 per cent of the 2·7 million voters.

Since the election several firearm-owning bodies have made approaches to the new Labor Government. One suggestion made was that in view of the importance of the matter a public inquiry should be held into firearm legislation before any amendments are made to the present law. The Minister wrote to the president of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria that such an inquiry would serve no useful purpose. The Minister seems to take the view that what he says goes and he will not listen to anyone. All the National Party is asking is that the matter should be discussed with those who know what they are talking about.

Farm concessions are to apply, so that farmers will not have to pay for registration and licences.

The shooters licence fee has doubled. The situation so far as the pistol clubs are concerned is that their fees have increased by a huge percentage. Fees for non-club members have increased from $5 to $50. That is an extraordinary situation. That is a 1000 per cent increase.

In the past if a person wished to purchase one or more firearms he did not need a police permit unless he was in a pistol club, but he had to advise the police within fourteen days of any purchase. Under this measure a person needs a police permit to purchase each individual firearm, such permit being obtained from the police.

The Minister indicated in his second-reading speech that the police would be expected to keep the numbers of pistols to a minimum—to what they think the shooter really needs. I do not believe the Police Force is in a position to tell a shooter he needs only one firearm. Four or five guns may be needed if a person wishes to take part in competition shooting.

I next refer to the definition of a firearm. The attempt to include air guns in the same category as explosive powered guns has produced the stupid situation where a toy gun that fires corks could be classed as a firearm. I wonder why this measure was introduced! I support my colleagues in the National Party and will not support the Bill or the amendments. It is a stupid Bill and should be thrown out.

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—A great deal of interest has been generated in the proposed legislation. Honourable members have heard a lot from the Government side about the mandate that the Government claims it has for the introduction of this measure.

Before I start discussing matters any further, I produce a copy of the National Party 1982 Victorian election policy, and quote from that the mandate on which our members were elected. We took a very strong stand on the issue of firearms and showed that we were greatly concerned by the proposals put forward by the then shadow spokesman, Mr Edmunds, who is now the Speaker, and the attitude that other members of the Labor Party took to changes in regulations concerning firearms.

The National Party policy states:

> Firearms.
>
> The National Party is opposed to any further tightening of the ownership of firearms in Victoria.
>
> It is the view of the Party that making conditions more difficult for law abiding citizens is unwarranted.
>
> Because the registration of all shot guns and small bore rifles is completely impractical to enforce, it achieves nothing in the way of crime prevention.
>
> Although control of the use of pistols is strictly enforced by the Police Force and pistol clubs, this does not prevent their use in crime within Victoria.
>
> The Party believes the status quo should be retained, and that Field and Game Associations and gun clubs providing education in the use of firearms should be encouraged.

That is the policy that the National Party went to the Victorian electorate with at the 1982 State elections and it was totally endorsed. In fact, the National Party vote increased. It is very interesting that as the proposed legislation became more topical in recent months, the parties had the opportunity to again test the water with two by-elections, one in Swan Hill and one in Warrnambool and, with preferences aside, one noted a swing towards the National Party in those seats. The National Party topped the poll in both those seats. Last time it tested both seats, it finished in third

place. That was a phenomenal turn-around. In Swan Hill the National Party vote went from 18 per cent to 45 per cent.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill. He is roving around past elections and is not on the Bill.

Mr McNAMARA—It is interesting to look at past elections when speaking about the mandate that has recently been given.

In the recent Warrnambool by-election there was an equally strong swing to the National Party from 12·5 per cent four years ago to 38 per cent and the National Party topped the poll most convincingly. That swing was due to the strong attitude of the National Party towards this Bill. The National Party is proud of the mandate it has been given and proud to express the views that it has been elected to express.

It is important that all honourable members be aware of the implications of the Bill. When the Minister for Police and Emergency Services spoke, he attempted to run down the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria and to demean the authority of that council. Whenever the Minister quoted the council, he criticized it. I was disappointed to come across a letter from one of the honourable members representing Thomastown Province in another place, Mr Kennan, who has attempted to ridicule the council, which represents sporting bodies in Victoria. The letter from Mr Kennan is a reply to Mr Brown, an officer of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria. After thanking Mr Brown for his letter of 28 March and his response to the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, Mr Kennan states:

You claim in the enclosures to your letter to be expressing views which are representative of shooters and shooting sports. However I am not at all clear, nor are my colleagues, as to the present standing of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria. I noticed that the address on the top of your letter of the 23 March, 1983 is at least the third address given for the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria in the last twelve months and I would be assisted in evaluating your comments, if you could provide me with the following information:

(*a*) A copy of the Constitution of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria.

(*b*) The manner in which you were elected as Chairman of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria and a copy of the minutes of the meeting at which you were elected Chairman.

Those comments typify the discussions that were held with the shooting bodies. The letter continues:

(*c*) An up to date financial statement of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria and the Audited Statement for the Council for the year ending 30 June, 1982.

(*d*) The names of the organizations which are members of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria.

(*e*) An indication as to whether or not your submission contained under cover of your letter of the 28 of march, 1983 was adopted by any appropriate body of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria or/and if it was ratified by any organization, which was a member of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria.

(*f*) The number of individuals, if any who are members of the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria.

(*g*) Whether the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria has any, and if so what financial liabilities to any, and if so what other shooting organizations.

It is not my purpose in writing this letter to you, to debate with you, the numerous assertions and allegations which you make in your submission.

Mr Kennan refused to discuss the proposals the council had put forward. The letter continues:

—but it suffices to say that the Firearms Amendment Bill very faithfully translates the A.L.P. Policy on Firearms which was made extremely well known to the whole electorate, into Legislation. It is noteworthy that there is nothing in your submission which is any different from the propaganda which you were promoting prior to the election. Your attack on Mr. Buchan is quite unnecessary and it is of course quite erroneous. Mr. Buchan, contrary to your assertions, is highly qualified in a wide range of shooting sports and is very widely respected.

I should like the balance of that letter and the reply from the council incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave was granted, and the letters were as follows:

The Government through its interim Consultative Committee has been carrying on a wide range of consultations since the elections and I myself have spoken to a great number of persons interested in Firearms. I do not believe that views that you express are widely held by shooters. It is my belief that the Legislation is not only subject to wide support within the Electorate at large, but that responsible firearm owners in general support it.

I believe that you will receive, if you have not already received, an invitation to make submissions to the interim Firearms Consultative Committee on the Bill and if you think that there are other organizations which have not been invited to make submissions to the Interim Firearms Consultative Committee then let

me know if the names of those organizations and I will certainly arrange for them to be invited to make submissions to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

JIM KENNAN, M.L.C.

Thomastown Province

Care of Unit 25 Albert Square, 37–39 Albert Road, Melbourne, Vic. 3004.

April 15, 1983.

Mr J. Kennan, M.L.C., 16 May Road, Lalor, Vic. 3075.

Dear Mr Kennan,

Your letter of April 6, 1983 has been received and was considered by the Shooting Sports Council at its meeting on April 13, 1983.

The Council considered your letter impertinent and unworthy of an aspirant for the position of State Attorney-General. In view of its tone there was considerable debate about whether it even deserved a reply. However it was decided to provide you with the following information in relation to your questions.

(*a*) Copy of SSCV Constitution is attached.

(*b*) By a properly constituted meeting of the SSCV.

(*c*) Our financial statements are our business and are not available to parties who are blatantly hostile. Audited balance sheets have been adopted for the last financial year.

(*d*) Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria); Victorian Amateur Pistol Association; Antique and Historical Arms Collectors Guild of Victoria; Victorian Field and Game Association; Australian Deer Association; Victorian Rifle Association.

The Victorian Clay Target Association was a member but did not renew its membership for the current financial year. The VCTA still owes the SSCV a substantial sum of money as its share of approved expenditure while it was an active member of the organization.

(*e*) The submission was unanimously approved by all delegates present at a properly constituted meeting. Your Government ensured that there was not time to go back to each organization for ratification. It should be noted that delegates are either executive members of their affiliates or are empowered to act on behalf of their affiliates.

(*f*) The SSCV has member organizations only with representation based on membership numbers of each organization.

(*g*) The SSCV currently has no liabilities to any other shooting organization except in one case where a small liability is more than offset by a substantial debt owing to the SSCV by that organization.

You say the Firearms (Amendment) Bill faithfully translates ALP policy on firearms. We would ask which ALP policy, the official one or the one represented to the electorate by ALP spokesmen at the last State election.

We suggest you, as a lawyer, read both the Bill and the ALP policy again and you will see that there are significant differences—refer to air rifles for instance.

We then suggest you again read the Bill in conjuntion with the policy as represented to the electorate. We refer you to the attachments to our submission of March 28 if you have no other copy of these commitments. If you believe the press and the ALP paid advertisements which were properly authorized have misrepresented ALP spokesmen, we can play you recordings of your official spokesmen making similar commitments in person.

Some of our delegates have indicated a wish to publish your letter for the benefit of their members. To meet publishing deadlines would you please advise within 7 days if you have any objection to your letter being published.

The contents of this letter have been approved by a properly constituted meeting of the SSCV.

Yours faithfully,

PHIL G. BROWN, Chairman.

Mr McNAMARA—After reading that letter, I was interested to discover whether those persons who are involved in the practical use of firearms have the same attitude as the Sporting Shooters Council of Victoria. Therefore, I convened a meeting at Benalla, which was attended by representatives of shooting bodies in north-eastern Victoria. When the various complaints that the council put forward were discussed, they were supported unanimously. The people involved at the grass roots level hold exactly the same concern as that expressed to Mr Kennan.

The Government claims that it had a close working relationship when drafting the Bill with the people involved in the use of firearms. However, I should like to quote from a press release, which states:

One man who owns three rifles and a shotgun who is not "going paranoid" about the ALP's gun policy is Mr Tom Edmunds.

Mr Edmunds, MLA for Ascot Vale, is Labor's spokesman on the portfolio of police and emergency services.

. . . .

"For instance in my case I have a Lee-Enfield ·303 rifle as a war service souvenir."

He will lose that rifle because it is a military weapon. The article states:

I also have a single-barrel 12-gauge shotgun.

I hope the barrel is not shortened because that will go too. When in opposition, the

then honourable member for Ascot Vale—the present Speaker—was the spokesman for the Australian Labor Party on police and emergency services. However, half of his armoury will go out the window. The Government claims that this policy, which it put forward when in opposition, has been carried faithfully through in government and brought to fruition in the Bill. It is a shabby argument that has been put before the House. No one who has seen the press releases produced and heard what the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has proposed could claim that the Bill is a correct reproduction of the firearms policy espoused by the Labor Party when in opposition. It is a complete sham.

The National Party does support parts of the Bill. One area that all honourable members would support would be the proposal to implement more instruction in the use of firearms. That is a long overdue improvement. The cooling-off provision is an interesting proposal that I support. That provision would give a person a chance to think over the purchase of a firearm. However, it is education and not registration that is needed.

Victoria is being over-governed. Recently the Victorian Law Institute claimed that the amount of legislation being passed by the Victorian Parliament in particular was overwhelming for the average person to keep up to date with. This is an area where the Government must use common sense and not the big stick. The Government must treat people as sensible adults rather than as children.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Bill, when passed, will reduce domestic violence. In a domestic violence situation in a home, if a gun is lying around, it may be used, but if no gun is lying around, either a knife or a brick or something else will be used and the same tragic train of events will occur. The community should be educated towards better standards of behaviour, but the Government has not acted in that regard.

The Government has ignored the treatment of the criminal element. The Government is using a vindictive approach towards honest citizens and placing them under all sorts of threats if they do not conform to Government legislation.

However, the Government is doing nothing about the person who uses a firearm to rob a bank; it has done nothing to increase the penalty for that offence. I thought honourable members were trying to achieve a reduction in the use of firearms for violent purposes, but the Bill simply attacks innocent people.

Some areas need tightening up. A couple of years ago, a solicitor told me that, under a permit for a "C" grade weapon, a person in the Seymour area had a cannon and was discharging beer cans filled with concrete. Apparently, that was quite legal because a "C" grade permit has no upper limit. It is obvious that that area needs some tightening up.

The proposal for a central register may sound good on face value, but some matters need to be considered. The example in West Germany should be remembered where the terrorist group, Bader Meinhof, one of the most notorious terrorist groups in Europe, got hold of the central registry and determined what weapons it wanted. The group knew exactly where to go because it had the register and it knew the type of weapons it wanted and where they were stored. A number of people were violently injured in the theft of those weapons. The proposal for a central registry does not completely benefit the community, and both sides of the issue must be examined.

The Labor Party is trying to create a division between the Sporting Shooters Council of Victoria and the shooting clubs. People involved in sporting clubs and the 45 people at the public meeting I convened agreed 100 per cent with the proposals of the council.

There is a suggestion that registration does not lower the crime rate. Western Australia has the toughest registration provisions in Australia and has the highest crime rate. Tasmania has the most liberal provisions regarding firearms—one can even own a machine gun—and that State has the lowest crime rate. In England, legislation has led to the operation and use of firearms for sport and has resulted in that sport being enjoyed only by the rich elite. That is one thing I am sure the Labor Party would not like to see

happen. It is a fact of life that when fees are introduced they escalate severely.

The Government has stated that it will charge $1 for each firearm to cover the cost of registration. Only twelve months ago, honourable members were told that the Government would charge a fee of $10 to cover the registration of farm vehicles. Registering a farm vehicle is far simpler than registering firearms, but the Government says it can do that for $1 but cannot register a farm vehicle for less than $10. In future, the fee will be $10 for firearms and no honourable member can convince me that the Government will not say that the cost for registration is higher than what it anticipated and will make it $10, $20 or $30. The Government keeps informing the House that its members are reasonable people, but honourable members have seen that reasonableness and certainly it has not been to the benefit of Victoria.

In 1968, a system of fees for firearms was introduced in England. The fee started at 2/6d and it now stands at 31 pounds. That is an increase of 248 times the original amount.

There is no evidence that registration will achieve the benefits that the Government claims. The National Party supports the proposals to improve the knowledge of people using firearms—this is a step forward. It supports the cooling-off period, but many anomalies are contained in the Bill.

There is a proposal to include air rifles under the description of firearms. Many parents have started their children off in the use of firearms by educating them in the use of an air rifle and teaching them the fundamentals on that basis. An air rifle will now be classed as a firearm, and that is a backward step. A great deal of doubt exists as to how wide the description of an air rifle will extend. Proposals have been made that pressure packs and toys which project corks could also be included.

All honourable members realize that the proposed legislation is extremely sloppy. The National Party is trying to point out to the Government the great number of faults in the Bill and that there is a better way of approaching the proposal. Honourable members should not place Victorian citizens under threat of acting in a criminal way; we should be ensuring that firearms are operated in a safe manner but not placing honest, law-abiding citizens in the category of criminals.

Another proposal that is concerning people is that the Bill provides that permits "may" be granted rather than "shall" be granted. What does that mean? Does it mean that an individual who is testing a person may have a personal dislike or grudge against that person and may not issue a permit? If a person qualifies for a permit in all aspects, the person should be automatically granted that permit.

Another proposal concerns safe storage of firearms. Will the Government require everyone to construct strong rooms or purchase a large safe or will it let people lock them away in the cupboard? The Bill does not clarify this. The proposed legislation is ambiguous and wide open.

The proposal of including air rifles within the definition of firearms could cause problems as air rifles with shorter barrels could be described as pistols. The whole proposition is straightforward. The National Party has a strong mandate on the Bill. Members of the National Party have been clear and consistent; we have not changed our attitude since the election. The Bill must be changed drastically from the form it is currently in.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—It is disappointing that no one on the Government benches is prepared to defend this Bill and to support the Minister in this controversial measure which has received a lot of criticism. Government members are prepared only to interject in the background, and to make comments denigrating people who are putting forward views that they hold very strongly. The National Party believes this is most controversial legislation that will have far-reaching effects on all Victorians.

Like other members of Parliament, I have had strong representations from organizations and individuals in the electorate I represent, and from throughout the State. The National Party is totally opposed to the Government's plan to register all firearms in Victoria. This was stated by the National Party before the election last year. In the seats where there were National Party candidates there was a strong vote, and candidates were returned with an increased majority.

If law-abiding citizens want to purchase firearms, they should be allowed to do so without the permission of a public servant, whoever that might be. This Bill will have no effect in reducing crime in Victoria, and to suggest that criminals will register their firearms before committing a crime is too stupid even to contemplate. Taking away the rights of law-abiding citizens to purchase firearms of their choice is opposed to the policy of the National Party. It must not be forgotten that this procedure will create a huge cost that will have to be borne by the people who register the firearms and by the State of Victoria.

The Minister said in his second-reading speech that there will be a once-only fee to register a firearm. That, again, is too ridiculous to suggest when one considers the fees being charged by this Government and all Governments for the services provided for the citizens of Victoria. I really think the Minister cannot believe what he has stated in the second-reading notes, and I will deal with that in detail in a few moments.

What is the Government's objective in wanting to register all firearms within Victoria? That is what Parliament must analyse. The history of gun legislation in Victoria is interesting. In 1953, the Premier at the time, John Cain senior, brought in gun registration. That carried on for a number of years. In the mid-1960s, the Statute Law Revision Committee, in two reports, concluded that there was no value in gun registration and that it should be taken off the statute-book. The result was that in 1972 a shooter's licence was introduced and gun registration was removed. I would like the Minister to explain why there is a need for the registration of guns when, for a period of nineteen years, there was gun registration, but two reports of the Statute Law Revision Committee recommended that it be removed and be replaced by a shooter's licence.

One has only to read the second-reading notes to see the problems confronting the Government and the Minister with this Bill and to see the anomalies in these notes.

The Minister, first of all, mentioned that the Government was given a mandate by the community to introduce legislation in relation to firearms and to establish an interim firearms consultative committee. That is too stupid for honourable members to believe and accept. Certainly the Liberal Party put forward a policy on firearms in the weeks leading up to the last election, but that policy has been changed dramatically. I would like the honourable member who is interjecting to read the submissions of the sporting shooters, because I wish to quote other letters and I do not want my time to run out.

The Minister said that all interested parties were consulted and that the proposed legislation developed and refined the stated policy put forward prior to the election. In other words, there was a committee supposedly listening to all interested parties. The stated policies were changed when the new Minister and the Government came into power.

The Minister states that there has been an escalation within the community of firearms. He has given no facts and figures to back this up. He seems to imply that if firearms have to be registered there will be a reduction in crime. The Minister would need to produce evidence from other parts of the world to convince honourable members that the registration of firearms will reduce crime. To think that a criminal will register a firearm before committing a crime is too ridiculous for words. Members of the National Party do not believe it.

The Minister also states in the second-reading notes that a large number of firearms are in the hands of people who have no knowledge of how to use them. The National Party believes people should be educated in the use of firearms and that this can be done through the shooter's licence. The registration of guns will not bring this about. The Minister said:

> An applicant for a shooter's licence will be required to pass a test of his knowledge of firearms laws and safe practices and to satisfy the issuing officer that he has a good reason to possess a particular type of firearm or different types of firearms before a licence to possess those firearms is issued.

Once again, the National Party agrees with the Government's objective, but the way to achieve that objective is through education in the schools, through safety courses, and through shooting clubs generally.

The National Party states that is the way the Government should go, but the Government then indicates that a restriction will be placed on the ownership of firearms to a

number consistent with the legitimate needs of a licensed shooter. People involved as gun collectors in the various shooting clubs find that proposal abhorrent. Many of them own large numbers of guns which they use within sporting clubs and hold as gun collectors. If I were involved in those clubs as a shooter, I would be opposed to legislation which would restrict the number of guns available to me.

The Firearms Act presently provides for a farm permit for a shooter. The Bill proposes to abolish the farm permit. That will certainly be to the detriment of people living in country Victoria and farmers operating in Victoria. The Minister has said:

> I am aware of rumours circulating amongst the shooting fraternity that the proposed registration system is an annual taxing device.

I agree and believe the Minister honestly considers that the Bill will not be used as a taxing device. Considering what has happened in Victoria in the past with different Governments, that undertaking certainly will change soon because the Government will find that the $1 registration fee for a gun will not be enough to cover the cost of operating the system and will not provide sufficient funds for the appeal mechanism provided in the proposed legislation.

The honourable member for Benalla mentioned the fee for the registration of vehicles that was debated in Parliament in the last sessional period. It was suggested that it be raised to $10 as an annual fee. In response to questions I put to the Minister, he indicated that it was to cover the cost of administration. It was suggested that the minimum administration to register a vehicle on an annual basis would be $10. It is ridiculous to suggest that the registration fee proposed in this Bill should be $1 on a once-only basis. I suggest that will be raised dramatically and quickly and will be used as an annual taxing device. The Minister further stresses that the measure is a once only registration fee and will not be imposed on an annual basis.

I point out to the Minister that under the fisheries and wildlife legislation the registration of bird parks for the holding of native birds was introduced in 1978 as a once-only fee of $30. At that time the Minister said that in 1978 the Fisheries and Wildlife Division would impose a registration fee on bird parks for the keeping of native birds as a once-only registration fee of $30. That has changed over the years and in the current financial year the registration fee on an annual basis for a bird park is $150. That is the sort of change that Governments make and the sorts of commitments on which changes are made. I do not believe for one moment that the registration fee will be a once-only fee on guns. The Minister has stated that it will not be imposed annually.

If the legislation reaches the statute-book, in years to come I shall repeat that sentence to the Minister and indicate that the Government has changed what he stated categorically in the second-reading speech. Like most honourable members, I have received strong representations on the Bill from a number of people involved in shooting and shooting clubs, and also from individuals. I shall quote one letter from a constituent in Yarrawonga. It states:

> Whilst I am not a member of a gun club any more I am still strongly opposed to any form of ridiculous gun legislation as proposed by the Labor Government.
>
> Whilst reading the *Border Morning Mail* dated 3 May 1983, I could not believe the couple of quotes by the State Premier Mr Cain.
>
> Firstly—"It is directed at making it harder for criminals to obtain weapons."

The response of the constituent is:

> I treat that quote as an insult to my intelligence, surely Mr Cain is not niaive enough to believe these "criminals" will apply for a licence before robbing a bank. I have spoken to a lot of people, some staunch Labor supporters among them, and they all have stated that they do not believe that stricter gun laws will keep guns out of criminal hands.

Another comment of the Premier that he quoted was:

> No responsible citizen will have his or her liberty threatened by this sensible, reasonable legislation.

Honourable members have heard the Premier on other occasions saying that he is a reasonable man. If he is a reasonable man, he will reconsider the Bill. The constituent states:

> As far as I am concerned Mr Cain has some mighty strange ideas on what is considered sensible and reasonable legislation. One can only hope that any other laws that he may be considering amending for our own good are looked into a lot better and are less biased than those he is trying to enforce on sporting shooters.

I shall mention another letter that I sent to the Minister and quote some sentences from the letter written by a constituent at Wangaratta. It is addressed to me and states:

> I appeal to you as a fair minded Australian . . . I believe I am a fair minded Australian . . . to strongly oppose the Victorian Government's proposed amendments to the Firearms Act.
>
> Being a pistol shooter, hunter and antique firearm collector, I am alarmed and sickened by the serious proposals of these socialist, un-Australian people in Government to restrict and jeopardize the interests of law abiding gun lovers as myself.
>
> Criminals will not register their firearms so registration will do nothing to inhibit crime.
>
> I urge you to support more stringent penalties for gun related crime and any legislation that will ensure more responsible use of firearms.

It is interesting to read one or two sections of the Minister's response to that letter, which I received only this morning. The Minister indicated that the Bill resulted from the concern of the Government and the community that, under the present system of controls, unlimited numbers of firearms are too easily obtainable by people who have little or no knowledge of firearms or safe precautions in the handling of firearms. I reiterate again that surely education is the way to overcome the problem which has been suggested in the reply by the Minister, and to control the people who use firearms through the shooter's licence that is operative at present. The letter states:

> This easy availability has led to an escalation in the number of firearms in the community which in turn increases the potential for abuse, be it the use of firearms in the commission of crime or the accidental misuse of firearms.

Again, the Minister has given no figures to suggest that there has been a huge escalation in the number of firearms. It appears that the Minister wants to restrict firearms, where they may perhaps be used for some devious means in the future. I am not sure exactly what that might be. He also states:

> It is the view of the Government that a large number of firearms in the hands of those with little knowledge of how to use them safely and responsibly is most undesirable.

I agree that education is necessary. The provisions of the Bill are based on that premise and will require an applicant for a shooter's licence to pass a test on his knowledge of firearms including safety precautions. The National Party supports the contention that better control over firearms can be obtained in Victoria by education and by the effect of the shooter's licence.

The last sentence of the comment by the Premier states:

> These are not designed to restrict the legitimate use of firearms but reflect the Government's desire to restrict the proliferation of firearms in the community and to better educate potential users of firearms for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Surely all honourable members agree with that but would not agree with the method proposed to be implemented by the Government. The letter from the Wangaratta Small Bore Rifle Club indicates:

> Our club strongly supports the National Party's opposition to amendment of the existing firearms laws in the proposed form . . .

The secretary of the club makes four points in the letter. One is:

> The legislation presupposes that reducing the extent of firearms misuse both accidental and deliberate can be achieved by reducing the rate of increase of firearm ownership in the community.

The club does not believe the proposed legislation will assist in reducing the crimes associated with or misuse of firearms in the community.

The second point made by the secretary is that a licensed shooter must satisfy a police officer each time he wishes to purchase an additional firearm and must also convince the police officer that he needs a firearm in that particular category.

The third point is that the secretary considers that many words contained in the proposed legislation are vague and need clarification if the Bill is to be enacted. That supports the contention of the National Party that the Bill should be withdrawn and honourable members should be seeking greater consultation with all the people involved with shooting organizations and, in particular, individuals and people living in country Victoria before the proposed legislation is enacted in any shape or form. The last point made by the secretary in the letter is that:

> The Bill as a piece of legislation appears to be hastily prepared, ill informed, ineffective, and designed to be pushed through Parliament under the guise of a "mandate from the people" to achieve two goals which are

totally irrelevant to improving the responsible use of firearms.

The secretary names the two points, which are:

(1) to score the political point of being able to say "we promised to amend the firearms Bill and we have done it" and (2) to raise revenue.

Those are surely the strong points that should be made. I am also informed that in New Zealand proposals have been put forward to change the gun registration. This has been under the advice of the New Zealand Police Force. Surely the Minister could investigate that area and perhaps obtain further information to ascertain why it is now proposed in New Zealand that the gun registration will be scrapped and that consideration is being given to implementing a shooter's licence to replace that system. The shooter's licence is also operative in Victoria.

Control on shooters by issuing a shooter's licence is a more logical method of controlling firearms in Victoria. Control by education incorporating a basic course on safety as well as other aspects may be effective in training people in the proper use of firearms. I reiterate the total opposition of the National Party to the Bill.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Some of the comments by honourable members during the debate on earlier occasions are worth commenting on, but in particular I shall refer to one comment made by the honourable member for Morwell, who stated that the people who were opposing the Bill were members of the Opposition and the National Party who have belonged to professions which are gravely concerned about the level of firearm abuse in the community.

It would appear that that statement probably highlights the views of the members of the Government when they talk about firearm abuse in the community. They have become so confused in this situation that they do not realize that there is extremely little firearm abuse. Of course, one can go to one extreme and talk about the spotlight shooters or week-end shooters who go to distant properties in country Victoria and shoot just for fun, or the few people who shoot at road-side signs and the like, but one could also go to the other extreme and mention the unfortunate case at Broadmeadows recently where a qualified and highly trained police officer made the classical error of pointing a pistol at another member of the force at the police station. As a result a death was caused. The mind boggles when one considers the average individual in Victoria being educated to use firearms, when a highly trained member of the Police Force made the fatal mistake of committing the unforgivable sin of pointing a loaded pistol at someone.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hockley)—Order! The less said about that matter the better because it will be the subject of litigation at a future date.

Mr WHITING—I appreciate that, but I was making a passing reference to the point that that situation did occur. The Government is trying to shackle the whole of the shooting community in Victoria because of the actions of a few people in the community who, with some education, could probably improve their standards of firearm handling. But the average person who has owned or used firearms over the years would not need that education because he is already extremely careful with firearms and is aware of the dangers that can occur if the firearms are ill used.

A number of provisions in the Bill are totally opposed by the National Party because the few good points contained in the Bill are so smothered in other parts that this makes them almost unworkable. Therefore, the National Party opposes the Bill completely. It is unbelievable to discover that not only is there to be a 100 per cent increase in fees, which is bad enough, for pistol licences and other licences that are to be applied under the Bill, but I am informed that most pistol clubs send all their pistol registration applications away in bulk so they can be registered reasonably easily under that system.

All the details are supplied to the central pistol registry and no serious problems are experienced by that registration body. Therefore, there can be no justification for the incredible increase in the renewal of pistols in any other cases, as provided for in clause 10 (2) (*d*). It has also been pointed out that those organizations that are involved in the security operations around the State, such as Mayne Nickless and various other groups that are available on a

professional basis for security have a bulk licensing system that applies on 21 February each year. One particular group has approximately 25 pistols. These groups can see no justification for the increase from $10 a pistol to $50.

Those organizations are facing tremendous strain on their operational costs at present partly due to the financial institutions duty that has been levied by the Government, as well as company tax and so on. Because they are handling large transfers of money almost every day of the week, the organizations find that any additional impost on overhead costs causes them to reduce their operations and possibly go out of business. I cannot imagine why the Government has decided on such a steep unjustified increase in the case of pistols, other than a first pistol, by a member of a pistol club. Pistol clubs have extremely strict rules on the use and storage of pistols and it is hard to understand the attitude of the Government in increasing the licence fee to that level.

Mr Mathews—It has not been increased since 1969.

Mr WHITING—That makes no difference. It was still $10. If the Government believes any other firearms can be registered for $1 once only, surely it will find the actual cost of the collection in that situation greater than the fee charged. The Government will find that the $50 fee for a pistol licence would be far outside the context of the actual cost of providing a licence. If that is the reason for the increase, it is fair enough. I hope the Minister can convince me that it costs $50 to provide a licence for one pistol. Obviously it does not and therefore one can only deduce that security firms and pistol club members requiring more than one pistol, either for sport or for commercial purposes, are being subject to a sheer taxing measure. I do not see any reason why they should be discriminated against.

The other provisions that have been rightly criticized are those contained in clause 11, which allow for the registrar or any authorized officer of the police, to grant a shooting licence to an applicant. The fact that the person "may" issue that licence indicates a discretionary power to say "Yes" or "No". There are six categories listed for qualification for the granting of a shooter's licence. The qualification that a person be not under the age of 18 years is reasonable. The qualification that the person must have good reason to possess a firearm is not good enough. That provision is far too wide. What is a good reason? Is the reason of duck shooting a good reason? Many people fire a tremendous number of shots at ducks and achieve a small bag. In those cases perhaps they could be called "bird frighteners". Paragraph (*d*) provides that a shooter's licence may be granted to an applicant who—

> is of good character and has not been convicted of an indictable offence or an offence punishable on summary conviction by imprisonment for not less than three months.

I cannot agree with that and I am amazed that the members of the Government party, particularly the Minister for Community Welfare Services, have agreed to that provision.

One hears a great deal of discussion about the rehabilitation of former prisoners and people convicted of various offences. However, the Bill seeks to prevent them taking up a sport in which they may be interested. This may be a suitable method of rehabilitating a person back into the community and, purely because of the offence, he or she will be prevented from obtaining a shooter's licence. The Government is using a sledge hammer to crack a walnut. That is totally out of context with the general thinking of the Government on the rehabilitation of former prisoners. I am surprised that members of the Government party have not taken up this issue because the policy has been espoused on a number of occasions. In this instance, the Government is walking away from its rehabilitation policy for former prisoners.

Honourable members have spoken about various provisions in the Bill and I propose to go into the detail of some of them. I shall also refer to a letter I received from the secretary of the Sunraysia Branch of the Victorian Field and Game Association, Mr Brian Hine. He asked a series of questions about the Bill.

Because some members of the club live in New South Wales, do they have to register their guns in Victoria although they live interstate? Will they be able to obtain a continuous permit to use guns in Victoria, especially at branch target shoots? Those questions have not yet been answered. The

Minister may be able to answer them, but he is not in the Chamber at present.

The Sunraysia branch also asks what will become of the proposed $1 million raised from the registration of firearms. As yet this has not been clearly answered. I hope that at least the profits will be used for the benefit of the sporting activities of shooters. If that can be achieved, some of the heated opposition against the Bill might be removed.

The branch also mentioned the three-week cooling-off period after obtaining a permit to purchase a firearm and the fact that this will stop the purchase of a selected firearm at large shooting competitions. For example, at the 1982 national field and game championship held in Sunraysia on 30 and 31 October, Winchester had a display caravan of firearms and associated equipment. A number of sales were made to licensed shooters from Victoria and interstate. Approximately 464 shooters participated in the championship and each shot at 100 targets. One wonders if there is any future in gun suppliers attending championship shoots to illustrate the latest shooting equipment and hoping to make sales. Under the provisions of the Bill, it seems that that will not be possible.

The branch also asks whether a Victorian dealer will still be able to sell to an interstate shooter without waiting three weeks. In the river towns on the border of New South Wales and South Australia, interstate people will walk into dealers' shops to purchase firearms. I presume the dealer will have to say, "You will have to wait three weeks, the same as Victorians". If that were the case, the prospective purchasers would have to consider whether they still want to make a purchase and return to the dealer. Obviously they would go to a dealer in New South Wales or South Australia and that trade will be lost to Victoria. The Minister and the Government do not seem to worry about that. These matters have not been thought through.

The branch also asks what will happen to prohibited weapons. Will they be confiscated? I presume the answer will be, "Yes". Before the election, the honourable member for Ascot Vale said that he had a ·303 rifle which he was keeping for sentimental reasons. What will happen if that becomes a prohibited weapon?

Obviously, changes will, from time to time, be made to the list of prohibited weapons. A shotgun with a barrel of less than 20 inches may be legal this week but illegal next week. Who will collect those guns? Will they be left in the hands of their present owners, or what will happen to them?

The sitting was suspended at 12.1 *a.m. (Wednesday) until* 12.33 *a.m.*

Mr WHITING—Prior to the suspension of the sitting, I was discussing the provisions of the Bill concerning the qualifications for obtaining a shooter's licence.

I wish now to raise again the question that has been referred to by the Sunraysia branch of the Victorian Field and Game Association—the matter of determining that a person has a good knowledge of firearms law and the safety practices relating to firearms. The association asks when police will have time to give and assess examinations in firearms knowledge. I assume the officer concerned would be of the rank of sergeant, senior sergeant, and officers of that rank are fairly scarce in some country areas. Where will people obtain the training to help them pass these tests? Who will draw up the examination? The Sunraysia branch of the association points out that it takes that branch one half-day a week for ten weeks to raise novices to a standard that is considered safe. These are new members coming into the association to take part in simulated field shoots. Those persons spend half a day a week for ten weeks training in the use of firearms before they are regarded as being ready to shoot in their own right and, to the association's knowledge, safe to handle firearms under any circumstances.

The next point I raise about the qualifications for obtaining a shooter's licence concerns the requirement that the person will ensure that the firearm or firearms are securely stored when not in use. The Bill does not define what is intended by the words "securely stored". One could believe that firearms may be required to be locked in a cupboard or cabinet of some sort. However, in many country homes, ·22 calibre rifles or shotguns often hang on a nail on the wall. The specific requirement is not

spelt out in the Bill. That makes one wonder just exactly where we are heading with this type of Bill.

The Minister states that he has had discussions with shooting organizations and persons who are concerned about the ramifications of the Bill. Does he consider the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria to be one of those organizations? Presumably he does not, because I am informed that, on 18 April 1983, Mr Phil Brown, the chairman of that council, had delivered to the Minister a letter asking for discussions with him, and is yet to receive a reply.

Mr Mathews—He appeared before the consultative committee on that day.

Mr WHITING—I am talking about discussions with the Minister with regard to the Bill. Surely it is fair that shooting organizations should be able to come to the Minister and discuss with him the ramifications of the Bill. That obviously has not occurred with regard to that council. It is fair enough for the Minister to say that somebody appeared before the consultative council.

Mr Mathews—I am sorry; three representatives of that organization appeared before the council on that day.

Mr WHITING—That is slightly different. One would have thought the Minister could at least have replied to the chairman of the council pointing out that its representatives had already appeared before the consultative council and that there was consequently no need for him to see the chairman. I understand that the Minister has not yet replied to that letter.

I have a letter from the Shire of Dimboola, dated 3 May, which is addressed to the honourable member for Lowan and to me. It refers to the Bill and states:

> I wish to advise that the Council, at its last meeting and at a subsequent committee meeting, considered the above Bill in detail and resolved to oppose the whole Bill in principle.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> It would be appreciated if you could oppose the Bill on behalf of the Council.

I also have received a letter from the Secretary of the Mildura Pistol Club, Mr Stan Nemstas, who states:

> The need for stringent pistol licencing is acknowledged and we believe the current system is already adequate particularly in regard to initial licencing and bulk annual renewals. However we consider that because our pistols are part of a recognised sport, renewal licence fees should be waived. We are in agreement that an initial fee of $5 is reasonable for the first pistol.

A number of members of that club have signed the letter, and they are obviously not happy with the Bill.

I have also received a letter from a person in the Mildura area, the managing director of a large firm, who is a pistol shooter. He makes a couple of points that are relevant:

> 1. The increase in Public Servants to control firearms properly would be enormous.
>
> 2. The legislation is too late. The firearms are already in the community. A lot of otherwise honest people will not register their firearms as they will be concerned that they may have them confiscated in the future, and I am sure that would be the idea behind the left wing of the Labor Party. This would make otherwise honest people law breakers. People tend to break a law if they consider it a bad one.
>
> 3. The crime rate will not alter one bit. To think that criminals have in the past or will in the future use registered firearms is laughable. It would be safe to assume that all firearms used by criminals are stolen or illegal now and in the future.

Obviously, his views are extremely strong.

A number of comments were made prior to the last election by various members of the Government party when in opposition and they endeavoured to point out that the proposed legislation would be quite harmless and would not adversely affect the community. An article that appeared in the *Bendigo Advertiser* prior to the State election states:

> State Labor candidate for Bendigo, Mr David Kennedy, yesterday defended his party's firearms' policy.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Gun owners who use their weapons properly and look after them properly will be able to have as many firearms as they wish.

The honourable member for Bendigo did not go on to say that they could have as many firearms as they wish so long as they could afford to pay for them. The honourable member referred to a meeting and stated that:

> The Police and Emergency Services Minister, Mr Granter, had been challenged to join his Opposition counterpart, Mr Tom Edmunds, at a public meeting tonight in Bendigo on firearms' legislation.

The meeting, convened by the Bendigo Clay Target Club and the Bendigo Field and Game Association, will be held at the South Bendigo football clubrooms at 7.30.

Organizers have urged all firearm owners and shooting sportsmen to attend the meeting, which will be addressed by sportsmen, district Parliamentarians and A.L.P. parliamentary candidates.

Mr Kennedy said the Liberals were planning "far reaching changes to tighten gun laws", but was "trying to hide its plans until after the election."

It is easy to see what happened to the gun laws of the Liberal Party.

In the Geelong area, a group of people were photographed and the pictures appeared in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 29 March 1982. The pictures included the candidates for Geelong North, Geelong West, Geelong East, Geelong Province, South Barwon and Ballarat Province. In stating its election policies, the Labor Party posed the question of whether the party's gun laws would increase fees and confiscate guns. The answer given was:

Fees will NOT be increased and guns will not be confiscated under the Labor Government.

The Minister has indicated that prohibited weapons or ammunition will not be confiscated and that covers the first part of the question. However, it could not be stated that fees will not be increased because it has already been pointed out that a fee for a second pistol has increased from $10 to $50 a year.

The former Shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services for the Labor Party, Mr Edmunds, referred to Labor policy on firearms in a statement he made on 19 March 1982. It states:

There will be NO UPPER LIMIT on the possession of firearms by legitimate shooters.

A consultative committee comprised of representatives of all interested organizations (e.g. clubs, collectors and retailers) would be set up to advise a Labor Government on the implementation of policy.

. . . . . .

Registration will be "notational", requiring advice to a Central Firearms Bureau of the theft, transfer or disposal of a gun, and will assist in providing a record of all firearms and their whereabouts to reduce criminal activity where possible. Retailers are now obliged to keep a record of all firearm transactions. To extend this principle to private transactions is logical and fair.

To implement registration it is proposed that when a shooter's licence renewal notice is sent it would include a request to detail the firearms owned by a licensed holder, without additional cost.

Labor aims to reduce illegal activity with firearms that have resulted in unnecessary suicides, accidental death, injury and rural vandalism.

The last matter is a laudable aim for the Labor Party to have, but the National Party does not agree with the increased fees proposed in the Bill and will oppose both the amendment moved by the honourable member for Midlands and the Bill in its entirety.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The National Party has performed a remarkable somersault from the time when this Bill was first before the House and the debate this evening. Three weeks ago, the National Party was prepared to support the registration of firearms as the principle was expressed in the amendment moved by the honourable member for Midlands. Over the intervening period, members of the National Party have performed a total about-face to restore themselves to the position of troglodytism with which this community has always associated them.

It is to be deplored that this debate was brought to a new low by the interjection by the honourable member for Benalla when, by interjection, he stigmatized as a scab the President of the Melbourne Gun Club and the President of the Victorian Clay Target Association because that distinguished member of the sporting fraternity was prepared to accept appointment to the Interim Consultative Committee on Firearms legislation which this Government set up within weeks of coming to office pursuant to its election undertaking of an intensive and extensive process of consultation leading to the debate in which honourable members are currently engaged.

As I have said already, the National Party is behaving in character as we have always expected of it. I suspect that the party will win itself fewer friends than it supposes in country Victoria in the consequence of the stand it is now taking. Country people overwhelmingly are the ones in the community who will continue to suffer from misuse of firearms. It is country people who have their stock shot by irresponsible shooters; it is

country people who have their tanks punctured by irresponsible shooters; and I suggest it is country people who have an overwhelming interest in seeing responsible legislation of this sort on the statute-book.

I will examine in some detail the position of the Opposition on this matter because the Opposition too has performed a somersault regarding this matter—a somersault on the attitude it took when in government to the position it now takes in opposition. I will document from the public record the policy of the Liberal Party and the record of the party so far as firearms legislation and other matters dealt with in this proposed legislation are concerned.

At the 76th State Council meeting of the Liberal Party in March 1978, the motion was carried that all persons wishing to obtain a firearms licence pass a written test incorporating safety procedures and that the State laws regulate the use of firearms.

Mr Saltmarsh—What is wrong with that?

Mr MATHEWS—There is nothing wrong with it, it is in the Bill. At the 78th meeting of the State Council of the Liberal Party in November 1978 a resolution was passed that the obtaining of a firearms licence be made more difficult for people who have not a sound reason for the use of a firearm.

I hope the honourable member for Wantirna will interject again: What is wrong with that? There is nothing wrong with that and that, too is at the heart of the Bill that the Opposition now seeks to have withdrawn. The Liberal Party Government of the day very properly took heed of those two resolutions and to begin draft legislation. Honourable members know this because the honourable member for Murray Valley has told the House about the letter that he received on the subject. As recorded in *Hansard* of 6 May 1981, at page 8374, the honourable member for Murray Valley said:

> When I spoke during the second-reading debate, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was absent for part of my comments. I quoted from correspondence that I had received from the Minister and from the Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services and from the Acting Treasurer, the Premier, which stated that, since July last year, a committee has been examining all aspects of the firearms legislation with a view to firearms registration.

The then Minister for Police and Emergency Services replied that everything possible should be done by legislative action to ensure safe operation and to minimize loss of life and injury from indiscriminate or careless use of firearms. He went on to say:

> . . . I hope to introduce a Bill dealing with the matter in the early part of the Spring sessional period.

I should be surprised if the honourable member for Murray Valley will ever step inside the troglodytes den again, but, thanks to the intervention of the honourable member, it is known that the Liberal Party was preparing firearms legislation and it is on record that when put to the test in the pre-election period the Liberal Party went to water and that Bill was never brought forward. It never saw the light of day. I applaud the attempt that the Government of the day was taking on the matter. It was enlightened then—it is now benighted on these matters.

Other organizations in the community have taken a different attitude from the Liberal Party and I quote the policy of the Victoria Police Association, which reads:

> (*a*) That firearms are registered and licensed like cars;
>
> (*b*) That firearms instruction is to be given to applicants before the issue of licences;
>
> (*c*) That there ought to be control of the number of firearms a person can own with a *prima facie* maximum of three;
>
> (*d*) That the applicant ought to demonstrate that he or she can guarantee the security of the firearm by means of having a lock receptacle or some similar capacity in relation to the security of firearms.

That policy reflects the policy of the Federation of Australian Police Associations on this matter. Since members of the Opposition have raised doubts about the capacity of the Police Force to implement the arrangements of the Government, I add that Inspector Rippon, the Secretary of the Victoria Police Association, has stated publicly that the Police Force does not regard it as an intolerable burden and would be only too glad to have the opportunity of policing tighter gun legislation. I hope that puts beyond doubt for the House both the attitude of the organization whose representatives have the best opportunity and background for understanding the risks that the community runs in these matters and whose

members, too, will be called on to carry the brunt of the administration.

It is not surprising that that attitude is shared by members of the Australian Bank Employees Union who, again, are in the front line where these matters are concerned. Bank employees and the Police Force agree that registration is definitely useful and that it is achievable and implementable along the lines that the Government has brought before the House.

Doubt has been raised in the debate as to whether an adequate consultative process has been carried through in the preparation of the legislative measure. I shall describe to the House the stages of that process as I set them out, having been sworn in as Minister for Police and Emergency Services with responsibility for giving effect to the Government's gun registration policy for which so triumphant a mandate had been won after one of the most spirited single issue debates that the State has ever witnessed in a State election campaign. I said at the outset, and it was also publicly stated, that an interim consultative committee would be formed that was representative of the three groups in the community with most at stake. The Government selected first and foremost Mr Bob Buchan, President of the Melbourne Gun Club and President of the Victorian Clay Target Association, a man eminently qualified to bring a lifetime of experience in shooting and the use of firearms to the disposal of the interim consultative committee.

Secondly, I invited Chief Superintendent Ibbotson of the Victoria Police Force, from a district where the firearms registry is situated, a man responsible for firearms registration up to this point in the State, to join the interim consultative committee.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has 2 minutes.

Mr MATHEWS—Finally, I appointed the President of the Criminal Bar Association and now Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr John Phillips, QC, to that interim consultative committee.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—I move:

That there be an extension of time for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I need to advise the Minister that there is a procedure that he must undertake in respect of that motion and it is that he must seek leave.

Mr SIMPSON—I seek leave to move the motion that I have just enunciated.

The SPEAKER—Is leave granted? Leave is refused.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Leave was granted by the spokesman for the Opposition at the table.

The SPEAKER—I will clarify the matter. It needs only one individual in the House to say that leave is refused, and I heard the word "No" in a number of places. The Minister has 30 seconds.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—We then provided a period of the best part of a year in which written submissions were received. Those submissions were considered thoroughly in the drafting of the legislation.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—By leave, I move:

That the question of an extension of time for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services be recommitted to the House.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is not as simple as the honourable member for Forest Hill has proposed to the House. The question has been dealt with and the House, by refusing leave, made a decision in respect of the matter. I am in the hands of the Standing Orders the same as every other member of the House. The Minister is concluding his remarks.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The interim consultative committee drafted legislation.

The SPEAKER—The Minister's time has expired. The Minister has moved that the Bill be read a second time, to which the honourable member for Midlands proposed:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "this Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to—(*a*) provide the necessary resources and expertise for the adequate education and training of applicants and holders of shooters' licences in order to promote the safe and responsible use of firearms; and (*b*) reflect the Government policy on firearms, as announced during the last State election campaign.".

The question is that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. Those who support the amendment should vote "No".

Order! I desire to advise the House that there appears to be an electrical fault and we cannot ring the bells. If the House will pause,. we will try to have the matter rectified.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I submit that it is impractical to call a division when the bells are not ringing, because every honourable member has a right and a duty to vote, and if he or she has no idea that a vote is proceeding because we cannot ring the bells, the House should adjourn.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker. To assist the House I should have thought that your ruling of a moment ago was clear. We are in fact not in the process of a division at the moment. The House is pausing while someone finds a screwdriver to fix up the electrical apparatus, so I do not believe that you need to uphold the point of order which has been reasonably put to you by the Leader of the National Party, in view of the remark that you made when you discovered that the ding-a-ling was on the blink. I think you have covered that situation, Sir, and the House may reasonably pause whilst the matter is investigated.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I will rule on the point of order and the speech of the honourable member for Forest Hill, and ask for the House's indulgence so that the electrical fault can be discovered in respect of the ringing of the division bells. I am asking the House for its co-operation.

Ring the bells!

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Ebery to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	54
Noes	19
Majority against the amendment	35

AYES

Mr Cain
Mr Cathie
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Ernst
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Gavin
Mr Gray
Mr Hann
Mr Harrowfield
Mr Hassett
Mrs Hill
Mr Hill
Mr Hockley
Mr Ihlein
Mr Jasper
Mr Jolly
Mr Kennedy
Mr Kirkwood
Mr McCutcheon
Mr McDonald
Mr McGrath
Mr McNamara
Mr Mathews
Mr Micallef
Mr Miller
Mr Norris
Mr Pope
Mrs Ray
Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Rowe
Mr Seitz
Mrs Setches
Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Shell
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Steggall
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Mr Trezise
Mr Walsh
Mr Whiting
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton

Tellers:
Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Wallace

NOES

Mr Brown
Mr Burgin
Mr Delzoppo
Mr Ebery
Mr Jona
Mr Kempton
Mr Kennett
Mr McKellar
Mr Maclellan
Mrs Patrick
Mr Ramsay
Mr Reynolds
Mr Richardson
Mr Saltmarsh
Mrs Sibree
Mr Templeton
Mr Williams

Tellers:
Mr Dickinson
Mr Leigh

PAIRS

Miss Callister — Mr Lieberman
Mr Newton — Mr Tanner

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	45
Noes	28
Majority for the motion	17

AYES

Mr Cain
Mr Cathie
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Ernst
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Gavin
Mr Gray
Mr Harrowfield
Mr Hassett
Mrs Hill
Mr Hill
Mr Hockley
Mr Ihlein

AYES

Mr Jolly
Mr Kennedy
Mr Kirkwood
Mr McDonald
Mr Mathews
Mr Micallef
Mr Miller
Mr Norris
Mr Pope
Mrs Ray
Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Rowe
Mr Seitz
Mrs Setches
Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Shell
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Mr Trezise
Mr Walsh
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton

Tellers:
Mr McCutcheon
Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)

NOES

Mr Brown
Mr Burgin
Mr Delzoppo
Mr Ebery
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Hann
Mr Jasper
Mr Jona
Mr Kempton
Mr Kennett
Mr McGrath
Mr McKellar
Mr McNamara
Mr Maclellan
Mrs Patrick
Mr Ramsay
Mr Reynolds
Mr Richardson
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Saltmarsh
Mrs Sibree
Mr Steggall
Mr Templeton
Mr Wallace
Mr Whiting
Mr Williams

Tellers:
Mr Dickinson
Mr Leigh

PAIRS

Miss Callister — Mr Lieberman
Mr Newton — Mr Tanner

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 and 2 were agreed to.

Clause 3 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 3)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 3, sub-clause (1), page 1, line 20, after "designed" insert "or adapted".

This amends the interpretation of "firearm" so that it means any weapon designed or adapted to discharge shot or a bullet or other missile. The existing interpretation does not cover home-made articles that are not ordinarily used as weapons, such as metal pipes. The amendment of clause 3 will allow the Firearms Act to apply to weapons designed or adapted to discharge shot or a bullet or other missile.

Doubt has been raised in the debate about the possibility of a definition of "firearm" incorporating shanghais, popguns and a variety of children's toys. This view has been discussed in detail with Parliamentary Counsel and the advice of Parliamentary Counsel is that, because the existing interpretation is limited to weapons, the articles mentioned would not fall within the scope of the interpretation.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)— Having examined the amendments, I have no doubt that the Government has not had consultation. The amendments that have come forward now prove beyond a doubt that there has been no consultation. It would be quite easy for anyone to understand that these types of amendments would have been included in the Bill at the outset, if there had been consultation. I should like to quote from a letter to the editor which appeared in the *Age* of Saturday, 18 July 1981 from Mr J. Cain, MLA State Opposition spokesman on legal affairs in which he stated:

The practice in Victoria not to make legislation public before the second reading is childish, insulting and counter-productive.

All Governments should encourage public knowledge of legislation and participation by all in its framing, not frustrate it.

JOHN CAIN, Bundoora

The headline above the letter is "Secrecy in new laws is childish, insulting and counter-productive". When the Minister comes into this House at this late hour with amendments which would obviously not have to be made if reasonable consultations had taken place, I do not know how it is possible to allow this debate to go on with any responsible judgment on these amendments. I believe it is completely unacceptable, and therefore I move:

That progress be reported.

The motion was negatived.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Does the Minister wish to reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Midlands?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Thank you, Mr Chairman. I should like to reply to the honourable member for Midlands and the points he has raised about the consultation because I think he has misunderstood the nature of the consultative process. The

initial step in the consultative process, to which the honourable member for Midlands has now referred, was to provide a period of twelve months wherein the interim firearms consultative committee, the composition of which I have described to the House, considered written submissions and other material of record that was before it in the process of drafting legislation. That measure was then brought into the House for the second stage of the consultative process, in which all interested persons and groups were invited to make comments on the draft legislation as it lay on the table and to appear before the interim firearms consultative committee, if that was their wish, to enlarge orally on the propositon they had put forward. I have asked the committee for its advice on both the initial stages, and I am told by the committee that four meetings were held in the course of 1982 for the purpose of considering written material, in the process of draughting legislation and then, pursuant to the proposed legislation lying on the table, that a further meeting was held on 18 April to hear a number of interested persons and groups. The groups were as follows: Mr Tony O'Brien of the Firearms Owners Union who spoke to his written submission; the Victorian Clay Target Association; the Shooting Sports Council of Victoria, whose three representatives spoke to their written submissions, and the Deer Stalkers Association.

The interim firearms consultative committee met again to make a number of amendments in the light of those consultations which were taking place and now asks me to make the point that nobody has complained to the committee that they have been denied the opportunity of putting their views to the committee. The Director of Public Prosecutions chaired the meetings of the committee at whch the people whose names I have given appeared. It was then envisaged that there would be a further stage in the consultative process where there would be a second-reading debate on the Bill in this House, so that members of Parliament could have the opportunity of putting forward their views and suggestions for the proposed legislation. A number of members, including the honourable member for Polwarth, the honourable member for Midlands and the honourable member for Lowan, have in the course of the debate raised practical points to which the Government has paid heed and which are now incorporated in the amendments to the Bill which the Committee is now considering.

I point out that that has been a thorough and proper piece of consultation which meets fully the undertakings given by the former shadow spokesman for Police and Emergency Services, now a member of the Government party, who wrote:

> To ensure that no organization or individual is disadvantaged, interest groups such as pistol, rifle and gun clubs, farmers' associations and collectors will be requested to advise on drafting amendments to the Firearms Act.

The advice has been sought and received both in writing and orally in the process of the preparation of this Bill. It was never envisaged that we would do other than further improve what was already good proposed legislation by taking heed of the public comment and the Parliamentary comment which were forthcoming after the Bill had been introduced for the first time in the House and after the second-reading speech was delivered.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I thank the Minister for his comments about the consultative process but, at the same time, in the course of making comments about the amendment I moved during the second-reading debate on this Bill, he went to great lengths to justify the appointment of Mr Buchan on the consultative committee and criticized at length some of the comments made with regard to that matter.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! I allowed the honourable member for Midlands some latitude when he was first addressing the Committee and likewise to the Minister in his reply to those remarks. However, I now feel that I must insist on the honourable members coming back to the specific amendment that was moved by the Minister, which is a very small amendment and does not provide scope for getting into a detailed debate on the question of consultation. I believe this is not the appropriate time for that matter to be canvassed at length.

Mr EBERY—The point I was making is that if clause 3 is taken as an example, it is obvious that insufficient thought was given to the preparation of the Bill because it is

just common sense, particularly on the borrowing and lending of firearms——

The CHAIRMAN—Order! The amendment with which the Committee is dealing is the first amendment moved by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, which deals with the question of inserting after the word "designed" the words "or adapted". I must insist that honourable members confine their remarks to that amendment.

Mr EBERY—In that case, the Opposition will agree to this amendment, but I again point out that the consultative process has been lacking in this case.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 3, page 2, line 19, at the end of paragraph (*c*) insert:

'(iii) in the interpretation of "Pistol" the words "and the length of the barrel of which is not less than sixteen inches" are repealed; and'.

The Bill brings within the ambit of the Firearms Act all air guns and air rifles, so that any person who wishes to use these weapons must hold a shooter's licence and registered weapons. One effect of repealing the general exclusion of such weapons from the operation of the Act is to bring many air rifles under the interpretation of "pistol", as their barrels are less than 16 inches long. Amendments of this sort will have the effect of defining pistols as any firearms having an over-all length of less than 30 inches, irrespective of the length of the barrel, and that has nothing do with air rifles.

The metric conversion can be caught up with during the second round of amendments to the proposed legislation.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Opposition will agree to the amendment because it is common sense.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 3, page 2, lines 26–29, omit the words and expressions commencing with the expression ' "but' and ending at the end of the sub-clause and insert "but the provisions of section 22AA (1), 23 and 24 with respect to permits shall not apply to or with respect to the lending or borrowing of a firearm (other than a pistol)".

Section 3 (2) of the Firearms Act provides that the provisions of the Act dealing with selling or purchasing a firearm apply to the lending or borrowing of a firearm. Clause 3 (2) of the Bill as drafted provides that a person who lends or borrows a firearm is not required to forward a notice of acquisition or disposal to the registrar.

The amendment proposed to the clause will also exempt such persons from the requirement to obtain a permit to purchase a firearm which, technically, would be required in order to borrow a firearm, thus meeting one of the practical points for which I am indebted to members of the Opposition during the second-reading debate.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 4 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 4A)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 4, page 2, line 39, after "Act" insert "for".

Clause 4, page 2, line 41, omit "is repealed" and insert 'there shall be substituted the words "or any spear gun designed for underwater use" '.

The second amendment has the effect of excluding underwater spear guns which use compressed air as a propelling agent from the operation of the Act. The amendment is required as such weapons fall within the amended definition of firearm, but it is not intended that the spear guns be subject to the same controls as weapons commonly regarded as being firearms.

The amendments were agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 5 (Application of Act)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 5, page 3, lines 9 and 10, omit "pistol licences or".

In paragraph (*a*), the proposed sub-section (3A) has the effect of permitting licensed gun collectors to buy, sell or possess modern pistols without the necessity to obtain a pistol licence. This was not the intention of the Government in extending the authority of a gun collector's licence to enable modern rifles and shotguns to be collected. The amendment to the clause thus restores the requirement for all pistols to be subject to

registration and an individual pistol licence. As such it would have the concurrence of all honourable members.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 6 to 9.

Clause 10 (Permit for purchase of pistol before issue of licence)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 10, page 6, line 16, after "registrar" insert "or a pistol declared by the registar to be a curiosity or ornament only or an underwater powerhead".

At present there are a number of pistol licences held by pistol collectors which are conditional upon the holder not using the pistol. Under the amended fee structure in the Bill, such licences would attract an annual renewal fee of $50. As this fee is intended to apply only to pistols used commercially, the amendment to the clause will prescribe a fee of $5 in respect of pistols owned by collectors which, for the purposes of the Act, will be declared by the registrar to be curiosities or ornaments only.

The amendment also prescribes a fee of $5 for a pistol licence in respect of an underwater powerhead, which is a pistol-type weapon designed to stun sharks.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The amendment provides that there shall be a fee of $5, and I am not sure whether that is an annual fee. I ask the Minister to clarify that point. I also ask the Minister to clarify how it is to be declared by the registar to be a "curiosity or ornament only".

Quite often people could be in possession of one or two antique firearms that may be family heirlooms and they have no desire to purchase any more antique firearms. People may also have in their possession firearms which may have been used a number of years ago—50 to 100 years—during the wars by their grandfathers or great grandfathers. Are these people also to be charged for keeping those pistols.

Under those circumstances those firearms should not attract a fee when the Government stated that it would not increase the fees for those firearms. It is another glaring example of the costs that have to be borne by people who previously did not have to pay such a fee. A fee of $50 will be charged for each renewal of a pistol licence and $50 per annum will be charged for the non-antique pistols held and licenced by a collector for collecting purposes only. Clause 10 (2) (11) (*b*) states:

For the issue or renewal of a pistol licence with respect to a pistol owned by a sporting club or organization (other than a pistol club) approved by the registrar—$5;

That is for the renewal of a pistol licence but the issue of a pistol licence is $1 and for an additional licence, the cost has been increased by $2. That represents a 100 per cent increase for people who use pistols for practice and competitions.

Those people must have a number of pistols in their possession and are not usually the people the Government is trying to educate in firearm safety through the general thrust of its arguments. These people must register their firearms, yet they are not the criminal type. They belong to well organized and well patronized shooting associations but they will still have to carry the burden financially because of the proposed legislation.

The amendment will make it extremely costly for many individuals who patronize those clubs and handle firearms. These people understand the safety aspects of handling firearms but they will have to limit their operations if the amendment is agreed to. Those firearm owners need to have different firearms when competing. It is like trying to send a professional golfer out to play a round with two or three clubs.

The proposed legislation will create many increased costs for the recognized shooter who is not the person in the community the Government hopes will gain a better understanding of safer use and firearms controls.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The concession that is in the mind of the Minister with the introduction of the amendment seems to be a severe penalty to be borne by people who have a pistol that is declared by the registrar to be a curiosity or ornament only.

From my reading of the Bill, it seems that the owner of such curiosity or ornament will have to pay $5 a year for the privilege of keeping it.

Surely the registrar would not declare any weapon to be a curiosity or an ornament unless it were incapable of being fired. There

would have to be a very good reason for him making such a declaration.

In effect the Government is providing that it will charge a licence fee of $5 a year for an ornament. That is what it is—it has been declared by a qualified person to be an ornament, a curiosity that is incapable of being used, yet the Government is going to charge an ordinary citizen $5 a year to keep that curiosity or ornament in his home. That is an example of the consultation process in which the Government has engaged.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I can give the honourable member for Midlands and other honourable members an assurance that the clause does not apply to grandfather's pistol or to other firearms of an historic or classical nature, irrespective of whether they are long arms or pistols.

The provision applies to modern pistols capable of being fired. The amendment has been introduced to ensure that those weapons are not caught up in arrangements designed for pistols for commercial use as would have been the effect of the Bill in its original form, instead of them attracting the $50 fee that is established at the $5 annual level for modern pistols alone.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 10, page 6, line 18, omit "$5" and insert "$2".

The honourable member for Ripon referred to the Verey or flare pistols in his contribution to the second-reading debate. The licence fee for the issue or renewal of a pistol licence with respect to a pistol owned by a sporting club or organization—other than a pistol club—approved by the registrar is $5, the same as for the issue or renewal of a pistol licence with respect to a Verey pistol; an increase of $1 rather than the arrangement to which the honourable member for Ripon rightly raised objection in the second-reading debate.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 10, page 6, lines 21–25, omit the words and expressions on these lines and insert:

'(3) For section 22 (13) of the Principal Act there be substituted the following sub-section:

"(13) The fee to be paid for the issue of a pistol licence under sub-section (12) for a lesser period than twelve months shall be such fee (being not less than $1) as is prescribed with respect to the time the licence will remain in force.".'

This amendment restores the facility for issuing pistol licences to commercial undertakings for periods of less than twelve months and reduces the *pro rata* fee. This facility was omitted in the drafting of the Bill and if left unchanged would have the effect of requiring the full payment of $50 irrespective of the period for which the pistol was to be registered.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I ask the Minister whether my interpretation of the clause, as amended, means that a person in possession of a weapon declared by the registrar as being an ornament or a curiosity has to pay $5 a year for the privilege of keeping it?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The $5 fee prescribed under the amendment to which the honourable member for Gippsland East refers applies only to modern pistols. It keeps the modern pistol in the possession of a firearms collector in a category apart from the remainder of the collector's weapons in recognition of the fact that, as the law has always provided, modern pistols are a case apart from other firearms. That principle has been given explicit recognition in the fact that modern pistols had to be registered whereas long arms hitherto were exempt.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—As I read the sub-clause, as amended, it will read:

For the issue or renewal of a pistol licence with respect to a pistol owned by a sporting club or organization (other than a pistol club) approved by the registrar or a pistol declared by the registrar to be a curiosity or ornament only or an underwater powerhead—$5;

Can the Minister answer "yes" or "no"—is the owner of a pistol that is declared by the registrar to be a curiosity or an ornament required to pay $5 a year for the privilege of keeping it?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Apparently I failed to make myself clear to the honourable member. If the weapon is declared as a curiosity, it does not attract the registration fee but a modern pistol not so designated carries the fee.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—That is not the way I see it.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 11 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 22AA.)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 7, line 1, omit "may" and insert "shall".

This is an important amendment that goes to the heart of many of the objections raised in the course of the second-reading debate. The clause prescribes a list of criteria that must be met before an applicant is issued with a shooter's licence. Having satisfied the issuing officer on these points the clause provides that a licence may be issued. The Government has accepted the view advanced by shooting bodies that there should be no criteria other than those prescribed in the Act which should be used to refuse the issuing of a licence. A licence shall be granted to the applicant if he satisfies the requirements.

The clause is a clear indication of the bona fides of the Government so far as the consultative process is concerned.

The central importance of the difference between the word "may" and the word "shall" was raised by shooter organizations in the course of the consultations that followed the tabling of the proposed legislation in the House. It has been reiterated by a number of speakers in the course of the second-reading debate and the Government has accordingly taken it on board and incorporated it in the new legislation by way of amendment.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—This is the clause that the Opposition believes the Government walked away from following promises made prior to the election in 1982, because the difference between South Australian legislation and the proposed amendments to the Firearms Act are substantial.

The notational system in South Australia is a limited system and any person can purchase a gun and notify the authorities within fourteen days. The Bill is a reversal of that principle. A person wishing to purchase a firearm must show good reason and a whole range of other requirements are necessary, including a cooling-off period. The authorized officer has to be satisfied that the person is up to the standard required.

However, supposing I had a firearm which I believed was safely stored, and which was subsequently stolen, where is the mechanism in the Bill that makes it mandatory for the police to notify the authorized record keepers? It could be argued that if the firearm finishes up in the hands of a criminal, the records would show that it belonged to me. I would most likely be interrogated because it was my firearm. That point requires clarification.

This is where the Opposition parts company with the Government. I refer also to the three weeks' cooling-off period and the fact that there is not sufficient substance in the Bill to ensure the efficiency of those people who supply training in the safe use of firearms.

The dialogue of the Bill that the Minister has projected is probably sound, but the substance of the Bill does not provide the power to ensure that the criminal element will still not obtain guns. It proves beyond doubt that pistols must be registered. Pistols represent 3 per cent of the total number of firearms in the State and they are used in 40 per cent of the armed hold-ups. The general thrust of the Bill does not provide sufficient power for the authorities to act and sufficient penalties for people who use guns indiscriminately.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Common sense, I would have expected, would have lead the honourable member for Midlands to see the parallel between a stolen car and a stolen firearm where registration is concerned. Where a car is stolen, the procedure is for the owner to notify the police who thereupon automatically inform the registration authorities.

I do not believe there is any mandatory requirement for them to do so laid down in the legislation, nor is it necessary for a mandatory requirement to be enshrined in the proposed legislation to ensure that the police carry out what is obviously the necessary procedure.

The honourable member raises the question of whether criminal behaviour is in any way impinged upon by the proposed legislation. In passing, I draw the attention of

the honourable member to remarks that were made last week in court by Judge Nicholson who was sentencing a person charged with armed robbery. On that occasion, the judge stated:

> You first bought a rifle from a gun shop in the city, and it is of interest that as the law presently stands you were able to do so without difficulty and were able to obtain a shooters licence. One would assume that a proper system of gun control would have made this task more difficult for you, having regard to your record. Indeed, this incident seems to suggest that the often-quoted argument that criminals will obtain guns whether or not there is a system of control as to their purchase may not be entirely valid. A proper system of control might have operated to protect both the public and yourself from your later behaviour.

There is a great deal of wisdom in those comments by the learned judge. The honourable member for Midlands went on to refer to education for shooters and I can only reiterate at this stage for the honourable member and other honourable members, the Government's total commitment to the proposition that there shall be effective education for firearm owners.

The honourable member may well ask how this will be done. One of the first references we will give to the new nine-member standing consultative committee established by the Bill will be to advise the Government on how best it can co-operate with the various shooter organizations in ensuring that the incomparable resources of wisdom and experience on shooting, which they have in their ranks, is mobilized in the cause of ensuring that effective shooter education occurs across the board.

As I was able to show the honourable member in my second-reading speech, that has already been pioneered. It needs to be achieved on a much more extensive basis. There is a willingness on the part of shooting organizations to participate in the process. The Government intends to ensure that that is done. It is not something for which appropriate provision can be written into the proposed legislation; it is something that needs to be devised at the administrative level and the Government will have the benefit of the advice of a broad-based standing consultative committee.

The honourable member also raised the cooling-off period and suggested that there was something inappropriate about this for shooters and their organizations. I make the point to the honourable member for Midlands and honourable members like the honourable member for Mildura, that this provision is included in the proposed legislation specifically at the suggestion of the shooter organizations.

In May 1981, members of the Australian Labor Party policy committee met with representatives of a wide variety of shooter organizations who categorically stressed their objection to the registration principle, but who urged on us the principle of the cooling-off period, which has now been incorporated in the proposed legislation, and which the Government warmly supports.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—I still find a number of difficulties with this clause. I am not trying to pick the Bill to pieces just for the sake of it. The amendment before the Committee seeks to alter the wording from "may" to "shall". It does not matter one iota whether the word is "may" or "shall". When one considers the provisions (*a*) to (*f*) underneath those words, the issuing officer could stop anyone—on one of those counts—from being able to obtain a licence to hold a gun. The applicant could be ruled out on at least one of those grounds.

There is not much here that alters that.

Mr Mathews—At present shooter's licences are refused and the matters sometimes go to appeal.

Mr BURGIN—If the issuing officer was being careful, it would be difficult, under these sub-clauses, to issue a shooters' licence to a person.

For example, a shooter who owns a gun could be walking down a street in Bendigo and in a store he could see a particular gun that for years he has wanted. Although the shooter did not intend to buy a gun, the one he has seen in a shop could be the one for which he had been looking. Apparently, to safeguard the gun dealer, the shooter would have to pay a deposit on that gun. That shooter, for example, could live in Warrnambool and he would have to return to Warrnambool because that is the only place he could apply for a shooters' permit, because he would be known in the area. He could not obtain a permit in Bendigo because he would be told to return to his own area and obtain one from the police.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! I am finding some difficulty in relating the

remarks of the honourable member to this small amendment, which is to insert the word "shall" on the first line of page 7, clause 11, which deals with the question of the issuing of a shooters' licence rather than a permit. Perhaps it would be more appropriate for the honourable member to address the Committee when that clause has been dealt with in terms of the amendment?

Mr BURGIN—I agree, Mr Chairman.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 7, line 33, omit "48 hours" and insert "14 days".

Clause 11, page 7, line 37, omit "48 hours" and insert "14 days".

The proposed new sub-section (2C) presently requires notice of acquisition of a firearm to be forwarded to the registrar within 48 hours of a transaction. The amendment to fourteen days notice is considered to be a more realistic period. This is the result of the consultative process. Representatives of the gun dealer organizations came to see me and I subsequently suggested that they raise with the interim consultative committee their point on the length of time in which it would be sensible to allow for the notification of various transactions. That change in the length of notification from 48 hours to fourteen days is now uniform throughout the Bill.

The amendments were agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 8, line 9, after "employees" insert "or in respect of any firearm acquired as a beneficiary under a will".

That creates an exemption from the requirement to pay a registration fee in respect of a firearm inherited by a beneficiary under a will where the beneficiary elects to obtain a shooters' licence to retain a firearm. That would be a fair and commonsense arrangement.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 8, lines 29–32, omit the words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(*c*) for the proviso there shall be substituted the following proviso:

"Provided that where the applicant satisfies the issuing officer that he is—

(*a*) a pensioner under Part III. or Part IV. of the Social Services Act 1947 of the Commonwealth;

(*b*) a pensioner under Part III., Division 5A or Division 5B of the Repatriation Act 1920 of the Commonwealth; or

(*c*) a totally and permanently incapacitated pensioner under the Repatriation Act 1920 of the Commonwealth—

the fees to be paid for a shooter's licence shall be—

(i) for a licence for one year—$1; or

(ii) for a licence for three years—$3."

Paragraphs (*c*) and (*d*) of this clause increase the pensioner concession fee applicable to shooters' licences. The concession is presently available to aged and invalid pensioners and totally and permanently incapacitated pensioners. The amendment extends the concession to social service pensioners, who receive a concession identical to all aged pensioners.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Opposition agrees with the amendment in principle because the pensioners referred to should receive the benefit of a reduction in costs. The majority of pensioners would not use their firearms to any great extent.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I move:

Clause 11, page 8, line 34, omit "sub-section" and insert "sub-sections".

Mr Chairman, can I explain the reason for the proposed alteration to those words?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—It would be appropriate for the honourable member for Lowan to move and explain amendment No. 2 standing in his name as amendment No. 1 is consequential.

Mr McGRATH—I move:

Clause 11, page 8, line 42, after this line insert:

"(7B) Any person who comes into possession of a firearm, other than a pistol, as a beneficiary of a deceased estate may have that firearm in his possession

or control without being the holder of a shooters' licence and without payment of a fee if he reports to the Registrar in writing within fourteen days after the firearm comes into his possession the fact of his coming into possession of the firearm and particulars of the deceased estate."

Proposed new sub-section (7A) is somewhat restrictive and, therefore, my amendment, if adopted, would be wider in scope. It could be that, when the proceeds of an estate are distributed, it would not be necessary for a firearm to be willed directly to the person named in the will. The firearm could be willed to some other beneficiary. The amendment was suggested to me by Mr Robert McDonald, the Vice-President of the Victorian Clay Target Association. He is aware of the problem caused by the distribution of firearms from deceased estates and having a firearm passed on to someone within close proximity of the family of the deceased. I urge the Minister to accept the amendments.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The Committee has already dealt with an earlier amendment relating to this matter. In the Government's view, it would be inappropriate for the firearm to be registered to a person who did not hold a shooter's licence. The point that the honourable member raises concerning the will is one to which consideration will be given while the Bill is between here and another place. The Committee has already adopted one amendment concerning a will and would have difficulties in taking on board the honourable member's suggestion at this time. However, the beneficiary from a deceased estate may well be incorporated at that later stage.

The amendment was negatived.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 9, line 11, omit the words and expressions on this line and insert:

"(10) On application by the registrar the Firearms Consultative Committee may cancel the shooter's licence of any person if in the opinion of the Committee the licensee is a person of intemperate habits or of unsound mind or is otherwise unfitted to be entrusted with the handling, use and care of firearms.

(11) Every person who is the holder of a shooter's licence"

This provision will empower the Firearms Consultative Committee, on application by the registrar, to cancel a shooter's licence if, in the opinion of the committee, the holder of that licence is a person of intemperate habits or unsound mind or is otherwise unfitted to be entrusted with the handling, use and care of firearms.

This provision is considered necessary to deal with those domestic situations where threats to life that involve the potential misuse of a firearm are made, as distinct from an actual misuse, which is currently one ground for cancellation of a shooter's licence.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I am not sure that I clearly understand the Minister's point. The proposed amendment gives the committee wide-ranging powers. I do not believe that committee has the expertise or the medical background to qualify it to cancel a shooter's licence. Three members of that committee will be barristers and solicitors of the Supreme Court of Victoria and they will have no medical background. Three members will be nominated by the Chief Commissioner of Police, and they certainly will have no background in medicine. Three others will be appointed to represent the interests of the holders of licences. The members of that committee will not have the ability to make decisions on such important matters, although they may well be able to deal with domestic or other problems. This matter needs a far better explanation from the Minister if the Opposition is to support the amendment.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I think the appropriate analogy for the committee in this role is that of a jury. It is not envisaged that the committee will have within its ranks the medical or psychiatric expertise to which the honourable member has referred; rather, its members would be persons of such broad experience as to be able to reach an informed, balanced and objective judgment on a case put before it by the registrar. The registrar would be expected to present evidence, including medical evidence where appropriate, and the committee would then reach a view based on that evidence.

Naturally, the provisions contained elsewhere in the Bill for an appeal to a magistrate would apply, and I ask the Committee to consider the alternative, which is to leave the discretion in the hands of the registrar himself without reference to the committee

or to leave it, in the first instance, in the hands of the registrar while leaving open a two-step appeal procedure whereby a person who was aggrieved by the cancellation of his licence, under the circumstances described in the Bill, could take the matter on appeal to the Firearms Consultative Committee and subsequently to a Magistrates Court. Although the honourable member may not consider that the present arrangement is ideal, it is certainly fairer than the alternative that was first contemplated of leaving the matter purely to the registrar.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I believe it is wrong to give that power to the committee. Surely it would be far better to empower that committee to hear an appeal. The members of that committee will have no medical background; they may know a little about court procedures. To give them power to decide whether an individual is of intemperate habits or unsound mind or is otherwise unfitted to be entrusted with the handling, care and use of firearms is going too far. Many people would consider that members of Parliament may be of intemperate habits or of unsound mind. The Minister is setting a dangerous precedent, and I am not satisfied that the Committee should accept the amendment.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I am curious about the remarks of the Minister because I do not understand how the registrar will obtain the medical evidence. The Minister seems to assume that the person seeking or holding a shooter's licence will be medically examined and that that information will be available to the registrar. Is the registrar to work on the basis of the person having dilated pupils, and therefore possibly some problem? I do not pose that question in a humourous way; I am simply saying that some signs can perhaps be seen externally, but I do not believe the clause is referring to matters of that kind. It does not refer to the size of the pupils but to the fitness of a person to continue to hold registration for a firearm. How is the evidence to be gained?

For many years, members of Parliament have perhaps failed to deal with those persons who have difficulties with alcohol, with monetary problems or with the management of their affairs and whose relatives or friends have been concerned about them.

The Minister would be aware that, in the case of drivers' licences, a discretion is given to the Chief Commissioner of Police to cancel a driver's licence. The licence is regarded as a privilege, therefore, a privilege that can be cancelled. Honourable members know how rarely that happens, how devastating it is when it does happen and how resented it is by persons of great age who hold drivers' licences but choose not to exercise them. However, below that age limit, there are people with alcohol difficulties who have not been prosecuted for any offence because they have never been detected on the road, but who have a continuing alcohol problem and are of concern to their families and friends.

The machinery by which that sort of problem should be dealt with has not been established. It is the same problem that the Minister is concerned about in this clause. I am not satisfied with the answer he has given to the Committee. The Committee deserves to know by what means the person with the problem will have that information brought to the attention of the registrar. For instance, will the registrar have any special skill in this area or will he merely rely on a letter written by someone else—the neighbour—who says, "I believe X is not suitable to have a weapon registered in his name, he is suffering an emotional crisis and going through a mental difficulty"? Would honourable members tolerate the situation where that information will go to the registrar who will then take it to this group and convince it that something should happen. The person concerned, having heard nothing about it and never having been able to put the contrary view before the group judging him, will be forced to appear before the Magistrates Court. The person will have to do that never having had the opportunity to put his answer to the allegations that, for example, they were the result of a feud and someone with a poisoned mind had made them. The person involved knows nothing about it until he must justify himself to a magistrate.

What details will the people involved be given? All they know is that some Government committee has decided to cancel the registration of any firearms registered in their name. That is the first they know about it. There is no provision for the registrar to give notice to the people concerned. There is no provision for the group that must make the judgment to hear those concerned.

This is an outrageous and sloppy proposed amendment; one which has taken no account of the need to balance carefully the rights of the individual as opposed to the risk to society of having an unbalanced person in possession of a firearm. The Minister should not proceed with the proposed amendment. If it is a Government determination to do so, I raise the matter with the Minister.

It needs careful consideration and the proposed amendment does not show the consideration necessary to balance the rights of the individual to ensure natural justice, that is a hearing on notice before the decision is made, not the right to appeal to a magistrate after the decision is made. To go to a magistrate to defend oneself after being found wanting is not the way our society chooses to work. I believe that and I hope the Minister believes it.

Prior to taking any action, the Minister should notify the person before any committee or group decides to cancel registration. The person involved should be heard and given the opportunity to be heard, and if he is not satisfied with the outcome an appeal becomes an appeal from the first hearing. It does not become the first hearing that the person is aware of because he has to initiate something to defend his reputation.

The Minister should realize that if somebody has his registration of weapons cancelled, he has already suffered a black mark so far as friends, neighbours and family are concerned. People would be saying that X was unfit—or a group judged him to be unfit—and cancelled the registration. Policemen do not cancel licences for traffic offences so a person does not have to go to court and ask for it back. People can go to the courts and argue their point of view on the matter with which they have been charged. In other words, after a person has been put on notice—that is the registrar telling a person that he intends to raise the matter and to hear both sides of the argument—a decision will then be made.

The proposed amendment is ill-judged, ill-considered and does not balance the matters that need attention. If the Minister believes the procedures necessary for natural justice—for the person concerned to be heard before any decision is made—are contained in the measure, I should like to hear the Minister on this subject during the Committee stage. I raise this as an important issue of the privacy and rights and protection of those rights of individuals in the community. The proposed amendment by the Government goes nowhere near the proper balance that ought to be established in these matters.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I echo the statements of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is grossly unfair for people in the community to be inflicted with rights which I am aghast that even the Labor Party considers bringing in. When in opposition, the Labor Party was keen on civil liberties and the present Opposition has no argument in relation to anybody who is not competent or a person who has committed a crime, forfeiting the right to continue the ownership of a firearm.

However, the proposed amendment is so wide and can be interpreted so liberally that it is a gross unfairness on the people expected to administer the proposed legislation and it will be grossly unfair to the populace who will run the risk of losing their firearms.

The proposed amendment refers to a person of intemperate habits. Over the next three weeks, members of this House will be of a somewhat intemperate nature. Honourable members are in the Chamber at 3.40 a.m. and will continue to get more intemperate as the three weeks grind on.

Therefore, what is the situation when someone has an argument on the floor of the House? From time to time one sees the Minister for Police and Emergency Services get upset and, on occasions, I have judged him to be intemperate. But does that necessarily mean that he should forfeit the right to own a firearm? Of course not!

I submit that the amendment is so wide that indeed it needs further consideration by the Government—between here and another place is a suggestion that I make for the Minister. Unquestionably, it needs consideration.

Another statement in the amendment is, "or is otherwise unfitted". Again, this is so wide and sweeping that it is ridiculous. It would be a travesty of justice for the amendment to pass as it stands. I am prepared to say that I give the Minister for Police and Emergency Services more credit

than to allow this to go unchanged. I have no doubt, as a result of the Opposition having raised the inequities of the amendment, that he will be prepared to give an undertaking that it will be further considered.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I am sensitive to the point of the two Opposition speakers on the amendment. Without wishing to be unkind, I suggest that the argument would be more persuasive if they themselves had not tolerated with such complete equanimity two parallel situations, to one of which the honourable member for Berwick has now referred. As the honourable member for Berwick pointed out, it is competent for the Chief Commissioner of Police at any time to withdraw the driving licence of a person on a wide range of grounds and the first that person knows about the withdrawal is the chief commissioner's notification that the withdrawal has occurred. There is then an appeal to the Magistrates Court and, in my experience, as I gather also is the experience of the honourable member for Berwick, that right is very often exercised because of the strong feelings engendered by that course of action.

Similarly, exactly the same provision as that which is now set out in the amendment applies at present for a pistol licence and the chief commissioner is entitled to withdraw a pistol licence. The Government has simply extended it. The registrar is the chief commissioner's delegate in this model and, of course, the honourable member for Berwick will be well aware that the decisions in these matters are taken by other delegates, whether for a driver's licence or a pistol licence, of the chief commissioner rather than the Chief Commissioner himself.

Clearly, it is not for the registrar to initiate the proceedings, what is seen is the registrar being a reactive agent when a contingency is brought to his notice. The police are frequently aware of a situation in which one spouse has been the subject of threats involving firearms by the other spouse and the police are helpless to do anything about it unless an overt offence has been committed, whereas this avenue enables the police to go to the registrar and put evidence before him. The police are able to set in train a procedure which has considerable flexibility because the registrar must make a decision, firstly, on whether he is prepared to refer the matter to the consultative committee and then the consultative committee has all the flexibility which this measure imparts to it in deciding on the procedure that it will adopt in dealing with the matter.

I believe the consultative committee, structured along the lines of the measure, would have very much the flexibility that the honourable members for Berwick and Westernport have raised tonight for the Committee in wanting to give the person who is the subject of the approach to the registrar the opportunity of putting a point of view of his own at the consultative committee level.

Mr Maclellan—Will you give an undertaking on that?

Mr MATHEWS—If I give an undertaking, I am depriving the consultative committee of that area of discretion and flexibility that the Government envisages as being one of the great assets of the system that is being established. The Magistrates Court is bound by rigid rules and procedures; at the consultative committee level it is desirable that the greatest possible flexibility and discretion on procedure is available.

Mr Maclellan—Does that include the flexibility not to hear the person?

Mr MATHEWS—That should be a matter for the nine-member consultative committee, structured as it is to include three representatives of the legal profession, three representatives of the Police Force and three representatives of shooter interests and the firearms industry. It is a body that will be extremely sensitive to considerations of the honourable members. The Government is adopting a much more liberal approach to this matter than the former Government adopted on pistol licences and driving licences.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I noticed that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was not prepared to give an assurance to the Committee that the nine-member group would always hear the person, the subject of the application. That is the key point of his response to my remarks. He says that he wants to give the committee the flexibility. He wants to give the committee

the flexibility not to hear the person. I cannot understand why. If the Chief Commissioner of Police cancels my driving licence, I know that he has done it and I can write to him about the matter and, if I have an early warning about it, I can write and ask to be heard before my licence is cancelled. That is one person—it is the Chief Commissioner who makes the decision and one appeals against that decision.

In this case, it is the registrar who then convinces a nine-man committee who may or may not hear a person or inform a person that the matter is being considered. Frankly, if the Minister is concerned about the threatened spouse situation, the weapon that is in the House and is likely to cause problems, he ought to be considering not going through a procedure of this sort whereby the weapon is there because the weapon is still going to be in the cupboard. All that is being cancelled is the registration of the weapon.

If one is concerned about a distraught wife or a distraught husband taking a gun and shooting a spouse, one is not doing much about it by cancelling the registration of the gun. One needs to get it out of the cupboard, if that is the situation, and out of the house. With the Minister's argument, one ought to give the Police Force the right to go in and take it and then have a decision on whether it should be returned, and so on.

What does one do? Does one wait a month for a committee meeting while the registrar tries to persuade the nine-member committee to decide whether to cancel the registration and then tell the Police Force to confiscate the weapon? One is dealing in that case with distraught people who would, by that stage, be dead.

The answer that the Minister gave is inappropriate to the debate. The significant point is that he is not prepared to say that the nine-member committee of three lawyers, three policemen and three shooter-interest representatives would hear the person. Frankly, I cannot understand it.

If my driver's licence were taken away, I could use a taxi and I could be driven by someone else while I go to court to argue the matter, and that is so in a handful of cases—and I hope it is only a handful of cases here—but it is a handful of principles. The Minister has not established to the committee that those principles have been successfully balanced in the provision he is arguing for in the amendment. It is most unsatisfactory that a committee could proceed on the basis of a registrar's recommendation on evidence which the person has not heard or seen in order to cancel registration of a weapon and then to be told that the weapon will be confiscated.

I suppose the first I might know about it could be when the police come around to tell me that my registration has been cancelled. If the police write a letter to the distraught wife or husband, it will expedite the problem rather than answer it. If the police write to them and say that they are going to come around next week because they are not trusted to keep the firearm any longer, that will make the matter worse.

The argument that the Minister put so eloquently to the Committee was not apt to the matter raised. The matter raised was whether there was going to be some natural justice; was the person concerned going to hear from the people who make the first decision. The Minister has not given an answer to that, and he ought to be ashamed that he has not thought of it.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member can be assured that the matter will be closely examined in the light of his comments between here and another place.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 11, page 9, line 26, omit the words and expressions on this line and insert:

"(13) The holder of a shooter's licence who acquires a firearm as a beneficiary under a will shall within 14 days after acquiring the firearm complete and forward to the registrar a notice of acquisition of the firearm in the prescribed form.

(14) Where particulars of a firearm or firearms are received".

This amendment requires any person who acquires a firearm as a beneficiary under a will to forward a notice of acquisition to the registrar, but does not require the payment of a transfer of registration fee. It answers the matter raised by the honourable member for Lowan and the assurances that have already been given in this respect.

The amendment was agreed to, as were consequential amendments.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—Clause 11 is one of the important clauses in the operation of this Act, and it seems from the way it is laid out that the actual operation will be very cumbersome. I am told by the Minister that the matter is taken care of.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I wish to make a few comments on clause 11, as amended, and to direct attention to some of the practical applications of this Bill. As I indicated in my second reading speech, I have no desire to own a gun, but this Bill will force me, like many other farmers who do not possess a gun, to purchase one because, in the past, if a farmer has injured stock that needed to be destroyed urgently, he has been able to borrow a pea rifle from a neighbour to kill the stock. This does not happen often, but occasionally.

Mr Mathews—That was carried out in amendment No. 3.

Mr B. J. EVANS—I do not believe it is covered as amendment No. 3 will not affect the clause that we are presently dealing with. I know that the earlier amendment dealt with the borrowing of a firearm, but does that apply to someone who does not possess a shooter's licence? That is the point I am trying to make. I do not possess a shooter's licence and I do not wish to, but in rare cases I find that an animal is seriously injured and is in agony and the most effective and quickest way to put the creature out of its misery is to shoot it with a pea rifle. At present one can borrow a neighbour's pea rifle, or the neighbour can come and use the pea rifle on one's property. However, this Act will prevent either of those things happening.

Another situation that is not uncommon in the country is a wife, with a family at home by herself and she finds a snake under the house. She can call in a neighbour with a pea rifle to shoot the snake to protect the children. These situations are not uncommon in country areas, yet, under this Act, this will become illegal. These are aspects which the Government has completely overlooked. They are important, and I am sure that any young wife who has never handled a firearm herself, but wants to get protection from a neighbour, is entitled to have that protection legally. Surely young wives in country areas should not be denied that simple sort of protection.

I did intend to make other comments on this clause, but, in view of the lateness of the hour, I shall not do so. Over the years I have heard of legislation by exhaustion, and it looks as if the Labor Government is going to indulge in that procedure, the same as the previous Government did.

Presuming I am in the position where I have to get a firearm to carry out the sort of things I have been referring to, and I go along to a policeman and say, "I want a licence for a firearm", is it a good reason to say that in the next ten or twenty years I may come upon a situation where I need a firearm on the farm? The policeman could say, "If you have managed for 30 or 40 years without one, why do you want one now?" I would have to say that the legislation this Government has put through is forcing me to have one; I cannot carry out the sort of things on the farm that I was able to in the past by borrowing a firearm. Those are the sorts of matters that are very pertinent to the operations of the farm and to people in the country.

I also had in mind to make some reference to the definition of the word "intemperate". That is asking a lot of any policeman to pass judgment on whether a person is of intemperate habits. Does that refer specifically to the consumption of alcohol or is it intended to be interpreted in the broadest of terms? I would say that it is intemperate to be standing here in Parliament at 3 o'clock in the morning trying to debate important provisions that will affect a great number of people throughout this State. Who is to make the judgment of what is temperate and what is intemperate so far as the right of any particular individual who makes an application to own a firearm?

This clause is fairly long and involved and concerns a lot of important aspects of the Bill. I make those few points to reinforce to the Committee the reason why members of the National Party see this measure as being unacceptable overall, and we intend to pursue our point of view on this Bill. Although the Government claims to have a mandate to introduce the registration of firearms, we have a mandate to look after the interests of the people who voted

for us, and we intend to exercise that mandate and oppose the Bill.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I draw to the attention of the honourable member the fact that the two contingencies that he describes, namely the borrowing of a firearm for the purpose of destroying injured stock and the matter of the wife being alone on the farm, will be no different after the passage of this proposed legislation than they are under the current legislation. The present legislation is tempered by common sense and every Government must rely on the interpretation of legislation in the light of common sense. That has happened in the past and I hope it will happen in the future.

On the matter of the capacity of the police to deal with this matter, I point out that the Government has no repository of experience and observation of these types of incidents available to it that is superior to the police, and I would rather have the police make that judgment than anybody else. The honourable member would be well advised to take the same approach.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 12 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 22AB)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 12, line 40, after "licence" insert "or gun collector's licence".

It requires the holder of a shooter's licence who wishes to purchase a firearm to obtain a permit to do so. The Bill makes it an offence for any person to sell a firearm to any person who does not hold such a permit. To enable licensed gun collectors to purchase additional firearms for their collections, the amendment makes provision for such persons to also obtain a permit.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 13 to 16.

Clause 17 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 23)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 17, sub-clause (1), line 38, at the end of the sub-clause insert:

'(2) In section 23 (2A) of the Principal Act—

(*a*) after the expression "sub-section (2) with respect to" there shall be inserted the words "acquiring or";

(*b*) after the expression "or other authority dies" there shall be inserted the words "to the acquiring or"; and

(*c*) after the word "administrator" there shall be inserted the words "or by any beneficiary under his will".'.

The Firearms Act provides that the provisions of the Act as to purchasing apply to acquiring. Thus where a person acquires possession of a firearm as a beneficiary under a will the Bill would require him to obtain a permit to purchase, or acquire, the firearm. It is not considered that this procedure is appropriate to such circumstances and accordingly the amendment will exempt such persons from the requirement to obtain a permit. Again this matter was raised by the honourable member for Lowan and I believe the Committee can accept the amendment in association with the others to which it has already given its consent.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 18.

Clause 19 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 26)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 19, page 11, line 6, omit the words and expressions on this line and insert:

'19. (1) In section 26 (1) of the Principal Act—

(*a*) in paragraph (*h*) after the expression "(i) by" there shall be inserted the words "purchasing or" and for the expression "issued to him in consequence of such membership" there shall be substituted the expression "for use as such a member"; and

(*b*) after paragraph (i) there shall be inserted the following paragraph:

"(*j*) in the case of a person shooting at a target in a shooting gallery at a show, fair or amusement centre—by having in his possession, carrying or using an air-gun or air-rifle;".

(2) In section 26 (2) of the Principal Act—.'

The Firearms Act exempts members of rifle clubs and cadet corps established under the Defence Act from the requirement to hold a shooter's licence. This amendment will also exempt such members from the requirement to register their weapons. Members of rifle clubs are also members of the Military Reserve Forces. The amendment will apply the same exemptions to them as apply to regular members of the Defence Forces.

The Bill requires all persons who possess, carry or use air guns or air rifles to hold a shooter's licence or junior permit. In order that such weapons may be used at shooting galleries in shows, fairs or amusement centres, the amendment to this clause exempts any person so using an air gun or air rifle from the requirement to hold a licence or permit. Honourable members may recall that this point was raised in the course of the second-reading debate.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 20 to 22.

Clause 23 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 32)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 23, paragraph (*a*), line 20, at the end of the paragraph insert:

"(4) Where any weapon prescribed under this section to be a prohibited weapon was not a prohibited weapon under any corresponding previous enactment a person who has such a weapon in his possession or control pursuant to this or any other Act when it is prescribed to be a prohibited weapon shall not be liable to any penalty for continuing to have that weapon in his possession or control after it is prescribed to be a prohibited weapon if he reports that fact in writing to the registrar.

(5) A weapon referred to in sub-section (4) shall not be disposed of without the authority of the Minister and upon the death of the person in possession or control of the weapon the weapon shall be forfeited to the Crown and shall be disposed of as the Minister directs.".

This clause provides for the prescription by regulation of prohibited weapons and makes the possession and use of such weapons an offence. It is intended to prescribe those modern military weapons which incorporate a pistol grip in their design and riot guns as prohibited weapons. However, it is not intended that persons who currently legally own such weapons should be required to dispose of them.

Accordingly, the amendment to this clause makes it clear that if a person legally owns any weapon which may subsequently be declared to be a prohibited weapon he may retain that weapon and continue to use it without committing an offence.

However, he may not dispose of the weapon without the authority of the Minister and on his death the weapon will be forfeited to the Crown. This provision should allay once and for all the fears of confiscation of weapons which have had some airing in the course of the debate.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Minister has said that there will not be confiscation but the weapons will be forfeited to the Crown as indicated by the amendment, and I wonder what compensation will be available for the person whose firearms are confiscated.

The placing of any prohibition on the ownership of any type of firearm was previously carried out in the principal Act but now it will be done by regulation. I wonder why it cannot be retained in the principal Act as it was previously.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The transfer of the declaration of particular weapons as prohibited weapons to regulation has occurred in recognition of the enormous proliferation of types of weapons of all kinds which has characterized the firearms scene since the firearms Act was originally enacted. At the time the original Act passed through the House firearms technology was of a relatively static nature and the introduction of new weapons was a rarity. It has now become an every day occurrence and it cannot be dealt with through the legislative process.

As to the other matter raised by the honourable member of compensation, the view might well be taken that the person who had retained possession of such a weapon throughout his lifetime had no entitlement to compensation on its reversion to the Crown upon his death, but I shall be happy to give that matter further consideration between the time when the Bill passes this House and is debated in another place.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 24 and 25.

Clause 26 (Amendment of No. 6251 s. 46)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 26, page 13, line 43, omit "26" and insert "27".

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Clause 26, page 14, line 8, omit the words and expressions on this line and insert:

"(4) The provisions of sub-section (3) shall not apply to the possession of a firearm by any person normally resident outside Victoria or to any member of a rifle club or cadet corps established or recognised by or under any Commonwealth Act relating to defence.

(5) Any person required by this Act to forward a notice of".

The amendment creates an exemption from the offence of possessing an unregistered firearm for persons who are normally resident outside Victoria but who wish to shoot in or travel through Victoria and for members of rifle clubs and cadet corps.

The point meets the matter raised by the honourable member for Polwarth.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—I had an idea when the Minister said earlier that the matter I was raising would be covered later that I was being unintentionally snowed by the Minister. There was a misunderstanding between us. I was talking about a Victorian who found a gun he wanted to buy who, under this Act, would not be able to buy it. He would have to go to where he is known to apply for a permit and three weeks later he would be able to do something about buying the gun. I envisage a problem in practice for Victorians travelling in Victoria. If a person sees the type of gun he wants to buy such as an English gun or some other type of gun in a store, he will not be able to buy it. The Minister should consider some way of overcoming that problem.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The honourable member for Polwarth raised the matter of travellers in the early stages of the Committee debate. It was then I informed him that the matter would be dealt with later in the debate. I would be happy to have the additional matter that the honourable member raises of the impulse buyer examined during the passage of the Bill from this House to the other place, although I do not believe the problem exists as the honourable member suggests.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 27 and 28.

Clause 29 (Consequential amendment of No. 6251)

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

27. Clause 29, page 17, line 39, after "22AA (3)" insert ", (8) and (8B)".

The amendment will insert two additional sub-sections which were previously overlooked in the general tradition of altering all references to the Chief Commissioner of Police in the Act to the registrar.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

New clause.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

Insert the following new clause to follow clause 23:

"AA. Section 36A of the Principal Act is hereby repealed.".

It repeals section 36A of the principal Act which currently prohibits the possession and use of fully-jacketed ammunition. This prohibition was inserted in the Act about twenty years ago, with the concurrence of the shooting bodies because of the danger of ricochet caused by second world war surplus ammunition then used by shooters. The shooting bodies now consider that this prohibition serves no useful purpose and its removal will allow collectors of military ammunition to pursue their hobby without the need to register as collectors of ammunition.

The new clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and the amendments were adopted.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I direct a question to the Minister relating to proposed section 53 contained in clause 28 (1) which states:

For the purposes of this Act there shall be a Committee to be called the Firearms Consultative Committee.

It is to be a high-powered committee as outlined by the Minister, with three members who are barristers or solicitors of the

Supreme Court of Victoria, three nominated by the Chief Commissioner of Police and three appointed to represent the interests of the holders of licences under the Act.

Will the Minister indicate what sort of costs this committee will be to the Government of the day? Will the payment of the committee be borne by fees raised in registration, or will it come from general Government revenue?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I am unable to give the honourable member an estimate of the cost of the operation of the consultative committee, but the registration system is considered to be self-financing

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

ELECTORAL COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Justices of the peace—Closure of district forestry offices

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Attorney-General and indicate that it gives me no pleasure to have to do so. All the justices of the peace on the Mornington Peninsula have received correspondence from the honourable member for Frankston, which states:

Due to the number of applications I am receiving for my support regarding appointments as justices of the peace, I find it necessary to ascertain the number of justices of the peace there are already on the Mornington Peninsula.

. . .

Due to the urgency of this matter I would be appreciative if you would forward to me by the 25th May, 1983, a letter advising me of the following:

(*a*) Confirmation of your present address.

(*b*) Your work load as a justice of the peace at this address.

(*c*) Your place of employment.

(*d*) Your workload as a justice of the peace at your place of employment.

The following paragraph is of extreme concern to the justices of the peace who have made representations to me. It states:

If I do not receive your reply by this date I will assume that you are no longer residing at that address, or that you do not wish to retain your appointment and I will advise the Attorney-General accordingly.

That is an obvious threat to the position of justices of the peace.

Members of Parliament have the privilege of being able to make recommendations to the Attorney-General of the day, but in no way do members of Parliament have the right to threaten, intimidate or suggest in any manner that they are moving towards removing justices of the peace or having their commissions revoked.

Honourable members are aware of the situation in another State where it is alleged that the Premier has tried to use his position in influencing the judiciary. That is a matter of extreme concern. I have been approached by four justices of the peace in the electorate that I represent. It appears that the honourable member has written to all justices of the peace who are residents in the Westernport electorate. They are extremely concerned at the suggestion that if a reply is not received by the honourable member for Frankston she will advise the Attorney-General that their appointments should be withdrawn. It is a serious matter and I trust that the Premier, in his capacity as Attorney-General, can clarify the matter and ensure it is rectified. I hope an apology will be given to all justices of the peace on the Mornington Peninsula.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—I raise a matter with the Minister representing the Minister of Forests. It concerns the rumour about the closure of district forestry offices, particularly the office at Macedon which was completely devastated by the recent bush fires.

From the absence of any Minister at the table, I can see that the Government is particularly interested in this matter. I have it on good authority that the Macedon office is to close and never be reopened. That will mean that 6700 hectares of forest that is

now currently managed from that office will not be tended by anyone living in the area.

The office employs some 26 staff, who will no longer have jobs once it is closed. As if the Macedon area has not gone through enough already that it should have this problem!

I also have it on good authority that there are 44 district offices in the State and that it is the intent of the Government to reduce this to only 24 or 25. Therefore, not only is the Macedon office to be closed, but there will also be an awful lot more district offices that will be closed.

The Macedon office has been in existence for more than 100 years and of particular interest to the community are two things. Firstly, it is concerned with the management of forests and the ability to reduce the risk of fires, which would be obvious to everyone in the light of the events of recent months and, secondly, the nursery that is at Macedon is part of the forestry office. The nursery currently produces 400 000 plants a year. Admittedly, it is burnt out at present, but it can easily be reinstated. Some 65 per cent of the output of the Macedon nursery comprises native plants and the balance is made up of exotic conifers, deciduous trees and shrubs.

Most plants are sold to the property owners or Government and semi-Government organizations. It was established in 1872, which was 111 years ago, and it is a pity for the community and for the State in general that it is threatened with closure. It would appear that it was extremely convenient for people from the north of Victoria to collect their trees there, as many obviously do. It is right on the highway in a thickly populated area and is accessible to many other areas.

I ask the Minister representing the Minister of Forests in this House if he would bring this matter to the attention of the responsible Minister in an endeavour to clarify the situation for everyone concerned, particularly the people of Macedon, several of whom have rung me not only about the problems they have had through bush fires but also that some twenty jobs could be lost as a result of the closure of the district office.

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—In answer to the matter raised by the honourable member for Westernport, I am aware of the letter to which he referred which was sent by the honourable member for Frankston to a number of justices of the peace. I am satisfied that she did not do so out of any desire to exercise any control or influence over the justices of the peace, but rather because she believed it to be the right and proper thing to do after having received a request from the Mornington Peninsula Honorary Justices Association.

As many honourable members would be aware, there are some justices who are active and some who are inactive. It has been implied that some attempt should be made to find out which of those members were fulfilling their functions and which were not. It may well be as the honourable member for Westernport suggests, by interjection, that there may be a case for some members making inquiries and advising the person responsible for making or unmaking appointments as to which justices are fulfilling their functions. It is frequently a response when an appointment is suggested that there are already sufficient numbers of justices in an area. Not infrequently, a response comes that many of them are not active and, therefore, the number of justices is not an answer to the question with regard to further appointments.

It may well be that some consideration by somebody on the spot might be desirable. The honourable member for Westernport did not refer specifically to me, but the position will be made clear to the honourable member for Frankston. I understand her concern to update the list of serving justices. I point out that she is an excellent representative of the area and that there has been no better member representing Frankston. She is doing her job well and she was circulating the letter following a request of the Honorary Justices Association for the area.

Mr Hann—Was that in writing?

Mr CAIN—I cannot answer that, but I believe it was. The action was taken by her following a request by the association, and she believed she was fulfilling her functions as the local member.

The honourable member for Frankston now understands the position and how that function should be fulfilled. I believe the honourable member for Westernport should not imply or render any motives of the honourable member for Frankston other

than her desire to fulfil her function and to do her job.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I shall refer to the Minister of Forests tne matter raised by the honourable member for Gisborne.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.27 *a.m.* (*Wednesday*).

Wednesday, 25 May 1983

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 11 a.m. and read the prayer.

NOTICE PAPER

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I regret to inform the House that I again had to authorize the improvization of the Notice Paper due to difficulties experienced by the Government Printer. I commend members of the staff on their initiative at being able to produce the Notice Paper before the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CASINO INQUIRY

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—In retrospect, I ask the Premier whether he agrees that statements and innuendos made by him to F. X. Connor, QC, as set out in Appendix C of the casino report, were unreasonable, incorrect and a monstrous reflection on Mr Connor——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The question put by the Leader of the Opposition is out of order. The honourable member is seeking an opinion; therefore I ask him to rephrase the question.

Mr KENNETT—I shall rephrase my question. Is the Premier aware that in the report by Mr Connor—in Appendix C of the casino report—there are comments made about the Premier's interference in the running of the Connor inquiry? Does the Premier now accept responsibility for the incorrect and monstrous way in which his interference put at risk the position of Mr Connor and the inquiry?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member's question anticipates debate on Government Business, Order of the Day, No. 51. If the honourable member has any objection to my ruling his question out of order, he can take the appropriate action.

I call the honourable to again rephrase the question to ensure that he is indulged so far as his rights are concerned.

Mr KENNETT—In an attempt to get an answer from the Premier, will the Premier apologize to Mr Connor, QC, for the way in which the Premier interfered with the proceedings of the commission into casinos?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—We are experiencing difficulties, it seems, judging by the performance of the Leader of the Opposition!

I believe the position of the Government has been made very clear in respect of the report and all matters relating to it. I expressed some views some time ago about the cost of the inquiry. I made my views clear. The Government is concerned about State finances. I have nothing further to add to those remarks.

The Government has considered the report carefully. It is regarded as a report on which the decision of the Government can be well founded. I believe the report will provoke some lively discussion in responsible sections of the community and I believe it is of great benefit to the Government and to the people of Victoria at large. I believe the Government has received a report of great consequence and I thank Mr Connor, QC, for his report.

RESTITUTION FOR MR AND MRS JOEY HAMILTON

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)— I refer the Attorney-General to the representations that have been made to him, both when he was in opposition and since he has come to office, by Mr and Mrs Joey Hamilton about the question of restitution. Can the Attorney-General advise the House whether the representations made by the Hamiltons are still under consideration and, if so, when is a decision likely to be reached by the Attorney-General?

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—The answer is, "Yes, they are under consideration." I cannot indicate when a result might be forthcoming.

The Leader of the Opposition interjects. Some of the matters were before the Government of which he was a part for some five or six years following the findings of the Beach inquiry.

THE TRUSTEES EXECUTORS AND AGENCY CO. LTD

Mr GRAY (Syndal)—Can the Attorney-General inform the House of the circumstances surrounding the collapse of The Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd?

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—I believe some indication of what has occurred should be given to the House, primarily because of the irresponsible remarks made yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition both inside this House and outside it—on Melbourne radio as well as elsewhere.

The Leader of the Opposition has again demonstrated how out of touch he is with the business community of this city. Mr Powell drew attention to it last week in regard to his particular sphere of activity. I suggest that if the Leader of the Opposition were to communicate with the financial business circles of the city, he would realize again how out of touch he remains and how serious that lack of consultation and knowledge is, and how it can lead him into great difficulties that might find him in another place if he is not careful.

The facts are that, following the March half-yearly report of that company, the officers of the Law Department made contact with the Trustee Companies Association. The association communicated with the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd as a result and was assured by that company that it was in good standing. I have the letters in regard to that communication.

At about the same time, information was given to the Corporate Affairs Office. The Commissioner for Corporate Affairs made inquiries and she believed, on the information that was provided, there was no justification for her to move by way of investigation. In fact, she considered that had she moved at that time, it might have been counter-productive and created some uncertainty in the market that could have led to difficulties with other organizations.

On 28 April and again on 10 May, inquiries were made from my office to Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd as to whether there were any matters that should be communicated to the Attorney-General. It was not until 11 May that a call was received from the merchant bankers who were then involved. Meetings took place that day and the following day.

For ten years, discussions have taken place about the diversity of operations of trustee companies. That matter has been raised for some considerable time. Two and a half years ago, it was suggested that the trustee companies should be brought into the national companies and securities scheme. That was rejected—as I understand it—on the veto of the West Australian Government at that time.

It may well be desirable, following communications I have had with other States, to again consider bringing trustee companies under the scheme. Any attempt by one State to place its trustee companies in a different situation from others could lead to allegations of their being a lack of competitiveness in the market across the nation. At present the affairs of the company are in the hands of the receiver. The company is not subject to the control of the Government. Anyone in the financial community will tell this to the Leader of the Opposition, if he chooses to ask.

No examination, other than a full intervention, could have revealed the problems that have been discovered by the examination of the receiver. I have also directed that an examination take place by the National Companies and Securities Commission to investigate the circumstances of the collapse. That is the proper body to carry out an operation on a problem that extends beyond the limits of this State. It is now apparent that TEA was less than frank with the Trustee Companies Association and the Government and that is a matter that should be investigated—and will be—by the National Companies and Securities Commission.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I ask a supplementary question of the Attorney-General in response to his answer to the last question. When did the Attorney-General personally become aware of the difficulties of Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd? The Attorney-General outlined to the House the departmental knowledge about the matter, but when did the Attorney-General himself become aware of the difficulties of the company?

Did the Attorney-General know that the Treasurer had invested $3 million in that company on the day before the collapse? Is the Attorney-General prepared to confirm that the $3 million was so deposited? Is that

$3 million the same amount that is now deficient in the Queensland fund of that company where cheques are being stopped and investors are not being paid the money owed by the company?

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—The matter was first brought to my knowledge on the Tuesday of the week in which the collapse occurred. Neither the Government nor the Treasurer interferes in the day-to-day arrangements that take place and the conduct and management of the Cash Management Account. That is a matter for that organization to determine from day to day. It has managed to operate competently and effectively during the time the fund has been in operation.

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Mr HANN (Rodney)—In view of the additional usage which is being made of the Correspondence School in Victoria, particularly in some country high schools, which are experiencing a decline in enrolments and a shortage of curriculum opportunities, is the Minister of Education aware of the need to upgrade the Correspondence School?

Is the Minister aware of a desire by various groups to see a school council established for correspondence schools which would enable the representatives of the consumers of the Correspondence School—namely, the parents, pupils, staff and other representative groups such as the Victorian Federation of State School Parent's Clubs—to be represented on that body so that the school might more correctly reflect the views of those consumers?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I am aware of the extended use of the Correspondence School and the high esteem in which it is held in Victoria by both country and metropolitan students. I am also well aware of the need for the establishment of a proper representative school council to be involved in the work of that Correspondence School. Recently I requested the Director-General of Education to initiate the establishment of such a school council. I will obtain a report from him on the progress that has been made to date and advise the honourable member and the parent groups accordingly.

OUT-OF-TRADE APPRENTICES

Mr McDONALD (Evelyn)—Can the Minister for Employment and Training inform the House what steps the Government is taking to overcome the problems that are being faced by out-of-trade apprentices?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—There is a great deal of concern because of the shortage of work for apprentices in Victoria, and the figures are quite startling. There are currently 1700 apprentices who are affected by work shortages. The Victorian Government has recognized its responsibility to ensure that the training effort that has been developed in Victoria over the past years for apprentices is maintained.

The House would be aware that the Government provides pay-roll tax rebates for first-year apprentices and workers compensation indemnity for first-year apprentices and also apprentices in later years. Approximately 300 out-of-trade apprentices have been placed in full-time training programmes this year as a result of Government action. The Victorian Government is receiving allowances for apprenticeship training under the Federal Government special assistance programme.

In addition, 225 apprentices have been placed this year and a similar proportion of apprentices will be placed over the next three years. Approximately 30 per cent of the intake of those 225 apprentices are out-of-trade apprentices and, of those placed under the full-time training programme, a significant number were out-of-trade apprentices.

The Government is conscious of the need to maintain training to enable apprentices to complete their apprenticeships, so that where employers are unable to fully train their apprentices, they will at least have the opportunity of completing their apprenticeships. The Government has also provided for the appointment of an additional fifteen apprenticeship supervisors, who have been recruited as a result of the State Budget decision and these will assist in making the maximum use of Federal assistance available for training opportunities.

The Ministry of Employment and Training is also engaged in consultation with Government departments and instrumentalities on how best to maximize training

opportunities in work undertaken on Government contracts and work that is subcontracted. That issue has been discussed broadly and the proposals that have been discussed with industry are coming to finality. The Ministry is adopting a range of cost effective measures to meet this problem and I assure the House of the growing and continuing concern of the Government to maintain apprenticeships in Victoria.

PAYMENT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN ELECTORATE OFFICES

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I refer the Premier to his denial during question time yesterday that the Government media unit is involved at public expense in the promotion of Australian Labor Party candidates for Parliament. I also refer the honourable gentleman to his answer to question on notice, No. 241 in the Legislative Council, also provided yesterday, in which he denied that the media unit had promoted an Australian Labor Party candidate for the Federal seat of Gippsland at the last Federal elections. I ask the Premier to explain the contradiction between those denials and the fact that in a press statement dated Thursday, 10 February, produced by the media unit, the name of the Australian Labor Party candidate, Mr Petersen, is mentioned seven times; details of his career are given, and the last paragraph proclaims the hope that "local people would support Mr Petersen"?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—Yesterday it was the turn of the honourable member for South Barwon; today it is the turn of the honourable member for Forest Hill. He has given me the benefit of referring me to the question on notice and also the press statement.

I said yesterday that we are concerned about promoting the policies of the Government and informing the people on what the Government is doing. The job that the media unit now has to do is easy compared with the job of the multitude of press officers who were employed by each Minister in the former Government. How could anybody promote that mob anyway, the way they behaved? They were like eighteen chooks running around with their heads chopped off, and the electorate dealt with them accordingly.

I have read quickly through the press statement that was handed to me by the honourable member, who suggests that there appears to be some inconsistency in that policy. The press statement, dated 10 February and headed "Minister visits Gippsland", states:

> The Minister for Conservation and Planning, Mr Evan Walker, today opened the new offices of Fisheries and Wildlife, National Parks and Soil Conservation Authority in Bairnsdale.
>
> Mr Walker said the opening of the office represented an important step for regional agencies.

I suppose the people of that area had waited for such a facility for years, and they had to wait for the Labor Government to take office before they obtained it. The press release states that the Minister for Conservation said:

> This is the first time three agencies of the Ministry for Conservation have come together under one roof.
>
> The move will enable officers from all three divisions to work more efficiently.
>
> They will be able to talk to each other about common issues . . .

Those are all things that a Government should do, and they should have been done long ago. What is wrong with all of that?

An Honourable Member—Read the rest of the press release.

Mr CAIN—I am not going to read the whole thing. Of course it is about the Government's policies. The media unit is there to explain, even to the dim souls in the Opposition, that the Government is doing something.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he needs to be somewhat guarded in his interjections. The House met until very late this morning and is quite unruly at this stage. I ask the House to come to order and to hear the Premier in silence.

Mr CAIN—All that the Minister did, following the opening of that office, was to indicate that an election was to be held. People should be informed of that fact so that they can vote in their droves against the Liberal Party—27 per cent. People are entitled to be so informed.

I intend to do what I indicated yesterday. I am having guidelines drawn up so that the

Government, the Opposition and the National Party will be better advised on how to use the perks of office and how their staff should use the facilities that are available to them in political matters and election campaigns. I accept that there is some grey area, but I believe the guidelines will clarify all of those matters for members on both sides of the House.

LANGUAGE CENTRES

Mr HILL (Warrandyte)—Can the Minister of Education inform honourable members what progress has been made in providing accommodation and staff for the newly established language centres in the eastern and Maroondah regions of the Education Department?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—As you are aware, Mr Speaker, the Commonwealth Government is expected to give notice to the Education Department of the anticipated arrival of families, including students, well in advance of their arrival in this country. Late last year, we were advised that a significant cutback of such arrivals would occur in 1983. However, that did not prove to be the case and, in March this year, there was an unexpected influx of young people, mainly from South-East Asia, to the Eastbridge and Enterprise hostels in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

In accordance with the requirement and the wish of the Education Department to provide intensive language centres for the teaching of English to these new arrivals, it was necessary to take steps to ensure that their needs were met, despite the short notice that was given.

The first function of the Child Migrant Education Branch was to locate and employ additional staff to undertake this important and specialist activity. Regional directors were required to locate space available within existing schools in the vicinity of both the Eastbridge and Enterprise hostels. That task was to be carried out in consultation with the schools involved.

I am pleased to report to the House that arrangements have now been finalized and, within the Maroondah region children have been located at the Parkmore, Mitcham and Spring View primary schools. Similarly, in the eastern region, Bennettswood and Mount Waverley primary schools have been utilized for this purpose.

On behalf of all honourable members, I thank those host schools for their co-operation in ensuring that these new arrivals to Australia are given appropriate opportunities for education. I thank the members of Parliament from the areas concerned who have attempted to assist—and in many ways have assisted—officers of the Education Department in meeting the requirements as quickly as possible. Satisfactory arrangements have now been made amd I look forward to the educational needs of these young people and their parents being met in the future.

LEGALIZATION OF POKER MACHINES

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—In light of the Premier's assurances regarding casinos—namely that there would be no casinos if there was the slightest suggestion that criminal elements would be or may be involved in the running of casinos—will the Premier give a similar assurance regarding the legalization of poker machines?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The position of the Government has been made clear, It was made clear before the last election that the Labor Party, unlike the present Opposition, would not introduce any new form of gambling without holding an inquiry.

After the performances of the Leader of the Opposition, I am reminded that four years ago he opposed the suggestion of an inquiry. He opposed a motion moved by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, when in opposition, that sought an inquiry by members of this House into the establishment of a casino. The Leader of the Opposition has now done a third back flip in the past ten days—shopping hours, casinos, you name it and he back flips. He cannot stay on the track with anything.

The Government has been consistent on the issue of gambling and I know the honourable member for Wantirna has a number of concerns in that area. Having read Mr Connor's report, I know more about what concerns the honourable member. The Opposition now wants to anticipate the poker machine inquiry. It was not prepared to allow the board to do its job regarding

the casino inquiry and now wants to anticipate the findings of the poker machine inquiry.

The Government will await the outcome of Mr Wilcox's report before making any decision or canvassing in any way the question of poker machines. Nothing can be clearer that that. That position has been stated previously and it remains the position.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—Will the Minister of Housing inform the House which co-operative housing societies in country Victoria have had their funds recalled? Will he give reasons, and will he give assurances that sufficient funds will be made available to those societies in the next financial year?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I have given an assurance to the co-operative housing societies that the Government will continue to fund them at the existing levels. I remind the House that those levels are double the amount of funds that the previous Government was prepared to make available to those societies.

For any specific co-operative housing society to which the honourable member for Gippsland South refers, I ask him to put the question on notice and I will give him the information.

COMMUTER CAR PARKING

Mr HOCKLEY (Bentleigh)—Will the Minister of Transport inform the House of steps that have been taken to improve rail commuter car-parking facilities in the metropolitan area?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The Victorian Railways is constantly seeking opportunities of expanding the capacity of suburban commuter car parks because of the heavy traffic congestion at many railway stations. I am grateful to the honourable member for Bentleigh for having the initiative of drawing to my attention the possibility of purchasing extra land at the Patterson railway station, which I understand has never been done before, in order to provide extra car-parking spaces at the railway station.

Another initiative taken recently concerns car parking at Caulfield station and car-parking space that is actually under the control of the trustees of the Caulfield Racecourse. The history of that initiative is quite interesting and indicates the way in which the predecessor Government used to behave. Steps were first taken in 1969 to investigate the possibility of commuters using the Caulfield Racecourse car park, which is presently used by bookmakers on eight days a year and which is a vacant paddock for the rest of that time. Since 1969, correspondence has gone to and fro at a great rate on the issue but no decision had been reached until Monday last when my colleague, the Minister of Lands, and I sat down with the agencies involved in order to resolve matters.

I am happy to inform the House that a small Bill will be introduced next session concerning zoning of the Crown land in order to allow railway commuters to use that area. This will provide extra car-parking space for approximately 250 cars that can be used throughout the year, except for the eight days when the bookmakers will use that area.

SALE OF VICRAIL LAND

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Will the Minister of Transport explain to the House how Colin James Mitchell and Jennifer May Mitchell, their place of business being 170 Warrandyte Road, North Ringwood, were able to purchase twelve out of the 78 residential allotments at Doncaster which were sold by the Railway Construction and Property Board on 9 April when a condition of sale was that no more than three blocks could be purchased by any single purchaser?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—As the honourable member for Westernport ought to be aware from the briefing he has had and discussions with the officers concerned and from his perusal of the files, a queue system operated and people lined up in the queue, some overnight, in order to purchase allotments. The situation applied that there would be a maximum of three blocks per person in an endeavour to ensure that everyone in the queue got a fair go. There is no way in which the person in charge of the queue could have ensured that each person was a separate purchaser.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CRABB—There is no way that the person selling the land could know whether the first three persons in the queue were brothers. No-one could know. A genuine effort was made to give a number of people in the queue a fair go, and that is as much as one could reasonably expect to have been done in the circumstances.

SMOKE-OUT DAY

Mrs HILL (Frankston)—Will the Minister of Health inform the House of the response to Victoria's non-smoking day, "No Buts"?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I am happy to be able to inform the House that numerous members of Parliament are desisting from smoking today and it is good that so many honourable members are prepared to set an example. Everyone hopes that this continues. Several honourable members have given up smoking this year. For example, the honourable member for Richmond has given up smoking after many years and, nonetheless, he is still a reasonable and humane person, which demonstrates the fact that it can be done.

I am very pleased that the initiative taken by this Government has received support and commendation from the World Health Organization in Geneva. I am informed by an Australian representative of the World Health Organization expert advisory panel on smoking and health that they convey their commendation to Victoria for its initiative in this area. We have also been requested to send the materials prepared for the smoke-out because this information could be most valuable for use in other countries, which are in turn trying to launch similar programmes.

It is rare for Victoria to be in the situation where the World Health Organization is not only commending actions taken by this State but also is hoping that this information could be used more broadly throughout the world, and we are very pleased with the attitude and support of the World Health Organization.

In general, there has been a great effort made by many people to give up smoking during the day. Certainly we know that some will succumb during the course of the day and some will succumb after the day. The honourable member for Narracan suggests that some have already succumbed, and that is unfortunate. However, on this side of the House we are made of sterner stuff and so everything is going along very well.

We see this as an opportunity for people to think about the smoking habit. Many will go back to it, but many will decide to give it up, and so far as we are concerned, that is a most useful Government initiative which has the support of all parties and people throughout the community

PETITIONS

The Clerk—I have received the following petitions for presentation to Parliament:

Shop trading hours

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER, MR C. T. EDMUNDS, M.P., AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully showeth:

The concern of the members of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia, Victorian Division, and residents of Ballarat, Benalla, Geelong, Numurkah, Riddells Creek, Shepparton East, Traralgon, and Wangaratta at the Victorian Liberal Parliamentary Party's Policy of Deregulation of Trading Hours for Retail Shops in Victoria, as such action would increase costs, aggravate inflation and unemployment in the retail industry, discriminate against labour intensive small firms employing full-time skilled employees in favour of the giant self service retail chains mainly employing junior staff at casual rates, which we believe is not in the best interests of the community.

We respectfully submit that deregulation of trading hours would seriously impact the "quality of life" of the small business owner/manager and the "quality of work life" of employees of small and independent firms.

We respectfully request that the Victorian Government's policies supporting small business and the non-extension of shop trading hours be strengthened and that penalties for breaches of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 be enforced.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mr Wilton** (556 signatures)

Industrial Relations Act

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria who wish to express their full support for the proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations Act which will:

1. Provide state industrial tribunals with power to make awards with respect to retrenchments, redundancy, unfair dismissal and reinstatement.

2. Facilitate a notification and consultation process by employers with their workers and unions.

3. Encourage constructive discussions between employers, unions and other relevant parties, on ways of averting retrenchments or minimising adverse effects on employees who are affected by retrenchments.

4. Allow full involvement of government agencies and departments in assisting both employers and employees in dealing with the problem of retrenchments.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the proposed amendments be enacted, and your petitioners, as in duty, will ever pray.

By **Mr Kennedy** (25 signatures)

Equal opportunity legislation

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria respectfully showeth:

That the proposed amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act to include discrimination on the basis of sexual preference:

1. Will legislate against the majority of citizens rights and responsibilities.

2. Make life harder for homosexuals, as the non-homosexual majority will not like being fined or jailed on account of what could in practice become preference for homosexuals.

3. Will produce dishonest Government if Labor M.P.'s were not allowed a conscience vote on what is in fact a moral issue.

4. Should be made available to interested persons and groups to enable informed public discussion.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will shelve the proposed legislation until it has been proved conclusively that there is a need for it.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr McGrath** (18 signatures)

Returnable drink containers

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria showeth our concern for the wastage of energy and raw materials that result from the use of throw-away packaging.

Your petitioners therefore pray that legislation be enacted to make all drink containers returnable, in a similar manner to the successful Beverage Containers Act in South Australia, and do further state our wish to see that all returnable containers bear a handling fee to be paid to all those who collect such containers. We further urge that all unnecessary, wasteful or dangerous forms of packaging, such as ring-pull can tops, be made illegal and do support all such Acts of Parliament which encourage recycling and conservation of resources, and your petitioners, in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Williams** (280 signatures)

Anti-discrimination legislation

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia, Victoria respectfully showeth that we support and affirm the purpose of the family unit as created by God and recorded in Genesis chapter 1 verses 27 and 28. "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him. Male and Female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth".

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable house will reject proposals that are contrary to the well being and not supportive of family life, and at variance with God's law and purpose.

We consider that anti-discrimination on the basis of sexual preference will be legislation that is detrimental to the well being of the family, will open the door to teaching in our schools that will threaten the dignity and virtue of our children, and will give credence to

what God called an abomination (Leviticus 18 v 22 and 20 v 13).

Your petitioners therefor humbly pray that your honourable house will reject such proposals.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Templeton** (34 signatures)

Gembrook forest shooting range

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

This, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria, shows that we participate in the sport of shooting and that we support the commitment of the former Government to implement a recommendation by the Land Conservation Council of Victoria that a site be allocated in the Gembrook forest area for a public shooting range to be managed by the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) such site to be separate from the proposed Bunyip State Park and in view of the Government's stated concern for safety and training being featured in the shooting sports we ask Parliament to continue to implement this recommendation of the Land Conservation Council and your humble petitioners, as is duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Ebery** (24 signatures)

Firearm registration

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

This, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria, shows our concern that the Government has indicated its intention to legislate compelling the registration of privately owned firearms and abrogating the terms of its claimed mandate by failing to consult with representatives of shooting organizations and by imposing charges and restrictions contrary to its specific election promises and, accordingly, we respectfully ask parliament to deny passage of firearm registration legislation or alternatively to restrict the passage of firearms registration legislation to the terms of the Government's claimed mandate obtained in response to specific public election promises that firearm registration would be notational only that it would be implemented at no extra cost to shooters in view of the recent 150 per cent increase in shooters licence fees and that representatives of shooting organisations would be consulted prior to legislating and your humble petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Ebery** (819 signatures)

It was ordered that the petitions 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:

Motor Car Traders Committee—Report for the year 1982.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961:

Ararat—City of Ararat Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 31.

Bass—Shire of Bass Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 8.

Beechworth—United Shire of Beechworth (Township of Beechworth) Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 1.

Cranbourne Planning Scheme 1960, Amendment No. 43 (1982).

Croydon—City of Croydon Planning Scheme 1961, Amendment Nos. 116 and 116A, (two papers).

Geelong Regional Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos. 49 (Part 2) (1982), 56 (Parts 1 and 2) (1983), (three papers).

Knox—City of Knox Planning Scheme 1965, Amendment No. 225A (1983).

Morwell—Shire of Morwell Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 18.

Seymour Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 70.

Shepparton—City of Shepparton Planning Scheme 1953, Amendment Nos. 57 (1981), 69 (1982) (two papers).

Warragul Planning Scheme 1954, Amendment Nos. 44 (1982), 46 (1982) (two papers).

SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT

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

The Legislative Assembly acquaint the Legislative Council that due to a proposal to renovate the Legislative Assembly Chamber it is expected that the Chamber will not be available to them from 20 June until 7 September 1983, and accordingly seek the co-operation of the Legislative Council in making available their Chamber as an alternative venue for the sittings of the Legislative Assembly during that period.

As you are well aware, Mr Speaker, the House Committee has set in train arrangements, and many would say long overdue arrangements, for the painting and redecoration of this august Chamber and Queen's Hall. This is expected to go well into August and early September and, to allow for the

possibility of this Assembly being able to meet within this building in reasonable circumstances, it was considered that the Legislative Council Chamber could be made available to the Assembly if it chose to meet during that period.

Informal discussions have been held between political parties and the officers of the Legislative Council and I expect that they will view this request favourably. It would be interesting to see how we would find the sitting within the Legislative Council Chamber, knowing the history of that august institution. It is not our intention that the Assembly to allow the Councils Standing Orders or practices. We would take to that place our traditions, Standing Orders and our method of operation and I am sure that we would be able to generate a bit more light and heat in that section of the building, if they see fit to accept this request from the Legislative Assembly. I hope this motion will have the support from all quarters of the House. It will give the additional flexibility for the required meetings of the Legislative Assembly, and I thank you personally, Mr Speaker, for your assistance and initiative in bringing this matter to fruition.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Opposition does not oppose the motion, but I make it perfectly clear that it does not support it either.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! Honourable members should cease interjecting.

Mr MACLELLAN—I was not doing the interjecting. The idiot members on the Government back bench and front bench and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services have had their chance.

The Opposition will not oppose the motion and will support it from this place to another place and hope it is considered there and that in their generosity they will decide to make their place available. However, the Deputy Premier has been too coy about saying why this problem arose, and the House should be given details. I understand, and I do not think it is confidential, that this Chamber is to be renovated. There are also proposals to renovate Queen's Hall and this presumably excludes those two areas from use if the House sits. Why cannot honourable members hear from the Deputy Premier, as Leader of the House, when it is intended that the House will sit? Surely if this motion is to be supported and consented to in another place, and if the request which, to say the least is most unusual, is to be made and agreed to, the Parliament and people of Victoria are entitled to have publicly stated the information which Government back-benchers already have. Presumably their diaries are already marked with the dates of sittings. The honourable member for Coburg should not make smart remarks about the matter. All that he and the honourable member for Prahran are doing with their interjections is confirming what I am saying, namely, that they already know. The Deputy Premier has coyly chosen not to allow the Chamber to know that the reason for the motion is some fixed programme of sittings.

How are Opposition or National Party members expected to commit themselves here or in another place to supporting the motion which has been put forward with inadequate explanation, even though the information is available to the Government? It is the usual devious performance of the Government in withholding basic factual information that will enable proper discussion on the matter. I will give the Minister of Education leave to give the House a proper explanation to be placed on the record for the benefit of all honourable members, and not allow the matter to be a scuttle-butt that rattles around the passages of this place as a result of party meetings of the Government party.

I do not want the information to come as an anonymous piece of paper slipped towards me from back-bench members of the Government party after their party meeting. Information is arriving in that way, when it ought to be put forward in full and frank public discussion in this House. The motion before the House gives the Minister an excellent opportunity to make clear what ought to have been made clear when he moved the motion. I hope he will give me the courtesy of speaking again to the motion after I have heard the full explanation he may care to give.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) (*By leave*)—I am sorry that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is feeling sad and

petulant this morning. He had a late night, as we all did. It is certainly not the usual practice for formal notice to be sent out before the end of one sessional period indicating the opening date of the next sessional period. If the Opposition examines past records, it will realize that has been demonstrated. It is true that I have been examining a number of options on the possible starting date for what is normally called the spring sessional period. I have discussed some of those options with my Parliamentary colleagues in the party room, as I have initiated similar discussions with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the National Party in our weekly meetings. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is well aware of that.

The honourable members concerned can discuss the matter within their party rooms, without suggesting that a final Government decision has been made. I intend to discuss the matter further with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the National Party at our meeting next Tuesday to endeavour to finalize the position prior to an announcement by the Government. What I have in mind is that the House will meet during two weeks in August prior to the school holidays, which would be on about 9 August. That is the suggested date I will discuss with the managers of the House from the other parties. I do not regard it as a great secret.

Mr Burgin—What have the school holidays got to do with that?

Mr FORDHAM—I frequently receive representations from honourable members of all parties who have young children at school asking that they have the opportunity to be able to spend some time with their children during the holiday periods. They do not have many other chances to do so during the year. As an honourable member with young children, I certainly support that view. That is why I have attempted, wherever possible, and so far successfully, to avoid sitting in school holidays while scheduling Parliamentary sitting times.

There is no suggestion of a conspiracy or of trying to hide information from honourable members of any party. That is the position to date which the Labor Party will discuss further with the managers of the House from the other parties at the meeting next Tuesday.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is pleased to support the motion before the House, but not necessarily for the reasons that are being expounded by the Government.

We do not support the suggestion. We do not believe it is logical for Parliament to meet on 9 August because we have found from past experience, and this sessional period is probably a good example, that when the House is scheduled to meet so early, other factors come into it. In this instance, we did not meet as early as was originally planned. When one considers the situation in August, the National Party believes it would give the Government inadequate time to prepare its legislation. The present situation is that some 31 Bills are to be introduced in each House of Parliament this week, to be disposed of in the next three weeks of the sessional period, because the Government was unable to have its legislation prepared in time.

Therefore, we strongly believe the Government would be wiser to get its house in order, so to speak, and have the House sit at the normal time, which is the first week in September. That will remove some of the difficulties and problems that would be faced as a result of renovating the Assembly Chamber. Of course, there could be delays in that work being completed, and I know that considerable negotiations have taken place to expedite the work and to ensure that delays will not occur. At least honourable members have the oppportunity of using the Legislative Council Chamber for the sittings of the Assembly in the early part of the spring sessional period.

The National Party is happy to support the motion. The Deputy Premier mentioned that the House may sit early in August. However, what he did not mention are the rumours that have been going around that it will be a three week on, two week off session in the spring. I believe the Government ought to seriously review that situation; otherwise it could find itself in a worse dilemma than ever and may need to sit until late December. Judging by the quantity of proposed legislation that has been introduced late this sessional period, there could be difficulties. However, I suppose that will be discussed with the party Leaders.

The National Party is happy to support the motion; it certainly recognizes the need

for the renovation and improvement of the Assembly Chamber to be carried out and appreciates the difficulties that could be experienced in doing that work. One needs only to recall the time when the furniture was taken out of the Legislative Council Chamber and scaffolding was erected. When the Premier called the House back again, the whole thing was reversed.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—My understanding is that the Government has made an announcement that at least half of the labour to be used on this project will be people at present unemployed, unskilled.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I do not intend to allow a full-scale debate on many other issues that may or may not arise out of the motion that is before the Chair. I intend to confine the debate to the motion before the Chair and I rule that the honourable member for Westernport is out of order in the course he has taken.

Mr BROWN—I should like to clarify one point in relation to the time that will be taken to complete this project. I ask if it can be clarified whether it is proposed to scaffold and complete this Chamber prior to any work being commenced on Queen's Hall. Obviously, this Chamber is only about half the size of Queen's Hall.

The SPEAKER—Order! I must interrupt the honourable member again and advise him that the matter of technicalities of the restoration works has been discussed this morning by the House Committee. If the honourable member will refer the matter to his representatives on the House Committee, they can fulfil all his wishes in repect of the knowledge of scaffolding and other matters related to the job. The Deputy Premier has no knowledge of these matters, of which I am aware. It has been a matter for the House Committee.

Mr BROWN—I am concerned solely with the aspect of time, so I shall simply ask whether, as the motion before the Chair deals with the agreement of the Legislative Council for the Legislative Assembly to use the Council Chamber from June until September, the Deputy Premier can give an assurance that the work will be carried out in an expeditious way to ensure that the Legislative Assembly Chamber will be finished in the shortest possible time?

Bearing in mind the comments I have made, it is apparent that unskilled labour could not paint this Chamber or Queen's Hall or in any way be productive.

The SPEAKER—Order! Again I advise the honourable member for Westernport that the technicalities of the restoration work have been carefully examined by me, the House Committee, the Public Works Department and, as a matter of fact, the various unions involved in the process of restoration.

In general, the opinion in the community is that restoration work of major public buildings, such as Parliament House and other public buildings in the city, should be undertaken by the Public Works Department, which is the most knowledgeable and expert department concerned with restoration. Therefore, the restoration of this Chamber and Queen's Hall will be left in the hands of the department, which will also have a consultant to provide information where necessary.

From my observations and involvement in discussions related to the project, I have no doubt that the work will be carried out expeditiously, to the satisfaction of every interested individual, for the benefit of Parliament and this major public building.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that a message be sent to the Council seeking their concurrence to the resolution.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) announced that he had received a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Mines (Amendment) Bill (No. 2).

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the better development and co-ordination of technical and further education in Victoria, to establish a Technical and Further Education Board, to amend the Post-Secondary Education Act 1978 and other Acts, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish a State Board of Education, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CROWN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (ASSIGNMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize the Treasurer of Victoria to assign certain copyright and trade marks, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (APPLICATIONS) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to alter the period within which applications may be made for compensation under the Motor Accidents Act 1973, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make special provision in relation to long service leave for persons employed in the construction industry, to re-enact with amendments the Building Industry Long Service Leave Act 1975, to repeal the Construction Industry (Electrical and Metal Trades) Long Service Leave Act 1982, to amend certain other Acts, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ANNUAL REPORTING BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the reporting to Parliament annually of Ministers in relation to departments of the Public Service and of public bodies, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES AND SUPERANNUATION BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part II of the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LEGAL PROFESSION PRACTICE (SOLICITORS' GUARANTEE FUND) BILL

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 53 of the Legal Profession Practice Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the payment of certain fees under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, to exempt from stamp duty certain instruments giving effect to the vesting of land in incorporated associations, for those purposes to amend the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to render unlawful certain kinds of discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status, to amend the Companies

(Consequential Amendments) Act 1981, to repeal the Equal Opportunity Act 1977 and the Equal Opportunity (Discrimination Against Disabled Persons) Act 1982 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

NUDITY (PRESCRIBED AREAS) BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to permit nudity in certain public places.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL

For **Mr ROPER** (Minister of Health), Mr Cain (Premier) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Medical Practitioners Act 1970 generally.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958, the Health Act 1958 and the Cancer Act 1958 to facilitate employee representation on hospital committees of management, to provide for a retirement age of 72 years for members of those committees, to make provision relating to the disclosure of information by specified persons, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MENTAL HEALTH (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Mental Health Act 1959 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

POLICE REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Police Regulation Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MOTOR CAR (PENALTIES) BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to enable the admission in certain proceedings of evidence of the recording of demerit points, to increase the number of demerit points to be recorded in relation to certain speeding offences and to remove doubt as to penalties for certain other offences, and for those purposes to amend the Motor Car Act 1958 and the Motor Car (Penalties) Act 1982 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

For **Mr WILKES** (Minister for Local Government), Mr Fordham (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958 to enable it to remain consistent with other superannuation schemes and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES (ATTENDANCE CENTRE PERMITS) BILL

For **Mrs TONER** (Minister for Community Welfare Services), Mr Fordham (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to empower the Director-General of Community Welfare Services to permit an offender undergoing a term of

imprisonment in default of payment of a fine to serve the term by way of attendance at an attendance centre, to amend the Community Welfare services Act 1970, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1981, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ALPINE RESORTS BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision for the establishment of an Alpine Resorts Commission, to make provision with respect to the powers, duties and functions of that commission and the development, management and improvement of alpine resorts, to amend the Forests Act 1958, the Local Government Act 1958, the Road Traffic Act 1958, to repeal the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort Act 1972 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BILL

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Consumer Affairs Act 1972 so as to abolish the Consumer Affairs Council and establish the Consumer Affairs Committee, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

BEER PRICES REGULATION (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) BILL

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I move:

> That I have leave to bring in a Bill to make temporary provision for the regulation of the prices at which beer may be sold by breweries and for other purposes.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I ask the Minister to clarify for the House the import and purpose of the Bill. As the honourable gentleman would be aware, the House has before it another Bill entitled the Liquor Control Bill, which is due to be debated today. With the possible introduction of this second Bill tomorrow, the House should have as much information as can be given by way of explanation of its intention so that that can be balanced out—not so much in anticipation of today's debate, but as a factor to be taken into account in determining attitudes in today's debate.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs) (*By leave*)—This Bill gives the Prices Commissioner power to regulate brewery wholesale prices.

Mr Maclellan—Interstate ones?

Mr SPYKER—No, only for Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

> That the consideration of Order of the Day, Government Business, No. 1, be postponed until later this day.

This will meet the convenience of the National Party, and I understand that the Opposition will agree to that small adjustment in dealing with Government business.

The motion was agreed to.

CONSTITUTION (DURATION OF PARLIAMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 5) on the motion of Mr Simpson (Minister for Property and Services) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I am of the opinion that the second and third readings of this Bill will require an absolute majority of the House.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The principle behind the Bill has been debated many times and, over the past few years, a gradual consensus has emerged that it is necessary to extend the life of Parliament from three to four years.

The Opposition does not object to that. The Bill amends the Constitution Act 1975 and The Constitution Act Amendment Act 1958 and extends the term of the Assembly from three years to four years and the Council from six years to eight years.

Concern has been expressed that the machinery to extend the life of the Assembly from three to four years and still retain conjoint elections will mean that the Upper House members will be elected for a term of eight years. That is a considerable time and many arguments have been put forward that it is not in the best interests of the people of this State. The alternative is that conjoint elections should not take place and electors would then be forced to the polls to elect Assembly and Council representatives at different times. The Bill retains conjoint elections and ensures that elections are held after the expiration of a fixed term.

The Opposition wonders why the Bill contains a provision that the Government can force an election any time prior to 1985 in which case all members of the Assembly and half Council would have to face an election. Over time, members of the Government have said that Governments should run their full term, but this Bill—whether deliberately or not—provides that the Government can go to the polls prior to 1985. I seek an explanation of the reason behind the introduction of a Bill which is the complete opposite of the philosophies and thrust of the arguments put forward.

The Opposition strongly opposes the double standards which the Government has pursued in this proposed legislation. The measure does not ensure that the Government cannot go to the polls before 1985. Consequently, the Opposition will not support this section of the Bill. Members of the Opposition believe there must be some philosophy behind the proposed legislation which will allow the Government to go to the polls before 1985.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The Bill is designed to extend the life of the Parliament from three to four years. The Bill is a compromise about which members on all sides of the House have reservations.

For a Government in office, three years is too short; for an Opposition or corner party out of office, three years is too long for a government. However, there are very good reasons for the term of office of members of Parliament being extended even though really it is not the term of Parliamentarians about which honourable members are concerned, but the term of office of the Government.

I have long held the belief that the basic philosophy of a Government running a country should be the same as one runs one's family affairs because the same principles apply. With any prudent family, when times are prosperous funds are set aside in reserve, in savings accounts, against the day when times are not so prosperous. I have long been concerned about this problem with Government finances because, under the democratic system, the Government of the day is not able to organize finances in that way. Many problems today have occurred because, during the boom years of the 1960s and 1970s, Governments were not able to set aside reserves against times that were not so prosperous, such as that which is being experienced at present.

If the Government does set aside reserves that would be available for long-term needs, at an election, and this applies whichever party is in office, opposition parties can promise all sorts of things to voters and point to the reserve funds as being available to provide all sorts of facilities and amenities in the community. As a result, Governments are simply not able to build up sufficient reserves of finance in prosperous times for less prosperous times.

In totalitarian countries where those in power know that they will still be in power in five, ten or twenty years time, decisions can be made on financial management for five, ten or twenty years, as the case may be, whereas in a democratic system that is a problem. On those grounds, there is justification for extending the term of office of parliamentarians to allow a Government of whatever political party more time in which to balance out its finances and to carry out more coherent and sensible long-term financial policies.

As a farmer, I realize that many ventures on which I embark will take five to ten years to come to fruition. It is ridiculous to suggest that a Government should run a State or a country on the basis that it has only three years in which to achieve its objectives. Of course, that must be balanced against the view that when one is out of government, three years is a long time.

Mr Miller—The former Government was in office for 27 years.

Mr B. J. EVANS—I appreciate that that is a long time but it is also a long time since

the National Party has been the Government in this State. One should be concerned about who governs the State and about whether it is being governed sensibly and logically. That is a judgment not necessarily properly made simply by the vote of the majority of people. People may have the Government most people favour, but whether the Government is governing in the best interests of the State is a different question.

The Bill contains a requirement which has been agreed to reluctantly because, if the Legislative Assembly members are to have terms of four years, in order to fit in with the requirements of the other House, members of the Legislative Council will have terms of eight years.

That seems an extraordinarily long time, and indeed, it seems to be going against the general theme of argument over many years with regard to the Legislative Council.

Government members recently made the point that the Legislative Council balance of power is influenced to a degree by the fact that half those members were elected four years ago, and not twelve months ago as were members of this Assembly. This argument will become even more of a contentious point in the future because the Government will be able to claim that some members of the Legislative Council, which may not be under the control of the Government party, could have been elected as long as seven years and up to eight years previously, and political opinions and political climate can change a good deal over that time.

There are matters of great conflict in this issue and there are a number of aspects which are diametrically opposed. There is the question of whether there will be terms of Parliament for a Government, of any colour, to bring some degree of long-term planning into operation. On the other hand, there is the problem that the longer the term of the Legislative Assembly, there will be people elected eight years previously, and the Government will still be able to argue that the political climate has changed dramatically over that time.

All the National Party can say is that it is about the best compromise that can be expected under the circumstances. The alternative would be to have followed the practice in the United States of America where there are mid-term elections; while the Government is elected for four years, every two years the people have an opportunity by voting, at the representative level, to pass an opinion on the way in which the Government is performing, without putting that Government at risk of being thrown out of office. That situation could have been achieved if the Government had decided instead to have Legislative Council members serve terms of two years, so that there would be some prospect for an opinion poll on a much broader scale every two years without the risk of the Government being thrown out of office in the process.

I do not know whether that point received consideration by the people determining the policy in this measure, but that could have been a preferable alternative to giving members of another place a term of eight years.

The other aspect to which the honourable member for Midlands referred was the fact that this Bill, if carried by the Parliament, will make it possible for the Government, for example, to go to an early election, even towards the end of this year, and take half of the number of members of the Legislative Council with it, despite the fact that those members were elected until 1985.

Although a great deal of comment has been made by the Premier over the period that he has been in office, expressing his very strong views about the desirability of a Government serving its full term of three years as it is at the moment, this proposed legislation certainly does open up the possibility of the Premier going to an early election and taking half the Legislative Council with him and maintaining the conjoint election arrangement. Over the past twenty years, one of the reasons why the Victorian Parliament has consistently gone its full term has been the desire of the Liberal Government over those years to have conjoint elections. It suited them for party political purposes and to have conjoint elections. That was one of the strong reasons why the Government ran its full term. The effect of the Bill in its current form will be to remove that control of the term of the Legislative Council, more or less forcing the Government to keep the Assembly going for the full three-year term because if it had been done so it would have got out of step with

the period for which the Legislative Council had been elected. Each Legislative councillor is elected for a fixed term of six years, regardless of whether the Legislative Assembly goes for a shorter period.

If the Government was prepared to accept an amendment, it would be completely in line with the argument that has been advanced by the Premier in support of the Government going into a full three-year term, so I support the proposition suggested by the honourable member for Midlands. Perhaps the House should have an amendment to bring this about, along the lines that clause 1 should be amended to provide that the Act shall come into operation on a day in early 1985. This would ensure that if the Government is bona fide and that it does wish to go for its full term, it will not take advantage of a provision in this Bill and go early; it will ensure that Parliament will not take away the right of members of the Legislative Council who were elected by the people for a period which will not expire until 1985.

This Bill will have the effect of changing that unless we have some such provision in the legislation. The Minister should consider seriously amending clause 1 (2) to provide that the Act shall not come into operation until some date early in 1985. As a guarantee that the Government has no ulterior motive in introducing the Bill at that particular point, it can achieve its result if the Bill does not come into operation for almost another two years. This would not alter the Government's intention of extending the term of Parliament to four years. It would not affect the operation in any way and I am perplexed as to why the Government is anxious to get the Bill through at this stage.

It is not a Bill that is considered with any degree of urgency. I hope the Minister will give an assurance that that particular amendment will be made. If he is prepared to give the assurance, there is no reason why the National Party should object to the Bill.

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—The Bill is an important constitutional reform measure. As previous speakers have indicated, it is one of a series of proposals that have emerged from the Government. I commend the Attorney-General and the Minister for Property and Services for bringing forward this proposal, together with the other electoral reform Bills that have been introduced in this session. The Minister has been active in the electoral reform area. In the main, I am pleased to say that all parties and all honourable members have supported most of those sensible and worthwhile proposals.

The principal opposition being expressed by members of the Liberal Party to the Bill is ill-founded and misconceived. It is perhaps because they do not understand the import and thrust of clauses 1 and 4. I will deal with those clauses later. The nub of this proposal is to extend the life of the Legislative Assembly to a period of four years and to extend the life of the Legislative Council to two terms of the Legislative Assembly. The proposal to extend the life of the Legislative Assembly to four years was an election promise made by the Government prior to the last election. This Bill is a concrete measure confirming that election promise.

The Opposition indicated that it considered there was some philosophy behind the extension of the term and that it should not be open to the Government to bring about this measure. I do not understand that view. It is a misunderstanding of the measure. It should always be open to the Government to go to the people in certain extremes or exceptional circumstances. For instance, if a Government lost the confidence of the House or was defeated on the floor of Parliament, or if it could not pass the Budget or Supply Bills, it should be able to go to the people.

It is the intention of the Government that, barring those exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, the Bill will not extend the life of this Parliament to four years. If one examines the frequency of elections that have been held in Victoria or Australia in the past twelve to eighteen months, one realizes that elections and by-elections have almost become a national pastime or sport. The frequency of those elections have caused an enormous cost to the community. Reducing the number of elections will bring about considerable savings. I do not always agree with the honourable member for Gippsland East, but I agree with some of his comments on this Bill about the savings that would result if the frequency of elections were reduced.

The other important point that was made was that in industry, business and farming

communities, it is necessary to have a lead time in terms of planning and implementing major decisions that would benefit one's own business or the running of the Government.

It has been widely argued, and strongly supported, that three years is too short a time for a Government of any political complexion to plan and implement the major business of the community it represents. If one examines the time frame in which Parliaments operate overseas and especially some of the major democracies, one will realize that most of them have four or five-year terms of Parliament. In the United States of America, a two-year period is in force, which is regarded as exceptional in that it is an extremely short time frame for any Government to properly administer its affairs. During the first year the Representatives are involved in putting together a series of proposals and packages and, during the second year they are involved almost exclusively in running for re-election.

If one refers to some of the major democracies, paticularly in Europe, one sees that four years is the norm. In Belgium, the period is four years, unless Parliament is dissolved at an earlier date. In practice, elections are held within three years or so. In Denmark, the time frame is also four years unless the Parliament is dissolved earlier. From my information, the average time between elections would be two-and-a-half to three years. In West Germany, elections are held every four years, unless the Bundestag is dissolved earlier. In recent years there has been only one early dissolution. In France elections are held every five years unless the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved earlier. In Ireland, the period is a maximum of seven years, but in practice, the period seems to be virtually a fixed five year term.

With regard to Italy, perhaps one cannot always rely on the length of time for which deputies are elected, and I certainly would not hold that country out as the most stable illustration, but in essence, the deputies are elected for a term of five years. In Luxembourg elections are held every five years and, in the Netherlands, a four year term is prescribed.

As honourable members would probably Know, the period of office for members of Parliament in Britain is five years and, in practice the elections are held approximately every four years. Therefore, if honourable members examine the major precedents of overseas countries—the overseas experience on which the House relies so often—one finds that elections are held less frequently and that Governments are elected for a longer term. It is obvious that in those countries, the extended term has very considerable and real benefits. Of course, the argument can be put that it would be in the interests of all politicians to go to the people less frequently but honourable members would have a vested interest in suggesting that. Of course, that suggestion also raises the more difficult and complex question of the extended term that has to be given to the Upper House. In the view of the many people in the community, the notion that the Upper House should not go to the people for a term of eight years, or the equivalent of two terms of the Legislative Assembly, is abhorrent. The notion that the Upper House should have an eight-year term would attenuate the concept of democracy.

As the Minister indicated in his second-reading speech, this is a proposal that has excited a great deal of interest and attention; the question of extending the term of office of members of the Legislative Council from the existing six years to eight years. Discussions have taken place between all parties on this matter and the alternatives that were open to the Government were fully canvassed. It was believed that, on balance, this was the best compromise that could be arrived at. It is certainly a most important provision. The Government has provided in the proposed legislation for simultaneous elections so that the Governor may issue a writ for a joint election of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly at the same time, thereby fixing the period at a date suitable to both Houses.

I support the measure and compliment the Minister and the Attorney-General on introducing the proposal because it is another worth-while measure which this reformist Government has introduced into Victoria.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—A matter of concern to me is that as the law stands in Victoria at present, the only way members of the Legislative Council can be called to the polls

before 31 December 1984 is by passing a Bill for conjoint elections through both Houses of Parliament.

As I understand it, if the Bill were passed as it is drafted, the Government would then have the right to call a conjoint election at any time—presumably after the redistribution is carried out. The measure would give the Government that right. The Government has already stated that it does not want any early election.

I seek an assurance from the Government, which should be not only verbal but also contained in the Bill, that although the Government has the right to call the Assembly to an election at any time, unless there is a Bill, passed the elections for the Legislative Council will not be held until after 31 December 1984.

Mr Cain interjected.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS —No, the elections cannot be held before then, the Government must pass the proposed legislation through both Houses to give the Government the right to hold a conjoint election early. That has been passed regularly since I have been in this House.

The former Government made the mistake before the last election but missed out because of the milk crisis. The Liberal Party could have again become the Government. That is as true as I stand here today. Is there something devious about the measure?

Mr Cain—No, there is not.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Then there must be a misunderstanding.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The Leader of the National Party will address the Chair.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Yes, but perhaps there is a little misunderstanding. The National Party seeks an assurance that the law will not be changed between now and the next elections to allow the Government to call the Council out. I appreciate that the Premier can call the Council out by going to the Governor and asking that the two Houses go out at the same time. Conjoint elections have been held in Victoria before but there could be a political gain for the Government in calling the Upper House out at a later date while the Government is still enjoying its honeymoon.

An Honourable Member—Extended honeymoon!

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Indeed, the Government's extended honeymoon. All the better because the longer the honeymoon, the greater the crash at the other end. I seek not only a verbal assurance but also a provision in the proposed legislation.

The sitting was suspended at 12.59 *p.m. until* 2.5 *p.m.*

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—The object of the Bill is to give effect to the agreement between all parties that there should be four-year terms of Parliament for the Assembly and that Council members should serve two terms of the Assembly. This means that half of the members of the Legislative Council will come up for election every time the Assembly goes to an election. If the assembly consistently went for a full four-year term, Legislative councillors would serve for eight years.

However, the Bill does not require the Assembly to serve the four-year term so that a Council term could be less than the eight years. The Bill also contains constitutional amendments to The Constitution Act Amendment Act which do away with the concept of conjoint elections and substitute the concept of simultaneous elections.

These consequential amendments result from the fact that, under the new arrangements, every time there is an Assembly election, there is also an election for half of the Council.

The Opposition agrees to the principle in this Bill and therefore will not oppose its second reading. However, the Opposition has reservations about a couple of clauses and the interpretation, which I will discuss in a moment. I know the Minister indicated during the suspension of the sitting that progress will be reported during the Committee stage so that more work can be undertaken.

The real problem with the Bill is that it does not contain any transitional provision which would prevent members of the Council, who at present would not face an election before 14 July 1985, being forced to an election earlier than that date. This would come about in the following way:

Section 8 (2) of the Constitution Act 1975 empowers the Governor to dissolve the Assembly at any time. Normally it is done on

the recommendation of the Government of the day.

The Bill before the House does not amend section 8 (2). Once the Bill comes into force, the Government can recommend to the Governor that the Assembly go to an election. Under the Bill, given that it is in force and receives Royal assent, half the Council would then also have to go to an election.

Under the provisions of the Bill, given that it passes through both Houses in the next three weeks and becomes the law, within the next two or three weeks, the Government of the day would be empowered to call an election of the Assembly and take out half the Council with it.

The Opposition is opposed to the principle of a constitutional election affecting the current term of the Parliament. Therefore, the Opposition considers that this area should be addressed by the three parties later on today to ensure that it is corrected.

Clause 1 (2) provides that the Bill shall come into operation on a day upon which it receives the Royal assent, so that the possibility just discussed should take place within a week after the Bill passes through Parliament.

This consequence was never the subject of agreement, as I said, between the parties. That is one of the areas to be discussed later on today. Although it was agreed that four-year terms would come into operation at the next election, it was never agreed that the half of the Council which is due to face election in July 1985 could be forced to an election before that date, simply as a result of introducing four-year terms.

The Opposition believes this should be overcome by the introduction of fixed term Parliaments along the lines set out in the Bill introduced by my colleague in the Legislative Council, the Honourable Haddon Storey. There is no doubt that the Opposition is prepared to see major reforms to the Constitution of this State and throughout Australia.

Regardless of some of the comments made by the Premier after the Constitutional Convention, I am quite sure he would agree with the Liberal Party delegation in South Australia. Many times we voted for what we thought would be in the long-term interests of the community and would address real change.

We came very close to an agreement with the Federal Attorney-General, a colleague of the Premier, Senator Gareth Evans, to bring about not only a four-year period, but also fixed terms.

There is little value in lengthening Parliamentary terms if those terms are not of fixed duration. If the Government of the day, regardless of its political flavour, calls out the Lower House within two years, that gives the community no added confidence in the Parliamentary system, the Government of the day no extra ability to get on with the job and—more importantly—it gives commerce, industry and business generally no extra confidence in making the investment decisions that are necessary if the economy is to get back on the right foot.

Apart from those issues that we will address with the Premier and the Minister later today, the Opposition reserves the right to move—and will do so in the Upper House—further amendments to introduce fixed terms for the Victorian Parliament.

If the Premier is consistent in his arguments and is genuinely concerned about the stability of Parliament and stability within the community generally, and given that he and his colleagues were, like his Federal colleague, on the verge of accepting the amendments of the Liberal Party delegation at the Constitutional Convention in Adelaide, I would see the sense in supporting four-year fixed terms for Parliaments for Victoria.

Under the Bill, the Assembly could not go to an election before May 1985 except in circumstances where a want-of-confidence motion was carried in the Assembly or the Council refused Supply or repeatedly rejected any other Bill. The Premier has consistently said, both in this Parliament and in the media, that Parliament should serve its full term, so the Government should be prepared to amend the Bill to ensure that no election is called before May 1985. If the honourable gentleman is not prepared to amend the Bill to that effect, his actions will contradict his many public statements and will give rise to conflict concerning his real intentions.

The best way of dealing with the matter is to adopt the fixed term proposal which was put by the Opposition at the Constitutional Convention in Adelaide and which

will be put to this Parliament when the Bill goes to the other House. Failing that, the Government should amend the Bill to fix the term of the present Parliament so that no election can be held before May 1985 except in the circumstances, as set out in the Opposition's Bill, to which I have just referred.

Obviously, it would be unusual and unexpected for there to be a vote indicating a want of confidence in the Government, given its majority in this House. I have given a guarantee that the Liberal Party, under my leadership, will not reject Supply, and on no occasion in the Government's thirteen months in office has there been repeated rejection of any Bill, nor do I see that occurring, given the way in which the parties are able to work together in the interests of the community.

The Opposition will support the second reading of the Bill. It will not support the final passing of the measure unless the Government addresses the amendment that is suggested. Without such an amendment, the Bill will have much wider effect than the proposal to have four-year terms as from the next general election. There are several ways in which this can be effected. One is to substitute a new section 38 in the principal Act to provide that the present Assembly shall continue until 27 April 1985 unless sooner dissolved by the Governor. That should be amended to provide that the Governor cannot dissolve the Assembly before that date except in the circumstances that I have outlined.

If the Bill as drafted is passed, the Government will have power to send the Lower House to an election and to take out with it half of the Upper House. It is rare that constitutional changes affecting the duration of Parliament become effective during the term of the Parliament in which the changes are made. If the Government adopts the suggestion put by the Opposition that there should be no election before 27 April 1985, there will from that election onwards be fixed four-year Parliamentary terms in line with the Opposition's amendment. Finally the Government would have the ability to bring out the Upper House at the same time to effect the sort of changes that we have discussed at party Leaders meetings over many months.

If the Premier wishes to retain the right of the Lower House to go to the people before the next election, his attitude will contradict his many public statements that he believes Parliaments should run their full terms. More importantly, under the proposals of the Opposition, it would mean that the Lower House would have to go to an election under the existing laws and rules of Acts of Parliament. In other words, if he were to call an election in June 1984, the term of office of the newly-elected Government would be three years because the provisions of this measure will not come into effect until 27 April 1985. That course of action would necessitate more elections in the short term and would defeat the purpose of the Bill for four-year terms of Parliament.

The Opposition has strong opinions on the issue. It is not, as a member of the Government party interjected, running scared. The Opposition can perceive the reasons and rationale behind the issue. The Opposition believes four-year terms should be introduced after the election that is due to be held in 1985. The Opposition foreshadows that when the Bill is before the Upper House an amendment will be moved in accordance with the Opposition's belief that there is little value in having four-year terms of Parliament unless those terms are fixed, as the Federal Government wants to do even though it has walked away from its proposed referendum on this issue. The principle of fixed four-year terms contains many constitutional questions. It is a principle that the Australian and Victorian communities generally endorse.

Because of the undertaking given by both the Premier and the Minister for Property and Services that progress will be reported during the Committee stage of the Bill in order to confer on areas that lack common ground and to work towards a solution, I do not intend speaking further on the matter now. The Victorian Parliament has the opportunity to lead Australia in its preparedness to accept reform should the Government be prepared to accept the ideas of the Opposition that not only should there be four-year terms but also that there should be fixed terms of Parliament in the interests of Parliament and of the people.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I believe the matters of difference that have arisen can be resolved. It is the desire of all parties that there should be four-year terms. The transition presents some difficulty because some members of Parliament in the other place have been elected for fixed terms which do not expire until July 1985 and 1988 respectively and some concessions must be made and given one way or another about those terms.

I shall not get into an argument about the Opposition continuing to retain the right to determine the life of a Government through the Upper House. There has been debate on that and it would be sterile to go over the same grounds again. We differ, and that will remain. We assert the right of a Government elected and holding the majority in this House to serve its term until it chooses or until it loses the confidence of the majority of members of this House.

It has been the custom to have conjoint elections where possible. That has been the practice and a Bill has been passed before each election to enable that to occur.

This is how it should have happened. On the same principle, an election should be able to take place, as has been the case previously, six or nine months before the due date. That has been the arrangement before as I understand it. A Bill was passed in September or October 1981 to enable a conjoint election to occur at any time from October through to April—six months. As the Leader of the Opposition said, during the Committee stage progress should be reported in an attempt to resolve this matter, and that is in keeping with the spirit that prevails. The way in which to handle the delicate and difficult transition would be to require that, as it is the intention of all parties that the four-year term should take effect from the next election, it should be held conjointly, with the members of the Upper House serving two terms of the Lower House members. That should start to come into effect as from the next election. We would resolve our problems if we were to agree to an amendment or a set of amendments—probably one line is necessary—to give the matter effect six or nine months before the next election is due, which would be April, May or thereabouts.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Property and Services)—I shall refer to a couple of matters that have been raised in the debate. The honourable member for Gippsland East asked whether there was some other formula whereby there would not necessarily be the two terms of the Lower House which could be something like eight years. The Government looked at a variety of options but unfortunately none were any better than those contained in the Bill. There was abolition, which is the Government's policy; proportional representation in regions; single Government four-year terms; and Senate-type representation to cover the whole of the State. None were proved to be satisfactory and the Government believes the Bill contains the best provisions available.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that four-year Parliaments should be fixed term Parliaments, and yet a draft Bill by the former Government in 1981—the Bill that is before the Parliament is almost identical to that Bill, and the Government was able to use it as a basis for preparing its Bill—contained no indication that there should be fixed terms. Once again the Leader of the Opposition has altered his stance. Honourable members know that he altered his stand on shopping hours and also on inquiries into casinos. Here is another example. In 1981 the Liberal Party did not want fixed terms but in 1983 it wants them. Certainly the Liberal Party wanted four-year term Parliaments but it wanted what this Government wants—to have the flexibility that has been outlined by the Premier.

There is a variance between the State and Federal Liberal Party. In today's *Sun News-Pictorial* it is indicated that fixed term Parliaments are in doubt as the Federal Liberal Party has announced that it would be opposed to them. If that report is accurate, the Federal Liberal Party is opposed to fixed terms, the Liberal Party of 1981 did not support them, but the State Liberal Party of 1983 had apparently decided to have fixed terms.

As outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, there will be discussions and it is hoped that these matters will be resolved because it is abundantly clear that there is a desire by all political parties for four-year Parliaments. The Premier has outlined the small amendment that will be necessary and that

will be discussed by the parties during the Committee stage.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I am of the opinion that the second reading of this Bill is required to be passed by an absolute majority.

As there is not an absolute majority of the House present, I ask the Clerk to ring the bells.

The required number of members having assembled in the Chamber—

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

Clause 1 (Short title)

Progress was reported.

LIQUOR CONTROL BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 5) on the motion of Mr Cathie (Minister for Economic Development) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Bill not only makes a number of significant amendments to the Liquor Control Act but also by the repeal of section 11A, the section that empowers the commission to determine a minimum price on packaged beer in Victoria, the measure is destined to significantly and permanently alter the shape of the liquor industry and the viability of a number of individual establishments. This will happen for the sake of a short-term advantage of cheaper beer to the consumer.

I emphasize that it is a short-term advantage. The measure is being introduced by the Government in spite of the unarguable evidence that it will cost the community jobs and cause greater hardship and suffering to a number of small retail liquor licence holders, as well as hotels. The viability of those establishments will be put in severe jeopardy in the short term and their ability to survive will be severely questioned.

The arguments on the removal of section 11A that were put forward by the Minister during the second-reading speech were not well thought out. The so-called protection provisions for small businesses outlined by the Minister are illusionary and completely inadequate, given the peculiar nature of this highly regulated industry, the liquor industry.

I shall deal with specific points put forward by the Minister to support his case. The Minister clearly stated that the Government has a longstanding commitment to the removal of the minimum price legislation that was on the statute-book when the Labor Party came to office. The honourable gentleman claims the measure will result in cheaper beer being made available to all Victorians. He claimed that there was no rational justification for Victoria being the only State with minimum price legislation.

Furthermore, the Government does not consider that the repeal of section 11A will have the adverse effects envisaged by many of those involved in the industry who are gravely concerned by the prospects. The Minister claimed the price war that was experienced in 1976 could not happen again, yet he claimed that the Government was introducing measures to protect the market position of small businesses.

That is an interesting contradiction. The Minister has said that the price war could not happen again, but at the same time he claims to introduce measures that will protect the market position of small businesses. If the price war will not happen again, why is the Government bothering to introduce provisions—adequate or inadequate—to protect the market position of small businesses?

In one sense the Minister has admitted that there is the possibility of a price war. I suggest there is more than a possibility of a price war occurring, there is a high probability. The Minister claimed there will not be a price war like that which occurred in 1976, for a couple of reasons; the first is that the current mark-up on liquor is not as high as it was then.

The mark-up of the recommended retail price in 1976, when the price war started, was certainly much higher than the mark-up provided for under the minimum price legislation determined by the Liquor Control Commission. The size of the current mark-up has absolutely nothing to do with whether there will be a price war.

The price war will occur if some retailers who occupy strong positions in the market set out to win a larger market share by price cutting. It is not the level of the margin with

which one must play that is critical, it is how close to the bone those retailers are prepared to cut their margins in order to win an advantage over another competitor.

Given the shape of the market, if some retailers are in a stronger position to cut prices than others, a price war will occur, as all the evidence suggests. On the Minister's admission, the price of beer will fall if people start cutting prices. All the elements for a price war are ready and waiting for the repeal of section 11A.

The Minister's second reason why the price war will not occur is that certain retailing practices have been outlawed. They were colloquially described as selling beer off the back of a truck. Restrictions were placed on the ability of wholesale liquor merchants to sell liquor. Those measures were introduced by a former Government so that some elements of a price war would not occur.

This in no way alters the fact that, given the nature of the liquor industry at present, some retailers occupy stronger positions than others, therefore, price discounting is bound to occur. The Government should realize the peculiar nature of the liquor industry which makes such a price war so unfair.

All honourable members are conscious of the fact that in a free market competition exists between retailers. One competitor adopts certain marketing strategies so that he may win business from another. This is part of the free enterprise and free market system. Under the circumstances, the system should be left to determine the most efficient mechanism for marketing products in the community. That procedure would be in the best interests of the business community and of the consumers.

When a Government moves in on a particular industry and makes it a highly-regulated industry, for reasons other than marketing, it is a very doubtful proposition to say that the removal of restrictions on price competition—such as section 11A represents—is a wise and proper move.

We have a highly regulated industry. The community wants the liquor industry to be regulated because of the nature and the social consequences of the misuse and abuse of alcohol; so we do have a regulated industry. We have a Liquor Control Act which clearly spells out objectives and to push into that situation a degree of price competitiveness on such a major product as packaged beer will create a very unfair situation for a number of retailers.

The Government has claimed that during the price war the common mark-up on packaged beer fell between 9 per cent and 13 per cent. The Minister has confidently predicted that that will be the figure to which discounting will lead the industry—to a mark-up between 9 per cent and 13 per cent.

It is interesting to look back to those difficult days in 1976. Sworn evidence was given to the Brokenshire inquiry that at least one supermarket chain was selling beer through some of its outlets at a mark-up of 8 cents, which, calculated on the price charged at the time, represented a mark-up of 1·16 per cent.

The Minister is ignoring the truth of the situation if he thinks that sort of price competitiveness and very high levels of discounting will not occur again. The Minister needs to understand why packaged beer is so important in Victoria. The fact is that the structure of the liquor industry in Victoria is unique. It cannot be readily compared with other parts of Australia.

I invite honourable members to consider some of the figures which apply to the Victorian scene and compare them with the New South Wales figures. Victoria has 1431 hotels and 769 retail bottled liquor licences of which 156 are held by large chain groups.

The Liquor Control Commission report and statement of accounts for the year ended 30 June 1982 contained some interesting observations about the nature of the liquor industry and trends occurring in the liquor industry in Victoria.

On page 11—honourable members can see it for themselves—the commission stated:

> The Commission, in recent Annual Reports has commented on certain trends in the industry discernible from the material supplied to it and the records kept by it. The figures of liquor purchases for the year ended 30 June, 1982, show a further decline in the comparative purchases of bulk beer as against packaged beer, and a further fall in the percentage share of hotels in the overall market. However, it is probable that lengthy industrial action by brewery employees in Victoria had an effect on the figures. Forty-three days of metropolitan area deliveries of beer manufactured in Victoria were lost during the year.

Having made that qualification the commission goes on to report:

> The purchases of packaged beer for the year ended 30 June, 1981, amounted to 68·109% of total beer purchases. The percentage rose to 70·904 this year. Conversely, purchases of bulk beer which amounted to 31·891% of total beer purchases for the year ended 30 June, 1981, fell to 29·096% this year. This represents an all time high in the packaged beer percentage of total beer purchases, and an all time low in respect of the comparative percentage purchases of bulk beer.

When one recognizes that bulk beer purchases are in the hands of hotels and some clubs and that packaged beer is shared by the retail bottled liquor outlets as well, one can recognize the significance of this trend from the point of view of the hotels. The report went on to state:

> The following trends in the pattern of beer purchases and consequently, beer sales and consumption over the period 30 June, 1964, to 30 June, 1982, may be thus summarised. (Figures cited below are rounded off to the first decimal point.)

Although the figures cited are rounded off, they are accurate enough for the purpose of this debate. The report continues:

> 1. There has been a significant decline in the percentage of bulk beer consumed, as compared with packaged beer from 46·6% to 29·1%. Conversely packaged beer consumption has risen from 53·4% to 70·9%. (The probable effect of industrial action has earlier been mentioned.)
>
> 2. Whilst there has been an overall increase of 76·7% in the consumption of packaged beer, the increase in hotel sales of packaged beer has been only 36·4%. The proportion of the share of hotelkeepers in packaged beer sales has fallen from 73·3% to 56·6%.
>
> 3. The percentage share of hotels of the overall beer market has fallen markedly from 82·6% to 64·8%.
>
> 4. The amount of beer consumed on hotel premises, when compared with the amount of beer consumed elsewhere, has also declined substantially from 43·4% to 24·7%.
>
> 5. The share of retail bottled liquor licences of total packaged beer sales has more than doubled from 11·9% to 25·6%.
>
> 6. The share of clubs of the overall beer market has increased but not substantially from 5% to 7·1%.

The Liquor Control Commission was pointing out that with the major shift in liquor consumption patterns in Victoria from bulk beer sales in hotels to packaged beer sales, packaged beer sales had gone substantially to retail bottled liquor stores rather than to hotels.

It makes an interesting comparison with New South Wales. In New South Wales bulk beer sales are currently around 52 per cent of the market compared with 29 per cent in Victoria. The packaged beer sales in New South Wales are 48 per cent of the total beer market but in Victoria they are 71 per cent.

The reasons for these changes in consumption patterns in Victoria have been the subject of comment from time to time. There is no doubt that the effective introduction of our ·05 legislation, so far as drink driving is concerned, has encouraged people to buy packaged beer and to drink at places other than in hotels.

The general trend towards home consumption of liquor is one that I would certainly encourage and has generally been encouraged in the community to a large, and it would seem effective, extent. But it does leave us with the question, "What about the hotels?" Are we interested in making sure that a system of adequate hotels is maintained across Victoria, not only because of their bar facilities but because of the community facilities—the meeting facilities, the accommodation, the food, the social centres that the hotels represent.

It is clear that it is in the interests of Victoria that a high standard of service and general atmosphere should be maintained in the hotels. This has been one of the objectives of the Liquor Control Act and one to which the commission has seen fit to require hotel licensees to give attention. As a result, over the past few years many millions of dollars have been invested in Victorian hotels but with this move in consumption patterns it has been an important part of an hotelier's business to maintain a profitable trade in packaged beer.

The Liquor Control Commission report indicated on page 17 what happened to the sale of packaged beer from hotels during the price war.

I shall not read the full table of figures as illustrated in the report but I shall round the figures and refer to the important ones. Before the beer price war the hotels had 59 per cent of packaged beer sales. That percentage of sales fell to almost 48 per cent. A good 10 per cent of the packaged beer sales disappeared from the hotels and was transferred to other licensed premises, but almost entirely to the retail bottled liquor

outlets. There was a major movement of trade from the hotels to the retail bottled liquor outlets.

Immediately after the introduction of the minimum price legislation—I can tell from the interjections of the Minister for Economic Development that he is aware of what happened—packaged beer sales were restored to hotels, which subsequently regained 58 per cent of the market and that figure has now dropped over the years since 1977-78 to 56·5 per cent.

After the minimum price legislation was introduced, the retail bottled liquor outlets obtained 35·5 per cent of packaged beer sales, which share has now risen to 36 per cent of the market. If any Government needed an indication on how the minimum price legislation restored stability to the industry, all it would need to do is turn to page 17 of the 1982 Liquor Control Commission report to understand how this improved situation was obtained. Whatever the reasons for decline in packaged beer sales, if a beer price war occurs again, the viability of many hotels and indeed many small retail bottled liquor outlets would be placed in jeopardy, as would the employment of many hundreds of people.

The Government should be thinking carefully about the speed with which it is moving to repeal section 11A of the Liquor Control Act. If the Government has been serious in the statements it made during the past twelve months about its concern to create jobs and to ensure that jobs are retained——

Mr Cathie—How much notice do you want?

Mr RAMSAY—I shall speak about how much notice has been given. As late as last week, the Minister for Economic Development was refusing to let me see a scientific report on which the Government has based its arguments for the repeal of section 11A. The Minister is continuing to interject in a disorderly way and claiming that the report was offered to me one week ago. That was the day after I had been refused the data. The reason why the Minister refused to let me see that data on the day before it was released was that he wanted more time to study it himself.

The data I refer to is the huge report compiled by the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University, which is the basis for the argument the Government is using to repeal section 11A. The House should hear no nonsense about how the hotels have been on notice for twelve months that section 11A was to be repealed. Last year the Government indicated that this scientific data was being compiled by the Centre of Policy studies at Monash University to determine what economic impact the proposed legislation would have.

Mr Cathie—Not last year.

Mr RAMSAY—The scientific study was not undertaken until this year and it was not made public until last Friday. The House should hear no more of this nonsense that the community has been on notice for twelve months that section 11A was to be repealed. The Government has been hesitating because it has recognized what the former Government recognized, namely, that there was more to the issue than meets the eye.

The Government has moved too quickly and it has not got its policy right. The Government has not given the community the chance to examine this scientific study to determine the basis upon which the Government has developed its argument. The Government has largely ignored what will happen to the industry if the Bill is passed, and what impact the Bill, if passed, will have on jobs.

The Government has turned its back not only on the study and report compiled by the team from Monash University but also on the reports of several inquiries to which the Government has had access. It would be worth the time of the House to examine the reports of those inquiries. The first report I bring to the attention of the House is one prepared by Professor Geoffrey Meredith. It is no secret that that report was prepared for the Australian Hotels Association, which has a vested interest in the retention of section 11A, and nobody is pretending otherwise. I know enough about Professor Meredith to recognize that he is an academic authority with impeccable credentials. He conducts the small business division at the University of Armidale in New South Wales and has an enviable reputation in both the business and academic worlds for his research on the nature and challenges to small businesses; the action small businesses need to take to survive and

prosper, and money of the economic and business difficulties and problems that small businesses might encounter from time to time.

The report of Professor Meredith is nowhere near as lengthy as the report of the Monash University team. It is more an analysis of general principles involving the sorts of changes that can be expected if section 11A is repealed. On page 6 of his report Professor Meredith describes what he calls the "short-term impact", stating that it is possible to identify both the short-term and long-term impacts on hotels of any repeal of section 11A.

Professor Meredith did not hesitate to list eleven short-term effects. His report at page 6 states:

1. A so-called "price war" in packaged beer can be expected led by larger chains and outlets in an attempt to attract additional floor traffic for food and variety lines and to highlight for the consumer, the immediate "advantages" of the repeal of Section 11A.

So much for the claim of the Government that a price war would not occur this time.

The report continues:

2. Advertising by larger and national/international enterprises can be expected to increase sharply using television, radio and daily newspapers—increasing the overall cost of enterprise operation and, if short-term total profits are not to reduce, these costs will have to be offset.

3. Licensed supermarkets can be expected to set higher prices for a wide range of retail product lines to offset costs of promoting the "expected price war".

4. Advertising by licensed retail establishments could be utilized to attract customers from non-licensed stores.

5. An immediate decline in volume of packaged sales by hotels can be expected—evidenced by experience of 1975-77.

Professor Meredith makes the point that the figures contained in the annual report of the Liquor Control Commission were annual data that did not reveal the immediate impact that the price war had on the critical six-month period of hotel business. It demonstrated the intensity of what could occur in the liquor industry if section 11A was repealed. The report continues:

6. Total profits of most hotels can be expected to decrease—most small and medium-sized hotels are "revenue sensitive" in that (for example) a 10% decrease in total revenue could lead to a (say) 30% decrease in profits. In the short term, operating profits for many small and medium-sized hotels could be converted to losses.

7. In an attempt to recover their lost packaged sales, some hotels may increase local advertising and promotion in a short term—adding to operating costs.

8. Part-time and casual employment will be immediately reduced by hotels. It cannot be assumed that staff so retrenched would find employment elsewhere. Supermarkets, for example, are not as labour intensive as hotels and to assume a shift in employment would be an overly simplistic attitude.

9. Plans to modernize, re-organize or expand hotel facilities will be cancelled (if possible) or at least delayed due to the need to provide cash to maintain operations while sales decline, and to meet additional costs of advertising and promotion to offset the "price war". This action will have long-term implications since, if hotels are to maintain their competitive positions, facilities must be refurbished regularly as part of overall hotel "promotion".

10. The value of hotels will decline immediately—value being based on future expectations of revenue and profit. This fall in value could "harden" attitudes of financial institutions to outstanding loans and interest rates.

11. Revenue and profits of the many associated enterprises depending upon hotel viability will decline—these enterprises include food, transport, entertainment, general services, repairs and maintenance, printing and the like. In many communities an immediate impact on hotel viability will flow to all business.

They are the probable short-term impacts, in the belief of Professor Geoffrey Meredith.

In the long term, he indicated some significant changes in the industry. He said:

1. Some small and medium-sized hotels will not be able to survive the initial "price war" and will therefore have to be sold at a substantial loss to their owners—licences may be surrendered and hotels eliminated.

2. Prices of packaged beer predictably will increase, at least to their 1983 levels and probably higher, as larger operators remaining in the business attempt to recover past losses and additional expenses associated with the initial "price war".

3. Total employment in the hotel industry will decline.

4. Values of hotels will decrease resulting in significant losses to present owners and further financial pressures from institutions. In the majority of cases, the value of a site as a *hotel* site will be greater than the value of the same site supporting a (closed) hotel.

5. Hoteliers "locked into" fixed leasing arrangements (it is estimated that some 50 per cent of all hotels in Victoria are leased) will face special financial hardships given a decline in demand for hotel services.

6. There will be a permanent reduction in the workforce associated with enterprises servicing hotels—advertising, printing, transport, repairs and maintenance and general services.

7. Local Government rate revenue, State Government payroll tax and Federal Government income tax revenue will decline while social service payments can be expected to increase.

8. The number of outlets providing packaged beer will reduce with a probable reduction in the range of liquor available, and conditions of sale to the disadvantage of the consumer. Surviving retail outlets can be expected to concentrate on select "fast turnover" lines.

9. The cumulative impact of expected decline in hotel profitability and reduction in hotel valuations will lead to increased unemployment, a reduced range of liquor products for the consumer and reduced services for the consumer.

Those short and long-term impacts of section 11A have largely been ignored by the Government.

In commenting on the shift in packaged beer sales from hotels to licensed supermarkets in 1976, the professor said:

No evidence exists to indicate that similar trends would not automatically follow any repeal of section 11A in 1983.

Professor Meredith's comments have been ignored. One may have expected the Government to take some notice of the report prepared by the Technisearch Ltd group at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

The group tracked down a number of indicators and the study was carried out with a painstaking degree of economic skill.

As is stated in the opening paragraph:

The study comprised a statistical analysis of liquor sales, financial factors and employment in the 1430 licensed hotels throughout Victoria, built into a computer model. The econometric analysis used firm figures for the last three years to forecast sales, turnover, profit and employment during the year 1983-84—the "Do Nothing" forecast.

The effect of the removal of the minimum beer price was estimated by a second forecast of the above variables based on the expected actions of the hoteliers and licensed supermarkets—the "Repeal 11A" forecast.

The Minister is aware of the figures. The estimated job loss in a total employment population of 45 000 persons, including all part-time employees within the liquor industry, was in excess of 5000 jobs—4350 in the metropolitan area and 1270 in country areas. The investment lost was estimated at $40 million. The owner's salary loss was also calculated.

The conclusion was reached that the price drop would only be temporary. The price war which the Technisearch group believes will occur between hoteliers and supermarkets will result in major losses of profit for hoteliers, but only a small move in sales of packaged beer from hoteliers to supermarkets. That is the point of the Minister's earlier interjection.

During the last price war, the hotels lost volume because they did not drop their prices. Technisearch has recognized they will drop their prices. However, if one drops prices to next to nothing and the item is an important element of one's trade—which I have demonstrated—that drop in profitability over an important section of trade will have dire consequences.

The Government has seen fit to ignore the report of the Technisearch Ltd group. The Government has turned to the report by the Monash Centre of Policy Study, which the Minister was reading last week. I will not detail the report to the House given its voluminous nature and given that it was not made public until last Friday.

Mr Cathie—You had it last Tuesday.

Mr RAMSAY—It was offered to me last Tuesday on a confidential basis. I could not discuss it with anyone and I was in a position to become part of the Minister's in-club group that was using the report to produce the result the Government wanted.

The Monash University Centre of Policy Study is a group of considerable integrity. It would not be bought or sold by this Government or anyone else. It has put forward a thorough report and reached certain conclusions. From the Government's point of view, the conclusions do not anticipate such a drastic impact on the market as the Technisearch report does. It believes that a fall in average prices of packaged beer is likely to be less dramatic than it was during the mid 1970's simply because the starting point—the present minimum price—is not as far ahead of the wholesale price as the recommended retail price was at that earlier date.

That it will not have a dramatic impact does not alter a scrap the fact that if the price comes back so that there is a narrow

margin in bulk liquor sales, the pressure it puts on certain retail outlets will be enormous.

The Monash study closely examined loss leaders and it came to certain conclusions on the practicality of supermarkets using packaged beer as a loss leader item.

Again, it is very clear from the last price war that some supermarkets did use it as a loss leader article. One does not sell a dozen bottles of beer at a mark-up of 8 cents and pretend that it is not loss leading. The general conclusion of the Monash report in the section headed "The effects of the abolition of section 11A", reads as follows:

> If section 11A is removed, average retail price for packaged beer will fall and the spread of retail prices will increase.

It was an interesting conclusion—the spread of retail prices will increase. The Government has ignored this effect of its present measure.

Reductions in retail margins are likely to be offset to some extent by an increase in wholesale prices. That is another unexpected effect of the removal of section 11A which has led the Government in haste to give notice that it will bring in another control to control the wholesale price of packaged beer. The Premier, I believe, has been telling the world that he does not expect to need to use it, but the Government is moving to remove section 11A, which has brought a degree of stability to the industry, and it knows that it is about to perpetrate chaos on the industry, all for the sake of cheap beer.

The Monash report goes on to state that the use of packaged beer as a loss leader in supermarkets is unlikely to be profitable, but it does not rule it out altogether. It claims that it is extremely unlikely that supermarkets will adopt a pricing strategy. The Monash report is making claims that are in direct conflict with Professor Geoffrey Meredith, and this Parliament, the people of Victoria. Interested parties are being given no time to assess the relative merits of those particular analyses to determine for themselves.

The Government is choosing to go ahead with the abolition of section 11A, and then it will see what happens. This was indicated in the Minister's second-reading speech. He gave an undertaking to this Parliament that the Government will keep a close eye on things and, if it does not work out, the Government will do something about it. This will be a great comfort to small hoteliers, small businessmen who find themselves in the Bankruptcy Court. They can tell the Receiver when he comes in, "Don't worry, the Minister for Economic Development is keeping a close eye on me going to the wall, so isn't that nice". That is a hopeless way of doing it. The Government should have had the Monash study out.

Mr Cathie—It was a report to the Government.

Mr RAMSAY—The Minister was reading this report last week, and he introduced this Bill two weeks earlier. It is a funny way for the Government to be doing business and the Minister will live to regret it.

The Monash study goes on to state that there will be a shift in packaged beer sales from high-cost outlets to low-cost outlets, simply because the former cannot match prices set by the latter. One would expect that is a straightforward economic phenomenon. The difficulties in this industry, and I only wish the Minister could understand it, is that the Liquor Control Commission has made some outlets high-cost outlets, not because of the wish of the outlet but because of the wish of the Liquor Control Commission to maintain a system of high-class standard hotels in the community. There will be shifts in trade from those outlets to the supermarkets which can handle these things more efficiently.

The Monash report goes on to state that the magnitude of the shifts are difficult to predict. In other words, the Monash inquiry does not really know what is going to happen either. However, it recognizes the effect on employment. It states that there is considerable controversy regarding the number of individuals currently employed in the hotel industry. Nevertheless, it reaches the conclusion that because of the repeal of section 11A employment opportunities will go. There will be some unemployment. The figure generally appears to be in the region of 800. Whether it is 800 or whether it is 500, one would expect the Government to have some concern about that and be looking to repeal section 11A in a way that would ensure job opportunities are not lost.

What has been the Governments response? It received the Monash report at a later stage, admittedly. It has not had time to study it properly and has not given the community time to look at it. The Government is sticking to its guns. It said before the last election that it would repeal section 11A. The then Leader of the Opposition in another place, the Honourable W. A. Landeryou, wrote a letter on 15 March 1982 addressed, "To all Candidates". He did not send me a copy, so I can only assume that he was referring to all candidates for the Australian Labor Party. The letter reads as follows:

> Dear Candidate,
>
> Most of us have been approached as candidates to express a view on the Australian Labor Party's proposal to repeal the minimum price packaged beer legislation.
>
> I have enclosed a copy of a letter forwarded to the Ballarat Brewery Company whose principal business today is retailing.

Then he told all the candidates:

> Whilst we are committed to repealing the minimum price beer legislation we will do it in such a way as to protect and enhance the small liquor businessmen.

It is perfectly clear from these references I have made to these studies that no small businessman could in any way imagine that this measure would protect or enhance the situation, but that was the undertaking the Government gave and that is what it should have achieved with this measure if it intends to repeal section 11A.

What steps did the Government take? According to the Minister, the Government looked very closely at the ten points recommended to it by its own Liquor Advisory Committee, and it is probably simplest to look at the response of the Government to those ten recommendations to see what a feeble and pathetic effort this Government made to look after the interests of the small businessmen involved in this industry. There were ten recommendations and the Government said that it has adopted all but one of them.

Mr Cathie—All but two.

Mr RAMSAY—I shall be generous and make it all but two. What recommendations have been accepted by the Government? If one sits down and reads those recommendations as presented, and reads the Bill, one will find that the Minister cannot count be it one or two. Let it be two. In fact, five of the recommendations were rejected outright, one was modified, and four were accepted. I shall refer to them one at a time. The first was the encouragement of giving low interest loans to small hotels to improve their facilities and to upgrade operations in the entertainment, food and accommodation areas to relieve financial dependence of beer sales.

The Government has accepted that recommendation. That acceptance amounts to an amendment to the Liquor Control Act to make it less onerous for a hotel to get a restricted hotelkeepers licence. The Liquor Control Commission still has to consider the situation carefully and must be satisfied that the demand in the area is for a tavern facility, not a full hotel facility. It must be sure that the tavern facility will not unduly impact the economic viability of any hotelkeeper licence holders in the area.

The measure is a moderate alteration to the restricted hotelkeeper's licence provision, but the Minister has indicated that low interest loans will be available. That money is coming from $10 million that has already been made available to the Economic Development Corporation to assist small business. Some of the $10 million may be used to upgrade small hotels. The Government has not given another penny in this area. Money already allocated to small business may be used for small hotels to fit the cap completely on this fraudulent claim that the Government is doing something in upgrading the process, which is consistent with the type of criteria used to assess eligibility for these loans. The Government has said that qualification of a hotel for a small business loan under the criteria already set out will be counted as one of the acceptances of the recommendations of the Liquor Advisory Committee.

I acknowledge the Government's acceptance of the recommendation, but its manner of acceptance is fraudulent because it is simply covering up for something that was already being done. Nothing extra has been done.

The second recommendation provides for a minimum age of eighteen years for employees selling retail liquor. The Government accepted this recommendation, but again it is close to fraudulent. For many

years, it has been the practice of the Liquor Control Commission when issuing a retail bottle liquor licence to indicate to the applicant that one of the requirements is that the commission expects the retail bottle liquor licence holder not to employ people under the age of eighteen years in their stores. Any retail bottle liquor licence holder coming to the attention of the commission as employing people under eighteen years would have his licence placed in serious jeopardy. The acceptance of this recommendation does not really alter the *status quo* one iota.

The third recommendation was that the total number of retail bottled liquor licences and hotelkeeper licences to be held by any person, company or related company, shall not exceed 5 per cent of the total number of retail bottled liquor licences in existence. This recommendation was accepted with a significant modification. It has not been fully accepted.

Mr Cathie—That is splitting straws.

Mr RAMSAY—It is not when one analyses the matter. The limit of 5 per cent in the recommendation has been increased to 8 per cent. The Minister's explanation was that G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd holds 61 of the retail bottled liquor licences out of a total of 771 so that it already holds 8 per cent. To place a limit of 5 per cent to stop people being entitled from holding any more than that would have restricted any other chains to fewer licences than G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd and would also give that company an unfair advantage. The Minister also said that if the figure of 5 per cent had been adopted it might have required G. J. Coles to surrender licences, but that is not indicated in the Bill. The limit is now 8 per cent. G. J. Coles at present holds 61 licences, a number of which are situated in key areas. Some are situated in supermarkets. According to the Liquor Control Commission report, the highest licence fee payable in the year ending 30 June 1982 was paid by G. J. Coles for its store in Bourke Street. Although many G. J. Coles licences are well situated, a significant number of them could still be removed and increase the ability of G. J. Coles to compete even more vigorously in the industry than at present.

When one considers the other supermarket chains, it becomes even more significant. The Safeway chain holds 28 retail bottled liquor licences at present and under the proposed legislation will be able to increase that number to 61. The Permewan chain, the Half-Case Warehouse, holds eleven licences. Woolworths holds nineteen licences and the San Remo–Myer group holds 34 licences. Each of those four major chains can increase the number of licences under the Governments proposed legislation. In the process of doing so, they will increase the total number of licences so that the number of licences representing 8 per cent will increase. In that way, even G. J. Coles will be able to apply for additional licences. For the Government to say that the limitation of 8 per cent on the number of licences that can be held by any one organization will control the situation, is not addressing the real problem of the sudden shift in trade that the repealing of section 11A will bring about.

The fourth recommendation which the Government saw fit to reject was that the differential licencees should be applied where more than ten retail bottled liquor licences are held by persons, companies or related companies. The Minister explained why the Government would not accept that proposal, but gave no consideration to the possibility of introducing a progressive licence fee so that large retailers could be paying a proportionately higher level of licence fee on the upper sections of their turnover, which would possibly have given some real relief to the smaller outlets in endeavouring to compete in the inevitable price war. The Government has dismissed that recommendation as not acceptable, even though the Minister has given a limited undertaking that I referred to earlier that in the month ahead a detailed study of the issues mentioned will be undertaken.

At the same time, the Government served notice of a licence change relating to the unfair pricing policies following the repeal of section 11A. Consideration will be given to implementing a proposal during the Budget sessional period to put some restriction on licences. The Government is trying to have it both ways. It will repeal section 11A and will hold out a carrot that it will introduce a measure to stop unfair pricing policies in the future if anybody engages them. Why does not the Government indicate what it will do about unfair pricing policies now?

The reason for section 11A was to eliminate unfair pricing policies. It is a general view of the industry, reflected in the Liquor Control Commission report, that it has been extremely successful in that regard. Nobody likes a minimum price for a product, but if the absence of that minimum price means there is unfair competition for reasons that have been imposed by the Government, there is a good argument for the retention of that control.

However, the Government rejected the recommendation about the differential licence fees. The next two recommendations involved representations to the Federal Government opposing any increase in the excise tax and asked for a review of existing tax levels and a reduction in the level of State taxation on liquor. This was turned down flat. The reply stated that in the stringent financial circumstances facing all Governments in Australia, no responsible Commonwealth or State Government would be able to reduce the level of excise and licence fees payable on liquor. In four lines, the two recommendations were rejected. When it came to ascertaining whether some prohibition could be placed on loss leadering, the Government turned down the recommendation.

Mr Jasper—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr RAMSAY—I was helping the House to understand that of ten recommendations of the liquor advisory council that the Government claims to have accepted, all but two have been largely rejected by the Government. Five recommendations have been rejected, four have been accepted and one was accepted with modifications.

I was discussing the introduction of a prohibition on loss leadering which would require anyone selling liquor in the retail market not to use it as a loss leader. The reason the Government supplied for rejecting the proposal was that it would certainly result in some price increases for wines and spirits and the proposal, in essence, was that a new minimum price for liquor would be established, albeit at a lower level than at present.

One could argue at some length about whether that is a true definition of loss leadering. Loss leadering legislation has been introduced in a number of States in the United States of America where it has effectively maintained a degree of regulation and removed the degree of unfair competition that may well be coming back in the liquor price war which this Government will precipitate with the passage of the proposed legislation.

The eighth recommendation was for a moritorium period of two years on the granting of retail bottled liquor licences or restrictions on the issue of licences. The Government knocked that one back. The ninth recommendation was the imposition of a tax continuance fee, which was accepted, and the tenth recommendation was legislation to prohibit the receipt at unlicensed premises of offers or orders for the purchase of liquor. This recommendation was accepted by the Government.

In all, the Government accepted the idea of low interest loans and the idea of a minimum age for people working in liquor stores. The Government also accepted the imposition of a tax continuance fee and legislation to prohibit the receipt on unlicensed premises of offers or orders for the provision of liquor. I will deal with that during the Committee stage because the proposed legislation is inadequately drafted to deal with that problem.

The fact remains that of the ten recommendations of the Government's liquor advisory committee, only four were accepted and the Government modified the recommendation most likely to help limit the number of licences to large chains. Therefore, it is almost meaningless in further limiting the growth of large supermarket chains in the retailing of liquor.

The reaction of the Government has been inadequate. The Minister should realize this and go away and do more homework to provide more meaningful assistance to small businesses during this critical period of adjustment. When section 11A goes, the Minister would be regarded by many people as being far more responsible than his headlong rush to get rid of the minimum price of beer. The Minister sees this as a popular move with many beer drinkers. The Minister has moved so fast on this that he has left one of his own best supporting unions behind. The Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union will not have a bar of what the Government is trying to

achieve. The secretary of the union, Mr J. J. Goddard, has circulated the matter widely on the union's letterhead. Under the heading, "Union supports minimum beer price", his circular states:

> Union members will have seen media reports of the State Government's intention to repeal section 11A of the Liquor Control Act which sets a minimum retail price for packaged beer.
>
> The Union is concerned about this because of the effect it could have on the hotel industry.
>
> Clearly, with the removal of the minimum price, the big supermarket chains will be in a better position to discount packaged beer than most hotels.

The union can understand it even if the Minister cannot. The circular continues:

> This will lead to hotels losing their share of the market in packaged beer which, taken together with the decline in bar sales of bulk beer, will badly affect the economic viability of many pubs.
>
> It has been estimated that as many as 5000 people could lose their jobs in the hotel industry.
>
> There is no evidence that removal of minimum pricing would lead to cheaper beer in the long term. Once the chains had driven out the small retailers they would be free to set the price as high as they want.
>
> While the Government has a pre-election commitment to the repeal of 11A the Union believes that this should not be done at this time because of the general unemployment crisis.
>
> The Union is represented on a Government appointed Advisory Committee on the Liquor Control Commission where our view has been made very clear.
>
> In fact, our opposition to repeal of 11A is shared by almost all sections of the liquor industry.
>
> If the Government does repeal 11A, in spite of all the opposition, then it should only occur if steps are taken to assist the hotel industry so that jobs will not be lost.

The secretary of the union calls on members to write to the Premier and the Minister for Economic Development expressing concern about the situation.

I would be interested to hear from the Minister how many letters he received, not just from the pressure groups in the community, but also from concerned individuals within the liquor trades union who see their jobs in jeopardy because of the pigheadedness of the Minister and the Government.

The Government is not prepared to provide reasonable time for a proper analysis of the report to ascertain whether some better method could be achieved than the limited four proposals it adopted and the other proposal being modified in its attempt to make the impact of the repeal of section 11A on the industry less horrific for so many. The Government should adjourn the debate until the Monash study has been properly evaluated. The Government should examine more realistic measures to aviod disruption in the industry.

The least that the Government can do is monitor the situation carefully. The repeal of section 11A, with only a few provisions to protect the industry, will lead to chaos, hardship and loss of jobs, and for very little gain for the community as a whole. The Opposition will not oppose the Bill.

Mr Jasper—Shame, shame!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! I ask the honourable member for Murray Valley to hear the honourable member in silence.

Mr RAMSAY—The Opposition will not oppose the Bill, on the basis that it carries out the Government's undertaking to the community, but it will be on the head of the Government if the Bill is passed and proclaimed and section 11A is repealed without safeguards being put in place. The economic chaos and hardship that will be created will be on the head of the Government. I will deal now with other clauses of the Bill. The repeal of section 11A has dominated to such an extent that a number of other important amendments could be overlooked and it is important that they should not be overlooked. I will bring the attention of the House to just a few of them at this stage, but I indicate that, in the Committee stage, further comments will be made.

I direct the attention of the House to the introduction of Sunday bar trading, a curious proposal in the way in which it has been couched by the Government. Hotels will be permitted to open their bars for two 2-hour periods on a Sunday, with a break of at least 2 hours in the middle. That will create interesting staffing problems, given the requirements of the appropriate award in respect of Sunday employment. I will be interested to see how many hotels will trade on Sundays, given the constraints of penalty rates and so on.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! In his own words, the honourable member said that canvassing of such matters would be restricted to the Committee stage. Rather

than debating the matter in depth now, I invite him to apply a veneer.

Mr RAMSAY—My comments will be general, but I will be interested to see how that provision will work and how many hotels will open, given the nature of penalty rates and the manner of application that has to be undertaken if hotels wish to acquire Sunday trading permits. Provision is made for objections to be lodged and the Bill deals with the need for the applicant to prove popular demand and to prove that no undue dislocation will occur in the neighbourhood or to worshippers.

Another clause that I will examine more fully at the Committee stage amends tertiary institution licences in such a manner as to throw grave responsibility on the Liquor Control Commission, because tertiary institution licences will be general drinking licences over which there will be no legislative direction of the hours for which the licences are granted. Hotel hours are restricted; club hours are restricted; a tertiary institution licence will be available for hours that will be determined by the commission alone.

Tucked away in the Bill are also some clauses giving associations of employers and employees the right to object to the granting or the renewal of a licence. Linked with that is an interesting clause that gives a union the right to object to the renewal of a licence on the ground of a licensee failing to meet the conditions of an award or the Industrial Relations Act. I will have more to say about that matter in the Committee stage.

It is necessary that adequate time be allowed to deal with these matters at the Committee stage because any amendment of the Liquor Control Act has repercussions well beyond the broad issue that is addressed by the specific amendment. That occurs because of the wide variety of interests—consumer interests, different classes of licensee and different classes of permits, all of which are impacted by any amendment of the Act.

The Government—and, indeed, Parliament—needs to tread carefully when it amends that Act.

I have taken some time on this Bill, principally on the provisions relating to section 11A. I conclude by repeating a request that the Government not press forward with this Bill and not proclaim the repeal of section 11A until such time as more adequate safeguards are put in place. I repeat that the shape of the industry is being put at risk, and the viability of small businesses in this area of economic activity will be threatened if the Government moves too quickly.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The contribution by the honourable member for Balwyn in analysing the Bill and its effect on the industry in Victoria was excellent. He has put a lot of work into determining the problems and understanding the effect that it will have. Having listened to him for more than one and a half hours, I must say that it was the most incredible speech I have ever heard. In response to interjections, I repeat that it was an excellent speech, but its conclusion was incredible. The honourable member proved to the House that section 11A should be retained in the Liquor Control Act, yet finally he indicated that the Opposition would not oppose the Bill. He said that he hoped the Government would not proclaim the measure and that it would reconsider the effect of the Bill on the industry and what steps could be taken to assist the industry in what would prove to be chaos. The reports that have been forthcoming have all indicated to the National Party—and no doubt, to members of the Opposition and the Government and, I believe, to the Minister—that the Bill will result in chaos.

I express the concern of the National Party at hearing from the honourable member for Balwyn a speech that highlighted the problems that the Bill will create and then indicated clearly that the Opposition will not vote against it. I hope the honourable member for Balwyn and the Opposition will reconsider their attitude prior to divisions being called, and I hope that sufficient pressure will be brought to bear on the Government to change what will prove to be a disastrous measure for the industry.

The Government has given a commitment to the people of Victoria that it will remove section 11A which, as everyone knows, enables the Liquor Control Commission to set the minimum price for beer sold in Victoria. With the Bill, the Government has set out to overhaul the Liquor Control Act in many other areas. The National Party supports the thrust of the actions taken by the Government in setting

up an interim Liquor Advisory Committee. The Government hopes that the committee will investigate all areas of the Act, determine the effects of changes to the Act on the industry and will be able to provide to the Minister avenues of assistance and protection wherever there may be upsets to particular aspects and areas of the industry.

The National Party supported the establishment of the committee. Certainly, it was concerned that the committee appeared to be a secret committee. In correspondence with the former Minister for Economic Development, I sought the names of the persons who comprised the committee, but the Minister was not prepared to name the personnel. However, after this matter was raised in Parliament, the new Minister for Economic Development, on 18 March, decided to provide to me, to some extent in confidence—and I appreciated that the information would be supplied to me on that basis—the names of the persons who comprised the committee. At that time, the honourable gentleman indicated that he did not want the committee to be subjected to pressure groups or individuals who might wish to put points of view or to press their own interests. I suggest to the honourable gentleman that that should be precisely the function of the committee. It should listen to people in the industry and to groups representing sections of the industry so that those points of view can be heard and that the committee may best determine the future of the industry and make changes to improve it. All honourable members know of the input of that committee into the suggested repeal of section 11A of the Act. It was made clear in a letter sent to the Retail Liquor Merchants Association that if there were to be changes to section 11A to remove the minimum price for beer there should be changes also that would assist people in the industry who may be affected by those changes. The letter of 6 August 1982 details the recommendations that would be put into effect if changes were made to section 11A or if that section were repealed.

The honourable member for Balwyn has detailed each of those recommendations which would have been a protection to those involved in the industry and affected by the changes. Despite the comment from the Minister that the Government has accepted all but two of the recommendations, in my analysis of the ten recommendations, four were rejected by the Government, which is indicated in the second-reading speech, and of the other six at least two recommendations have had changes made to them. These changes have affected any suggestion that the people in industry should be protected if the provisions for the minimum price of beer were repealed.

I refer honourable members briefly to the history of liquor licensing. The first licence for the sale of liquor in Australia was issued in 1792. Over the years, many changes have been made to the control of the industry. Most of those changes were to the benefit of the industry generally.

The first significant Victorian Act was proclaimed in 1854 in an attempt to control the industry when heavier licence fees were opposed and Sunday trading in Victoria was ended and all sales of liquor of more than two gallons had to be made by registered sellers. In 1916, the Licences Regulation Board was reconstituted as the Licensing Court of Victoria which existed for the granting, renewing, transferring and withdrawing of liquor licences and there was more control over the industry to provide a better industry and one that would serve the people and be able to provide liquor under controlled circumstances.

In 1953, major changes were made to the Licensing Act. In 1965 major changes were made to the trading hours which were extended from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., extending the trading period by four hours. In 1968, the Liquor Control Act established a Liquor Control Commission, replacing the Licensing Court, which was headed by a County Court judge. Other changes included the continued concept that liquor could not be sold without a licence and that hours of trading should be limited. As honourable members know, in 1976 the Liquor Control (Orderly Marketing) Act introduced section 11A which controlled minimum prices for packaged beer. Only minor amendments have since been made.

This Bill was introduced last Thursday fortnight. The National Party believes not enough time has been available in which to analyse the Bill, to examine the reports and to be able to provide to the Minister the best input possible and to be able to exert some pressure to obtain changes to the proposed legislation so that it will be to the best advantage of the liquor industry.

Following the second-reading speech on the Bill, the National Party quickly affirmed its opposition to the measure and the removal of the minimum price for packaged beer. Both the Leader of the National Party and I clearly stated that we believed such action would have a disastrous effect on the Victorian liquor industry, that it would have a serious effect on the maintenance of service and profitability of hotels, licensed bottle shops and other persons involved in the sale of packaged liquor, particularly in country areas. Unemployment will result from these changes at a time when the Government is providing funds to increase employment and to reduce unemployment.

We made those statements immediately after the Bill was introduced and prior to having had the benefit of much of the investigation which has occurred since. The measure contains a number of other provisions, as the honourable member for Balwyn indicated, apart from the vexed and major question of the removal of the minimum price for packaged beer.

The Bill also contains major clauses relating to Sunday trading for hotels and other associated outlets in the liquor industry and I will come to that later. It also deals with changes to the restricted club licence to provide a better time for cricket clubs to be able to operate at week-ends. It covers other areas of amendments which will be dealt with later by me during the debate or in the Committee stage. Many of the clauses of the Bill are most important and will have a considerable effect on the industry and will require comments at the appropriate time.

What does the Bill contain? What will be its effect? I make no apology for the fact that the National Party is totally opposed to the removal of the section relating to the fixed price for packaged beer. I refer to the second-reading notes and shall provide to the House some facts and figures which will prove to the Government that it should not proceed with the Bill in its present form. In the second-reading notes, the Minister said that the removal of the minimum price for beer will result in cheaper beer being made available to all Victorians.

Mr Cathie—Hear, hear!

Mr JASPER—Has the Minister analysed the situation in other States? He probably has far too much to do. He is Minister of Housing and Minister for Economic Development with responsibility for tourism, which includes the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Control Commission. I believe the Minister in his capacity as Minister of Housing was doing an excellent job, and still is. Houses are being built in the Murray Valley electorate and that is important, and important to me as the member representing that electorate. However, if a Minister is loaded up with more than he can handle, he is not able to give the time necessary to analyse proposed legislation and he becomes more responsive to pressure groups within his party. I believe this Bill is the result of pressure groups within the Labor Party. Obviously the Minister is being responsive to that pressure and to a commitment given by the Government prior to the election. However, since then I believe there has been a rethink by many people in the Government party who believe section 11A should not be removed from the legislation. I refer to the former Minister for Economic Development. Although he has not confirmed the fact with me, it is my belief that since the new Government was elected he has become convinced that it should not proceed with a repeal of section 11A.

Mr Cathie—What is your evidence for that?

Mr JASPER—I shall be interested to hear the Minister refute that and to hear the Minister for Industrial Affairs, also in his capacity as Minister of Labour and Industry, refute that point.

The Minister indicates that as long ago as 1979 the Labor Party stated that if it came to office it would remove the minimum price for beer. The Labor Party came into office early in 1982 and it has had more than twelve months to introduce a Bill. A Bill has now been introduced, and members of the Government Party expect the National Party to assess the Bill in under three weeks and look at all the reports that have been prepared and debate the matter in this House. That is not good enough when the Government has taken more than twelve months to produce this Bill, with much heartburn.

In the second-reading speech, the Minister said that removal of the minimum price will result in cheaper beer being available to all Victorians. I wonder how cheap it will

be in the long run. Perhaps some price reductions will occur. It is important to look at the price for beer across Australia, Victoria being the only State in which there is a control on the minimum price of beer. The price for a single bottle of beer is much higher in other parts of Australia than it is in Victoria. In New South Wales a single bottle of beer is more than 20 per cent dearer than it is in Victoria. Who will be affected? Does the Minister deny that beer is cheaper in Victoria per single bottle than in New South Wales? If so, let him stand up and say so. I am talking about bottled beer and the free market. This indicates how good the free market is.

In Victoria where there has been control it is important to note that the minimum price set by the Liquor Control Commission is lower than that recommended by the Australian Hotels Association. Honourable members should be clear as to what price is recommended by the association. In Wangaratta the recommended retail price for a dozen bottles of beer is $15.12 but the minimum price set by the Liquor Control Commission is $13.92. There is a significant difference between the two prices, the association's recommendation providing a 22·6 per cent margin of profit. The association believes this to be a reasonable margin for a person operating in the hotel industry. The recommended retail price for the city of Wangaratta is $13.92 which includes the 9 per cent licence fee. The wholesale cost is $11.70 which leaves a margin for a dozen bottles of beer of $2.22 which represents a percentage of 15·95. I shall refer to the percentages a little later because the Minister was so keen in his second-reading notes to mention percentages and what people should be earning that I should like him to remember that the margin in Wangaratta for a dozen bottles, which would be the same margin across Victoria, is 15·95 per cent. In Wangarratta a single bottle of beer costs $1.16. The actual cost of that bottle to the retailer is 98 cents, leaving the retailer with a margin of 18 cents which is 15·5 per cent. I suggest that that is a fairly minimal margin when running a business and wanting to obtain some sort of profit to maintain oneself in the industry.

It must be remembered that the people who might be affected to a greater extent by a higher price for a single bottle of beer would be the people whom this Government would be most interested to support, the lower income earners, the pensioners and those who wish to take home a couple of bottles of beer of an evening to drink at their leisure. In a report dated 17 May 1983, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that Victoria's single bottle prices are the cheapest of any in Australia. The prices given for a single bottle were: In Melbourne, $1.16; in Sydney, $1.41; in Canberra, $1.28; in Hobart, $1.28; in Perth, $1.24; in Brisbane, $1.25 and in Adelaide, $1.27. All of those prices are dearer than that for a single bottle in Melbourne, and Victoria is the only State of Australia that has a fixed minimum price for beer.

Therefore, it has been most effective with the Liquor Control Commission setting minimum prices, which have become the maximum prices at which beer is sold at the retail outlets. Therefore, one is able to see what the result of that legislation has been in Victoria.

The price per dozen bottles of beer should also be compared, because the Minister has been keen to interject and say that it relates to single bottles and that cans should be considered as well. In relation to bottled beer, the report of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, dated 17 May 1983, points out that in Melbourne, the average price for a dozen 750 ml bottles of beer is $13.25, in Sydney, the price is $17.31, in Perth it is $13.28 and in Canberra it is $13.53.

The lowest price for beer has been in Victoria where the Liquor Control Commission has set the minimum price for packaged beer, which has become the maximum price at which it is sold. In his second-reading speech the Minister made a number of assertions. He stated:

> It is clear that what occurred during the so-called price war could not happen again.

What a blatant statement for the Minister to make! There is no evidence to back it up. I will be interested to hear the Minister's reply and whether he will produce the facts. The Minister went on to say that the Government will continue to protect the market position of small businesses in the retail liquor trade at the same time as section 11A is repealed. I have already indcated that of the ten recommendations made by the interim advisory panel, only six have been accepted

by the Government, and even a couple of those have been watered down to some extent.

One can understand the queries that are coming from the National Party when these sorts of comments are being made by the Minister. The Minister also stated:

> The first reason is that there does not now exist in the retail bottled liquor market the capacity for discounting on the scale that prevailed during the price war.

Therefore, he is saying that that is the case because there is not the same capacity now to discount as there was on previous occasions in 1975 and 1976. The Minister goes on to provide reasons for the changes to the legislation and details the ten points which are put forward by the interim advisory committee. Honourable members need to be clear on what is happening. The Minister seems to be very good at bringing forward percentages as to what people should earn, how much they should make and what profit margins they should receive. In referring to such percentages, the Minister stated:

> For these reasons, the Government is confident that the vast bulk of discount packaged beer will be sold at prices which produce a gross mark-up of between 9 per cent and 13 per cent . . . This would represent a saving to consumers of between $1.06 and 60 cents.

He suggested that there will be a saving to the consumer. I suggest to him that no business can operate on a margin of between 9 and 13 per cent. Further on in the second-reading speech the Minister said that the cost of doing business has been established at 12·5 per cent.

The National Party has received many representations from people involved in the industry, both from hoteliers and people involved in retail bottle licences. It has been suggested that, for many small businesses, up to 30 per cent of packaged beer is sold on Bankcard. The Minister would be aware that the percentage of give-away for the retailer is 5 per cent. Perhaps the retailer may be able to reduce that by negotiating with the management of the Bankcard operation. For the small retailer, 5 per cent of what he takes in will be the margin for operating on Bankcard. If the profitability of between 9 and 13 per cent, as suggested by the Minister, were taken away from that amount, what sort of profit margin would that leave? It is not a net profit, but a gross profit for the industry and the particular operator. The margin would be some 4 per cent before all costs are taken into consideration. In that way, the small operator will be operating in a loss situation. The Minister also stated in his second-reading speech that:

> Consequently the liquor industry has had more than twelve months' notice of this proposal in which to prepare.

No one knew what the changes would be or what assistance would be provided for people involved in the industry to protect them from the abolition of the minimum price for beer. What would a person do to prepare himself for changes over twelve months? Does he sack staff? If he sacks the staff, he will be up for payments, and the Government is keen to see that redundancy payments are made for people who are put off from work. What should the retailer do? Should he sell out his business? Not many people would be keen to buy a business involving the liquor industry at this time, knowing full well that the Government will repeal the fixed minimum price for beer.

Of course, in the licensed retail bottle industry and the hotels generally, there is a free delivery, if it is required. There is also the provision of chilled beer. The protections for small businesses that the Government says it will provide are not adequate.

Some of the other comments made by the Minister include the fact that people in the liquor industry have had twelve months to prepare themselves, and I indicate clearly that the National Party has not had enough time to discuss the proposed legislation with all the people involved or to study the great number of reports that have been brought forward.

In discussing the recommendation of the interim advisory committee, the Minister in his second-reading speech quoted the reference to:

> 1. Encouragement, including low-interest loans to small hotels to improve their facilities and upgrade their operations . . .

I suggest to the House that the $10 million to which the Minister referred to be made available through the Victorian Economic Development Corporation has certainly not yet been forthcoming, and not all of it will

be provided to the liquor industry to help it to adjust.

The Minister did not mention the retail bottled liquor licence outlets, which may or may not be involved in low interest loans. Perhaps the Minister can clarify that position.

The second point with regard to protecting the people involved in the industry relates to allowing 18 years to be the minimum age for employees selling retail liquor. That sounds all right, but what about the people working in the supermarkets, the people behind the scenes, who are certainly required, but who are usually junior employees.

The Minister spoke at length about the number of retail bottled liquor licences that will be allowed, and the figure recommended by the committee was 5 per cent. The Government has said, "Look, we are in trouble here. G. J. Coles has 61 outlets, which is 8 per cent of the total retail bottle licences, so we will raise it to 8 per cent! That also sounds all right, but it is a sell-out against small business. I do not know how the small businesses will be able to operate effectively under these circumstances. This has been highlighted in the report of the Liquor Control Commission of 30 June 1982. At page 15 of the report, if one reads between the lines, one will see that the Liquor Control Commission is opposed to the repealing of section 11A. That is the inference I get from the report. At page 15, the report details the number of retail bottle licences and states:

> ...Numerically speaking, the "chain stores" represent only 5·21% of all retail licensed outlets in Victoria, whilst their purchases in litres represent 6·77% of beer, 24·36% of wine and 21·89% of spirits purchased by all retail outlets.

That clearly indicates that the retail bottle licence holders sell at a higher percentage for wine and spirits as they are discounted and brought onto the market because there is no fixed price or percentage for them to operate and be effective in the market-place. If there is to be a change to the minimum price for beer, as contained in the proposed legislation, the percentage of beer sold by the chain stores will increase dramatically to the percentages which were indicated in the report for wine and spirits.

The honourable member for Balwyn mentioned specifically the number of retail bottled liquor licences, 8 per cent of which had been incorporated in the Bill as the maximum that can be held by one licencee. Coles New World Supermarket is one of the outlets referred to and has 61 per cent of its licences through its subsidiary, S. E. Dickens Pty Ltd. Four others were mentioned by the honourable member for Balwyn who have varying numbers from 11 per cent to 34 per cent. This gives those chains the opportunity of being able to increase their number to 61 per cent—the same as that held by S. E. Dickens Pty Ltd.

Very little protection is afforded to the small retail bottled liquor outlets a point that was not mentioned by the honourable member for Balwyn. In the case of S. E. Dickens Pty Ltd, one of its licensed outlets which could be a small seller of packaged beer and liquor could sell its licence. The retailer could then apply for a new licence for a larger development in the outer metropolitan area. The company would then have a bigger outlet for selling packaged beer and could compete with the large chains.

This point should be considered when analysing the proposed legislation. The Minister also said in the second-reading speech that the Government will undertake a detailed study of the issues mentioned earlier in the second-reading speech. How does the Minister intend to do that? Will he ruin all the small licensed bottle outlets, the hotel industry generally, and then say the Government will investigate ways to assist the industry?

I suggest the Minister and the Government would do better to retain the proposed legislation unless there is a full investigation of the impact of the removal of section 11A. The Minister continues to discuss the recommendations Nos 5 and 6 and says that they relate to the Federal Government's excise duty on beer and the State duty on liquor, yet the next comment by the Minister is:

> All members will realize that in the stringent financial circumstances facing all Governments in Australia, no responsible Commonwealth or State Government would be able to reduce the level of excise and licence fees payable in respect of liquor.

I concede the need for Governments to have money; they need money. However, the Government should recognize that people involved in the retailing of packaged beer also need a profit margin to work. No such

margin exists when one takes the Minister's percentages into account.

It is worth analysing the figures for a dozen bottles of beer. The recommended retail price for a dozen bottles of beer as set down by the Liquor Control Commission is $13.92, and that recommended by the Australian Hotels Association is $15.12. The Minister quoted the Liquor Control Commission price as the maximum price obtainable. I should break down the cost involved in packaging beer: The brewery receives $5.02; the Federal Government takes the lion's share of $5.40, which is more than the brewery receives for a dozen bottles of packaged beer; 94 cents is the total charge by the State and the Federal Government charge is $6.34, which brings the total cost of a dozen bottles of beer to $11.46.

If the landlord were expected to receive a reasonable margin, it might be 70 cents. We shall let him have that amount. If one adds to that the cost of hiring employees, which is generally regarded by the Australian Hotels Association as 8 per cent of the total, the figure is $1.07. One must also add the cost for freight, and if one were going to send the packaged beer to Wangaratta or Benalla, it would cost 34 cents to freight to Wangaratta and 24 cents to Benalla. The total price for a dozen bottles of beer is $13.37 compared with the recommended retail price of $13.92. That leaves a margin of 55 cents over and above all other costs; those costs might include the power, rates, maintenance on the building and all the other inbuilt costs associated with maintaining a hotel or retail bottled liquor outlet.

Mr Remington—What does all that mean?

Mr JASPER—If the honourable member for Melbourne will wait, I can tell him what it means; I can give him the end result and the full treatment. I shall be able to convince him that the proposed legislation is wrong. The honourable member for Balwyn convinced the House the Bill was wrong and then stated that the Opposition was supporting it.

Mr Ramsay—That is not true. You were not listening.

Mr JASPER—I was listening and a print of *Hansard* would not prove me wrong. In the second-reading speech the Minister refers to the prohibition of loss leadering. I wish to mention this aspect because the Minister does not really understand the issue. The Minister is paid regularly, once a fortnight, as are all honourable members, and he is not really aware of the costs that are involved in running a business and the costs that must be met by people in private enterprise.

I have grown up in private enterprise and appreciate the problems of people trying to make a profit and trying to reinvest in various developments in industry that are taking place.

Competition is necessary, and competition is referred to in other ways in the report. If the Minister reads the report he will discover that the report that he hangs his hat on—the Monash report—states the point raised by the Minister. I should like to think that the Minister read the report from cover to cover.

Most honourable members have not had the time to do so.

Mr Cathie—You have had a week!

Mr JASPER—A week! That is right, but how long has the Minister had the report? The Minister understands much about economics because he continues to state that the suggestion made by the panel should be inserted in the Act to make packaged liquor available at a price less than cost. In the second-reading speech the Minister stated:

> "Cost" would be calculated by reference to the wholesale price, freight charges, licence fees and an amount representing the average minimum overhead necessarily incurred in respect of the sale of packaged liquor. This latter amount is generally referred to as "the cost of doing business".

That is an extremely fine economic term and I agree with it—"cost of doing business". The Minister then continued to make an astounding assertion:

> The advisory council panel recommended that the amount to cover "the cost of doing business" be set at 12·5 per cent of the wholesale price.

During the second-reading speech, the Minister said that for those reasons the Government is confident that the vast bulk of discount packaged beer will be sold at prices which produce a gross mark up of 9 or 13 per cent. I ask the Minister what will happen if a retailer does not have a profit and

is not in a profitable situation. Those retailers will go out of business, become bankrupt and close down. The result will be higher unemployment in Victoria. I suggest to the Minister that if there are no employers, there will certainly be no need for employees.

The Minister makes many statements on the various points brought forward by the interim advisory panel.

The Minister indicated that there should be no limit to the amount of beer a person can purchase from a retail bottle outlet or hotel if discount prices apply.

I shall be moving an amendment to clause 36, which relates to vignerons, exempting them from that clause and which looks at the position so far as wholesalers are concerned.

The next point relates to the two year moratorium on the granting of new retail bottle shop licences. The Government says it is not prepared to accept that proposition so that recommendation has gone out the door.

The Minister also spoke about the imposition of a discontinuance fee on a licensee who does not renew his licence or surrenders his licence. The fee will apply to any business that closes its door for whatever reason. That sounds okay, but implementation will be very difficult.

The final point was the introduction of proposed legislation to prohibit the receipt at unlicensed premises of offers or orders for the purchase of liquor. If that proposition could be implemented, it would help the situation in relation to the removal of section 11A.

Many articles have appeared in the newspapers that commented on the industry and the removal of the minimum price for beer. Most of the comments that have appeared in the newspapers expressed concern about possible changes to the liquor industry. Some of the headlines were:

> Beer price move risks jobs.
> Price cuts will hit liquor jobs.
> Beer price move a job threat.
> More jobs to go if beer price drops.

Some of these comments were made by people involved in the industry but in other cases by people who see the removal of a fixed price for beer as a big problem for the industry. The Minister and the Government need to recognize what this will cost the industry generally. One of the important documents——

Mr Cathie—Start with the *Age* editorial.

Mr JASPER—I have the *Age* editorial and I shall refer to it in a minute. If one looks at the article that appeared in the *Age* on 29 April 1983 written by Philip Chubb, state political reporter, one sees that it sums up the current situation. The articles is headed:

> Cut price beer: Boon or a threat to jobs?

I suggest it will be a very great threat to jobs, to the industry and the security of jobs within the industry. It was interesting to read that article and see how obstinate the Minister was in not listening to what reports have stated. The previous Minister listened to what people had to say. He listened to the warnings being made but this Minister says he will put the proposed legislation into effect and it does not matter what happens to the liquor industry. The industry is operating effectively at the moment. What does the Minister want to do—he wants to wreck the industry by attacking the small margin of profit.

Let the Minister attack the licence fees imposed by the Government and the excise fee imposed by the Federal Government. The Government should be able to make adequate representation to the Federal Government because the Government in Canberra is a sympathetic Government. The Minister has spoken about the fact that there has not been a sympathetic Government in Canberra in the past. I suggest he would have the ear of the present Government and should be able to make specific representations.

The article written by Philip Chubb was very interesting, and states:

> The Government was beginning to worry if it could carry out its promise without putting more people out of business than any Government could afford.
>
> So it decided to send the problem to the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University.

Prior to that article the articles written stated that the Government should not remove section 11A because it would have a tremendous effect on the industry. The Minister was hell-bent on getting a document

that would back-up what he wanted to do. The article also states:

Then the analysis was published in 'The Age' and Mr Cathie did a second extraordinary thing. He dismissed the findings publicly without even running through them with the authors. He had still not received the Monash Study.

Asked about the RMIT analysis on 14 April, the Premier, Mr Cain, said: "I'm not aware of the details on which it's based.

"I had heard about that report, I can't comment on its validity. What I can say is, I think that the Victorian people would wish to buy beer at the cheapest possible prices and many see competition in that area as being what they would expect."

What is the Government looking at? It is looking at a gross margin of 15 per cent to retailers. The Government is saying it will take some of that for the consumers and it does not matter whether the retailers go out of business, there will be cheaper beer for the consumers. The Government is wrecking business and employment opportunities throughout the State. Philip Chubb goes on to state:

The arguments in the RMIT study against the Government's policy are powerful. It may be they are wrong. But an observer could hardly conclude that the Government had arrived at its view after serious consideration.

This is even more surprising because of the extent to which RMIT is prepared to put its professional reputation on the line defending its findings.

The Government does not worry about this. The Minister interjects that he will not listen to that study.

The rebuttal by the Minister for Economic Development appeared in the newspapers and the head of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology issued a press statement stating that the view of the Government was based on erroneous data. The article by Philip Chubb is worth reading and should be compulsory reading when looking at this measure and should perhaps be incorporated in *Hansard.* I wish to quote two small excerpts. I am sorry the Minister is not staying to hear the comments. It is probably hitting home—the fact it is contained here. The article states:

Mr Cathie argues that these findings do not take account of safeguards the Government is proposing . . .

What do we get with the safeguards? A number are not even to be implemented. The article continues:

Mr Cathie agrees that the effect of the abolition of the minimum price is "difficult to determine". But, he says, he is "convinced that small business can survive".

I suggest that if the Minister claims that he has no understanding of the problems that this will inflict on small business, business generally and people involved in the liquor industry, then it should be remembered that one of the reasons the Government was pushing so hard for the proposed legislation was because it was under pressure from all sorts of areas to make changes and that this measure may not be good enough.

Two advertisements have appeared this week—one inserted by retail liquor merchant outlets headed, "Cheaper beer means loss of jobs" and which states:

Before election the Labor Party in Victoria pledged the public "Cheaper Beer". After being elected they checked retail prices and found that the minimum beer price legislation had already done a good job reducing beer prices to a minimum.

The minimum has become the maximum. The advertising continues:

The Government then appointed an advisory panel of experienced people from within and outside the industry to advise on the beer pricing policy.

The advertisement proceeds to reinforce the point that the Government should not proceed with the Bill. The advertisement states:

Proceed Mr Cathie and never again will your Government be believed that they want small business to survive.

The Government should heed the points raised in those advertisements. I refer to the advertisement that appeared in the newspapers on Tuesday, 24 May, placed by the Victorian branch of the Australian Hotels Association on behalf of 1431 hotels and an estimated 40 000 employees. The advertisement states, *inter alia:*

The Cain Government is showing a callous disregard for those people whose jobs and livelihoods will be destroyed.

It has rejected:

Warnings from the Liquor Trade Union that its proposals would cause widespread unemployment amongst its members.

Personal appeals from hundreds of employees whose jobs are threatened.

Its own report from the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University which predicted job losses, a shift in trade to large supermarkets, warned that some hotels and other liquor outlets could become insolvent and said detailed prediction of the effects of the change was extraordinarily difficult.

The advice of its own Liquor Advisory Panel . . .

The Government should have accepted all of the recommendations of the advisory panel before proceeding to repeal section 11A. The advertisement continues:

Results of a study by RMIT that up to 5000 jobs could disappear.

A report by leading small business authority Professor Geoffrey Meredith, predicting chaos in the industry, closure of hotels and a large fall in employment.

If the Bill is passed there will be a marked increase in the rate of unemployment in Victoria. The Government claims that it is committed to reducing unemployment by introducing job creation schemes through the expenditure of $30 million in one stage, and the expenditure of $40 million in another stage, provided by the wages pause. However, the Government is proceeding with a Bill, which, if passed, will create massive unemployment.

The Minister is unsure of whether the Bill, if passed, will lead to increased unemployment. However, according to those involved in the liquor retail industry, that is what will occur.

I refer honourable members to the *Age* editorial of Tuesday, 24 May. Although I do not believe the editorial takes fully into account the real problems, it does indicate:

But the Cain Government says that it will procceed with legislative changes that will allow retailers to set their own price, below the present minimum price which amounts to about an 18 per cent mark-up on a carton of beer.

That is wrong because it does not take into account the 9 per cent licence fee, which is paid to the Government and which would reduce the claimed mark-up percentage to approximately 15 per cent. The editorial continues:

The Government's proposed action will bring beer into line with other alcoholic beverages such as wine which are not subject to the same regulation.

The prices at which wine and other liquors are being sold are uneconomic for most retail liquor outlets. If the Government is intent on repealing section 11A, it should also examine its stand on retail trading hours. That is the viewpoint expressed in the *Age* editorial.

I refer honourable members to numerous reports of the retail liquor industry, which recommend that there should be no change to the minimum beer price legislation. The Liquor Control Commission is concerned at the proposed repeal of section 11A. I urge the Minister to state categorically that the Liquor Control Commission supports fully the proposed repeal of section 11A. Since late 1976 section 11A has brought effective control to the liquor industry and helped maintain profitability for many small retail liquor businesses.

The honourable member for Balwyn referred specifically to a report commissioned by the Australian Hotels Association by Professor Geoffrey Meredith. That report states that the so-called price war for packaged beer led by the large retail outlets in an attempt to attract additional trade would lead to problems within the industry and that the licensed supermarkets could, in the long run, be expected to set higher prices for a wide range of retail products to offset the promotion of the expected price war. The report refers also to the unemployment that would be created. The report confirms that the Government would fly in the face of many facts if it acted to repeal section 11A and would hand over the packaged beer market to supermarkets.

I refer to the report by a team from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology on the effect on the liquor trade if the minimum price of beer were to be removed. The conclusions in the report state that the repeal of section 11A would result in:

A permanent loss within 12 months of 5240 Victorian jobs with the job loss predominantly concentrated in the major provincial centres and the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

A further loss of between 2000 and 3000 jobs would be likely in the following six to nine months.

A net fall in Victorian aggregate demand of at least $175·55 million.

An increase in the cost of Federal unemployment benefits of $11·12 million.

A 20 per cent to 40 per cent profit decline within the hotel industry.

A temporary decrease in beer prices at all liquor outlets which would be maintained only until the rapid erosion of industry profitability leads to bankruptcies and major structural adjustments within the industry.

A $20 million or 50 per cent reduction in investment in hotels, renovations, fittings and so on with a consequent downgrading of the currently high quality facilities within the industry.

A further decline in investment in new hotel buildings, with no compensatory investment in supermarkets.

A shift in market shares from the labour intensive hotel industry to the less labour intensive large supermarket chains.

They are the conclusions of an expert team from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Notice should be taken of these recommendations. However, the Government is hell-bent on causing chaos in the industry.

The Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union does not support the Bill. It can see the problems that will be created; why cannot the Government? If the Government will not take notice of the people involved in the industry, the employers, and selects what it wants to from the Monash report, surely it should take notice of the union. Perhaps the union is not important enough so far as the Government is concerned, but it can see the chaos that will be created.

The union has published a circular, the contents of which should be noted in *Hansard.* The circular is headed, "Union supports minimum beer price" and states:

The union is concerned about this because of the effect it could have on the hotel industry.

Clearly, with the removal of the minimum price, the big supermarket chains will be in a better position to discount packaged beer than most hotels.

This will lead to hotels losing their share of the market in packaged beer which, taken together with the decline in bar sales of bulk beer, will badly affect the economic viability of many pubs.

It has been estimated that as many as 5,000 people could lose their jobs in the hotel industry.

There is no evidence that removal of minimum pricing would lead to cheaper beer in the long term. Once the chains had driven out the small retailers they would be free to set the price as high as they want.

While the Government has a pre-election commitment to the repeal of 11A the Union believes that this should not be done at this time because of the general unemployment crisis.

I now refer to the Monash report, despite the fact that the honourable member for Balwyn has already referred to it in many areas. It is a true Socialist document because of the terms used in it. The report sets out the attitude of the Government in obtaining a report which fits in with its thinking and criteria in removing the minimum price for beer. The document states:

This indicates that even without the minimum price for packaged beer, liquor stores in New South Wales generate supernormal returns above direct cost.

What is a super-normal return? The document states that restrictive licensing alone is sufficient to allow liquor retail establishments to earn super normal returns above costs. It is likely in Victoria that super normal returns in liquor retailing will prevail even if section 11A is removed. Those comments concern me. The document also indicates that there will be a loss of jobs.

The study refers to three scenarios regarding what could happen with the removal of Section 11A. The study makes an educated guess as to what may happen. I suggest to the Minister that he should consider what will be the effect on the industry before he institutes the proposed legislation. If the Government proceeds with the measure, there will be many detrimental changes to the industry. Licensed bottle shops and hotels will go out of business; they will not be able to stand the pressures resulting from the measure.

The Minister, instead of being known as the Minister for Economic Development, will probably be referred to as the "Minister for Small Business Bankruptcy". He may even be referred to as the "Minister for Dearer Beer". The Minister has declined to listen to the industry and has failed to understand what will happen. He has closed his ears on this issue. He has had little to do with private enterprise and that may be why he does not understand the industry.

The second-reading speech contains vague assertions. The proposed legislation is destructive. The thrust of it is supposed to help the majority of Victorians to obtain cheaper beer. I have demonstrated to the House that there is little margin to effect lower prices. A drop of 60 cents a dozen will probably help maintain hotels and licensed

bottle shops in business. That should be considered. The Government is suggesting that a drop of 5 cents a bottle will be of benefit to the consumer, and that needs contention to be examined.

The Government has given a commitment to protect small business and businesses generally, but that protection is not forthcoming. The industry has been effectively controlled by the Liquor Control Commission. Excellent facilities and services are available for those involved in the industry. I am concerned with the attitude expressed by the Liberal Party. It has expressed total opposition to the repeal of section 11A, but will do nothing about it.

The Leader of the Opposition is a person who thinks about things; I hope he has listened to what I and the honourable member for Balwyn have said. I hope the Liberal Party will reconsider its attitude to the proposed legislation, particularly in relation to section 11A.

I will make other comments on various clauses of the Bill in the Committee stage. The National Party is totally opposed to the removal of section 11A which removes the fixed minimum price for packaged beer in Victoria. I hope the Government does not live to regret the proposed legislation.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I thank the honourable member for Murray Valley for concluding his speech. It was a Cliff Young performance in terms of durability. I congratulate him and the honourable member for Balwyn for the effort they have put into bringing to a head some of the concerns of the opposition parties in this place. It is also necessary for me to explain briefly the difference between the Liberal Party and the National Party on this issue. The Liberal Party does not support the contents of this Bill, but it does not oppose it for very good reason.

I do not mean this as a criticism of the National Party, but the National Party represents certain seats in this House which do not in any way infringe on metropolitan Melbourne. Today the National Party has made decisions based on the way that country people vote. I and my party appreciate that over the past few weeks the anti-Labor vote in rural Victoria has increased considerably at a cost to the Labor Party.

Mr B. J. Evans—At a cost to the Liberal Party, too.

Mr KENNETT—It does not matter which way one looks at it, but in country Victoria there is an isolation from the rest of the State in terms of views. The Liberal Party representatives comprise members from both metropolitan and rural Victoria. The Liberal Party does not like this measure, and I say that categorically. It is all right for the honourable member for Murray Valley to put his head in the sand, but this Government went to the polls 13 months ago and cast the view that it would remove section 11A in this Act, but it has not acted in the way that it promised on that question. The Government does have a mandate, and a political party that does not recognize that changes do take place in the community is not acting responsibly. There was no question of trading hours before the last election from the Liberal Party. I will come to that in a minute, because once again the Government is selling people down the drain.

Members of the Liberal Party are bitterly opposed to the contents of this Bill as it relates to comments of the Minister for Economic Development on 15 March 1982. We are mature enough to recognize that at the last election the majority of people in the community overwhelmingly voted for a political party which went to the people based on a policy in terms of liquor.

There are many aspects of the Bill that causes the Opposition concern. Let me refer to the provision in section 11A and how it contradicts the Government's other utterances to date in terms of policy.

The honourable members for Balwyn and Murray Valley mentioned the employment schemes being initiated by this Government and its Federal counterpart. This Government has continually said that job priority is important, but on this occasion it is turning its back on a report that states there will be a loss of 800 jobs in the liquor industry. Also, a provision in the Bill will restrict employment in retail bottled liquor licence outlets to people under the age of 18 years. This is a vicious attack on young people in this State who may wish to be employed. Many are employed in the industry, although the liquor industry indicates that it does not want people under the age of 18 years working in the liquor outlets. The Government has professed an interest

in people who need jobs, but in this measure the Government has admitted that jobs are not nearly as important as trying to appease certain sections of the community.

Mr Landeryou, the Minister for Industrial Affairs, said on 15 March 1982:

> Whilst we are committed to repealing the minimum price beer legislation, we will do it in such a way as to protect and enhance small liquor businessmen.

There is nothing in this Bill that protects the small liquor businessman. The House is not only faced with this Bill, but there is another measure to be introduced in a couple of days time, being the Beer Prices Regulation Bill, which will set a maximum price for beer. On my reading of that Bill, the maximum price will apply to retail pricing as well as to wholesale pricing. The Government is establishing a maximum retail price as well as a maximum wholesale price. This Bill abolishes section 11A and totally ignores the Government's first priority of jobs and the Government's concern for small business. The Government has no concern for jobs, for employment, or for small business.

Mr Cathie—That is nonsense!

Mr KENNETT—Then why is it introducing the Bill? It is amazing how easily this Government is prepared to prostitute itself for short-term gain. One can understand the Government moving towards a system of deregulation. As honourable members know, I am in favour of deregulation when circumstances allow it to occur, but that is when there is better economic growth. This is not creative legislation, it is disasterous legislation for small business, and I am amazed that members in this place can laugh about it.

I have spoken recently to many employer organizations and industry associations, and I have spoken at length to the Australian Hotels Association and the retail liquor merchants. I have not spoken to the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, but not one peep has been heard from them on the effect this Bill will have on small business in Victoria. There has not been a peep out of that organization to protect small business over the escalation of energy charges, higher land taxes or Board of Works charges. There is no doubt that there are some hypocritical issues in this State.

Let us accept that the Government in this Bill is admitting that it is anti-employment, anti-small business and anti-people under eighteen years of age looking for employment. What else can be said about it? Hotels and retail bottle outlets over the years have been subject to Government legisation and regulation in terms of the expenditure that they have to make in developing their business. One of the reasons legislation was originally introduced by the Liberal Party when in Government was to ensure that these people got a fair return on their investment, an investment that was dictated to them by the Government of the day. The Liberal Party said clearly at the time that section 11A would not be enforced for all time, and that it would protect the cost of the investment by these people so that these small businesses and organizations could continue.

The Government has not given that protection in the proposed legislation. There is no doubt that many of the small businesses will go to the wall—and the Minister for Economic Development knows it—simply because much of their work relates to selling packaged beer. Opposition members do not like the situation in which we find ourselves tonight, and I mean that most sincerely. Industry in this State must realize that because of the Government's philosophical base, it is anti-business, whether it is big or small. By extending drinking hours on Sunday, the Bill is introducing extended shop trading hours in this State by stealth.

Why is it that the Government states that shop trading hours will not be extended, but it is allowing an extra 4 hours on Sunday when businesses can sell grog? One cannot buy modern furniture on Sundays, but one can buy antique furniture, and one can buy salt and pepper, but not spices. It is a hypocritical move. I guarantee that whatever the result of the next State election, fully extended shop trading hours will operate in this State within six months, whichever party is in office. Some honourable members on the Government side of the House are committed to change, and discussion in recent weeks has emphasized the term of this Parliament.

Through this Bill, the Labor Party has started to move towards extended shop trading hours. It is doing it by way of stealth and after the next election Victoria will have

fully extended shop trading hours. Why is it that in the meantime particular individuals have to suffer? New opportunities are being given to tertiary institutions in the Bill. I am not opposed to that, but why is the Government taking away more opportunities from the established hoteliers and licensed bottle shops and making their competition more difficult? Anyone can apply for a tertiary institution licence from the Liquor Control Commission and eventually get approval for it.

Mr Cathie—It is only for tertiary institutions.

Mr KENNETT—Has the Minister ever been to a tertiary institution? Hotels around those areas derive much of their commercial profit from those institutions and often investment has been made in those areas because of the institutions. The provision will take away their viability. I am not opposed to the proposition, but the Government has gone only half way. If the Government were consistent it would give the hotels and other liquor shops the same opportunities as tertiary institutions. Why is it all right to have one rule for one group of potential drinkers and consumers and not for another?

The proposed legislation will ensure that those who have built up their businesses over the years and spent more than they would have spent otherwise to meet Government standards will find their competion increasing without the same standards being required of their competitors so that they will not even be able to compete for the same business. At the same time, there are certain organizations in this State that do not care about the interests of those small businesses.

I invite the hotel organizations and associations and retail liquor merchants to accept the measure with reluctance, knowing that section 11A has been repealed. That was very much part of the Government's policy. After 13 months, the Government has finally made a move in this area, but no protection has been provided for small businesses affected by the Bill. People must now realize that the Government is not interested in their welfare. It is not interested in their welfare because only about 40 000 people are employed in this industry. That is nothing compared with the 2 million people who vote. The Government is going for majority considerations and selling down the drain the allegiances it supposedly built up before the election.

The Government said it supported small business and would protect and develop it. The Government does not give a damn about small business. The Small Business Development Corporation has been promised $10 million by the Government, but not 1 cent has been allocated yet.

Mr Cathie—It will be in this financial year.

Mr KENNETT—It is thirteen months since the Government made that commitment. When it comes to protecting industry—small business is the lifeline of this State—where is the Government? The Government is drinking from its cups and eating from its plates and does not give a damn about small business.

The proposed legislation is a disgrace. It discloses the so-called commitments made by the Government to small business and employment both before and after the election. Regardless of all that, Opposition members believe the Government acheived a mandate and we are prepared to make the commitment that we will allow the Bill to go through, regretfully, in honour of the mandate the Government received for this measure. If industry is put out of business and jobs are lost, the Opposition is prepared to introduce proposed legislation in the next session of Parliament that will give protection during hard economic times to both small business and people. The State cannot afford legislation that wipes out 800 jobs with the stroke of a pen. It cannot afford legislation that wipes small business from the face of the earth without any concern for the rights and opportunities of individuals.

In all the time the Liberal Party has been in opposition, it has tried to exercise its role as an Opposition party responsibly and most people in the commnity and the industry would say that it should automatically reject the proposed legisation. The Opposition has had significant consultation with people in industry, and I think they appreciate our situation. It is time that an election promise made is an election promise kept.

In introducing part of this measure, the Government has kept an election promise

for the first time. It is a pity that it did not keep the other promises it made. It is in good faith to the people of Victoria who overwhelmingly voted for the Labor Party at the last election that the Opposition is prepared to pass the Bill. To all those in the community who will lose their jobs and businesses, I say, "You have our total suport and sympathy, but it is to the Government that you should turn, which introduces legislation that is destroying your lifestyle and opportunity". The Government has not even read the report of the Monash group which would prove any estimate put forward to be incorrect. The Opposition will responsibly meet its obligations to the community and introduce a measure that will ultimately give individuals and businesses protection.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—The Bill amends the Liquor Control Act 1968 and has four main objectives. The first objective repeals section 11A, which has been widely canvassed over several hours this afternoon.

The minimum price for packaged beer was introduced by the former Liberal Government following a price war which took place and involved loss leadering of an extensive nature which had a disastrous effect on the hotel industry.

Honourable members have to cast their minds back to the reasons why the Government of the day at that time took the action it did. It was somewhat against its philosophy to introduce a fixed price scheme. It did so because of the actions of the Government in relation to the hotel industry over a considerable length of time. Those actions were the compulsion on hotels to upgrade facilities involving meals and, in particular, accommodation. The standard imposed by the Liberal Party Government of the day meant that hotels and publicans had to spend a considerable amount of money and capital in meeting those requirements. Many of them could ill-afford to do so. There was little return, particularly in remote country areas, for hotels in relation to that amount of capital expenditure.

When the price-cutting war virtually exploded, the Government of the day considered that it had an obligation to protect the hotel industry. The result was that a minimum price for beer was introduced and many hotels survived when otherwise they would not have gone to the wall.

Over a long period of time, I have had quite a bit of experience in many hotels. After the war, I lived in a hotel for many months and had considerable knowledge of the hotel trade in country areas. I saw how hotel managers and their families ran their businesses. Hotels play an important part in the life of the country district in which they operate. I realize that many people see hotels as merely drinking houses. Many people distrust hotels and are critical of them. I hope the current Government and its members are not in that category.

In country areas, hotels are places where people can meet after work, not to see how many beers they can drink in the shortest possible time, but rather as places in which to relax and share views and experiences. Well-run hotels become the hub of the surrounding country district. The wives and children of publicans play an important part in the towns and cities in country areas. They are nearly always involved in the various sporting clubs. The wives of publicans are involved in many country activities and the whole family become involved in service clubs. Many of the hotels carry on their activities in the form of a club. Anything that puts that situation at risk must be deplored.

The National Party is to oppose the repeal of section 11A and the honourable member for Balwyn and the Leader of the Opposition stated that the Opposition will not oppose that. The two previous Opposition spokemen made it clear that the Opposition in no way agrees with the repeal of section 11A, but considers that it has a strong responsibility, as an Opposition, to act in a responsible manner. It is not right for the Opposition to oppose everything the Government does when it has been given a strong mandate on a certain policy which was clearly canvassed in the lead-up to the last election. This issue was a stated policy of the Labor Party, the then Opposition.

If the future of hotels is jeopardized because of the possibility of a price-cutting war, the Government has said it will reexamine the issue. At the first opportunity, the Opposition will make certain that the Government does just that. The Opposition will carry out a watchdog operation and, at the first signs of a price-cutting war, it will take up the matter on behalf of Victorian hotel people.

Mr B. J. Evans—Those who go bankrupt will appreciate that!

Mr AUSTIN—I said that the Opposition will take action at the first sign of that happening. I have given reasons why the Opposition will not be voting against this clause.

In his report, Professor Meredith stated that he feared the long-term impact of the proposed legislation could be detrimental to hotels. He stated that some small and medium-sized hotels will not be able to survive the initial price war. He further stated that the price of packaged beer would predictably increase to the 1983 levels and probably higher. He added that total employment in the hotel industry will decline.

Honourable members have heard figures quoted ranging from one report which states that 800 jobs would be in jeopardy to another report which stated up to 5000 jobs could be lost.

There are 771 retail bottled liquor licences in Victoria, many of which are shared by five large companies. The honourable member for Balwyn pointed out that the Coles group has 61 licences, or 8 per cent of the total. That was the limit imposed by the Government. The original limit was to be 5 per cent, but because the Coles group already had 8 per cent of the liquor licences, that percentage figure was changed.

The Safeway group has 28 licences and, under the provision of the Bill, these can be increased to 61 licences. The Permewans group has 11 licences, Woolworths 19 licences and San Remo 34 licences. Forty of the 61 licences held by the Coles group are held by large supermarkets and 21 licences are held by small liquor shops. That means that those 21 licences can be transferred to larger outlets.

That would give the Coles group the capability of increasing its total volume of output. The Government uses figures which relate to the gross market options ranging between 9 and 13 per cent. The publican is not so interested in what those might be. He wants customers through his door.

If people are encouraged to buy their beer at supermarkets, they are being siphoned away from the hotel, and customers are not simply part of the hotel get-together; hotels aim to attract customers for the general well-being of their business.

The Government says that the price war will not occur again. That is a confident statement and the Opposition genuinely hopes that prediction is correct.

Mr Cathie—When you were in government, beer was sold off the back of trucks.

Mr AUSTIN—Everyone knows that people break laws, and that will continue to happen. It will be interesting to see how the Government stops the very abuses that the Opposition is concerned about.

Clause 9 extends trading hours on a Sunday to both the beer trade and meals. Currently, liquor may be served with meals on a Sunday from noon until 3 p.m., and that period is to be extended for an hour until 4 p.m, on the ground that people do necessarily need 4 hours to have their meals but that some eat later than others. I should have thought that the current provision allowed plenty of time, and I find it abhorrent that people are being encouraged to sit over lunch until 4 p.m. The extension will encourage people to drink for a longer period on a day when they could be better employed in some other activity.

The present provision in respect of evening hours allows liquor to be served from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. on a Sunday, and that is to be extended to 6 p.m. until 11.30 p.m. I do not object so much to that extension, but I object strongly to the extension in the middle of the day.

Further, clause 9 provides for bar trading on Sundays. Hotels are to be allowed to trade for a total of 4 hours in 2 periods of 2 hours, with a break of at least 2 hours. They are not allowed to begin trading before noon. I foresee the situation where the meal licence will cover the period from noon until 4 p.m., the bar licence will then operate to cover the period from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m. and the meal licence will come into operation at 6 p.m. People will be able to drink virtually from noon until 11.30 p.m. The mind boggles at that type of thinking. People will be encouraged to drink for the whole of Sunday afternoon.

The publican must advertise before obtaining a Sunday trading licence and the Bill stipulates various conditions, one of which is that a licence will not be granted if the granting of it is likely to cause disruption to a neighbourhood or to worshippers. I supose that will rule out Young and Jacksons.

The Bill will lead to a nightmare for publicans and their families, especially those in country areas, who already work long hours on six days of the week. They will now be committed to a hard day on Sunday. The alternative will be to pay labour so that they or their families might have some respite. To employ labour on a Sunday, they will pay overtime at casual rates, and in addition they will have to pay fares. If they employ permanent staff, they will pay for 12 hours to obtain 4 hours' actual work.

The provisions of clause 9 will encourage young people to drink more. It has been found in recent years that the young are drinking more and more. The accident rate is still deplorably high and many of the accidents are caused by drinking by teenagers and those under 25 years of age.

At week-ends, young people travel in fast motor cars all over Victoria and interstate to parties, weddings, and other get togethers. A change has occurred in recent times in that those young people are more inclined to camp on the site of the function or party, and that is to be encouraged. If the Bill is passed, young people will travel away on a Friday night or Saturday morning, have their party on Saturday night and, as they return home on Sunday, the bar trade will be available to them. All hotels will not be open for the same 2 hours all the way from the River Murray to Melbourne; there will be a staggering of hours and it will be possible to drink oneself silly all the way to Melbourne. That aspect of the Bill is to be deplored.

The Government is concerned about the road toll and the Bill is inconsistent with reducing that toll. I am certain that the extension of bar trading to Sundays will increase the road toll.

Clause 22 makes the one change that appeals to me. A cricket club licence currently permits the serving of liquor from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. That will be changed to 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. That makes sense because, as everyone knows, stumps at a cricket match are drawn at 6 o'clock. If one has made a century, one will be able to have a drink at the club whereas, previously, one might not have been able to do so.

The Opposition strongly opposes the repeal of section 11A and will monitor the position carefully to ensure that the kind of chaos that has been foreshadowed does not occur. If those types of problems that have been foreshadowed do occur, the Opposition will take the necessary action.

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—I express my grave concern and disagreement in general with the Bill. It appears that in a number of ways the clock is being turned back, especially on Sunday trading. Historically, hotels were closed on Sundays because of the problems of intoxication and road traffic difficulties and of road accidents. Today, with thirteen deaths on Victorian roads last week-end, honourable members are debating a Bill that will turn the clock back again in order to provide more drinking opportunities on Sundays. Sundays are days for leisure activities and for family.

The Bill gives in to some fanciful notion that the Government holds. I recognize that during the election campaign some time ago, a specific undertaking was given by the Australian Labor Party, which was well debated and obviously supported by the electorate, for the removal of the minimum price for beer. However, if the Government was serious only about removing that provision, there would have been no reason for the Government in this Bill to do any more than remove from the Liquor Control Commission the power to fix a minimum price for beer. If the commission no longer had that power, the intentions of the Government would have been realized.

However, shortly after coming into office, the Government appointed a committee which, for these purposes, I will call the Elliot committee because it included a former member of the Legislative Council, Mr Doug Elliot, who was a principal adviser to the Government in selecting a group of people who would form the advisory committee to investigate the liquor industry.

From concerns expressed about consumers being victimized and upset by the minimum price for beer, one would have assumed that the committee would have had strong consumer representation. However, it comprised only Mr Doug Elliot—who apparently has a great deal of interest in the liquor industry generally; a managing director of the largest brewery company in Victoria; a representative of the Liquor Trades Union—and only one person who in any way represented the consumer, Judge

Campton from the Liquor Control Commission. There was effectively no input on behalf of consumers. This committee was concerned about ensuring that there would be more opportunities for big business and big unions to have more say and opportunity in the industry.

Earlier, the dogs in the community were barking that there was concern about the relationship of the Storemen and Packers Union and the liquor industry. Honourable members know that ferreting out was done on the company known as 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd, which was owned by the Storemen and Packers Union. This ferreting out of information about 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd led to a great deal of embarrassment to the Government because it was demonstrated that there was a clear conflict of interest between the Minister then responsible for the Liquor Control Commission and his own pecuniary involvement in the Storemen and Packers Union. All sorts of interesting developments occurred then and the Government was severely embarrassed, so much so that the Minister was removed from that office so that there would no longer be a conflict of interest and a new Minister was appointed to handle that portfolio.

In the meantime, the report of the particular committee had been brought down and it made all sorts of recommendations which, again, would enhance big business, not the small business for which the Government has been mouthing all sorts of words of support. I refer particularly to the clause that seeks limitation on the influence of big business, according to the Minister's second-reading speech, and which places an 8 per cent maximum holding of licensed liquor outlets by any company or any related company. The committee actually recommended a 5 per cent maximum.

An article last year in the *Business Review Weekly* clearly indicated that a 5 per cent maximum would disadvantage G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd. There had already been negotiations and sounding out by Woolworths to the Liquor Control Commission on that company possibly buying into 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd. If G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd had to divest itself of a significant number of its outlets to have only 5 per cent of licensed liquor outlets, it was anticipated that the Storemen and Packers Union, through 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd, would have been able to purchase those excess outlets owned by G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd and there would have been a very substantial price negotiated for the purchase of 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd by Woolworths. Honourable members know that Woolworths made approaches to the Liquor Control Commission to ascertain whether it was possible for the company to make a bid. Honourable members know that that was a possibility and that when that story broke in the *Business Review Weekly* there was some embarrassment with some of the actions that were being exposed and some of the expectations of significant income to the Storemen and Packers Union through this corporate activity which was being promoted as a protection for small businesses.

The whole sorry activity on the 8 per cent limit means that any group or company with an investment or interest in the liquor industry generally will now be able to keep on expanding its interests until it has achieved a similar number of outlets as G. J. Coles and Co. Ltd—61 outlets or 8 per cent of total outlets. Only a small number of companies or individuals would eventually take over virtually all the outlets of the liquor industry in the State. There is no concern for small business in this.

It is obvious that any large group or consortium would be able to so set their prices and business activity to put real pressure on the small businessman. Having done that, it is clear that there would be an offer of rescue by the growing organization or by the big organization which would be able to make a so-called offer in order to rescue the small businessman in distress. The whole object of this generosity would be to build a major empire controlled by a few organizations.

I am concerned that at present there appears to be a great deal of upset within the Storemen and Packers Union. There is concern about what is happening in union activities and that there is money, possibly from superannuation trust funds, from 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd and other activities, such as LUCRF Pty Ltd, which is now being used to buy all sorts of properties around Melbourne—supermarkets, service station sites and potential new outlets for licensed liquor premises. In fact, there is so much concern in the union that a reform group has been established as a means of finding

the facts about what is happening with union funds, and for whose advantage.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! If the honourable member can show me the relevance of his remarks or the course he is leading the House to on this matter, I shall hear him, but I fail to perceive at present what relevance there is associated with his remarks on the Bill before the House.

Mr SALTMARSH—A substantial paragraph in the clause of the Bill indicates that there will be a limit to the number of outlets at licensed liquor establishments to 8 per cent for any one company.

I seek to indicate that there is a possibility that a whole range of organizations or companies may increase their holdings through the purchase of additional sites, to increase their total ownership to about the size of the G. J. Coles ownership in this State. I wish to exploit the argument that although it is being argued that this Bill will protect the small businessman and the small investor, the measure really do the exact opposite; it will advantage those who have significant capital and significant influence and significant power, at the expense of the small businessmen. That line has been introduced and expounded by the Government but the Bill is completely opposed to the protection of the small businessman. It might be of advantage to the people of Victoria to realize what this Government is doing without being rescued by the Opposition or the National Party.

Mr Ross-Edwards—You will make a mess of Victoria.

Mr SALTMARSH—That is what the Government is doing.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—Two of the significant aspects of the Bill relate to the minimum price for packaged beer and Sunday bar trading. I shall deal first with the minimum price for packaged beer. A document put out by the Victorian Government under the heading "Victorian Government Notes" gives an outline of the legislation and deals in particular with the liquor control Bill. It reads:

> It is not possible for the disruption that occurred during the price war to recur.

The article is referring to the price war in regard to packaged beer that took place in 1976. It continues:

> There is no longer the market capacity for discounting on the scale that prevailed in 1976.
>
> Throughout the price war the recommended retail price for one dozen 750 ml. bottle of beer sold in Melbourne was $8.88. This price represented a gross markup on wholesale price plus licence fee of 36·8 per cent. The present minimum price for the same packaged beer of $13.44 represented a gross markup of only 18·3 per cent.

The honourable member for Murray Valley has interjected that it is only half of what it was originally. The article continues:

> If packaged beer were being sold today at the gross markup that prevailed during 1976, packaged beer would sell for $15.54 per dozen.

I ask the Minister whether there is anywhere in the State at present where beer is selling for $15.54 a dozen and I wonder what is the purpose of the Bill and what justification the Government has for introducing this measure. It is not there. At any point in Victoria packaged beer is selling for about $13.90 or $13.92 a dozen, retail. Mr Laurie McIllian of the White Heart Hotel, a member of the Australian Hotels Association executive, came to see me last Monday regarding the Bill, representing the hoteliers in the Wimmera district. He said that at Horsham they purchased one dozen bottles of beer at $11.80 and retailed them at $13.92, thus making a markup of 18 per cent. I understand that that is about the markup that exists right around Victoria for packaged beer.

If this Bill is passed—I express Mr McIllian's representations to me—the two drive-in bottle shops at Horsham will lose about $600 a week and one job will be lost from each of those two outlets. The market will transfer across to a major supermarket licenced outlet. This Government is intoducing a Bill which will favour the big operator and that must be in complete contrast with Labor Party philosophy. I always thought the Labor Party supported the little Aussie battler. Many country hoteliers are little Aussie battlers. About a half an hour ago the Leader of the Liberal Party, which is more inclined to support big business, described this measure as disgraceful legislation, yet I expect that the Liberal Party will support it. I question what the two

major parties are all about in this place at present.

Every member of this House would support the ·05 legislation but it has had an adverse effect on beer trading in country hotels. This effect has perhaps not been as great in city hotels because in the city people have access to public transport. The ready accessibility of public transport is not always available in country areas. The country drinker must limit his consumption at the bar and resort more to packaged beer which he can take home and drink in a family situation, which is perhaps not a bad thing.

As a result of the ·05 legislation bar trading in country hotels has declined and those hotels are endeavouring to pick up their sales through packaged beer. This Bill will be against the interests of the small country hotelier who is trying to compete on the package beer market. That is why the National Party intends to oppose the measure.

Another aspect of this Bill will allow hotel bar trading on a Sunday for two periods each of two hours—from 12 noon to 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Once again I question the wisdom of this decision. I always believed that one of the prime motivations for extending the hours from 6 p.m. as they were many years ago to 10 p.m. was to try to eliminate the six o'clock swill, as it was then termed.

What will happen under this proposed legislation is that, by having two 2-hour openings of the bar on a Sunday afternoon, people will rush into a hotel and say, "We will buy a couple of rounds"—of which there would probably be four or five—and they will return to that old system that we tried to eliminate before. Instead of the 6 o'clock swill, we will have two 2-hour ones—either between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. or between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. That is what the legislation will bring about. If one intends to open hotels on Sundays, one might as well throw them right open rather than have restricted times for opening and encouraging the swill of beer by those people who wish to go to a bar and consume as much beer as they can as quickly as possible in that 2-hour period.

The other detrimental effect that the Bill will have on the small country hotels, which are mainly family-operated businesses, is that the owners will find it impossible to have a day off. Under this Bill, they will be required to man their bars for those two 2-hour periods. If they bring in outside labour, I understand that they must employ those persons at a high penalty rate and for no less than three hours at a time. The honourable member for Murray Valley corrects me, by interjection, and says that it is four hours. Whether it be three or four hours, those people will certainly be employed at high penalty rates, and would in actual fact be working for only two hours.

When would the hotelier have the opportunity of taking a day off, when this type of legislation is proposed? Once again, the National Party will exercise its right and oppose this aspect of the legislation as it is not in the best interests of the small operators, who are mainly in the country districts of Victoria. The National Party was elected to support those people, and that is exactly what it will endeavour to do.

The next part of the Bill deals with allowing cricket clubs to make alternations to the restricted licence under which they can dispense beer from between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. That is certainly a sensible move. In the summer, when cricket is played and when the evenings are longer as a result of daylight saving being in operation in Victoria, it would probably be a pleasant time to have a relaxing glass of ale with one's cricketing fraternity. The proposition to alter the hours certainly has the support of the National Party in this place.

In rounding off my remarks, I should like to comment on a matter that was covered quite adequately by the honourable member for Murray Valley, but, although it may seem repetitious, I must point out that it is hard to understand why a Labor Government should bring in proposed legislation which gives a distinct advantage to the big retail licensed outlets. As I said before, I could understand a Liberal Government supporting it, yet the Leader of the Opposition got up and said that it was a disgraceful piece of proposed legislation, then gave an indication that it will support it! I wonder about the rationale in that thinking.

I hope the Minister for Economic Development, who is responsible for tourism, will take to heart the thoughts that have been expressed by the National Party on this Bill and reconsider the minimum price for

packaged beer issue and its stance on the matter.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—I believe this proposed legislation is somewhat like a trial by ordeal for hotels in South Barwon. On 16 February this year, Ash Wednesday, we saw the destruction of two hotels in the electorate I represent, namely at Airey's Inlet and Deans Marsh. I have an interest in representing those hotels, whether they be in Wye River, Lorne, Birregurra, Winchelsea, Torquay, Barwon Heads, Queenscliff, Mount Moriac, Belmont or Grovedale. A person who owns a hotel at Grovedale, which is in the heart of the electorate I represent, asked me to put before Parliament his grave concern about the proposed abolition of section 11A. I should like to put to the House the details concerning the Grovedale Hotel because it is situated on 4 acres of land alongside the Torquay Road, Grovedale, two and a half miles from the Geelong Post Office. That hotel provides the community with an excellent facility. For example, the Colonial Room there is capable of seating 250 guests and the public bar caters for 150 people. The Alcove bar and lounge adjacent to the Colonial Room is able to seat a considerable number of guests. This hotel is famous for its Sunday smorgasbord and carvery functions from 12 midday until 2.30 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. for its entertainment and for being a family hotel. It provides for the people an entertainment facility in an area where there are not many other outlets for entertainment. In the main, it services the communities of Belmont, Grovedale and Torquay from its extensive range of products that include not only in-service, but also the drive-in, walk-in and phone-in bottle shops.

The owner of this hotel, Mr Leslie Cranbourne, in a letter to the Premier, stated:

> The intended abolition of 11A, with no restrictive measures whatsoever against the predatory and monopolistic pressures of the Chain Store giants is very bad news for us and the industry.

He has particularly addressed the matter of his staff, as he employs 24 people in his hotel. Those people are concerned about their futures and have indicated their concern to the Premier in a petition, which was sent to him direct. In the letter, which is dated 12 May, addressed to the Premier, Mr Cranbourne pointed out:

> We are struggling valiantly now for survival and to meet the obligations imposed on us by the many Government and semi-Government instrumentalities to satisfy the proper requirements of the community. Whilst these are not objected to, I ask how I and many others can continue to shoulder this overwhelming burden in the light of a constantly shrinking turnover and profit margins and a vastly increased cost of labour, raw materials, taxes etc.?

He also stated that, having lived and travelled in many countries overseas, he knows the value of hotels in the community, and that he is aware of the expansion of the country and, in the case of Australia, to their potential to meet the requirements of their undoubted forthcoming multi-million tourist industry.

That is particularly relevant to the South Barwon area because, as honourable members may recall, on Ash Wednesday, 720 houses were lost in the fire, and some 6000 people had holiday homes in the electorate.

The manager at the hotel continues in the letter:

> I do stress, however, assistance is required now, not later, if my business and the industry is to survive.

The hotel advocates the retention of section 11A because it will provide no assistance whatsoever. The letter continues:

> Please help us to build on the great asset this country has in the hotel industry.
>
> I truly believe the maintenance of clause 11A would be the right decision in the interests of all concerned, and particularly the public and the many employees engaged in our labour intensive industry.

I would be failing in my duty as a member of Parliament if I did not address the problems facing the industry. The Retail Liquor Merchants Association of Victoria has also put a case to me that:

> We find it ironic that the Government, in giving effect to its commitment to the removal of Section 11A is offering a saving of cents per bottle which will be of little consequence to a majority of Victorians but whose combined effect, concentrated on retail liquor outlets, will disrupt orderly marketing, concentrate distribution of beer in the hands of a few majors and lead in the long term, to higher prices, and lower standards of, service for the shopper and, living for the RBL owners who manage to survive.

The association has submitted evidence through the Minister but believes it has been ignored. The letter continues:

> The Government's stated intention is to refrain from removing 11A in isolation and seek workable alternatives which protect the small man. This being so we suggest they explore opportunities for reducing fixed costs as a means of achieving their objectives of cheaper beer instead of forcing the burden of price reduction in to the variable costs borne by the small retailer.

The association states that it is the intention of the Government to provide cheaper beer and continues:

> The Government's intention to provide cheaper beer but against the certainty that the Victorian public is being offered it at the cost of upwards of 50% of one sector of small businessmen going out of business. Already the small man's lack of purchasing power puts him at a disadvantage when competing in advertising with large chains . . .

Further in the letter the president states:

> I turn now to the Government's admission that removal of 11A could cause a shift of trade away from small Australian businesses to large supermarket chains. But I note when a decision has to be made which would help the little men compete with big business, big business gets the nod. I refer of course to the Minister's rejection of the proposal that differential license fees be applied. A proposal of this kind would not affect the minimum price of beer, but it would give the efficient small RBL operator a fighting chance of survival.

In conclusion, Mr Bruno Scarcella, President of the Retail Liquor Merchant's Association of Victoria, states:

> In conclusion may I reiterate that in our view retention of 11A is the only hope many of our members, and their employees have of protecting their livelihood and any other proposals we have made are "next best". . . we would hope to have the Bill deferred until the Spring session of Parliament. Adequate time for consideration of all facets of the Bill would enable us to propose acceptable alternatives.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures explain that there are 1433 hotels in Victoria employing approximately 21 000 people. The wages and salaries paid out in the State are in excess of $130 million. The retail value of beer and spirits exceeds $546 million while the takings from meals would be $140 million. The total turnover in the industry is approximately $713 million.

Although an average hotel would appear to be making considerable profit, a study has been undertaken by the University of New England which explains that the community recognizes that the hotel industry is important for its support, entertainment, provision of food, buildings and other allied industry services to the community. It is interesting to note that net profits for each hotel average only $13 000. The net profit is less than 1 per cent of the total sales.

However, the average gross profit is approximately $362 000 a hotel but nevertheless 50 per cent of hotels should make very little profit. Hotel owners have to meet high licence fee costs which average $21 600. The average interest paid on loans exceeds $80 000 a year.

Hotel investors' potential represents a high risk and a low return. The repeal of section 11A could lead to a price war on packaged beer, and price discounting is bound to occur. In addition to that there is the high cost of advertising, which can only add to the cost of the product. Licensed supermarkets set high prices on a range of lines in order to offset the costs of encouraging people to attend their stores.

The impact of any price war might not be evident for six months. Part-time and casual labour may be affected by this, and hotels will be reluctant to modernize, re-organize or expand facilities in a climate where revenue and profits fall far too low. These institutions may harden in their attitude to providing extra facilities for the community.

These difficulties are also faced by banks and other lending institutions that tighten up their borrowings and the rates of interest which they can collect on money lent to the organizations. What of the long-term impact on the small hotels that will not survive a price war? Employment will decline and prices of packaged beer will increase; 50 per cent of these who lease hotels will face extreme hardships. The small hoteliers are also faced with local government charges and State Government pay-roll tax charges.

Honourable members need to recognize that packaged beer sales have risen to 68 per cent of the total consumption but beer consumption in hotels has declined from 43 per cent to 27 per cent. Packaged beer sales for 1975–76 were made through various outlets: 56 per cent in hotels; 33·3 per cent retail bottle licence holders; 4·3 per cent in clubs; and 3·4 per cent in other outlets. The impact in 1976–77 following the price war

resulted in hotel packaged beer sales dropping to 49 per cent while retail bottle licence holders increased from 34 per cent to 46 per cent during a six months period. Those trends will continue following the repeal of section 11A.

I have already stated the concern expressed by people for the reduction in employment—full time or casual. Hotels will be seriously affected in the area serviced by large supermarkets providing other outlets. Honourable members should recognize that many people regard the hotel as their centre of social activity. Packaged beer sales will increase to the detriment of the hotel bar sales. One way is to speculate on the future market strategy.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise the honourable member for South Barwon that he has 2 minutes before I interrupt him for the joint sitting of both Houses.

Mr DICKINSON—Another area of concern in the community is for those people who are actively involved in church groups and who are fearful of the extention of hotel trading hours on a Sunday. There has been an increase in the number of road deaths, and many people are strongly opposed to any trading whatsoever on Sundays. On many occasions drunken people have wandered in off Swanston Street, Melbourne, into St Paul's Cathedral. The Dean and the Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral may be very patient and tolerant men but they can do without the drunks from the streets.

I do not envy the commission's task in administering this measure. In conclusion: What a Bill! What a task for any industry to survive in the present economic climate created by the Labor Government!

The sitting was suspended at 6.20 *p.m. until* 8.5 *p.m.*

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—The Bill, by an ironic twist of fate, is indelibly associated with the name R. J. Hawke—the present Prime Minister of Australia. The principal clause in the Bill is clause 8 which repeals sections 11A and 104 (6) of the principal Act. These are the provisions under which minimum prices for packaged beer are determined and enforced. In 1971 R. J. Hawke, in the case of Bourke's store, refused to maintain retail price maintenance for products manufactured by the Dunlop group of companies, and this led to the abandonment of retail price maintenance in this country and inevitably to the destruction of fixed selling prices for beer imposed on hotels by Carlton and United Breweries Ltd and other breweries. That is the history of section 11A. The Liberal Party was forced to introduce section 11A because of the action of R. J. Hawke.

I also refer to clause 31 which inserts a new section 66A to stop any corporation holding more than 8 per cent of the total of retail liquor licences. I understand that is the percentage held by the Coles group of companies. The other important competitors are well below that percentage, particularly Woolworths who were negotiating with 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd, which is the address of the R. J. Hawke Hotel. I understand that 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd is a wealthy investment company that owns a number of liquor outlets in Sunshine and other areas. It is interesting to note that one of the directors of 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd is the Honourable Doug Elliot, who is a member of the interim advisory panel on liquor control.

Mr Cathie—He is not.

Mr WILLIAMS—Are you saying that the Premier of Victoria told a lie!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr WILLIAMS—I have here an answer to Question on Notice No. 1970 asked by the honourable member from Wantirna in October last year. The answer appears on page 3312 of *Hansard* for 16 March 1983. I table the answer. In the answer the Premier of Victoria states:

> Mr Doug Elliot is a member of the Interim Advisory Panel on Liquor Control and did provide some assistance in recruiting volunteers to serve on that panel. He is not a major adviser but rather like all the other members, a person with considerable practical experience in the liquor industry.
>
> The panel has been convened to provide expert advice from practical people but is an advisory body only. It has no direct involvement in the making of Government policy.

A director of 133 Sydney Road Pty Ltd, a company that was negotiating with Woolworths to sell its liquor outlets to Woolworths, was the architect of this Bill. Need I say more! Because of the actions of R. J.

Hawke in forcing the abandonment of retail price maintenance, the trade practices legislation had to be amended and that legislation now makes retail price maintenance unlawful in Australia.

That was unfortunate for the liquor trade. For more than 50 years the liquor trade in this country had been able to enjoy enormous profits through restrictive trade practices. It controlled a number of hotels and liquor outlets that could sell liquor and it imposed very severe restrictive practices on them. In fact, the brewery owned a number of freeholds and a number of the lessees were obliged to sell only Carlton and United Breweries Ltd beer. It was a nice little club—an exclusive club—in my language a cartel that had a licence to print money.

Although I have had differences with Mr R. J. Hawke, I pay tribute to him for the way he acted ultimately to destroy the cartel in the liquor industry. He put the Liberal Party on trial.

I do not apologize for the platform of the Liberal Party. My party believes in a private enterprise system that is responsive to free market forces. The Liberal Party believes in an economic system in which individuals can achieve the economic stature and material awards through initiative and effort. This is where the Liberal Party differs from the Labor Party. The Liberal Party believes free market forces provide the best means of production, distribution and exchange. The Labor Party believes production, distribution and exchange would best but be achieved by Socialism. The Liberal Party believes that it should be achieved through the free market forces.

I make no apology as a member of the free market modest society, who has an occasional drink for supporting this Bill. It is regrettable that the Liberal Party at the Federal level has not acted effectively enough in the past to ensure that free market forces operate properly. I am delighted to note that the new, young leader of the Federal Liberal Party, Mr Andrew Peacock, has bitten the bullet and realized that the Liberal Party must face up to its principles and distinguish itself from the Labor Party. The only way in which the Liberal Party can achieve that is by impressing upon its followers that it believes in the free market forces.

I have had discussions with the owners and lessees of bottle shops and hotels in the area that I represent. I have been delighted to discover that they understand why they are part of the private enterprise system and that section 11A of the Liquor Control Act must be repealed.

I note that there are very few members of the National Party present. That is most unfortunate because I wanted to tell them that for a Government to get the best out of the economy, it must act to ensure that free market forces are allowed to prevail. I concede that liberty does not mean licence. Private enterprise must not be allowed to operate in an untramelled manner and degenerate into a monopoly. I would not want to see the owners of small bottle shops and hotels quickly gobbled up by the large companies like G. J. Coles, Woolworths, Safeways and others.

Mr Ross-Edwards—They will go.

Mr WILLIAMS—They will not be gobbled up. I pay tribute to the Government for acting to prevent that happening. There is scope in the economy for large and small scale enterprises to operate together. However, monopolies should not be allowed to control completely the distribution of liquor in the community. Providing that competition is fair and that discounting and all the other subterfuges that are used to reduce the price of beer are outlawed, the shopkeeper who operates a small retail outlet should be able to compete honestly with the larger retail outlets. Once again, I praise the Labor Party for its initiatives in acting to ensure that this will occur.

When I was listening to the comments of the Minister for Economic Development in his second-reading speech, my mind harkened back to 1977, when a number of Liberal Government members said the same thing in the party room, but we kept being reassured by the Honourable Pat Dickie, who told us that section 11A of the principal Act was only temporary. It has been caused by this abandonment of retail price maintenance. All of these little shopkeepers and hotelkeepers have put all of their money into upgrading their facilities. We cannot have them sacrificed to people who are selling beer off the backs of trucks and all the rest of it. I accepted that argument, but I pleaded then, as I plead now, that section

11A should only be a temporary phenomenon. At the time, the Honourable Pat Dickie said that the action of the then Government was to allow only those operators of small businesses in the industry to get their houses in order to pay off some of the debts that they had unfortunately incurred.

Prior to the abandonment of retail price maintenance, a liquor licence was a licence to print money. In the early 1970s the price to buy a bottle shop licence in the Melbourne area was $40 000 for every $1000 of turnover a week. Now that there is no longer this licence to print money, the price of a liquor store licence is less than half that figure.

Those persons who believe in the free enterprise system must realize that, by the end of this century, there may be few independent liquor stores left. It is to be hoped that they can be phased out without causing much disadvantage to the system. However, I also believe in the anti-trust Acts that exists in the United States of America where, for example, directors of Woolworths stores and similar large companies that engage in anti-trust Acts and form cartels are sent to gaol and their shares forfeited.

I do not want to see these large cartels raise the price of packaged beer and other liquor if they have driven the operators of small businesses out of the market place. There is room in the economy for the operators of small businesses, but there is no doubt that by the end of this century the bulk of beer and hard liquor in this country will be distributed mainly by the four or five large retail chains.

Changes are occurring in the liquor industry not only because of the abolition of retail price maintenance and the proposed repeal of section 11A but also because of the action to enforce drink-driving laws, which have caused a massive swing away from people drinking in hotels.

According to the latest annual report of the Liquor Control Commission, purchases of packaged beer now constitute approximately 70 per cent of total beer purchases and sales of bulk beer have dropped to less than 30 per cent. This represents an all-time high in the proportion of packaged beer compared with total beer purchases and an all-time low in respect of the comparative proportion purchases of bulk beer. As a virtual teetotaller, I am in favour of this.

There is no merit in men deserting their families night after night and getting drunk in hotels, staggering out of the hotels at 10 p.m. and killing one another on the roads. This is especially so amongst persons under 25 years of age. I would be happy to see an increase in the sales of packaged beer so that more people would drink in their own homes instead of neglecting their families and drinking in hotels at night.

The Bill represents a move with the times. I congratulate the Government and those responsible for introducing the Bill. However, much more information is needed on the effects that the Bill will have on the economy.

I applaud the brilliant advertising sponsored by the Australian Hotels Association.

I urge the Liberal Party to find out who is the advertising agency and to see if it can induce it to draw up the advertising for the party. The depiction of bottles dressed up as Russian serfs was good subliminal advertising.

The case may have been exaggerated as to the number of people who would be put out of work as a result of this proposed legislation. I would be surprised if more than 20 000 people were engaged in selling liquor in Victorian hotels, licensed supermarkets and bottle shops. I would be surprised if more than a few hundred of that 20 000 would be put out of work by the introduction of this measure.

Private enterprise should face its responsibilities and not engage in unfair scare tactics to try to fool the public. Members of the public are not fools. I have pleaded with some of my colleagues from the eastern suburbs to stand up for free and fair competition. If the Liberal Party had gone to the polls with a modern platform—including the promise to abolish section 11A—the setbacks in the eastern suburbs would not have occurred. The people in that area want to pay $1 less a dozen for beer and that is what the free market is all about. If the Labor Party can ensure that the price of beer is not cut by more than $1 a dozen, small shopkeepers will be able to stay in business.

A lot of nonsense has been heard about people being out put of work. People lose their jobs because the ecomomic system breaks down. It is not sufficiently realized where employment lies. Approximately

200 000 people are engaged in retail selling in Victoria, most of whom are subject to free competition. Why should 20 000 employees in retail liquor stores be treated differently from the other 180 000 in the retail economic system? If one is to continue to give benefits to hotels and bottle shops, they should be given to everybody else, butchers, bakers and candlestick makers.

If the Liberal Party believes in free enterprise it must bite the bullet. I face up to the reality that the Liberal Party will probably form a coalition Government with the National Party because I do not mind associating with conservatives. The Liberal Party is partly conservative and partly liberal. I have always stood for the liberal section of the party. However, I have been ultra-conservative on some moral issues, and on one occasion I voted with the National Party against both my colleagues and members of the Labor Party.

Two political forces exist in Australia—those who believe in the free enterprise system and those who believe in the Government system, and they are both good. The mix is the only problem. A good society has 20 per cent or 30 per cent of the enterprises run by the Government and 70 per cent to 80 per cent must be run by private enterprise. The National Party apparently believes in 100 per cent private enterprise. If members of the Labor Party were fair dinkum in the pledge they signed, they would believe in 100 per cent Government ownership.

It is only at election time when it wants to fool the voters of the eastern suburbs that the Government appears as just another Liberal Party. Members of the National Party should realize that. When members like myself and the honourable member for Wantirna face the voter, it is no good for us to champion the conservative nineteenth century ideas of the National Party; we must face up to the coming 21st century and the ideas of the Premier, the Minister for the Arts, and the honourable member for Prahran. They are men who, I regret to say, belong to the 21st century.

If the Liberal Party is not prepared to face up to the challenge of the 21st century, it will never again form Her Majesty's Government; it will be Her Majesty's permanent Opposition. That is what the proposed legislation is all about; whether we will have a free society next century.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—On a point of order, the Bill before the House is a Bill to amend the Liquor Control Act 1968. The views of the honourable member for Doncaster on Capitalism and Socialism are interesting, but I suggest that they are not relevent to the Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—I do not uphold the point of order. As the Minister indicated, the Bill is confined to the question of retail marketing of liquor. However, I am prepared to take the view that the arguments of the honourable member for Doncaster can be answered by Government speakers, if they so wish.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker for your wise ruling. I throw back into the teeth of the Minister for Economic Development his own press statement on 20 May 1983. The Minister emphasized his belief that there would not be a repeat of the beer price war of the mid 1970s. He said that the measure was to protect small retailers. I applaud his promise of finance to be made available for small hotels to upgrade their operations and his promise to prohibit sales loss leaders used by some liquor retailers to attract customers to buy other products.

The public wants to buy groceries from supermarkets and if they are licensed, there is no reason why supermarkets should not be able to sell liquor to the public at competitive prices. I applaud the statement of the Minister that there should be differential licence fees to stop the licensed chain stores adopting unfair pricing policies after repeal of the minimum price provision.

So far as I am concerned as a member of the Liberal Party, this is a bipartisan Bill. It will bring in the competitive free market force that I want. I presume the Labor Party is vote-catching and competing for the votes of the people in the middle ground. I remind the Leader of the National Party that that is what the next election is going to be about, competing for the people in the middle ground, the people who live in the eastern suburbs where I am, a lonely Liberal member surrounded by the honourable members for Mitcham, Ivanhoe, Box Hill and Warrandyte. They were elected because my Government was not astute enough to

realize what the young and the under-forties were on about in those electorates. I was very lucky to be a maverick and thus to be regarded as half-Labor, and that is why I got back.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—This Bill is a hotchpotch. I believe that free enterprise is an important principle, and the market should be allowed to find its own level. It seems strange to me, as a member of the Opposition, for the Government which normally advocates control, to concentrate on industries like the liquor industry area. On the other hand, the National Party, which professes to be in favour of free enterprise——

Mr Cathie—Except for subsidies.

Mr LEIGH—Yes, except for subsidies—is not prepared to support this measure. A party either believes in the free market force or it does not. The National Party believes in a free market force when it suits them.

The Government, when in opposition, said that it would remove the minimum price at which packaged beer may be sold in Victoria. I thought then that it was supporting free enterprise, but yesterday, in the *Herald*, the Premier was reported as talking about fixing a wholesale price for beer. Does the Labor Party support the market force and allowing private enterprise to find its own level, or is it taking away Government control in one area and replacing it in another? If the Government does this in the liquor industry, given the opportunity it would do the same thing in other areas because it is the Labor Party's philosophy that Governments should participate more and more in these areas. That is why we sit in this House until 3 a.m. and pass Bills.

Apart from the Minister for Economic Development, the back-bench members of the Government have sat in the Chamber quietly and not supported this Bill. It has been left to the Opposition, while the Leader of the National Party and his members are the troglodytes of this society. Over on the other side of the House there is the former Hawke brigade, now the budgerigar brigade, who squawk and cackle all the time. That is the limit of their participation, and yet the Government is repealing section 11A that fixes a minimum price for packaged beer.

There is a principle inherent in this Bill and I believe the former Government, which introduced it, was wrong. I have no hesitation in saying that. The Labor Party thought that this measure would pick up a few votes. It was a cynical approach to obtaining government, and the people will become aware of it at some stage and deal with it.

The Bill further deals with Sunday bar trading, allowing 2 hours on, 2 hours off and 2 hours on again. This would mean that permanent staff would have to be employed for 6 hours, otherwise staff would have to work for 2 hours, go home and then come back again to work for 2 hours. The Government is not prepared to introduce legislation in a consecutive form concerning Sunday bar trading. It either believes that hotels should be open on a Sunday or it does not. Some hotels, if not all, would not open on a Sunday.

The Bill also allows tertiary institutions to obtain a liquor licence and to do what they want.

Mr Cathie—You do not understand it.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister ought to read the Bill. Licensed clubs are regulated, and yet tertiary institutions would be allowed to do as they wish. I am not suggesting that tertiary institutions ought not to have a liquor licence, but they ought to come under the same control and guidelines as anybody else who is forced to come before the Liquor Control Commission.

Mr Cathie—So do I.

Mr LEIGH—The Bill does not say that, and that is the point. The legal minds in the Chamber will be interested in the clause that states that if there is a popular demand for supply and disposal of liquor on a Sunday, liquor may be sold. Who decides what is a popular demand? Is a popular demand two people, four people, twelve people? There is no criterion for popular demand set out in the Bill.

The Bill further states that persons worshipping in a church should not be duly inconvenienced as the result of the granting of a permit to licensed premises. What does that mean? If there are two people at church can they object to five people going to an hotel across the road?

Mr Ross-Edwards—Of course they can.

Mr LEIGH—Who decides this question.

Mr Ross-Edwards—The Liquor Control Commission decides it.

Mr LEIGH—I thank the Leader of the National Party. This Bill has been ill thought out. The Labor Party has been in government for fourteen months; why has it brought this measure in at this late stage of the sessional period? It was important when the Labor Party was seeking to gain government, and it is disturbing that it has taken so long.

There is also a clause in the Bill allowing union participation; similar to the Industrial Relations Bill in which the Government said employers have no rights but employees can go on strike when they like. If this power is given to employees, it should also be given to employers.

This Government is inconsistent. It spends its time examining the little things which are important, but it ought to address itself to some of the major problems confronting this State.

I note that the Minister of Education has entered the House. His whole education programme is in a mess with the cyclic maintenance programme being cancelled in the area I represent. That ought to be examined. Although the Opposition supports the Bill, it has qualms about some of its aspects. Once again, it has been left to the Opposition to defend the Government in terms of minimum pricing. Apart from the Minister, who made a lovely speech, Government supporters have contributed nothing to the debate. I have not heard Government back-benchers participating in the debate on the Bill. They should represent the community in their electorates.

I oppose minimum pricing. While in government, the Liberal Party would never have introduced a Bill of this kind. It would never introduce a concept that does not espouse free enterprise.

Mr Jasper—You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr LEIGH—As I said earlier, the National Party professes to espouse the free enterprise system. Sometimes I cannot tell the difference between the National Party's brand of Socialism and the Government's brand of Socialism. The Government must introduce the proposed legislation carefully and slowly to ensure that it does not affect employment. Obviously, some jobs will be lost. The Government must be responsible for ensuring that when the measure is introduced it will cause the least number of jobs to be lost to hurt as few people as possible.

The Government talks about protection for the industry, but in some areas that protection is not evident. The Government has yet to allocate the $10 million promised for the Small Business Development Corporation prior to the election. I am not talking about only the $10 million for the Small Business Development Corporation, but other areas as well. I urged the Government when it introduced the Bill that it should assist hotels in particular that are facing problems. The National Party has said that the Opposition should rethink its position, but after espousing free enterprise I consider it should examine its own philosophical position for a change, rather than supporting something because it will gain a few more votes in another area.

Mr Jasper—It has nothing to do with that.

Mr LEIGH—In the National Party's view, a mandate is to win one seat, but in my view a mandate is given when a Government wins a majority of seats. The Government openly advocated this policy in the election campaign and people support it. The National Party is behaving in an irresponsible manner. It is only serving secular interests and is playing politics to an extreme and forgetting about the interests of the over-all State. I hope in the next election the Opposition will take a few of those country seats from the National Party, which no doubt it will.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The proposed legislation covers many unrelated matters. At this stage I will restrict my comments to the matter of the minimum price of packaged beer. I will speak in the best interests of Victoria, relating my remarks to the section of the present Act known as section 11A. I am amazed at the Liberal Party supporting the Labor Government in abolishing the minimum price for packaged beer. The present legislation was brought in by the Hamer Liberal Government by regulation in 1976. It was brought in by legislation and confirmed in 1977. The legislation was supported by most Liberal Party members in 1977. In answer to an interjection, I do not know about a

sunset clause as it has been a long time between sunsets, between 1977 and 1983.

The Liberal Party has changed its policy once again. It is walking away from the cause of small business, which is the second example of this in recent weeks. The first example was the change in policy on retail shopping hours. The damage caused by the Liberal Party is obvious from the results of by-elections around the State. One would think Liberal Party members would learn from the problems faced by the former Premier, Mr Thompson, before the last election. To fall for it again in disarray is beyond my comprehension. The Liberal Party has now changed its policy on the minimum price of packaged beer, which was brought in to overcome a chaotic situation at the time.

Honourable members know that semi-trailers were leaving Melbourne and travelling to suburban towns and provincial cities, unloading the trailers in backyards and selling the beer cheaply off the back of trucks. It was illegal, but it happened and it will happen in the weeks following the proclamation of the proposed legislation.

Mr Fordham—It is illegal.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Many illegal things happen. Illegal activities were mentioned in the report on casinos dealt with yesterday. The problems of 1974–75 will happen again. Chaos will occur when the proposed legislation is proclaimed.

I know the country towns and provincial cities in this State extremely well and I pay tribute to the hotel industry. When one travels interstate, one appreciates the good standard of hotels in Victoria. I speak particularly about country hotels. Their service and facilities have improved incredibly in recent years. There are a variety of reasons for that being brought about, but the minimum price of packaged beer in recent years has played a significant part in bringing about an improvement and has given much needed stability to the hotel industry. Honourable members all know that hotels come under the strict control of the Liquor Control Commission.

That is right and proper, and the commission has achieved a great deal in raising the standards of hotels in this State.

I should like to comment on some of the points raised in the excellent speech of the honourable member for South Barwon. He referred to country hotels and mentioned some of the facilities that people tend to take for granted today, such as air-conditioning to cool hotels in the summer and to warm them in the winter. Hotels have become meeting places for social and sporting clubs; they provide meals, facilities for social occasions such as 21st birthday parties and weddings and first-class accommodation; they are centres for transacting business; and they provide refrigerated bottled liquor and soft drinks from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. six days a week.

Last Saturday week, I visited every hotel in the Shepparton electorate. It was interesting to speak not only to proprietors but also to the customers at those hotels. I took the opportunity of explaining to them what the Bill will mean, especially to country people. I regret that, because the Bill was introduced only last Thursday fortnight, I did not have the opportunity of taking it and the second-reading notes to every hotel in the Warrnambool electorate. Had I done so, the miserable 31 per cent that the Liberal Party polled there in the recent by-election would have dropped below 31 per cent and the National Party would have had another honourable member in this House. The present representative has been put there by the grace of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Simpson—As in Swan Hill!

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Not as in Swan Hill. The National Party would have won Swan Hill without Labor Party preferences, as the Minister would know if he had taken the trouble to examine the figures, but he probably has not done so seeing that the Labor Party came last.

The Leader of the Liberal Party describes the Bill as a disgraceful measure, and I agree with him, but he is going to vote in favour of it. He talks a lot of rubbish about the Government having a mandate for everything in its policy. I do not believe that is the case. The Government certainly received no mandate in the electorates that are representated by the National Party because National Party members were returned, together with a new member, with increased majorities. So I will not accept that the Government has a mandate for this measure.

The other argument put by the Liberal Party—which I find impossible to accept—is that, if the Government wants to make a mess of it, we should create the mess and the public would put the Government out of office. Neither I nor any member of the National Party will vote for anything unless we believe in it. We will vote for what is best for Victoria; if we believe the Government to be wrong, we will vote against it. We have done so up to now and we will not vote simply to get this State in a mess, as is the declared policy of some Liberal Party members. Those members know that chaos will follow if the minimum price of beer is removed, yet they are prepared to support the Socialist Government and see that mess occur before their very eyes.

I know that most of the members representing country electorates think the same way as I do because they have been outvoted in the party room by a narrow margin and they are having to eat humble pie and vote with the Labor Government.

The Bill could not have been introduced at a worse time. As all honourable members know, for good reasons the bar trade is down in all hotels and the packaged beer trade is increasing substantially. That is being caused by a change in social habits and by the ·05 legislation. That makes the minimum price for packaged beer more important now than when it was first introduced in 1975–76

I will refer now to some matters that were raised by the honourable member for Doncaster. The honourable member has misled the House. The liquor industry is controlled by the Liquor Control Commission, and I do not challenge that control because it is right and proper, but there is not a free enterprise system better than the chain stores, the single bottle shop owner and the single hotel owner. There cannot be fair competition between them without a minimum price for packaged beer. Beer will be used by the chain stores as a loss leader; the chain stores are happy to lose money on packaged beer to bring people into their stores so that they can make money on other items. The Bill will put many small businessmen out of business. Country centres will lose their community centres when hotels close. Big business will take over the packaged beer trade; that is as certain as night follows day.

I accept that National Party members represent country areas, but I make the point that, in two by-elections in recent weeks, the National Party topped the poll in two such diverse and widely separated electorates as Swan Hill and Warrnambool. That gives some idea of the standing of the National Party in Victoria at present as compared with the standing of the Liberal Party.

I make no apologies for the National Party's support for small businesses. It will nail its flag to the mast in support of small businesses because it not only has such a policy, but also supports small businesses when measures come before this House.

The Bill will not bring about cheaper packaged beer in the long term, as can be seen from the experience in New South Wales. Single bottles are dearer in New South Wales than they are in Victoria. The result of the measure will be to reduce the service and the facilities that are currently available in this State.

Some of my Liberal Party colleagues have overlooked the fact that the general principles that I have expounded apply equally to small city hotels as to country hotels. Many city hotels carry out an important function and provide a real service in their area. These businesses are under tight financial strain at present. I think some Liberal Party members are under the impression that the way to make a fortune today, as it was after the first world war, is to marry a publican's daughter, but that is no longer the case. Today, every publican and his family work long hours. They have a big investment of capital and they have to continue to plough capital into the business if they wish to stay in business. I can think of no stand that the Liberal Party has taken that will be more harmful to its cause than the stand it has taken tonight in the debate on the minimum price of packaged beer.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I am in an unusual situation tonight in that I am following the Leader of the National Party and I am not in a situation in which I most commonly find myself, because the honourable member has not made one of his better speeches. I am in a somewhat embarrassing position in having to follow the Leader of the National Party after he has made a particularly disappointing and shallow speech. However, I pay a compliment to the

honourable member: He was at least—and perhaps at most—inventive, because he did not have a lot to say. He had very few feathers with which to fly, and he stretched the bounds of relevance as far as the Chair would allow.

For much of the time, the honourable member made passing reference to the Bill and indulged in irrelevancies to the point where he believed he could go before being brought back to order by the Chair. This was not one of the good performances of the Leader of the National Party and one can only conclude, which is perhaps a kind conclusion, that the honourable member did not have his heart in it and tried to put up what would be seen as a reasonable show. Regrettably, he did not put up a reasonable show.

The Bill has generated considerable controversy in the community and considerable concern among wide and varied sections of the community. The Leader of the National Party said that the Liberal Party is supporting the abolition of the minimum price of packaged beer. I draw the distinction between the position of the Liberal Party and the statement made by the Leader of the National Party.

It should be remembered that a previous Liberal Party Government established a minimum price for packaged beer, and I shall refer to the history of that shortly. I make the point now quite clearly that, rather than supporting the abolition of the minimum price for packaged beer, the Liberal Party has decided, because it lost the election and the Labor Party became the Government after giving a set of undertakings, one of which was the abolition of the minimum price for packaged beer, on a course of action it believes is proper and that it should not oppose the Government on this measure.

There is a clear distinction between supporting the Government on an issue and in not opposing the Government on an issue. It is particularly important that in establishing the position that is adopted by the Opposition, it is understood that this measure is a result of one of a set of undertakings that the Labor Party gave during the election campaign. A lot of nonsense is going on in front of me between Ministers of the Crown who do not seem able to understand the way in which I have expressed the position of the Opposition. That is their problem.

The Liberal Party has clearly established itself as a party that supports free enterprise and the proposition that market forces ought to operate as freely as is proper and reasonable within the community. The non-opposition to the measure by the Liberal Party derives also from the fact that it accepts that it lost the election and that it is no longer the Government and that the reins of government were passed over to the Labor Party when it won the general election.The Labor Party said during the election campaign that it would abolish the minimum price for beer and it has now introduced a Bill to give effect to that undertaking. The Liberal Party has taken a realistic and responsible view of this undertaking, unlike the National Party, which somehow seems to believe it can change the course of events by protesting and by saying that it will oppose the Government on this or on some other measure.

With this measure, the fact is that the Government has the numbers. That is why it is the Government. The National Party is pretending to itself that it is being terribly clever and politically smart and it is wooing publicans of bottle shops, proprietors in country districts and others and somehow believes it will garner wide-spread popular support by that stand. If the National Party wishes to take such a cynical political view, that is its prerogative. If it turns out that this cynical political judgment is shattered, it faces its own consequences.

One cannot object to every measure in the Bill. It contains a multitude of content in its provisions, the most contentious being the repealing of sections 11A and 104 (6) of the principal Act.

The Bill also deals with the granting of and the limitation of licences to retail outlets. It deals with the extension of bar-trading hours on Sundays, the granting of permits to licensed restaurateurs, retail bottle licences, cider tavern licences, licensed clubs, tertiary institutions and even the Victorian Food and Wine Festival and wine exhibition licences.

All of those other measures contained in the Bill have been overlooked in the flurry that has surrounded the repealing of section 11A. It is a pity that more attention has not been given by speakers, particularly from

the National Party, since there have been so few speakers from the Labor Party. The National Party has chosen not to devote any real attention to the proposition of Sunday trading and to the silliness contained in those proposals.

It is the height of silliness for a Government to propose that hoteliers should go to the expense of opening their bars and not their bottle shops for four hours on a Sunday, but only if there are two hours intersecting the first 2 hours and the second two hours.

What are people meant to do during those intervening two hours when the bar is closed? Do the employees of the hotel sit and watch television and, if so, at what levels of pay? What do the customers do if they have been at the hotel for two hours on a Sunday afternoon and the publican then calls "Time gentlemen please"? Do they all then disappear for two hours, twiddle their thumbs and then come rushing back? Will we have 2-hour swills on a Sunday to replace the 6 o'clock swill which was abandoned by the change in licensing laws some years ago to extend the hours of trading until 10 o'clock? I do not believe the Government has thought this through, nor do I believe the Government has thought through the economic consequences to publicans who are given the option of opening on a Sunday. The impression that I have received from conversations which I have had with hoteliers and from reports which I have read in the newspapers suggests that it is really not a proposition for a hotel to open under those conditions for bar trading alone on a Sunday. We also have a curious discrepancy between the provisions for the granting of a licence to tertiary institutions where the tertiary institution licence may be issued for the hours specified in the licence. In other words, there can be one licence for tertiary institutions and another licence, a restricted licence, for other outlets for alcohol. Why has the Government chosen to differentiate between tertiary institutions and hotels, licensed clubs and so on? There are a variety of liquor outlets within the community. All it would seem, except tertiary institutions, will be bound by strict legislative provisions. As a former student at the University of Melbourne I ought to say, "Wacko for my university! They can booze on for as long as they like and other people cannot, and isn't that good for the students!" Is it reasonable for somebody to adopt that sort of view? I should think not. However the Government appears to have adopted that view. There may be a good reason for that, but it has not been explained. I hope it will be explained by the Minister when he responds. No explanation has been given by any speaker from the Government side, for the simple reason that there has been no speaker from the Government side. Therefore, although there is a variety of provisions in this Bill in addition to the contentious one dealing with the repeal of the minimum price for beer, there is a startling degree of inconsistency within those other provisions and in some of those other provisions this startling inconsistency becomes simple silliness.

The Sunday trading contradiction needs to be answered by the Minister when he rises to be the solitary speaker for the Government on this matter. Apparently the Government does not trust any of its backbenchers to speak. The Minister suggests that there is a filibuster. No filibuster is involved. This is either a Parliament of free expression or it is not, and the Opposition is entitled to put its view on behalf of the people of Victoria when it sees that a Government is abrogating the right to responsible Government and when it sees that a Government is going back on the real undertakings it gave to the people of Victoria which gained the trust of the people of Victoria. When a Government behaves as irresponsibly and disgracefully as this Government does, the Opposition not only has a right but it also has a duty to speak out and voice opposition. This Opposition will continue to speak out in the face of this disastrous Socialist Government.

There is a contradiction in the Sunday trading proposition. The Government has castigated the Opposition and has brought its tame supporting organizations into play as well against the Opposition policy decision that, in the interests of all Victorians and in the interests of economic recovery in Victoria, there should be deregulation of trading hours across the board. The Liberal Opposition has been condemned for that by the Socialist Government of Victoria and the Socialist Government of course has found willing allies in the National Party which usually supports the Labor Party

more frequently in this House than it supports the Liberal Party. There is a curious contradiction when the Labor Government says "Shock, horror, one cannot extend retail trading hours into week-ends, except for grog."

Honourable members should consider why there is this curious contradiction in the attitude of the Labor Party on this matter. It has nothing to do with hotel trading hours and nothing to do with liquor and nothing to do with the unions involved in the liquor trade, but it has everything to do with the unions involved in the hotel trade. For many years the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Union has not been affiliated with the Labor Party. This union is a right wing union whereas the Victorian Labor Party is dominated by the left.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member is now straying too far from the Bill and I ask him to come back to it.

Mr RICHARDSON—This conflict is all about strengthening the influence of the right wing in the Labor Party so the left wing can be depleted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member sincerely that I will not tolerate his defiance of the Chair. The Bill deals strictly with the retailing of liquor and trading hours with regard to certain liquor outlets. I advise the honourable member to stick to the Bill.

Mr RICHARDSON—Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have made my point. Therefore, there is a particular interest by this Government in encouraging one set of week-end trading hours because of its relationship with a particular union and discouraging them because of the association it hopes to have with another union, and that is where the contradiction in the Bill has occurred. That must be clearly understood by all members of the House, particularly by members of the Labor Party, so that they will know that we are "awake-up" to the whole rationale behind the Bill.

Comments have been made by previous speakers from the National Party that there has been what they regard as an extraordinary freedom of expression by speakers from the Opposition. Let me state quite clearly that the Opposition makes no apology for the way in which speakers from the Opposition express their views and stand up for the rights and interests of their constituents, and if some diverging views are expressed, that is evidence of the strength and the democracy of the Liberal Opposition. We are not a political party which is hidebound and disciplined in the way in which it believes Government members are, so that we will bully our members. It has never been the case and it never will be the case. When members of the Opposition speak in this House, they are speaking within the framework of a democratic political party which embraces a wide variety of views within the community and represents a wide variety of metropolitan, provincial and country electorates.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! Once again I ask the honourable member if he would be good enough to come back to the Bill. He started to stray when getting into the philosophy of his own party. I ask the honourable member to come back to the Bill.

Mr RICHARDSON—I need make no further reference, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was simply taking up some of the matters raised by previous speakers and answering them. I believe I have satisfied the need for those to be answered.

Let us now look at the history of the minimum price for packaged beer. It was introduced by a Liberal Government in 1976 and was established as a consequence of threats to the stability of the liquor industry. When I speak of the liquor industry, I am speaking of the industry as a whole, not simply about hotels. The Leader of the National Party, who preceded me in the debate, spoke exclusively on the impact it would have on hotels. It seems that he had the impression that the measure was introduced to protect publicans to the exclusion of all other retailers of liquor. That is simply not so.

The fact is that Governments over the years have imposed stringent conditions on retailers of liquor—publicans, restaurants, licensed liquor outlets, taverns and so on. These stringent conditions brought with them quite substantial financial obligations. In 1976, a stage was reached where, although the Government had imposed considerable expense on the liquor retailing industry so that it might maintain proper

standards of premises, services and so on, the viability of many of the retail liquor outlets was under threat because of a development in cut-price retailing.

The Government at that time took the view that, because the Government imposed financial conditions upon licence holders, it had an obligation to provide support. In consequence, the minimum price for beer was introduced on the clear understanding that it was not to be seen as a permanent measure. However, as with other temporary measures, such as the temporary buildings at Parliament House, those measures are often assumed to be permanent.

We then faced the election of 1982. The Opposition at that time gave a clear undertaking to the community that if it achieved government it would abolish the minimum retail price for beer. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, the fact is that the Labor Party won that election, and I believe one of the reasons why it won was that it gave that undertaking. Now that the Government has introduced into the House legislation to keep that promise, we can say that there will be severe consequences from it, and nobody can escape from the consequences of this action. It is the Government which is taking this action in consequence of a promise it made. If there is chaos in the industry, it is the Government that has caused it, but the Government must understand that when the public voted the Labor Party into government, it expected the Government to carry out its promises. The Government is now proceeding to carry out one of those promises and it remains to be seen what the consequences will be.

Although the Opposition is profoundly disturbed at what those consequences will be, it believes it would be quite improper and unrealistic for us to say that we will oppose the Government in carrying out a promise which the people elected it to keep.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—It is unquestionable that the Government, when in opposition, spelt out clearly its proposals in relation to this measure. However, the Minister at the time when the Labor Party first became the Government, the Minister for Industrial Affairs in another place, gave an undertaking that:

> Whilst we are committed to repealing the minimum price beer legislation we will do it in such a way as to protect and enhance the small liquor businessmen.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Why do you not keep them honest?

Mr BROWN—I shall return to that matter.

Many speakers prior to me have spoken to the Bill and I do not propose to be repetitious; however, I point out that the former Minister gave an undertaking. The former Minister had as much in-depth knowledge of the liquor industry as the present Minister responsible for the proposed legislation lacks. The present Minister for Economic Development was put in as a puppet to push through the Bill which the Minister in another place had previously undertaken to do. The Minister of Labour and Industry was not prepared to act. There is no doubt about that and that was one of the reasons he was shoved aside.

It has been made abundantly clear to all honourable members that the minimum number of jobs that will be lost—there is unanimity on this point—will be at least 800.

Mr Cathie—Where is the unanimity?

Mr BROWN—The Minister does not accept that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member for Westernport will ignore interjections and address the Chair.

Mr BROWN—I understand some members would disagree with my view that there is unanimity on this point, but I understand the close ties the present Government has with unions in Victoria, and it is the unions that are telling the Government that the figures are between 800 and 5000.

One well researched report into the subject reveals that between 500 and 5000 people will lose their jobs in the short term. The Minister has the effrontery to suggest that people will not lose their jobs. The saying is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. All honourable members will know in a short time who is wrong and who is right on the subject.

I share a view espoused by all honourable members to date who have spoken on the Bill acknowledging that hardly a member of the Government party has been prepared to stand up and support the Bill. Of course, Government party members oppose it. They will toe the party line, and if they differ,

they should follow me in the debate. We have all the time in the world; as much time as they want. If Government members do not support the measure there is only one view I can construe and that is that they support——

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BROWN—The only conclusion I can draw is that they support the view of the people living and working in the electorates they represent who have written to them. In every case, or almost every case——

Mr Norris—Nobody has written to me.

Mr BROWN—The honourable member for Noble Park interjects that no one has made representations to him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Noble Park will have ample opportunity of answering the honourable member for Westernport.

Mr BROWN—The honourable member for Noble Park indicates that he has received no representations from unionists worried about losing their jobs. That flabbergasts me. I cannot understand why those people write only to members of the National Party and the Opposition of Victoria unless they hold the view that the honourable member for Noble Park is so inconsequential that they would not take the trouble to write to him. I do not hold that view of the honourable member because as a member of the Government of the day I should think he is one of the appropriate persons to approach. I am flabbergasted that no one has approached him.

Obviously the view held in the community is that if one wishes things to be carried out, one goes to members of the Opposition. I suppose members of the Opposition should be elated to accept the accolades handed out by the community. Employees from the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union have told members of the Opposition—obviously not members of the Government party—that they oppose the Bill. They expressed their views in writing, and I should be happy to have the letter incorporated in *Hansard* if it is wished. They estimate that as many as 5000 people will lose their jobs.

That is a union telling the Government, which is supposed to have close links with the union movement, the effect of the Bill. Another union pays for space in the major daily newspapers in Victoria to try to get the message across to the Government about its concern over job losses. It makes other points, one of which that in New South Wales, which is formally run by Neville Wran in exile, there are no constraints on the sale of liquor; indeed, beer is more expensive in New South Wales. Many points are made but I do not wish to repeat them.

The Minister is aware of what the unions are trying to tell him, yet back-bench members of the Government are saying that they are not receiving representations. Therefore, it is most important, indeed imperative, that the Opposition make known to the Government the opposition to the measure that exists in the union movement. Again, I am flabbergasted that the union members and union executives concerned have not approached Government party members. I shall take up that point at the appropriate time.

The Opposition has received representation from the tourist industry, which, again, the Government has not received, that it is concerned about the measure. The representations point out that some country tourist establishments that exist in Victoria are under threat. The Minister for Economic Development must also be aware of the situation because he is the Minister responsible for tourism.

Earlier, the Leader of the National Party made a point that the measure should be thrown out. That is all right for him to say because of the illustrious four members of the National Party in the Legislative Council. If he were to decide such a vote, it would have credence in that House. Sure, members of the Opposition can be big fellows, but nothing happens in this place because the Government has the numbers. What happens when the measure is before the Council? The Leader of the National Party is saying that he wishes to use the four members in the Upper House to overturn——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Westernport is now out of order in anticipating what another place may do with the proposed legislation.

I invite the honourable member to concentrate his remarks on the Bill.

Mr BROWN—The Government was given a mandate on two specific issues, which I cannot deny, even though I am loath to say that: The gun laws proposed by the former Opposition, now the Government, and the proposed legislative changes that it enunciated clearly to the community that it would make in the Bill before the House. I must and do acknowledge that. If ever a Government comes into power with a clear mandate it is on those two issues. I cannot deny that today, to the credit of the Government, the changes have been allowed and will come to be.

The 4-hour hotel trading on Sundays has been well covered and is provided for in the Bill but there must be a gap of 2 hours in the trading. The hotelier can open his premises for 2 hours but must close them for at least another 2 hours before he can reopen. That is an iniquitous situation for the employer because the employer must employ a person on a Sunday for at least 4 hours.

The reality is that to be open for 4 hours—assuming the premises are open for 2 hours, closed for 2 hours and opened again immediately, as allowed for in the Bill—the proprietor has to pay for a minimum of 6 hours' labour.

Employers will be adversely affected by the measure. Small country areas, which traditionally make services available, will no longer be able to do so because of the costs incurred in opening for that time.

I conclude with two final points. Firstly, it has been spelt out loudly and clearly to the Government that the measure will cost jobs. The Government is not prepared to accept the argument, but time will tell. I cannot comprehend that the Government is prepared to go ahead with any measure that will cost jobs.

Secondly, a small degree of emphasis has been placed on the time the debate has taken. I make it perfectly clear that it did not suit me to be in this place until 3.30 this morning and that the prospect of facing an early morning again today does not suit me. If it has to be, it has to be. However, I would have thought it preferable to extend this session by a week or whatever time is considered reasonable. When in opposition, the Government promised that this sort of occurrence would not take place. I have no objection whatsoever to an extension of the session by a further week to adequately handle these matters so that some honourable members are not put in their graves.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Before I accept the motion, I advise the House that the debate has been taking place for five hours and 40 minutes.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member for Brighton will incur my wrath if she does not respect the fact that I am on my feet. Thirteen speakers have taken part in the debate, one for the Government, nine for the Opposition and three for the National Party. All points of view have been well canvassed and, towards the latter end of the debate, tedious repetition occurred. I, therefore, accept the motion.

Mr Fordham's motion was agreed to.

The House divided on the motion for the second reading of the Bill (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	65
Noes	8
Majority for the motion	57

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr Ihlein
Mr Brown	Mr Jolly
Mr Burgin	Mr Jona
Mr Cain	Mr Kennedy
Miss Callister	Mr Kennett
Mr Cathie	Mr Kirkwood
Dr Coghill	Mr Leigh
Mr Crabb	Mr Lieberman
Mr Culpin	Mr McCutcheon
Mr Dickinson	Mr McDonald
Mr Ebery	Mr McKellar
Mr Ernst	Mr Maclellan
Mr Evans	Mr Mathews
(*Ballarat North*)	Mr Miller
Mr Fogarty	Mr Norris
Mr Fordham	Mrs Patrick
Mr Gavin	Mr Pope
Mr Gray	Mr Ramsay
Mr Harrowfield	Mrs Ray
Mr Hassett	Mr Remington
Mrs Hill	Mr Reynolds
Mr Hill	Mr Richardson
Mr Hockley	Mr Roper

AYES

Mr Rowe
Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Seitz
Mrs Setches
Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Shell
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mr Templeton
Mrs Toner
Mr Trezise
Mr Walsh
Mr Wilkes
Mr Williams
Mr Wilton

Tellers:
Mr Delzoppo
Mr Simpson

NOES

Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Hann
Mr Jasper
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Steggall
Mr Whiting

Tellers:
Mr McGrath
Mr Wallace

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 3 to 7.

Clause 8 (Repeal of ss. 11A and 104 (6))

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Clause 8 is the key clause in the measure. This afternoon I extensively canvassed the opinions of the National Party in opposing the removal of section 11A from the Liquor Control Act and indicated that the section should be retained which would mean, in effect, the retention of the minimum price for beer.

I guess honourable members would have to regard the Minister for Economic Development as the hatchet man so far as this measure is concerned.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member will withdraw that remark.

Mr JASPER—I am happy to withdraw the remark. The National Party is concerned about the attitude adopted by the Minister. The former Minister for Economic Development listened to the attitudes expressed to him, particularly by members of the Australian Hotels Association, by representatives of retail liquor licensees and by many people who were extremely interested in the industry.

An interim advisory committee was set up through the Liquor Control Commission and that committee investigated all aspects of section 11A and introduced what the Minister termed a package. That package was discussed and considered by the former Minister for Economic Development. I believe in his own heart the Minister was not keen to see section 11A dropped from the Liquor Control Act because of the enormous chaos and problems this would cause within the industry.

As indicated earlier, the new Minister for Economic Development was given the job to ensure that the proposed legislation was enacted and that part of the policy of the Labor Party submitted at the election earlier last year was put into practice.

The National Party does not agree that the Government has a mandate to introduce the proposed legislation. Of course, it was part of a package of policies put forward by the Labor Party when in opposition but when it is in government, the National Party considers that all aspects of proposed legislation and policy should be investigated before it is enacted. One need only look at what has happened at the Federal level to understand that the new Federal Government has broken many promises as has the State Government. The State Government indicated that it would not increase State charges, State Electricity Commission charges or Gas and Fuel Corporation charges. In fact the Government stated that it would lower charges. The Government has broken its promises.

The National Party believes in this case the Government should have looked at this situation and decided that the proposal to delete section 11A would be to the detriment of the industry. The Liquor Control Commission has been effective in providing stability to the industry and providing a proper basis on which the industry can operate.

The National Party can only repeat some of the comments brought to it as a responsible party in this Parliament. I refer to a statement made by the Australian Hotels Association which sums up the situation. The first paragraph I wish to quote states:

> Having given such consideration to the proposed amendments it is the overwhelming view of the AHA that the amendments will create chaos and indecision in the liquor industry and at this stage represent a

radical and disastrous change in the nature of the liquor industry particularly so far as hotels are concerned and contain none of the ameliorating measures indicated by the Minister in his reading speech.

That is most important. Another paragraph states:

The repeal of this section will lead to a disorderly market situation and loss leadering, both of which are contrary to the objects of the legislation as set out in Section 3 of the Principal Act.

I hope the Minister reads section 3 of the principal Act. The statement continues:

The repeal would also destroy any opportunity for small businesses to maintain fair and equal competition against multi-national and large supermarket chains, it will lead to wiping out many small businesses and destroy the capital investment of many family operated hotels.

The Bill will lead to massive unemployment. The Government claims it is attempting to create jobs. Many speakers from the Opposition have referred to reports. Indeed, the honourable member from Balwyn delivered a long dissertation on why section 11A of the Liquor Control Act should be retained but then informed honourable members that the Opposition would vote with the Government to have the section repealed. The statement continues:

It will create the loss of thousands of jobs, a fact established in independent reports lodged with Government and a fact which is totally supported by the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees' Union.

Surely that should carry some weight with the Government? The draft copy continues:

The repeal of section 11A in isolation, together with many other unfavourable clauses, is regarded by AHA as a blueprint for disaster for the hotel industry.

The comment has been made by a responsible organization that wants stability in the hotel industry. I have referred to the price of beer in New South Wales and the important fact that Victoria has the cheapest beer prices in Australia. The last paragraph in a recent copy of *Liquor World,* published in New South Wales, states:

As part of its lobbying campaign the association may suggest to the Government that it imposes a minimum price on packaged beer.

That is what is occurring in New South Wales. The Government must ensure that Victoria has a stable hotel industry that operates effectively under the powers of the Liquor Control Commission.

The operators of retail bottled liquor outlets are also in trouble. Twelve retail bottled liquor outlet holders were present in the Parliament this afternoon. I did not know one of them. Eleven of them were of Greek nationality and one was of Swiss nationality. They own and operate independent retail bottled liquor outlets in the western suburbs, which are represented by Government members. They were astounded to believe the Government was going to wreck their businesses. Eight of them claimed that they would go bankrupt immediately.

What is the attitude of the Opposition? The Opposition is not prepared to stand up for those operators of small businesses. The Opposition claims that the Government has a mandate. Why does the Opposition not understand what the repeal of section 11A will mean to the industry?

I have a copy of a letter from the Premier to the owner of a retail bottled liquor outlet in Sunshine. I also have a copy of a letter from the Director of Tourism to the owner of a retail bottled liquor outlet in Altona. The Premier has indicated that the Government will repeal section 11A of the Liquor Control Act, but will be only a part of a package the Government proposes to introduce to protect small businesses. However, out of the ten recommendations to the Government on the matter, the Government has accepted only six recommendations. The Government rejected four of the recommendations and two of the six recommendations that have been accepted have been watered down.

The Bill is a recipe for disaster. The retail liquor industry has been effectively stabilized, but the Government is acting to wreck it. The small profit margins that the industry operates on will be reduced further. The National Party is totally opposed to clause 8.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—During the entire, lengthy, second-reading debate and the debate on clause 8, which is the guts of the Bill, because it seeks to abolish the minimum retail price of beer, honourable members heard nothing from either the Opposition or the

National Party about the consumers in this State.

Ever since the minimum price of beer was established in Victoria, there has been a transfer of money from the average Victorian consumer to the retailer. There has been a continuous transfer of small amounts of income from many consumers to the retailers of packaged beer. I was delighted to hear the honourable member for Doncaster say that the minimum price legislation established in 1977 was only a temporary measure and that it was never the intention of the then Liberal Government to establish a permanent minimum price for packaged beer.

There will be winners and losers, but the dominant result of the Bill will be to ensure lower beer prices for consumers. That will be sustained over a long time. I have no apology to offer on behalf of the Government for the fact that this Bill will produce cheaper beer for the Victorian consumer. Chapter 4.6 of the report of the Monash University Centre of Policy Studies indicates that, for an average price fall of 50 cents for a dozen bottles of beer following the repeal of this section, it is estimated that the aggregate increase in consumer surplus would be in the vicinity of $17 million a year, and that if the price for a dozen bottles of beer fell by $1, one would have to double the aggregate increase in consumer surplus. That is a factor that speakers from the National and Opposition parties omitted to mention in the analysis of job losses and the effect of the measure on the community.

The Opposition and National parties have completely ignored the macro-economic effects of giving the consumer additional money in his pocket. When the Bill is passed, the consumer who purchases one dozen bottles of beer will have up to an additional $1 in his pocket. Some of that additional money, whether it be $17 million or $34 million, will be spent on increased expenditure on packaged beer and some of the money will also be spent elsewhere on consumer goods and durables.

The net effect will be that that money will generate economic activity in the community and thus create jobs. That point was completely ignored and not even referred to by speakers from the Opposition and National parties.

Much has been made about some of the other assessments of job losses. However, I should like to put this first before I return to analyse that aspect. Why is it that the Victorian liquor industry should be treated differently? I did not hear any explanations on that point.

There is no minimum price set for any other type of liquor. No other State has set a minimum beer price. What is special in Victoria about the liquor industry? Why should it be treated any differently?

The Government does not believe there will be massive closure of hotels or that there will be massive economic chaos. It has not occurred anywhere else in Australia.

The study by Monash University suggests that in all probability the net loss of jobs will be 2262. This is a particularly different story to the claimed loss of 5000 jobs.

Mr Jasper—What scenario is that?

Mr CATHIE—If the honourable member for Murray Valley referred to scenarios 2 and 3, he would discover that those scenarios are the most likely for the reasons set out in the report, and I do not have time to canvass that now.

Speaker after speaker referred at tedious length to the Technisearch report.

The Technisearch Ltd research asserted that there would be a fall of $1.50 a dozen for beer sold in all metropolitan licensed supermarkets and in most hotels dealing in large packaged beer trade. In other words, they were suggesting a fall of $1.50 a dozen for about 75 per cent of all packaged beer sales in the State and for the remaining 25 per cent of sales they suggested that the price would fall by 70 cents.

No explanation has been given on how those figures were arrived at. The figure of $1.50 certainly seems unrealistically large. It implies a gross mark-up of only 3 per cent on the wholesale price plus licence fees and that is well below the New South Wales figure of between 8 and 10 per cent. It is difficult to determine how that conclusion was reached. Even during the 1976 price war, the heaviest discounters were still selling on a mark-up of 4·6 per cent with a common price being set with a mark-up of between 9 per cent and 10 per cent.

It is the magnitude of the employment loss postulated by Technisearch which appears to depend to an important extent on suggesting that there will be a price drop of $1.50. It would be much less if the price drop was less, and that is what the Government believes the situation will be.

Mrs Patrick—You hope.

Mr CATHIE—It is not a hope, it is what the Government believes. Contrary to the Technisearch report, the Monash study expected the average price of packaged beer to fall between 65 cents and $1.05 a dozen in the lowest priced outlets and between 50 cents and 25 cents in the industry as a whole. The Government does not believe there will be a uniform drop in prices because there will be a great variety.

A significant number of hotels will still find it profitable to maintain prices above those lowest-priced outlets. This is a point that the Opposition and particularly the National Party have not considered sufficiently. The high number of sales of packaged beer from hotels that occur now will continue to occur during evening and Saturday afternoons when supermarkets and licensed liquor outlets are not open and when they will not be in competition with those supermarkets and outlets. That means the consumer will be willing to pay prices higher than those that have been offered earlier in the day by supermarkets.

Similarly, licensed liquor outlets relying on local custom will not have to cut prices as much as supermarkets. One must consider a combination of price and service. It is not a matter of saying that the price will fall and therefore people will no longer go to this one or that one to buy liquor. Some people will still prefer to go to their retail liquor bottle shop around the corner because they are used to getting good service because they like the person running the small business and because they can park their cars close to that business and have their beer stacked in the cars for them, and so on.

I refer again to the Monash University report. After all, retailers compete in many ways and competition may come in many dimensions. For example, chilling of beer might not be required by all customers. I have often erred to the point of going into a retail bottled liquor shop and buying a carton of chilled beer, taking it home and dumping it in the laundry and not in the refrigerator.

I referred earlier to the delivery of beer to a patron's car. A customer may prefer to go to a hotel because of the amount of parking that may be available at a hotel or a club, the hotel may provide a television service, and so on. It is a question in many cases where consumers will make their decisions on the service that they will get and the custom they have been in the habit of receiving.

I have suggested that the job loss will be much less than has been proposed in these other studies. I have indicated that Monash research differs fundamentally from the figures produced by Technisearch. When Monash used a figure of 19 000 being employed in the industry, that figure was taken from a census of retail shops undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. One cannot get a more responsible body undertaking a survey than the bureau because it includes in its census returns a statistical direction for lack of returns and in the gathering of census returns, three attempts are made to ensure that the people who receive those returns return them.

The differences in estimates in employment levels do not have a crucial bearing on the estimate of job loss in the industry subsequent on the abolition of minimum prices for packaged beer. Rather, it is how hoteliers will react to changes in sales and profitability. The debate on what is the real employment level in the industry is something of a red herring. The industry will adapt and it will be able to remain viable. There will be major benefits to consumers in the abolition of the minimum price for packaged beer.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—It is disappointing to have debate all over again on clause 8 when so much of the time during the second-reading debate dealt with the question of the minimum price for packaged beer. However, the Minister's explanation to the Committee must surely be called into question. He very nobly asked about the consumer and said that no one had expressed concern for the consumer, but that is not so.

The setting of the minimum price for packaged beer by the Liquor Control Commission over the years has been done very responsibly and I challenge the Minister to

show anywhere that the commission did not carry out its duties without the greatest concern for the consumer. The legislation had a requirement that if the minimum price was to be adjusted that fact had to be advertised by the commission and people were allowed to make representations to the commission. I cannot recall any occasion on which consumer groups took advantage of the opportunity, but the opportunity was still there. There has not been a high level of consumer dissatisfaction with the stability that has been brought to the industry.

I cannot accept that the removal of section 11A is done in order to help consumers. There has been enough evidence in reports quoted to suggest that the removal of section 11A may well in the long run not be in the interests of consumers and the Minister should bear that in mind. He took the Monash figures and spoke of a surplus of $17 million that would be injected into the community by the removal of section 11A and the reduction in beer prices of 50 cents a dozen. Certainly, if one takes the calculation that $17 million will be in the hands of the people, before this measure is enacted it would be in the hands of people in the trade and not just in the hands of a few holders of these licences but in the hands of the employees of those people. Some of those employees will be losing their jobs as a result of the change. The Minister grandly referred to macro-economic arguments which, when analysed, fall into a very small heap.

The third point the Minister is trying to make at this late stage in the debate is why is Victoria different. I am only sorry that the Minister lost the thread of the debate earlier in the afternoon because it was spelt out clearly and it can be seen clearly in the annual report of the Liquor Control Commission. I shall not quote it for the Committee now. It was spelt out earlier and the Minister should look at it himself. Victoria is unique in the ratios—I do not believe the Minister is listening even now—of bulk beer to packaged beer sales. Victorians should be pleased that this State is encouraging people to drink more at home rather than out. The ·05 legislation may well have had something to do with it but it means that Victoria is different, and it is not good enough for the Minister to say that the removal of section 11A from the legislation does not need the safeguards built into the legislation that so many people have tried to impress upon him.

Our position is clear. The Opposition is not pleased to be seeing section 11A removed, but it believes the Government is entitled to proceed with this proposed legislation, and the Opposition is therefore not opposing it. When we were in government we said on more than one occasion when I was the Minister responsible for this matter that we would retain section 11A in the legislation unless someone could show us another method of ensuring fair and free competition in the liquor industry. Because of the close control that the Liquor Control Commission imposes on the industry, it is different from the normal free market situation.

The Government indicated it would not remove section 11A until it put in the safeguards and it has used the phrase, "It would enhance and protect the small businessman in the liquor industry". That is what the Opposition has been seeking and that is why it has asked the Minister why he has turned his back on so many of the safeguards that his advisory committee recommended and why he has chosen from those advisory committee recommendations the weakest and the least significant so far as any real protection is concerned.

The Opposition submitted that this debate should be adjourned until such time as the Minister brought forward these extra safeguards, but the Minister has rushed in on the basis of the Monash report to say that the effects on the industry will not be as great. In the past few minutes the honourable gentleman has told the House what he thinks is wrong with the analysis done by Technisearch. He did not quote the Monash report in his analysis of Technisearch but I recognized in many of the comments by the Minister on Technisearch that he was quoting from appendix E of the Monash report. It is an evaluation of the Licensed Freeholders Association Technisearch report on the effect of the removal of section 11A.

I have two criticisms of the Monash report on this. I have identified the Technisearch report as a joint report, the Licensed Freeholders Association Technisearch report. In fact it is a Technisearch report commissioned by the Licensed Freeholders Association. It was compiled with all the

skill and research available to the Technisearch organization.

My second criticism is really a criticism of the Government. It has given the Monash Centre of Policy Studies the opportunity of analysing and commenting upon the Technisearch report but that privilege has not been given the other way around. Technisearch has not been given the chance of commenting on and putting out its analysis of the Monash report. This Government is choosing the report that suits its position best and it is turning its back on the need to include proper and adequate safeguards in the legislation. The consequences of the repeal of section 11A without those safeguards will be to the eternal discredit of this Minister and this Government.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The speaker on behalf of the Opposition has confirmed that the Opposition will not oppose clause 8 which provides for the abolition of section 11A relating to the minimum price of beer. If the Opposition does not oppose that clause it will be irresponsible.

I refer to some of the comments made by the Minister, which were absolutely ridiculous. The Minister used one report. He waited until he received a report which suited him to prove that the industry may not be affected as much as some of the other reports have indicated by the removal and repeal of section 11A. The Minister says that there should be an interest for employees. Members of the National Party are interested in employees, as is the union involved in the liquor industry. That is why they do not want section 11A repealed. It appears that the Government is taking no notice of the comments made by a responsible union in the industry.

The Minister talks about consumers and says that no one has mentioned consumers. The Minister has not listened to some of the comments that I made this afternoon. I shall refer to the organization that the honourable gentleman quoted when speaking about figures—the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a well-known organization. The Minister says that one would have to listen to what it said. The Australian Bureau of Statistics in its report of 17 May 1983 indicates that Victoria has the cheapest beer. If one has the cheapest beer in the current circles, why change it?

Mr Cathie—The price is higher in New South Wales. There is a higher wholesale price.

Mr JASPER—I am talking about Melbourne where a bottle of beer costs $1.16. The respective costs are: In Sydney, $1.41; in Canberra, $1.28; in Hobart, $1.28; in Perth, $1.24; in Brisbane, $1.25; and in Adelaide, $1.27. I invite honourable members to consider the price of a dozen bottles of beer. In Victoria the average price of a dozen bottles of beer is $13.25. The respective prices are: In Sydney, $13.71; in Perth, $13.28; and in Canberra, $13.53. That surely confirms that Victoria has the cheapest beer.

Mr Cathie—What about canned beer?

Mr JASPER—I am quoting figures. If the Minister wants to quote other figures, he should do so. These figures confirm that Victoria has the cheapest beer. If the Minister does not agree, he should provide the figures to confirm his assertion. Under those circumstances there is a small margin for the retailer. The Minister is saying that the Government will take some of that margin away and make it not profitable for the retailer to be in business. The figures provided by the Minister in the second-reading notes indicate a 12·5 per cent mark-up on the wholesale price but in the second-reading notes the Minister later says that the gross mark-up would be between 9 per cent and 13 per cent without section 11A. He is saying that those retailers will have to sell beer at a loss. How many people can operate at a loss? Everyone has to make a profit, and if there is no profit, there will be no employer and no employee. The liquor union recognizes that and it is a pity that the Government does not. The Minister says that those retailers are sheltering behind the protection of the Liquor Control Commission. The commission has been responsible in what it has done to control the industry. It has acted extremely well in Victoria and enabled great facilities to be provided in the hotel and retail bottle sales outlets.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! The time for me to report progress under Sessional Orders has arrived.

Progress was reported.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The time appointed by

Sessional Orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), the sitting was continued.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed of clause 8 (Repeal of ss. 11A and 104 (6))

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Prior to the interruption of the sitting, I suggested that the scenario quoted by the Minister from the Monash report was only one scenario that may result from the repeal of section 11A. I quoted many other reports that proved exactly the opposite and demonstrated the great disruption that will occur to the industry if section 11A is repealed.

The cost set by the Australian Hotels Association for a dozen bottles of beer is $15.12, but the minimum price—which is the maximum price set by the Liquor Control Commission is $13.92. A margin of $2.22 is left for the retailer; that is a margin of 15·95 per cent, which is reasonable.

I hope the Government and Opposition will be reasonable on this clause. Members of the Opposition have expounded to the National Party why section 11A should be retained, but they support the Government because they believe it has a mandate. Surely, as a responsible Opposition, it should be trying to protect responsible businessmen and employment, and the way to do that within the liquor industry is to maintain the orderly marketing system under the Liquor Control Commission with the minimum price for packaged beer as contained in section 11A.

Chaos will be created in the industry. It will not be as evident as the word suggests, however. Many people will battle on because they will hope for better things in the future. As the honourable member for Gippsland East suggests, they will go broke slowly. That will be the reality. Many employers in Victoria earn much less than their employees and if the Government, supported by the Opposition, continues down this track, more and more employers will go broke. The National Party opposes the removal of section 11A from the Liquor Control Act.

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—It was part of the Labor Party platform prior to the election in which it won government to abolish section 11A of the Liquor Control Act. In the publication *Hotel and Catering* of April 1983, Mr Daryl Cox, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Hotels Association stated that there can be no doubt that the Liquor Control Act was designed to enable Victorians to enjoy the best licensing and hotel facilities in Australia and has achieved that objective. That sums up the history of the Liquor Control Act and of the introduction of section 11A.

Mr Cox also stated:

> If the industry is to continue to the standard of service envisaged by the Act and expected by the people of Victoria, the minimum price provision must remain.

I question the wisdom of the Minister in introducing the abolition of section 11A. In stating that this provision was to be repealed, the Government said that it would protect small business and that the proposed legislation would advance the viability of small business and the industry in general.

As I understand it from people who have come to see me, including representatives from the hotel industry and retail bottle licensees, it does not appear that those protections have been built into the proposed legislation.

The Minister has picked out from six different crystal balls the scenario that appeals to him. There is no evidence that cheaper beer will be brought about by the removal of section 11A. The honourable member for Murray Valley pointed out that in other States beer is dearer than it is in Victoria. It will be interesting to see whether the removal of section 11A will result in the public that I presume the Government is trying to please—the drinkers—being happy that the section has been removed and that beer is cheaper. Not many letters have been received—I have not received one—from members of the public supporting the abolition of section 11A.

There is no loss leader abolition provision in the proposed legislation and, while it may not be beer that is used as the loss leader, it is easy for a big chain store to loss lead on another article and therefore sell beer at a cheaper price. The small businessman, the small country and local hotels and the bottle shop will all suffer. They will have

to put off employees. It has been stated that anything from 500 to 8000 jobs may be lost, but the Minister has now stated that the figure is 200.

A suggestion was made that the abolition of section 11A should be phased in and I understand that the Government was conducting talks with various members of the industry about such a process. It would have been more sensible if the Minister had weighed up the different reports, given more time to this matter and again talked to the industry before introducing the abolition of section 11A. It is clear that the people of Victoria voted the Labor Party into government knowing full well that the section was to be abolished. The abolition is a mistake, and there are other mistakes in the proposed legislation.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—My position has been made quite clear on section 11A. It provides for the minimum price for packaged beer and the proposed legislation will repeal that section. I refer to one additional point. The honourable member for Balwyn challenged the Government to adjourn the measure until the Government's promised safeguards have been introduced.

All the promised safeguards are not in the legislation, and the Minister knows that only too well. One safeguard that has been promised by Ministers of his Government has not been included.

The challenge I now make is directed at the honourable member for Balwyn. Would he give consideration to joining the National Party in seeking to adjourn the debate on this Bill, when the Opportunity occurs, until those safeguards have been introduced? If the honourable member for Balwyn does not accept that challenge, he is not fair dinkum.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The Opposition to the abolition of the minimum price for beer has been argued as if we were doing that in a complete vacuum and as if there are no safeguards in the Bill. That simply is not true. In fact, the Australian Hotel Association, in its submission on this clause, submitted that the repeal of section 11A should not be done in isolation. That is precisely the view of the Government and that is why mechanisms and safeguards are written into the Bill. I do not intend to speak at length or in detail about those safeguards. They are in the Bill and were covered extensively during the second-reading speech. I shall now just summarize them.

Some finance will be available to help small hotels to upgrade their operations. The Government is allowing in the Bill the right of hotels to become taverns, which means that they may be able to adjust and be a much more viable operation than they are at present. We have a prohibition of sale limits, which are used by some retailers in loss leading to attract customers to buy other products. That no-limit provision is an essential part of the safeguards that are written into the Bill. If one examines loss-leading, one finds that it occurs again and again with other items such as tea and margarine. Customers are asked to come into the shop because margarine has been marked down to 60c, but they are then entitled to take only two of those items.

We have introduced a no-limit law into the Bill to prevent supermarkets from loss leading in that way. Loss leading was referred to by a number of speakers on the clause, as were claims that there were not sufficient safeguards in the proposed legislation. Because packaged beer usually accounts for a larger proportion of the supermarket turnover than any other single item, beer would not be a good loss leading item. The Monash report concluded as a result that supermarkets would be able to sell packaged beer at relatively lower prices simply because their retail costs are relatively lower and not because of loss leading.

The Government also wrote into the Bill a minimum age of eighteen years for employees selling retail liquor or standing in as managers for retail or wholesale liquor licensees. That provision is aimed at reducing the competitive edge of the supermarkets, which usually use cheaper junior labour. Another condition that the Government used to shift the competitive advantage of the supermarkets to the small retailer is the upper limit of 8 per cent which has been put on the number of licenses held by a company or a group of related companies.

The point is, if the Government finds that, despite all that has been said, despite all that is contained in the Monash study and despite the safeguards that are written into the legislation, the supermarkets still adopt

predatory pricing policies, I have indicated that the Government will certainly examine the feasibility of bringing in a differential licence fee. I do not believe that will be required. The message will be fairly clear to the industry in the commitment I have given.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I rise to put just one further point on the record, following the remarks of the honourable member for Murray Valley, who made a great point of making comparisons between the price of packaged liquor in Victoria and New South Wales to suggest that the minimum price legislation has kept Victorian prices marginally above those of New South Wales. He quoted a number of examples to prove his point. I appreciate the point he was attempting to make in the debate, but, unfortunately his research on this issue went only half-way. The honourable member for Murray Valley gave the comparisons of packaged bottled liquor prices, and it is true that the minimum price in Victoria and that of New South Wales are very similar. In fact, in many cases, Victorian prices are marginally lower. As of yesterday, one could walk into the Grace Brothers store in Chatswood and buy a dozen bottles of beer for $13.50. There was a time when the minimum price in Victoria was $13.44, which is a 6 cent difference.

Where the research of the honourable member for Murray Valley has been inadequate is that the packaged liquor market in New South Wales is distinct from that in Victoria, because the vast majority of New South Wales beer sales are in cans. I do not have the exact figures with me, but a 2-dozen package of 375 ml cans would be some $12.99 or $13.99. The minimum price of similar can packages in Victoria is somewhere between $15 and $16. There is an important margin there.

It is all very well for the members of the Government party to make a feature of this difference. All I am suggesting is that the argument about the comparison of prices between Victoria and New South Wales is not the relevant argument. The relevant argument is the peculiar nature of the liquor industry in Victoria, and it is very different from that of New South Wales, as I pointed out earlier. This Government is intending to move with only those safeguards the Minister has spelt out—and honourable members saw earlier how inadequate they are. He has backed off on the differential licence fees and now says that he will examine that matter. When the Minister sees how many liquor stores he has sent broke, perhaps he will do something about it, and quite clearly, that will be too late. He should incorporate in the Bill better safeguards than exist at present.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The remarks of the honourable member for Balwyn demonstrate that he is really scraping the bottom of the barrel to get a bit of credibility for the Opposition out of this debate. When he criticized the research and the figures put forward by the honourable member for Murray Valley, he overlooked that those figures were provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Therefore, the honourable member for Balwyn was criticizing a body which is recognized throughout the country for its accuracy and the method by which it obtains its information.

The honourable member for Murray Valley made it clear that the figures were average figures, and it is irrelevant to pick out a retail price at one particular outlet in Sydney and compare it with the Victorian price. The figures quoted by the honourable member for Murray Valley were obtained from a most reputable source and I believe they were justified and supported by the honourable member during the debate. They were brought forward very effectively and firmly. I compliment the honourable member on the excellent research he has done into this subject, and no one in this House could dispute that point.

The thing that disturbs me about this clause is that the Opposition has repeatedly, not only during the second-reading debate but also during the committee stage, expressed opposition to the removal of section 11A.

Its members have expressed their opposition to this clause continuously and vehemently, but they tried to justify this on the basis that the Government has a mandate to govern. If that is the case, why do we have a Parliament? Why do we not say that the Government has a mandate to do whatever it wants? We are just wasting our time and wasting the taxpayers' money. The people of this State would save a great deal of money by not having this Parliament.

The Opposition is abrogating its responsibility to the people who voted for it. The Opposition has the power to do something about the clause. It is all very well to make fine remarks about the opposition to the clause, but how will opposition members vote on it? I wonder how many of them will tell their voters that, and whether they will tell the people who have made representation to them on this Bill. They will say, "This is what we told Parliament", but I wonder whether they will include the record of how they voted.

If honourable members have any purpose in this Parliament, they will join with the National Party and vote against this proposal.

The Committee divided on the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	63
Noes	8
Majority for the clause	55

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr Maclellan
Mr Brown	Mr Mathews
Mr Burgin	Mr Miller
Mr Cain	Mr Norris
Miss Callister	Mr Pope
Mr Cathie	Mr Ramsay
Dr Coghill	Mrs Ray
Mr Crabb	Mr Remington
Mr Culpin	Mr Reynolds
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Richardson
Mr Dickinson	Mr Roper
Mr Ebery	Mr Rowe
Mr Ernst	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Fogarty	Mr Seitz
Mr Fordham	Mrs Setches
Mr Gray	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Hassett	Mr Shell
Mrs Hill	Mrs Sibree
Mr Hill	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Hockley	Mr Simmonds
Mr Ihlein	Mr Simpson
Mr Jolly	Mr Spyker
Mr Jona	Mr Stirling
Mr Kempton	Mrs Toner
Mr Kennedy	Mr Trezise
Mr Kennett	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilkes
Mr Leigh	*Tellers:*
Mr Lieberman	Mr Gavin
Mr McCutcheon	Mr Williams
Mr McDonald	
Mr McKellar	

NOES

Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Steggall
Mr Hann	Mr Whiting
Mr Jasper	*Tellers:*
Mr Ross-Edwards	Mr McGrath
	Mr Wallace

Clause 9 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 26)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

2. Clause 9, page 4, line 31, omit "popular".

The reason for the amendment is that it deals with a new provision which lays down the criteria that control the granting of a permit which must be made by application to the Liquor Control Commission. The granting of the permit will not be automatic. The amendment alters proposed section 26 (3B) (*a*) which states:

that there is popular demand for the supply and disposal of liquor on a Sunday in the locality in which the licensed premises are situated;

The word "popular" is to be deleted because it adds nothing in a legal sense. The word is unnecessary and I propose that it be deleted.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party opposes clause 9, as amended. The hours that are provided for in section 26 of the principal Act are adequate to handle the demand for Sunday trading. The hours that a hotel may be open are between 12 noon and 3 p.m. and between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m., when patrons may consume liquor with refreshments.

The clause adds the additional opportunity for hotels to operate for two 2-hour sessions between 12 noon and 4 p.m. and between 6 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. The National Party is opposed to the extension of those trading hours. Apart from the opposition expressed by the National Party, the hoteliers are also not happy about the amendment in that it grants them a licence to operate for only two 2-hour periods but stipulates that there must be two hours between each of those sessions. The hotelkeepers must pay for the labour and pay the penalty rates that apply on Sundays. In addition if a person is called back to work, he or she must work a minimum of 4 hours. That makes it more difficult for a hotelkeeper to make a profit.

The other problem is that hotelkeepers are not able to sell packaged liquor. It has been brought to my attention by publicans in the electorate I represent that they would be placed under enormous pressure from people who wish to buy packaged liquor and yet are not able to purchase it from the hotels when they are open. The National Party is opposed to the extended trading hours allowed in clause 9 for Sunday trading.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The clause, which originates from the Government, is curious when one considers the stand that the Government has taken publicly on trading on Sundays. As I have said on many occasions, the Government has adamantly opposed Sunday retail trading and said that there would be no extension of retail hours at week-ends during the life of this Parliament. It has almost become an article of faith, with the Government wanting to protect small businesses from week-end trading. Yet the Government is prepared to turn around and introduce a provision which enables hotels to operate bar trading on Sundays.

The clause represents a change to the Liquor Control Act that will be historic in Victoria. There has been a long tradition in this State that hotel bars will be closed on Sundays, apart from hotels providing liquor with meals and for bona fide travellers. They have been some of the conditions in the past but now, with clause 9, the Government is moving to introduce Sunday bar trading. It is certainly a tentative step.

The hours are to be heavily restricted to not more than two 2-hour sessions and the hotels must be closed for at least 2 hours between those nominated sessions. The bottle shop facility will not be available and, as the honourable member for Murray Valley stated, this will certainly pose problems for country hoteliers who may wish to take advantage of the opportunity of bar trading on Sunday. The bottle shop may not be open, yet it may not be a separate area for selling packaged liquor—often the packaged liquor is sold over the bar. Some extremely difficult situations may arise.

The Bill provides some safeguards against disturbance that may be caused by Sunday bar trading. The commission must first grant a permit, and provisions are incorporated in other parts of the Act to provide that the intention to trade on Sunday must be advertised to allow people the opportunity of objecting if they believe their position may be disadvantaged by the introduction of Sunday trading. The Liquor Control Commission is designed to keep an eye on those situations to ensure that there is an orderly and progressive improvement in the supply of hotel services.

The Opposition is not opposed to the measures but points out that a number of difficulties may arise which may mean that many hotels will not seek to take advantage of the new service. The Opposition is concerned about the speed with which the Government has introduced the measure and the absence of any evidence that there has been proper and thorough research into the changes that the Bill may introduce.

One aspect of concern to the Opposition is the relative safety on Victoria's roads on Sundays compared with Saturdays. I should be interested to know whether the Government considered this point and examined the relative statistics. Did the Government confer with the Road Safety and Traffic Authority or other interested parties to determine the possible impact on road safety of the opening of hotel bars on Sunday?

If so, it would be good if the Minister would advise the Committee of this effect and perhaps keep a close watch or ask the Road Safety and Traffic Authority to keep a close watch over those aspects of liquor in the community. If an increasing number of hotels and bars are opening as a result of the amendment to the Act, the Government has a large responsibility in this area of community development. I would not like hotels to open on Sundays without a proper regard being taken for these other factors.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—There appears to be some opposition to the idea of extending trading hours on Sundays. I make it clear that the intention of the Government is to make drinking conditions in this State more civilized, sociable and oriented towards the family. In that case, there is merit in an extension of hours on Sundays so that families can go to hotels for lunch or dinner.

In terms of bar trading, the Government took into account the points raised by the member for Balwyn. That is one of the reasons why the Government has suggested

that although hotels can be open between the hours of 12 noon and 8 p.m. for bar trading it can be for only two sessions of 2 hours and if they opt for two sessions there must be a break of 2 hours in between. I am happy to give an undertaking that the Government will ask the Road Safety and Traffic Authority to keep a close watch on the effect of Sunday trading on traffic. I believe what the Government is doing will achieve a much more civilized Sunday for everyone to enjoy.

The Committee divided on the clause, as amended (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	63
Noes	8
Majority for the clause	55

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr Mathews
Mr Brown	Mr Miller
Mr Burgin	Mr Norris
Mr Cain	Mr Pope
Miss Callister	Mr Ramsay
Mr Cathie	Mrs Ray
Dr Coghill	Mr Remington
Mr Crabb	Mr Reynolds
Mr Culpin	Mr Richardson
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Roper
Mr Dickinson	Mr Rowe
Mr Ebery	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Ernst	Mr Seitz
Mr Fogarty	Mrs Setches
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Gray	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Shell
Mr Hassett	Mrs Sibree
Mrs Hill	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Hill	Mr Simmonds
Mr Hockley	Mr Simpson
Mr Ihlein	Mr Spyker
Mr Jolly	Mr Stirling
Mr Jona	Mrs Toner
Mr Kempton	Mr Trezise
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walsh
Mr Kennett	Mr Wilkes
Mr Kirkwood	
Mr Leigh	
Mr Leiberman	
Mr McCutcheon	*Tellers:*
Mr McDonald	Mr Gavin
Mr Maclellan	Mr Williams

NOES

Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Steggall
	Mr Whiting

NOES

Mr Hann	*Tellers:*
Mr Jasper	Mr McGrath
Mr Ross-Edwards	Mr Wallace

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! It would be of considerable assistance to the Chair and to those honourable members who wish to debate the clauses if honourable members would resume their places quickly and quietly. I do not think that should be too difficult.

Clause 10 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 28)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 10, page 5, line 1, omit "(*c*)" and insert "(*e*)".

This is purely a drafting error.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—On a point of order, the Minister is resuming his speech before honourable members have resumed their places. Surely honourable members should be able to resume their seats before the Minister resumes his remarks.

The CHAIRMAN—There is no point of order. The Chair will endeavour to control the situation during the Committee stage. That can be done only with the co-operation of honourable members. I appreciate that the sitting hours are beginning to stretch out but honourable members have been in this place long enough to know that this is par for the course at this time of the session.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 10 introduces new hours for Sunday trading for licensed restaurants to bring them into line with the new arrangements that clause 9 established for liquor with meals at hotels.

I commend the Government for keeping similar hours for these two different types of licences. It would clearly be inequitable to take any other action. One point which the Government overlooked, which applies equally to the hotel situation as well as the restaurant situation, is that in changing the hours for Sunday trading, the clause, as presented, fails to make the same adjustment in hours for trading on Good Friday.

I am uncertain whether this was an intended variation. I would appreciate comments from the Minister. It would seem to be common sense that if a measure is to be introduced specifically for Sunday trading for licensed restaurants and liquor with

meals service in hotels, it would be appropriate for the same hours to apply to Good Friday.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party opposes clause 10 on the same grounds as it opposed clause 9.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 11 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 32)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—This clause restricts the number of retail bottled liquor licences that can be held by any one person or corporation to 8 per cent of the total number of retail bottled liquor licences that may be issued at any one time.

During the second-reading debate, the Minister made a great feature of the restriction stating that it was a measure that would go a long way towards ensuring that the large retail chains trading in the liquor area would not be able to dominate the market and create undue pressures with loss leadering or price competition which would adversely affect other outlets.

So far the Minister has not given any indication of the Government's reaction. By increasing the figure from 5 per cent, which was recommended by the liquor advisory committee, to 8 per cent, the Government has made this clause completely superfluous. This alteration was made specifically because the Coles–Dickins group already held 8 per cent of retail licences. In making that a bench-mark, the Government has left room for other large chains—at least three or four—to considerably increase the number of liquor licences they hold.

The Opposition is not satisfied that clause 11 will do anything to ameliorate the problem, although the Minister claims that this will be the case.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—This point was repeated by a number of speakers during the second-reading debate, and it was noted that the Government decided to alter the recommendation of 5 per cent of the advisory committee to 8 per cent. The reason, as has been indicated by the honourable member for Balwyn, is that the Coles–Dickins group—or Liquorland as it is known—already hold 61 licences which represents 8 per cent of total licences.

The Government took the view that the company acquired the licences at a time when it was quite legitimate to do so. Therefore, the Government believed there would be problems with attempting to undertake some type of retrospective legislation. The Government could have told the Coles group to divest itself of the number of outlets which take it above the 5 per cent figure. However, on what grounds of fairness could that have been achieved? What would be the compensation? The only way to go is to set the figure at 8 per cent. The other related groups of companies are well below the number of licensed outlets held by the Coles–Dickins group.

All I can say is that if, as a result of the setting of an 8 per cent figure, the Government finds that a company is adopting predatory pricing practices, a differential licence fee will be implemented to stop that practice. This is an issue that can and will be monitored by the Government.

Some of the groups of companies such as the Myer–San Remo group could well sell some outlets. The Coles group might do the same. In the context of the introduction of a differential licence fee, if predatory pricing practices are adopted, it is unlikely that the other chains and groups of related companies will approach the figure of 8 per cent.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party recognizes that this is one of the off-sets offered by the Government for the removal of section 11A. I canvassed the view of the National Party during the second-reading debate. The National Party recognizes that the reason for the introduction of a figure of 8 per cent is because of the number of licensed bottle outlets of the Coles–Dickins group. As the Minister indicated, the National Party will be watching this measure with interest. The National Party expresses concern for the single licensed bottle outlets because they will be under the most pressure following the removal of section 11A which removes the minimum price for packaged beer.

These small outlets will feel the effects of the changes that are proposed in the Bill. The 8 per cent provides the basis for the Other four large holders of licences to increase the number of licences they hold to 61, the number currently held by the Coles organization. That organization can still sell off outlets which may not be profitable and

can then secure a licence in a new development in, say, the outer metropolitan area to obtain a higher turnover. The National Party foresees that loss leadering by the large retail bottle chains will result in problems for the industry.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 12 and 13.

Clause 14 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 38)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 14, page 6, line 13, omit "Full".

This amendment omits the word "Full" because the commissioner is empowered to issue a Sunday permit. The omission of the word will make the provision consistent with other provisions relating to Sunday trading.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The clause allows licensed clubs the same extension of hours for bar service or for service with meals as was provided in the amendment to clause 9 in respect of hotels, and it introduces limited Sunday bar trading for those licensed clubs which until now have not had it. Certain sporting clubs with liquor licences have had bar trading on Sundays, but this amendment brings licensed clubs into line with hotels.

The Opposition has no objection to the amendment to the Act, but believes the conditions and hours of trading under the different classes of licence should be kept as uniform as possible.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party opposes clause 14 on the same grounds as it opposed clause 9.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to, as was clause 15.

Clause 16 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 38C)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 16 amends section 38C of the principal Act, relating to convention facilities. It reduces the requirement in respect of the numbers of persons to be accommodated in a facility before a convention facility licence is granted. This matter was not mentioned in the Minister's second-reading speech or at any other time in the debate. I ask the Minister to advise the Committee of the reason for this amendment.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—Hotels, as I understand it, do not need to have a convention facility licence. With the present figures of between 1000 and 750, respectively, the Act appears to be tailor made for one place—the Moonee Valley racecourse. The Masonic Centre is the only other place that I can think of that would come within that definition.

The Government believes the definition of a convention centre should not be restricted to cover merely those two venues. Conventions could legitimately be held at many other places that are not of that size, and proposes that the numbers be changed to 400 and 300, respectively. It should be remembered that the commission can decide what is a convention centre and what the terms of the licence should be.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 17 (Amendment of Act No. 7695 s. 38D)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 17 deals with the food and wine festival. Once again, this matter has not been mentioned in the debate, and I ask the Minister to place on the record the reason why the Bill envisages the possibility of a food and wine festival being conducted at a venue other than the Fitzroy Gardens.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I am surprised that the honourable member for Balwyn has not discussed this matter with the Melbourne City Council. This amendment was specifically requested not only by that council but also by the food and wine people. That festival very nearly did not go ahead this year because it was necessary that it be held in the Fitzroy Gardens, whereas the council wanted another site. Hence the decision was made to substitute the words "in any part of any park or garden under the control of the City of Melbourne or any part of any street adjacent to that park or garden or part thereof".

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I had discussions with people in the food and wine industry and they indicated support for this amendment, which will enable them to conduct the food and wine festival at places in Melbourne other than the Fitzroy Gardens.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 18 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 40A)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I invite honourable members to vote against the clause. The omission of clause 18 will permit the insertion of a new clause later in the Bill concerning tertiary institution licences.

The clause was negatived.

Clause 19 was agreed to.

Clause 20 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 21 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 45C)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Once again, no explanation has been given for the variation that is introduced, and I should appreciate a brief explanation from the Minister.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—This clause amends the particular occasion permits for public hall licences to be issued for specific functions. It is not unusual for a town, city or local area, or example, such as Carrum to conduct a week-end which it calls the "back to" week-end. The whole group of planned activities is usually decided upon, and that is the reason for the use of the words "a series of functions". Equally, a play may be performed on a number of nights and, by extending the definition, a permit can be obtained for each night on which the play is to be performed.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 22 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 45D)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I invite the Committee to vote against this clause. By so doing, the Committee will be able to insert proposed new clause BB which deals with a cricket club.

The clause was negatived.

Clauses 23 to 28 were agreed to.

Clause 29 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 58)

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I bring to the attention of the Committee the concern that was expressed to me by the Australian Hotels Association about the inclusion of this clause which amends section 58 (5) of the principal Act.

The clause provides for an objection to the renewal of a licence to be made by firstly, the Equal Opportunity Board and, secondly, by the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union. The grounds for the objection are contained in section 58 (2) of the principal Act.

This matter needs to be brought to the attention of the Committee because the Australian Hotels Association believes this measure goes too far in providing the opportunity for those two organizations to object to the renewal of a licence on the grounds that it would seem would be better dealt with by the Liquor Control Commission and not by objections from those organizations.

The objections are set out in section 58 (2) and include objections, such as that the applicant is of bad fame and character or of drunken habits, that the premises in question are not suitably maintained, or that the applicant has not complied with the requirements of the Act. When looking at the grant of a permit to an applicant the Act deals with areas that are not the concern of the Equal Opportunity Board or of the union.

I can understand the concern of the Australian Hotels Association where a particular union controlling employees in the hotel industry and the Equal Opportunity Board are able to object to the granting of a licence on grounds that are more suitably dealt with by the Liquor Control Commission.

I also bring to the attention of the Minister the words, "on the grounds that the applicant has failed" in clause 29. It is believed by the Australian Hotels Association that that should read, "has consistently failed" rather than just "failed" because the applicant may have failed to meet particular requirements on only one occasion.

I ask the Minister to comment on that matter and to indicate to the Committee that he will look at clause 29 between here and another place in the hope that something may be done to straighten the objections that have been raised on this clause.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Opposition feels as strongly as the National Party, if not more strongly, about clause 29 and the provisions it introduces into the Liquor

Control Act which go beyond the objectives of the Act.

The amendment just carried on clause 26 has made provision for organizations of employers or employees involved in the liquor industry to be parties to an objection to the granting or renewal of a licence.

Clause 29 provides specific grounds on which a nominated union—the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union—can object to the renewal of a licence. The grounds are not only those grounds already incorporated in the Liquor Control Act, grounds that are available to any person who is qualified to object, but the union is to be given two extra grounds: Firstly, that the applicant has failed to observe the terms and conditions of an award relevant to his employee and, secondly, has failed to comply with the provisions of the Industrial Relations Act 1979.

The Opposition is concerned about this and does not believe the Liquor Control Act and the provisions relating to the opportunity to object to an application for renewal of a licence should be used as matters that are essentially concerned with industrial relations. In those cases the unions have other courts of appeal, if one can use that term in a general sense. Provisions are included in the Industrial Relations Act and in the Liquor Industry Award where the union can take its grounds of concern and see that justice is done, but to have them having this double opportunity of not only going to that source but also to the Liquor Control Commission and putting pressure on employers in that area is unacceptable to the Opposition.

The Opposition is opposed to clause 29 and is equally opposed to the provision relating to the extension of the power of the Equal Opportunity Board to object to the renewal of a licence where members of the board are of the opinion that an act of discrimination to which the Equal Opportunity Act 1977 applies has been performed by the licensees. Currently the Equal Opportunity Board can object to the licence only on the grounds that the applicant has failed to comply with the order of the board. That is a reasonable position to sustain. The Equal Opportunity Board should not be party to an objection to the renewal of a licence simply because of an opinion formed by it.

The Equal Opportunity Board has the statutory power to make orders under its own Act, to which a licensee applicant may well be subject. If the applicant does not comply surely the Equal Opportunity Board should then move in at that point. The Opposition is opposed to clause 29 and will vote against it.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I join with the honourable member for Balwyn. I find clause 29 to be the most obnoxious clause in this measure. The clause interferes grossly in the relationship between employer and employee at a time when greater interference by Government could lead to the loss of employment opportunities. More importantly it also leads to a situation where employees are disadvantaged because of the intrusion of the Government.

It is sad that the Government attaches so little importance to employment that it introduces a clause such as this which is designed to take away the opportunity of the employer to get on with the job of running his or her business and increasing job opportunities.

There is no doubt that employers today, and in this case those involved in the liquor industry, are spending more and more of their time filling out paper work and defending their existence—an existence which creates opportunity for family and individual security. The Opposition will vote against this clause now and I hope that, when the Bill reaches the Upper House, the clause will be rejected.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The first part of the clause relates to removing the limitation that is currently placed on the Equal Opportunity Board. If an allegation of discrimination is made, the Liquor Control Commission, which understands the industry, its problems and how it operates and which is the best source, can determine it. I am not prepared to add the word, "consistently" to section 58 (5) (*b*) because it could be that one act itself might have been blatant. That is a matter for the commission to determine. After listening to the arguments, it can make its own judgment on that.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I speak against clause 29 in support of the honourable member for

Murray Valley. This provision is an example of what occurs to the Labor Party Government from time to time when narrow political objectives are forced on the Government by outside influences. To keep those outside influences quiet, the Labor Party has to accept those moves. There are plenty of opportunities for anyone concerned to object to the renewal of a licence. If there are proper grounds, that objection can be made. However, in this case, the Government is setting out an invitation to the Equal Opportunity Board and to the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union to go looking for trouble in these premises.

The Liquor Control Commission has served the State well over the years. It has been an intelligent and reasonable watch dog. This clause could lead to victimization against owners of licensed premises. The Government is making it difficult enough for the liquor industry to carry out its duties and remain in business. This would be the last straw.

The Committee divided on the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	26
Majority for the clause	17

AYES

Miss Callister	Mr Norris
Mr Cathie	Mr Pope
Dr Coghill	Mrs Ray
Mr Crabb	Mr Remington
Mr Culpin	Mr Roper
Mr Ernst	Mr Rowe
Mr Fogarty	Mr Seitz
Mr Fordham	Mrs Setches
Mr Gavin	Mr Sheehan
Mr Gray	(*Ballarat South*)
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Hassett	Mr Simmonds
Mrs Hill	Mr Simpson
Mr Hill	Mr Spyker
Mr Hockley	Mr Sterling
Mr Ihlein	Mrs Toner
Mr Jolly	Mr Trezise
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilkes
Mr McCutcheon	*Tellers:*
Mr McDonald	Mr Sheehan
Mr Mathews	(*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Miller	Mr Shell

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr Burgin
Mr Brown	Mr Delzoppo
Mr Dickinson	Mrs Patrick
Mr Ebery	Mr Ramsay
Mr Evans	Mr Reynolds
(*Gippsland East*)	Mr Richardson
Mr Hann	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Jasper	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Jona	Mrs Sibree
Mr Kempton	Mr Whiting
Mr Kennett	Mr Williams
Mr Lieberman	*Tellers:*
Mr McKellar	Mr Leigh
Mr Maclellan	Mr Wallace

The sitting was suspended at 11.59 *p.m. until* 12.33 *a.m.* (*Thursday*).

Clauses 30 and 31 were agreed to.

Clause 32 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 33 (Licensee to control business carried out on licensed premises)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 33 seeks to amend section 96 of the principal Act, which at present makes it illegal for a licensee to sub-let any bar-room on his premises. However, the proposed new section seeks to extend this prohibition on the sub-letting of a bar-room to prevent a licensee—without the permission of the Liquor Control Commission—sub-letting other areas of his premises, be they for the provision of either food or accommodation.

So far, the Minister for Economic Development has provided the Committee with no explanation on the reason for the proposed new section. It would be unnecessary for the Committee to adopt that proposed new section and it should not be proceeded with.

Part of the proposed new section seeks to ensure that a licensee shall be the proprietor of any business involving the supply of food and liquor or accommodation on a licensed premises and that the licensee shall be the employer of any person employed in the conduct of that business.

That appears to place a blanket prohibition on a licensee from making any particular arrangements with, for example, a specialist catering firm to provide an adequate food service within the framework of a hotel and the satisfactory business arrangement that may be possible between a licensee and a catering enterprise.

On the surface, there is no apparent reason why a licensee should be prohibited

from making that arrangement or even why a licensee should be obliged to obtain special permission from the Liquor Control Commission to make that arrangement.

The Liquor Control Commission exists to maintain control over the supply, distribution and consumption of liquor in the community. The existing provision preventing the sub-letting of any bar-room to sell liquor on licensed premises appears to be suitable and adequate and should be retained. There is no reason to extend that provision. The Opposition opposes the proposed new section.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The clause, if adopted, will require an application to be made to the Liquor Control Commission for sub-letting a bar-room either for the provision of food or for the provision of accommodation. The Government believes the correct course to adopt would be to allow the commission to determine the conditions under which that sub-letting would occur.

The Australian Hotels Association has suggested that this is a much wider provision, but the Government believes there is no possibility of it being extended, for example, to cover maintenance contractors, refrigeration mechanics, electricians or whatever because the proposed new section refers to the conduct of that business which refers to food and accommodation and nothing else.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The Australian Hotels Association has expressed the concern outlined by the honourable member for Balwyn. The Minister for Economic Development indicated that the Australian Hotels Association had expressed its concern. That association has also expressed its concern to the National Party at the scope of the proposed new sub-section (2) (*b*).

Mr Cathie—The "carrying on of that business" refers to the provision of food and accommodation.

Mr JASPER—I am unable to determine the scope of that proposed new sub-section. The National Party is not prepared to accept the assurance given by the Minister. The National Party can foresee problems arising for persons involved in the liquor industry.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Opposition thought that the Minister for Economic Development may have provided the Committee with an adequate explanation on the reason for the proposed new section, but the Minister has simply spelt out that this is what the Government wants to do. In effect, the Liquor Control Commission will be given even more control over the activity of a licensee.

The licensee will be obliged to go to the Liquor Control Commission and say, "Please, I want to make this arrangement in relation to food". The Opposition believes the concern of the commission should be that an adequate food service is provided by the licensee on his premises. How he provides that service is his own concern and not that of the commission. The Minister cannot explain what is wrong with the clause and therefore the Opposition cannot accept it.

The Committee divided on the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	38
Noes	24
Majority for the clause	14

AYES

Miss Callister	Mrs Ray
Mr Cathie	Mr Remington
Dr Coghill	Mr Roper
Mr Crabb	Mr Rowe
Mr Culpin	Mr Seitz
Mr Fogarty	Mrs Setches
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Gray	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simmonds
Mr Hassett	Mr Simpson
Mrs Hill	Mr Spyker
Mr Hill	Mr Stirling
Mr Hockley	Mrs Toner
Mr Kennedy	Mr Trezise
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Walsh
Mr McCutcheon	
Mr McDonald	
Mr Mathews	*Tellers:*
Mr Miller	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Norris	Mr Shell
Mr Pope	

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Brown	Mr Hann
Mr Burgin	Mr Jasper
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Jona
Mr Dickinson	Mr Kempton
Mr Ebery	

NOES

Mr Kennett	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Lieberman	Mrs Sibree
Mr McKellar	Mr Whiting
Mr Maclellan	Mr Williams
Mr Ramsay	*Tellers:*
Mr Reynolds	Mr Leigh
Mr Richardson	Mr Wallace

Clause 34 was agreed to.

Clause 35 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 111)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 35, line 24, omit "who has been granted a permit under section 35 (3A)".

Clause 35 provides for the insertion of a new sub-section after section 111 (3) of the principal Act to provide that the section shall not apply to a vigneron's licence who has been granted a permit under section 35 (3A). The effect of this is to permit persons who purchase bottled liquor from a vigneron to consume that liquor in or in the vicinity of the licensed premises. I am indebted to the honourable member for Murray Valley for both this and the next amendment. He spoke to me about them last night and pointed out the reason for them. In some cases vignerons do not have a wine tasting permit, and this amendment will enable people to consume wine which they have purchased on the premises or on any highway adjoining or near such premises. The point raised by the honourable member for Murray Valley appears to be sensible.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—This amendment and the need for it was brought to my attention by the proprietor of the Mt Prior Vineyard at Rutherglen who has a licence at the vineyard to sell wine and has a tasting permit on the same premises but he has a large home at the vineyard where he often allows people to conduct functions. The home, which is surrounded by a beautiful garden, is not regarded as a licensed premises. An amendment was required to the Act to enable wine or liquor to be consumed at the premises of the vigneron but not necessarily in the licensed area or the tasting area. This amendment moved by the Minister remedies the situation by the omission of the words "who has been granted a permit under section 35 (3A)". In some cases the licensed area is not the same place as the tasting area at the vineyard.

This clarifies that point and also allows for the consumption of liquor in areas other than the licensed area or specific tasting area.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 36 (Amendment of No. 7695 s. 111A)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 36, line 27, after "licensee" insert "other than the holder of a wholesale liquor merchant's licence or a vigneron's licence".

This amendment was suggested by the honourable member for Murray Valley and I again thank him. The amendment exempts the holder of a wholesale liquor merchant's licence or vigneron's licence from the provisions of proposed section 111A and contains the no-limit law. As the honourable member for Murray Valley pointed out, some wholesalers and vignerons, particularly small operators, may have only a small quantity of wine which they wish to ration amongst a number of different restaurants, perhaps as a means of advertising or distribution. The amendment covers that point.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I thank the Minister for accepting the amendment to clause 36 and indicate that I have had discussions with the vignerons in north-eastern Victoria regarding amendments to the Liquor Control Act. In particular I spoke to Mr George Smith of the All Saints winery, who made the representations to me on behalf of the vignerons of north-eastern Victoria and the Wine and Brandy Producers' Association of Victoria. I am pleased that the proposed amendment will be incorporated in the Bill. I indicate that I will be making further recommendations to the Minister and the advisory committee at a later time as to the interpretation of a vigneron.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The proposed amendment must be of some concern to the Committee. I recognize the point made by the honourable member for Murray Valley and it is valid. As to the example given by the Minister of a vigneron with special wine only available in small quantities to be spread over a wide range of customers and

the no-limit law that proposed section 111A represents, if an exception is not made for vignerons, that action would be prevented. However, the Government must examine this proposed section.

It is one of the much-vaunted safeguards that the Government has seen fit to put into the proposed legislation to prevent the so-called loss leader. The clause makes it illegal for a licensee to place a limit on the number of units that the purchaser can buy at any one time.

In commenting on other clauses in the proposed legislation, I said that it is important that legislation should be equal and fair between the different classes of licences that exist. This is the key clause, in the Government's view, in preventing unfair competition and an exception is now being made for one class of licence. I am not sure how wide it will develop so far as vignerons are concerned. There is no doubt that the discounting of wines by retail liquor merchants is a practice that is likely to continue.

The discounting will be restricted to the extent that a limit cannot be put on the number of units that can be purchased by any one customer, but vignerons will be able to impose such a limit. Is this introducing a degree of advantage to vignerons over retail liquor licence holders? I am not certain, but I warn the Government that if it starts tinkering with that sort of thing, it may open doors to practices that it does not fully understand.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—In response to the comments by the honourable member for Balwyn, I indicate to the Committee that extensive discussions have taken place with the Liquor Control Commission as to the proposed amendment. The chairman of the commission does not see any problem with the amendment currently being considered. The vignerons are being protected from the implications of this proposed section on the use of a loss leader to prevent the use of limitation. It is directed at the large chain operators rather than at vignerons who are mainly primary producers selling their own product.

The Minister indicated the need for the proposed amendment in relation to the wholesale liquor merchant's licence. It should be remembered that 90 per cent of business of a licensed wholesale liquor merchant must be in wholesale deals. There is not a great likelihood that they will be able to become involved in the limitation and prevention of large sales of liquor.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 37 (Amendment of No. 7695 new s. 112A)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 37, line 33, omit "a licensee under" and insert "the holder of".

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 37, line 33, omit "A licensee under" and insert "the holder of".

The clause prevents the selling of liquor by a person under the age of 18 years in a retail bottled liquor store. It is aimed at stopping supermarkets from employing juniors at that level. However, it is badly expressed and not consistent with expressions used elsewhere in the proposed legislation. The proposed amendment changes the clause to read:

A licensee under a retail bottled liquor licence shall not permit a person under the age of 18 years to sell or dispose of liquor on the licensed premises.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The clause is one of those being held up by the Government as a safeguard against unfair trading in the industry after the repeal of section 11A. I point out to the Committee that the clause will enshrine in legislation that there shall be no employment of youths under 18 years of age in liquor stores. The Committee should understand that this practice has already been in operation so far as the Liquor Control Commission is concerned. Any person applying for a retail bottled liquor licence, or any other liquor licence, is advised by the commission that that is a matter of policy. The difference this clause will make in practice will be minimal indeed.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 38 (Holding out)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 38, line 6, at the end of this line insert:

"(2) Where a licensee conducts business at more than one premises, some of which are licenced, he shall

not take or receive orders or permit any employee of his to take or receive orders for liquor at any of those premises at which he conducts business which are not licensed premises.

Penalty: 2 penalty units."

Some renumbering is required to allow for proposed new sub-section (2) to be inserted. This covers situations like, for example, the credit card offer, which may include liquor or some other special deal, and could have the effect of avoiding a licence fee. Similarly, a door-to-door salesman could offer wine from interstate, perhaps on a commission basis. The second amendment makes it clear that where a company or a group of companies have both licensed and unlicensed premises, they cannot accept orders at the unlicensed premises on behalf of the licensed premises.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 38, as amended, on close reading, is really most extraordinary. Whether it says what the Minister means it to say would have to be asked of the Minister, because, at present, a person who holds himself out as being prepared to order or purchase liquor on behalf of another person shall be guilty of an offence. One has only to go to the bar of any hotel to find a person who holds himself out as being prepared to order or purchase liquor on behalf of another person, and this will under this Bill be an offence.

Anyone reading that clause would think that, if one wishes to shout a round of drinks the next time one is having a drink with one's friends, clause 38 will make it an offence to do so, and one will be up for a $200 fine. I am sure that is not what the Minister intends, but the way the clause is worded at present, I can see no other interpretation of it but that. I understand the intentions of the Minister in his amendments to the clause to ensure that unlicensed premises do not take orders on behalf of licensed premises. As an objective, that is a sensible thing to do, but I point out that proposed new section 114A, as drafted, may have unexpected side-effects and I ask the Minister to consider the matter while the Bill is between here and another place.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—My advice is that this clause does not cover the frequent occasions that occur in hotels where a person who may be drinking with a group of friends shouts a round of drinks. What occurs is that that person is simply making a gift of beer to another person and, in that case, that would not come under the meaning or the intention of the clause.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to as was clause 39.

Clause 40 (Reassessment of licence fees)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 40, line 39, after "pay" insert "an amount of not less than".

Clause 40, line 41, after "Fee" insert "and not more than double the amount of that difference".

It is a clear penalty provision which allows a penalty to be imposed where a person has knowingly understated his liquor purchases and thereby evaded the licence fees.

The amendments were agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 41.

Clause 42 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 43.

Clause 44 (Transitional provision)

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Cause 44, line 17, after "permit" insert "or a licence (as the case may be)".

There is a drafting error where reference to a licence was omitted. It should read "permit or a licence (as the case may be)".

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 44, line 18, after "act" insert "until the renewal of that permit or licence."

Clause 44 deals with the transitional provision between the old and the new hours so that if a licensee wishes to have extended hours now he would have to apply now, between June and December. That means he would have to advertise his intent in the newspaper circulating in his area. However, if the licensee decided not to seek the extension of hours now and waited until the end of the year until the normal time for renewal, there would still be the right of objection at this point. The only difference is

that, if he delayed it until the annual renewal of his licence, the hotel or the restaurant would not have to advertise, but it is still pertinent for a person to lodge an objection at that stage and for the commission to go through the normal objection hearings.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

New clause

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Insert the following new clause to follow clause 17:

'AA. In section 40A (1) of the Principal Act for paragraph (*b*) there shall be the following paragraph:

"(*b*) between the hours specified in the licence;".'.

I am adding a new clause to the Bill to follow clause 17. It refers to the tertiary institutions' licence. There have been some comments about this matter and, although the Government is doing it this way, I point out that the hours specified in the licence clearly mean that it must be determined by the commission. The reason for not spelling that out in the Bill is because there is such a huge range of tertiary institutions in the country. The Government is trying to deal with institutions as diverse and different as colleges of advanced education, or even an agricultural college, perhaps in a provincial area. For that reason the Government believes it is better to lay down in the legislation that it should be between the hours specified in the licence and as specified by the Liquor Control Commission.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—This is an important amendment, even though it has been introduced late at night. It should not pass without some note of it being taken by the Committee. Section 40 of the principal Act makes provision for a tertiary institution licence which, up until now, has been quite restricted. It states:

(1) A tertiary institution licence shall authorize the licensee to sell and dispose of liquor on the premises specified in the licence for consumption—

(*a*) on those premises;

(*aa*) by any person employed by the institution, any student at the institution or any person recognized as a guest by the institution;

(*b*) between the hours of six in the evening and ten in the evening on any day other than a Sunday or Good Friday; and

(*c*) with refreshments at all times during those hours.

By the amendment, the Government proposes to remove any reference to the hours for which tertiary institution licences may be granted.

This puts the tertiary institution licence well ahead of a hotelkeeper's licence or a club licence. As I have heard mentioned during this debate on several occasions, the importance of keeping a degree of unanimity in the hours the different classes of licences are allowed to trade is most important.

I am concerned that a tertiary institution licence will be handed over in its entirety, with no guidance on the hours it may be authorized to operate. The commission does have direction in the Bill so far as clubs and hotels are concerned, and there is a limitation put on the extension of Sunday trading. The tertiary institution licence is left entirely to the Liquor Control Commission, and if the commission were asked to grant a licence for consumption of alcohol on Sunday for twelve hours straight, the commission could grant such a licence. I do not think that it would, because of the provisions of the Act, but this is the problem.

The Minister makes the comment, "Would a council of a university want extraordinary hours of this nature"? I am not certain. Extraordinary things are done at universities. There are all night rock shows, with bands and various forms of entertainment at universities, and this would give the Liquor Control Commission no guidance so far as hours are concerned. I am sorry that the change to the tertiary institution licence is introduced in this form. Restrictions in the present Act are tight. There may be an argument for an extension of those restrictions, but the Opposition would sooner see some guidance being given to the Liquor Control Commission pertaining to hours and it should be in line with the club licence.

Given the lateness of the hour, and the possible reasonableness of the Minister, I will not be pressing an amendment on the matter, but I ask the Minister to take into consideration the points I have raised and the desirability of having a relationship between a tertiary institution licence and club licence and considering an amendment between here and another place.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party supports the insertion of the new clause proposed by the Minister, but it also takes note of the concern expressed by the honourable member for Balwyn. There was extensive discussion in the National Party on this particular clause. It appeared that if a tertiary institution could convince the Liquor Control Commission that it required a licence for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to serve liquor, that this would be approved by the commission. This may fall into line with the new Liberal Party policy on trading hours, that shops should be allowed to operate at any time.

New clause AA refers to section 40A (1) (*c*), which states that refreshments shall be served during those hours. Therefore, the hours specified by the Liquor Control Commission will restrict the operation of bars at institutions. The National Party believes this is a reasonable restriction. Therefore the National Party supports the new clause.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—This clause highlights the inconsistency of the Government's procedures on legislation. It is now giving to the commission authority to allow tertiary institutions to serve alcohol at whatever time is approved by the commission, providing it is consumed with refreshments. I am not opposed to that concept, except that it raises the question of inconsistency.

Around most of our institutions there are a number of hotels and other facilities that have been built up over the years and, if the commission grants trading hours to tertiary institutions, the hotels that affront these institutions, where there is a high density of young people, will be disadvantaged.

In terms of inconsistency and fair play, and if the Government is serious in giving equal opportunity, it should examine whether the same concession should be given to the outlets that affront these tertiary institutions. Otherwise, tertiary institutions will have an unfair advantage and the trading hours of those hotels around the institutions will be affected.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I am glad the honourable member for Murray Valley picked up the point that liquor has to be served with refreshments. That was the point of redrafting this amendment. The hours are to be settled between the universities and the colleges with the commission, and the views of the councils of those bodies, would be taken into account. Their views would probably be required by the commission before making a determination.

I do not believe the difficulties that have been foreseen will eventuate. The Australian Hotels Association, in its submission, stated that the hours should not extend beyond 8 p.m. Many students are still at lectures at 8 p.m.

The new clause was agreed to.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Insert the following new clause to follow clause 21:

'BB. In section 45D (2) of the Principal Act after the words "seven in the evening" (where second occurring) there shall be inserted the words "or, in the case of a cricket club, on a Saturday between the hours of six and eight in the evening and on a Sunday between the hours of eleven-thirty in the morning and one-thirty in the afternoon or six and eight in the evening".'.

It simply means that cricket clubs will retain their choice of hours of trading. They can either have liquor at lunch, or after the match on a Sunday. Previously they did not have the choice in the way this was drafted in the Bill.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party supports this new clause which relates to the restricted permit, and which is an amendment to section 45D (2) of the principal Act.

The National Party supported the introduction of the restricted club permit when it was introduced into legislation two and half years ago. It believed there was a need to have a restricted club permit for sporting clubs in Victoria. It seemed a ridiculous situation to the National Party that most clubs were operating on a consumption permit, which made it restrictive for most clubs unless they got a full club licence and on a consumption permit sporting clubs could not sell liquor.

The liquor could be sold by them selling tickets at another place or receiving cash at another place and selling the liquor to the participants at the sporting club.

The National Party supported the original amendment to the Act which allowed for restricted club permits. When the proposed legislation was debated, I indicated to the House that it should be similar to

South Australian legislation whereby a club applied for the hours that were most suitable for it, whether it be a football club, cricket club, bowling club or rowing club. Honourable members should recognize that the hours that would suit one club certainly may not suit another club.

The former Government, in its wisdom, when introducing the proposed legislation, restricted the hours to 2 hours between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday or 2 hours on a Sunday between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. or 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the evening. Although that provision suited many football clubs, it was not suitable for bowling or cricket clubs, which are now covered by the amendment. I hope the Minister will take notice of my suggestion that more realistic permits are needed for the consumption of alcohol in sporting clubs under a restricted club permit.

I ask the Minister to consider that suggestion and, to be more open in allowing a club to apply for the hours that are most suitable to it. At the time I indicated that the proposed legislation would not work because it was too restrictive but, at present, many large sporting clubs, particularly football clubs, are still operating on a consumption licence. They do so totally outside the law.

Although some football clubs have applied for restricted club permits as well, when it is 7 o'clock on a Saturday night, they continue to sell alcohol because they then operate on the consumption licence. Those football clubs recognize that they are completely outside the law.

The National Party supports the amendment to make the hours more appropriate for cricket clubs but recognizes that there should be a broader interpretation of section 45D to allow sporting clubs to apply for the licence that is most suitable. The Liquor Control Commission may then approve the hours as it determines and may also apply restrictions to the conditions that are most appropriate to the licence that has been approved.

The new clause was agreed to.

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Insert the following new clause to follow clause 26:

"CC. After paragraph (*b*) of section 55 (1) of the Principal Act there shall be inserted the following paragraph:

'(*ba*) That the applicant or in the case of a body corporate, a director or the person nominated to be the holder of the licence has engaged in activities which, if carried on after the granting of the licence, would be unfair and derogate from the attainment of the objects of the Act; or'.".

It is not true that in negotiating with the Australian Hotels Association I have been altogether a difficult negotiator; indeed, some of the amendments that have already been accepted by the Committee have been the result of lengthy discussions with the Australian Hotels Association. This is another amendment that was recommended by the advisory panel on the suggestion of the Australian Hotels Association.

The amendment inserts a new ground for objection to the grant, removal, renewal or transfer of a licence. The ground relates to section 3 of the principal Act which sets the objectives of the Act. The effect of including the amendment is that an objection can remain on the ground that the applicant has:

. . . engaged in activities which, if carried on after the granting of the licence, would be unfair and derogate from the attainment of the objects of the Act;

That relates in particular to objects set out in section 3 (1) (*c*) and (*d*) of the Act, which state:

3. (1) The objects of this Act are to ensure in the interest of the public generally—

. . . .

(*c*) that there is an orderly and continuous improvement in and development of facilities and arrangements for the supply of accommodation meals and liquor to the public;

(*d*) that the provision for the orderly and economic development and improvement of that supply should also promote a stable and ordered industry;

This is a further safeguard to ensure the promotion of that stable and ordered industry and to prevent unfair trading practices or predatory pricing habits.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The amendment is a most extraordinary occurrence. At 1.25 a.m., at the final stage of the Committee debate, the Government is admitting by the amendment that there is something inadequate about the protection that exists in the Bill without the amendment that it introduced to remove section 11A. The Government claimed that it had safeguards to ensure that the objectives of the Act would still be achieved. Until now,

the Government had ignored the pleas that were being made by the Opposition and the National Party to strengthen provisions in the Act to ensure that the interests of the small businessmen in the industry were protected.

The last of the twenty amendments brought forward by the Government is to be inserted in the Act to strengthen it in this regard. I am uncertain whether this amendment is appropriate. I am glad that the Government has done something and I will not be opposing the amendment but I advise the Government that the Opposition will be examining closely the amendment while the Bill is between here and another place. The Opposition may comment further on the amendment in another place.

The inclusion of the word "unfair" concerns me. "Unfair" is not defined. Unfair to whom and unfair in what way? I am concerned by the wording that the activities of the licence holder will not "derogate from the attainment of the objects of the Act". Clearly the amendment is an attempt to strengthen the Act in those important areas. The Opposition proposes to examine the amendment and continue to give it the party's full support in another place but further amendments may have to be made.

The new clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Victorian Institute of Secondary Education

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I have to report that, this day, this House met with the Legislative Council in the Assembly Chamber 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 the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education and that the Honourable Walter Jona, member of Parliament, has been duly chosen to be recommended for appointment.

SITTINGS OF PARLIAMENT

A message was received from the Council consenting to the Legislative Assembly using the Council Chamber from 20 June to 7 September 1983.

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

> That the Legislative Assembly express their appreciation of the generous action of the Legislative Council in consenting to the use of the Legislative Council Chamber from 20 June to 7 September 1983.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.31 *a.m.* (*Thursday*).

Joint Sitting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 25 May 1983

Victorian Institute of Secondary Education

A joint sitting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly was held this day in the Legislative Assembly Chamber to elect a member to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

Honourable members of both Houses assembled at 6.20 p.m.

The Clerk—Before proceeding with the business of the joint sitting it will be necessary to appoint a President of the joint sitting.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

> That the Honourable Cyril Thomas Edmunds, M.P., Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, be appointed President of this joint sitting.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I thank the House for the honour and privilege bestowed upon me by this appointment to conduct the joint sitting. I

draw the attention of honourable members to the suggested rules of procedure which have been circulated. It will be noted that the Act requires that the joint sitting be conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by members present at the sitting. The first procedure will be the adoption of the rules.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—Mr President, I desire to submit rules of procedure, which are in the hand of honourable members, and I accordingly move:

That these rules be the rules of procedure for this joint sitting.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—The rules having been adopted, I will receive proposals from honourable members with regard to a member to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I propose:

That the Honourable Walter Jona, M.P., be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

He is willing to be recommended for the appointment if chosen.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I second the proposal.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Are there any further proposals?

As there is only one honourable member proposed, I declare that the Honourable Walter Jona, M.P., has been chosen to be recommended for appointment to the Council of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

I declare the joint sitting closed.

The proceedings terminated at 6.25 *p.m.*

Thursday, 26 May 1983

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 10.36 a.m. and read the prayer.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise the House that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services will not be attending the House today because he is attending a police Ministry council meeting in Darwin.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MEDICARE

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—Will the Minister of Health advise the Government policy and what action he intends to take to assist the estimated 2000 Victorians who will face a loss of employment with the private health funds as a result of the introduction of Medicare by the Federal Labor Government?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—Firstly, I should point out that the estimated loss of employment or change of employment would be significantly less than the figure suggested by the Leader of the Opposition. In my discussion with the Federal Health Minister, the suggested number—at a maximum—for Victoria would be in the order of 500 people.

The Federal Government has determined that Medicare will come in on 1 February. As the Leader of the Opposition would be aware, the Federal Government has a massive mandate for that. The Federal Government has examined the various organizations that could conduct Medicare and has decided that Medibank Private is the best organization to carry out those activities, with the additional undertaking that regional health organizations will have discussions about how they can act as agents in this area. That particularly affects the Latrobe Valley.

The Federal Minister for Health is discussing with his colleagues the taking up of clerical positions in the Commonwealth area. At any one time, numerous clerical positions are available in the Commonwealth system and those positions will be available for those people who lose their jobs or whose jobs are reduced as a result of the Federal arrangements. The Victorian Government has said that it will be prepared to examine the position in the event that that arrangement does not satisfy the full requirement but, as I understand it, the Federal organization has the capacity to take up the additional clerical workers.

POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—In the absence of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I ask the Premier whether the Government has decided to abolish the Special Branch of the Victoria Police; if it has so decided, when will the decision become effective?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The matter is under consideration by the Minister. No decision has yet been made. When a decision is reached, an announcement will be made.

HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr HASSETT (Dromana)—In the light of the current national housing loan situation, will the Minister of Housing inform honourable members of the current situation in Victoria?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—Victoria is witnessing a Government led recovery in the home building industry in this State. The Government made housing a top priority because that area had been so neglected by the former Government that the housing industry was at a 30-year low in this State.

The number of loans that had been approved in the all dwellings category in Victoria in March 1982 was 6127 with a value of $161·6 million; the comparable figures for March 1983 are 7260 loans with a value of $211·6 million. That is the highest number of approvals since March 1976 and the value of the approvals had not exceeded $200 million since the statistics were first kept in 1975.

The Chief Executive of the Housing Industry Association wrote to me indicating that the housing industry is now showing

strong signs of a sustained recovery in Victoria. He points out that the March approvals were the highest since 1977.

Importantly, the recovery is also occurring in the private sector. He estimated that there has been an increase of at least 600 homes in that sector in the four-month period, over and above the additional activity generated by the Government's house and land package scheme. Victorians are witnessing a firm recovery in the home building industry, and that recovery is generating both employment and economic activity in the community.

The statistics for the period from February last year until March this year reveal that there has been an increase of nearly 100 per cent in the total number of houses being built in the Government sector in Victoria.

That clearly demonstrates that the Government has been a leader in economic recovery in this State and in getting jobs going again.

POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Will the Premier confirm that a direction has not been given to the Chief Commissioner of Police to dismantle the Special Branch by 24 June 1983?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I repeat what I said earlier; no decision has been made by the Minister in respect of this matter. When a decision is made an announcement will be made. No such direction has been given.

ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr HANN (Rodney)—With the constant changes in the structure of education that are occurring, is the Minister of Education aware of concern among school principals, and particularly principals associations, regarding the future role of principals, and does the Minister intend to spell out and define the role of principals, particularly in primary schools in this State, at some stage in the future?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—From time to time I meet with representatives of the principals associations. They have themselves initiated a statement outlining what they perceive to be the role of the principal and they have sought a departmental or Ministerial response.

I have undertaken to initiate discussions involving both the principals associations and the department with a view to my coming up with a comprehensive statement dealing with the very important role that the principal plays in the school. I assure honourable members that I recognize that role and would wish to enhance the educational role of principals throughout Victoria.

RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR TRAINS

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN (Ivanhoe)—Can the Minister of Transport inform the House what progress has been made on the State programme for the radio equipping of trains?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The programme which was commenced after the tragic accident at Barnawartha last year has now been completed, some time ahead of its scheduled completion date of 30 June. Virtually all locomotives on line operations have end-to-end radio—that is, communication between the driver and the guard.

On the 266 locomotives in service, 213 have that facility in service. The balance consists of B and T class locomotives which are in the course of being rebuilt and in the rebuilding programme the radio facility will be installed in them. This means that all of our main passenger services—on broad and standard-guage lines—have now got that communication facility and, indeed, have had it for some months in the case of the major passenger trains.

The second part of the programme, which is to provide base-to-train radio communication, is also well advanced. I am informed that the Adelaide and Albury broad and standard-gauge lines will have base-to-train radio communication operating by 30 June this year.

The total cost of all of this radio communication equipment is some $6 million, and 75 per cent of the equipment has been manufactured in Victoria.

INTRODUCTION OF POKER MACHINES

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Following the Premier's welcome assurance to the community that in the event of criminal elements being associated with casinos the Government would have nothing to do with

casinos—I welcome the decision of the Government on that matter—will the Premier give the same assurance in respect of poker machines so that the community can rely on the fact that if criminal elements are shown to be associated with the manufacture, supply or have an interest in poker machines no such poker machines will be introduced in Victoria?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I refer the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to my answer to the honourable member for Wantirna yesterday who asked precisely the same question.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Mrs RAY (Box Hill)—Will the Minister of Education inform the House of the steps that the Government is taking to ensure that its policy on the role and structure of school councils is fully understood by school communities?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I know of the concern and interest that the honourable member has shown in this important topic for a long time. I have been delighted with the response from the education community to the release of Ministerial papers. In response to the request from throughout Victoria, additional copies are being printed. Honourable members who may require additional copies will please notify my office and I shall attempt to satisfy their needs.

A central in-service conference is being held over the next few days, beginning this evening, which I shall be addressing and which senior officers of the Education Department and personnel from education organizations throughout Victoria will be attending. I have been delighted with the response to those invitations. Approximately 150 people will be at those in-service activities. They will in turn be followed by regional in-service activities throughout Victoria so that administrators, principals, and key personnel in schools will be aware of the Government's policy initiatives and the proposed implementations of those proposals over the months and years ahead.

Victoria faces a very exciting and innovative time in education and I look forward to working with the community on this resurgence and redevelopment of the State system.

CENTRALIZED EMPLOYMENT IN EDUCATION

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—I draw the attention of the Minister of Education to newspaper advertisements which appeared in the *Age* and the *Sun* on Tuesday, 24 May, in which the teachers at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology TAFE College have published an open letter to the honourable gentleman claiming that all their previous correspondence to the Minister on the question of centralized employment has gone unanswered, and, furthermore, in which they expressly raised their concern that a Labor Party Government had refused to discuss such a vital issue as centralized employment with the workers affected by those proposed legislative changes.

Why has the Minister of Education refused to answer this correspondence? Will he give me an undertaking this morning that he will meet the teachers immediately, and certainly before a Bill is introduced?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—It is certainly a novel approach having the honourable member for Hawthorn representing the supposed interests of teachers in Victoria and I wish him well in his new-found interest in Victorian teachers. The honourable member did not indicate that the proposed legislation referred to deals with the TAFE teaching service and the union that represents the members of the TAFE teaching service—some 90 per cent of those teachers—is the Technical Teachers Union of Victoria. Either the honourable member did not know that or he does not understand, or he chose not to understand it.

I have referred this matter to the Technical and Further Education Board and Mr Peter Kirby, who has been universally acclaimed as a first-class appointment as chairman of the board and asked him to meet with representatives as he has been handling the drafting of this proposed legislation. I am not aware whether Mr Kirby has met with the particular group referred to by the honourable member for Hawthorn and I will be prepared to make further inquiries today.

I look forward to the Bill proceeding as quickly as possible because it is a major advance for technical and further education.

SILT JETTIES ON MITCHELL RIVER

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—Is the Premier aware that the silt jetties on the Mitchell River, where it enters the Gippsland Lakes, are regarded as the most perfect example of that type of geographical formation anywhere in the world? In view of that, will the Government take steps to have this unique geographical feature recognized by the World Heritage Commission? In view of the deterioration of this geographical feature, will the Premier give consideration to having Victoria withdraw from the legal action between the Commonwealth and the State of Tasmania and divert the money, which would otherwise go to lining the pockets of the legal profession, to provide urgent protection works for an important part of the heritage of Victoria?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I was not aware of the geographical features that adorn the Mitchell River, to which the honourable member for Gippsland East refers. However, I bow to the superior knowledge of the honourable member because I am interested to know of this geographical feature.

I will take what steps I can to ensure that the Ministers and departments concerned do what they can to protect and enhance the features of the area. However, I will not give any undertaking to the honourable member about the withdrawal of the support of the Government for those important proceedings that are to be heard next week in the High Court. The Government believes it has an obligation to make clear to the court the views of Victorians on the protection of our national heritage.

When the Commonwealth Government seeks to have features placed on a national heritage list and accepted and embraced by the World Heritage Commission, it should expect the entire nation to support its actions to protect those features. That is what the Tasmanian dam issue is about, and that is what both the honourable member for Gippsland East and other members of the coalition opposite appear unable to either appreciate or comprehend.

That again marks the difference between the Government and the Opposition parties. The Government believes a national approach should be taken on some matters, few though they may be of this type. It is important that a national approach be taken on the Tasmanian dam issue. That is why the Victorian Government has taken the stand that it has and I welcome it being joined by a number of other State Governments.

SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

Mr NEWTON (Bennettswood)—Can the Minister of Health inform the House of any recent decisions on the School Dental Service?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I am pleased to be able to inform the House that the Government has been able to find additional State resources to boost the School Dental Service for the second time within less than twelve months.

Honourable members should be aware that, because of the inadequacy and slowness of the former Government, Victoria was left out of the funding arrangements for the School Dental Service back in the 1970s, with the result that a smaller proportion of Federal money for the School Dental Service is allocated to Victoria than is allocated to Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

The honourable member for Wantirna is interjecting about the provision of a good service. There was no School Dental Service provided in the western suburbs until this Government determined that it would provide a School Dental Service for all Victorian school children, no matter where they live in the State. The Government has decided that all disadvantaged people—especially those who are doubly disadvantaged because they are represented by the honourable member for Wantirna—will receive the service.

Secondly, all preparatory and grade 3 children will also receive full service. This can be achieved because of the additional funds that have been made available at State expense.

I am now able to announce that a further amount of money for the School Dental Service—$1·5 million—has been allocated for additional caravans. The Treasurer has

agreed to this major expenditure for the provision of up to 40 caravans. It is the intention of the Government to build caravans that will not fall apart, unlike those often built by its predecessors. One dental therapist was working in a caravan, and the roof fell in.

All the additional funds allocated to the School Dental Service come from State resources. The Commonwealth has agreed to enter into discussions about a review of the programme because the Federal Minister of Health has admitted that the current programme discriminates against children living in Victoria and New South Wales. I hope the discussions will be successful, but, in the meantime, additional State funds are being found.

I comment on another subject by saying that I, and other honourable members, did not take full advantage of the Smoke-Out Day yesterday. The horse, Last Smoke, won the Mildura Cup at two to one.

NEWMARKET SALE-YARDS

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—Will the Minister for Local Government inform the House whether the Government is in favour of the retention of the Newmarket sale-yards?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The Government is currently holding discussions with the Melbourne City Council by medium of several Ministers interested in the future of the sale-yards. At the moment, no decision has been made one way or the other. The Government is waiting on a report commissioned on the future of the sale-yards. When that report is available, a decision will be made and I will inform the honourable member.

RAIL FARE EVASION

Mr HARROWFIELD (Mitcham)—Will the Minister of Transport advise the House on the number of $50 on-the-spot fines issued to people travelling on trains without tickets?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The $50 on-the-spot fines that were introduced in February for people avoiding payment of rail fares, and other offences on the railways, have been extremely successful. Honourable members will be pleased to learn that the number of fines being applied is reducing steadily. Presumably, the mail received at electorate offices will likewise continue to reduce.

In the three months the fine has been in existence, 10 000 people have been fined and it has had a salutory effect on the number of people travelling on trains without tickets. It has also been effective in increasing the revenue of the system. There is a hard core of persistent offenders who are continually apprehended because they have not purchased a ticket, they are smoking on the trains or they have their feet on the seats. The Government will continue to fine such people so that everyone travelling on the railways pays their fare.

OVERSEAS ADOPTIONS

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—I ask a question of the Minister for Community Welfare Services about overseas adoptions. Is the Minister aware of section 117 of the Australian Constitution which ensures that no Australian, subject of the Queen, shall be subject in any other State to any disability or discrimination as compared with residents of other States. Is the Minister aware that, with relation to visas being provided to Victorian parents who seek to adopt children overseas, there is discrimination against these parents? Will the Minister undertake to ensure that this discrimination as compared with adoptive parents living in other Australian States does not take place against Victorians and examine these Constitutional matters so that satisfactory overseas adoptions for Victorians may occur.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I shall refer the question of the honourable member for Wantirna to the legal officers of my department for their opinion about whether there is a breach in the law, as he seems to indicate, with respect to persons who want to adopt children from overseas. However, I should be interested to have more precise details of the matters that he has raised.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—What action does the Treasurer intend to take to remedy the anomalies of the financial institutions duty? I particularly draw his attention to the fact that municipalities are exempt and that some municipalities provide water and sewerage services as part of their activities. To ensure uniformity in the

operation of this duty, will the Treasurer now extend that exemption to water and sewerage authorities?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I have made it clear to the House that I have been monitoring the financial institutions duty in the Victorian economy and its effect on various institutions. I have made it quite clear that water and sewerage authorities are providing a particular service to individual consumers. They are not part of the over-all structure of local municipalities. As the honourable member would be aware, in some cases, water and sewerage services are provided directly by local municipalities and, in some cases, they are supplied by a separate entity.

I have made it clear in correspondence I have had on this issue that such authorities will not be granted an exemption.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SCHEME

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—Can the Minister for Employment and Training inform the House whether he has made approaches to the Federal Government with proposals for maintaining the apprenticeship training scheme in Victoria?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—Honourable members would be aware that, as a result of the current economic difficulties, the number of commencements in apprenticeship has declined by 22·4 per cent throughout Australia in the first eight months of this financial year. Although the Federal Government provides support through the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentices Full-time Training scheme and the special assistance programme, clearly additional programmes are necessary.

I have written to the Federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations suggesting that the Federal Government consider a programme whereby it provides funds for the employment in both its own and in the State Government establishments of additional apprentices above normal requirements. Such a programme could be specifically targeted at out-of-trade apprentices. Honourable members would be aware that the State Government has already implemented a similar programme which will employ an additional 900 apprentices over the next four years. State Government establishments should be included in any Federal scheme because the places made available would be likely to be more varied, both in terms of trades and geographic spread. I have raised this question consistently with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and I look forward to receiving a positive response on this initiative.

PETITIONS

The Clerk—I have received the following petitions for presentation to Parliament:

Industrial Relations Act

THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA ASSEMBLED:

Receive the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria who wish to express their full support for the proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations Act which will:

1. Provide State industrial tribunals with power to make awards with respect to retrenchments, redundancy, unfair dismissal and reinstatement.

2. Facilitate a notification and consultation process by employers with their workers and unions.

3. Encourage constructive discussions between employers, unions and other relevant parties, on ways of averting retrenchments or minimising adverse effects on employees who are affected by retrenchments.

4. Allow full involvement of government agencies and departments in assisting both employers and employees in dealing with the problem of retrenchments.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the proposed amendments be enacted, and your petitioners as in duty will ever pray.

By **Mr Sidiropoulos** (39 signatures)

Gembrook forest shooting range

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

This, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria, shows that we participate in the sport of shooting and that we support the commitment of the former Government to implement a recommendation by the Land Conservation Council of Victoria that a site be allocated in the Gembrook forest area for the public shooting range to be managed by the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) such site to be separate from the the proposed Bunyip State Park and in view of the Government's stated concern for safety and training being featured in

the shooting sports we ask Parliament to continue to implement this recommendation of the Land Conservation Council and your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mrs Setches** (20 signatures)

Firearm registration

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

This, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria, shows our concern that the Government has indicated its intention to legislate compelling the registration of privately owned firearms and abrogating the terms of its claimed mandate by failing to consult with representatives of shooting organizations and by imposing charges and restrictions contrary to its specific election promises and, accordingly, we respectfully ask Parliament to deny passage of firearm registration legislation or alternatively to restrict the passage of firearms registration legislation to the terms of the Government's claimed mandate obtained in response to specific public election promises that firearm registration would be notational only that it would be implemented at no extra cost to shooters in view of the recent 150 per cent increase in shooters licence fees and that representatives of shooting organizations would be consulted prior to legislating and your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

By **Mrs Setches** (34 signatures) and **Mr Dickinson** (122 signatures)

It was ordered that the petitions 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 :

Industrial Relations Commission—First Annual Report of the President—Year ended 31 October 1982.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Police Regulation Act 1958—No. 101.

Public Service Act 1974—Determination Nos. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

Warehousemen's Liens Act 1958—No. 103.

Youth, Sport and Recreation Department Report for the year 1981-82—Ordered to be printed.

GRIEVANCES

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The question is:

That grievances be noted.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—On Friday, 6 May, Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd contacted Hill Samuel Australia Ltd, merchant bankers, in the presence of the Chairman of Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd, Alex Ogilvy, and chief executive director, Peter Bunning. The company was facing serious difficulties. It was asked to investigate the company's affairs and advise on an appropriate course of action.

As a result, a decision was made to bring in Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co. to advise on the technical aspects of receivership and the implications and complexities of putting a trustee company under official management. This had never happened before in Australia. It was clearly centered around investments in property developments and loan joint ventures. Property developments and the loans to joint venture partners aggregate more than 50 per cent of the $70 million, which is believed to be the amount at risk.

The directors of Trustees Executors and Agency are pre-eminent in the business world in Victoria and Australia. The chairman, Mr Ogilvy, is a director of Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd, Repco Corporation Ltd, Uniroyal Pty Ltd and indeed many other companies, according to the register of directors, as required by section 23 of the Companies Act 1961. This gentleman is a director of twenty companies.

In addition, other people on the board include Mr Edward Harty, the former chief executive of AUC Holdings Ltd; and director of AUC Holdings Ltd and Vickers Australia Ltd and Mr L. M. Ericsson. There are many other people of similar stature, including Sir Robert Norman, the former chief general manager of the Bank of New South Wales and now director of Westpac Banking Corporation, A.G.C. Ltd, Australian Gas Light Company, Partnership Pacific and numerous other companies.

There is also Mr H. E. Peterson, C.B.E., a consultant to the A.M.P. Society Life Insurance, as well as a Director of Besser Qld. and other companies; Sir Thomas Webb, former Chairman of Commonwealth Banking Association Bank, Director of AOD, Bulkships, Email, McIlwraith McEachern and other companies; and likewise, Mr Max Mainprize, General Manager of Colonial Mutual Life Association. Those are the

luminaries in company directorships in the nation, people in whom one could rightly expect to have total confidence in administering the management of an organization such as this trustee company.

The first point I raise is that Mr Ogilvy is not only Chairman and Director of Trustees Executors and Agency but also has close associations with other companies involved in this matter.

Firstly, he is the director of Hill Samuel Australia Ltd, which was called in on 6 May to advise Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd. Mr Ogilvy is also a former senior partner of Arthur Young & Co., which has been for many years the auditor of the trustee company. The balance-sheet for 1980 shows that Mr Ogilvy was a director of Arthur Young & Co. at that time. I am unaware whether he is still a director of that company. The auditors at no time reported to shareholders anything indicating a problem. Indeed, they gave a clean certificate to the company's last balance-sheet.

The fourth entity involved in the liquidation is the firm of liquidators, Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co. Mr Ogilvy is a tenant of Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co. and to the best of the knowledge of the Opposition his association is no more than that between tenant and landlord, but of course that is an association.

Mr Ogilvy is chairman of the company in liquidation. He is also a director of the firm called in to advise, Hill Samuel Australia Ltd; he was a director of Hill Samuel Australia Ltd in 1980 and is a tenant of the liquidator.

The assets of the company under administration in total exceed $1000 million, and this is the largest liquidation in Australia's history.

Suggestions have been made that the implications are so serious—and this is why the matter is being raised by the Opposition today—that funds that are considered not to be at threat may be in some measure at risk. The public, rightfully, expects to be informed when a serious situation exists to the knowledge of directors. Indeed, the directors have an obligation at law to ensure that the public is advised at the earliest possible time. Obviously the directors knew of the situation of this company well before the official appointment of the receiver was made.

In the chairman's address to the 104th annual general meeting he said, in part, referring to retirement of former directors and the appointment of new ones:

> During the year, the Board appointed two new Directors. Mr Peterson is Chairman of our Queensland and Northern Territory Board of Advice and a former senior partner in Cannan and Peterson, a leading legal firm. Mr Mainprize is the General Manager and a Director of Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited and its group of companies. These appointments will contribute to the breadth of professional experience which shareholders have come to expect from its Board.

That is acknowledged. As I indicated, these directors are pre-eminent in matters such as administration of companies in this nation. Indeed, it has been considered for the duration of its operation that this trustee company, above all others, could be considered as safe as a bank. The directors of the trustee company, like others, are in a unique position. They are and have been free from takeover threat, and because they operate under a special Act of Parliament that gives them this privilege, amongst others. They have a role, if not equal to that of all other directors of public companies, but because of their special position, probably of even more serious consequence.

The Opposition has in its possession statutory declarations which were sworn by the company secretary on 10 March 1983, not long before the liquidation, showing that there were no problems with the company that were declared at that time. It is stated that the amount owing by the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd on judgments was nil, on speciality, nil and on estimated liabilities, nil.

A second statutory declaration that is required to be made annually stated that there were no problems with the company, and that statement was sworn on behalf of the company. A third statutory declaration required under the Companies Act again showed that the amount owing on judgments was nil, on speciality, nil and on estimated liabilities, again nil.

In March 1983, the company indicated that it had no problems. The company secretary, Mr Reid, is a servant of the company. I make it clear that the Opposition is

not in possession of any material that would indicate any wrong doing on his part.

The leading article in the *Australian Financial Review* of 17 May says, in part:

> TEA's secured creditors, including merchant banks, have acted quickly to claw back their funds.
>
> Hill Samuel Australia Ltd, which is compiling a report on TEA's financial position at the request of the board, yesterday confirmed that a $5 million secured money market deposit had been retrieved.

Hill Samuel Australia Ltd was called in at that time to advise the board. The article continues:

> Hill Samuel's funds were bank-bill backed and the merchant bank gave 24 hours notice of its intention to reclaim the funds on Friday, the day receivers and managers were appointed.

Hill Samuel Australia Ltd had, for some days, been in possession of knowledge in relation to the company's position and, on the day the receivers and managers were appointed, withdrew $5 million. The article continues:

> TEA technically defaulted on the repayment yesterday, enabling Hill Samuel to exercise its rights over the securities covering the advance.
>
> The move is understood to have received the blessing of the receivers and managers, Mr J. M. Poulton and D. Crawford.
>
> The merchant bank Schroder Darling and Co Ltd is understood to have been an agent to a similarly secured loan, which was also in the process of being retrieved yesterday.
>
> Further repayments or secured funds are likely to occur as the TEA receivership continues.

The Opposition has received serious allegations in relation to many aspects of this matter. Indeed, in the opinion of some persons, withdrawals obviously took place on the basis of privileged and inside knowledge. The Opposition is not in a position to declare valid or invalid the claims that have been made. However, a full and impartial investigation is necessary.

The State Government invested $3 million in the company the day before it collapsed and was successful in obtaining almost immediate withdrawal. No doubt more will come out concerning the Treasurer's activities in that area.

The 1982 annual report of Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd highlights many items, one of which is that several subsidiary companies were established by that company based on real estate transactions; indeed, they were all set up to be licensed land brokers. The first, Templeton's Pty Ltd—formerly Templeton's (Victoria) Pty Ltd—incurred a loss of more that $15 000; Templeton's (Victoria) Pty Ltd, formerly Templeton's Pty Ltd, incurred a loss of more that $17 000, as did a like company.

This is an area in which trustee companies have not traditionally operated. Note 7 of the report states:

> NOTE 7 PRODUCTION PAYMENT AGREEMENT
>
> The subsidiary, Nedals Finance No. One Pty. Ltd. has been formed to act as principal in a production payment agreement with respect to a natural resources project.
>
> This subsidiary has received $46 577 830 which has been used to purchase production payments from a mining company but is only liable to repay this amount plus interest of $3 661 044 provided it receives sufficient funds in the form of production payments from the relevant mining company.
>
> Consequently the production payment asset and corresponding loan liability have not been included in the consolidated balance sheet.

An air of exposure surrounds this $46 million of funds that were, in theory, responsibly managed by this organization. Trustee companies have not traditionally availed themselves of this area. The exposure of more than $46 million having been invested in this area alone must certainly be the subject of an in-depth and far-reaching inquiry.

I refer to share market turnovers. Traditionally, the share market turnovers of stocks in this company have been low. Indeed, the average annual weekly turnover was approximately 1500 shares, going back many years. Remembering that on Thursday 12 May the company was meeting with the Attorney-General's representatives and it was well known to many in the business community and it was the understanding of the Opposition and people generally that there were problems with the company, approximately 5000 shares were traded on that day, 3000 in Melbourne and 2000 in Sydney, and there was a drop of 20 cents in their value on that day.

That same week 20 000 shares were traded in Melbourne and Sydney exchanges, in the previous week 10 000 shares were traded on

both exchanges. When one contrasts that with an average weekly turnover of 1500 shares, it is evident that there was inside knowledge of the problems of the company and that people were aware that the collapse was imminent and used that knowledge to get out before it occurred. Hill Samuel Australia Ltd as I indicated, withdrew $5 million. The State Government withdrew $3 million and there certainly must be questions asked on that matter. Indeed, it may appear that illegal preferences are developing as a result of payments that have been received.

I understand that under the Act, if preference is given even prior to a liquidator having been appointed and if it is found later that there was any illegality—in other words, if people, companies and firms have been able to withdraw money prior to receivers having been appointed—and it is so found at a later time, the court can overturn the payments and they can be retrieved. A requirement in the second schedule of the Act, which was amended in 1981, indicates that the maximum permissible shareholding in this company is 10 400 shares. The company holds considerably in excess of the maximum permissible holding.

The Act is subject to interpretation and the time I have available in the debate will not allow me to pursue the matter; suffice to say that TEA Nominees NSW Ltd had more than 20 000 shares, TEA Nominees Ltd B Account, Collins St Melbourne had more than 16 000 shares, TEA Nominees Ltd C Account, Collins St again, had more than 16 000 shares separately listed, TEA Nominees Ltd of Collins St again, had more than 198 000 shares and TEA Nominees Ltd, Collins St, again a separate listing, had 150 000 shares.

The Opposition is not aware of the complexities of the Act to the degree of giving a legal opinion, which the Attorney-General can get, but questions must be asked about shareholdings of the company and why the company was holding far more shares than that allowed by law to the public.

Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd purchased Goode House for $3·3 million in March 1981 on the basis of selling its existing premises and moving into that building.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member has 2 minutes.

On the motion, by leave, of Mr Maclellan (Berwick), Standing Order No. 59 was suspended to enable the honourable member for Westernport to continue his speech for 10 minutes.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I thank the House. Indeed, in addition to the purchase price paid by the company, it was proposed to spend $2 million on refurbishing. That refurbishing over-ran by $3 million. To my mind, an over-run on a single project of $3 million does not indicate prudent management. The balance sheet shows that there were adequate stand-by funds that were undrawn as at the publication of the last balance sheet, and at the date of the receivership were still undrawn.

These standby funds are supposedly in excess of $20 million. A question that has been raised and must be clarified is: How much were these stand-by funds, who were the providers and in what proportions? The Opposition has received a serious allegation on that question. Two directors resigned. Sir Thomas Webb resigned on 26 April and Mr Howarth Edkins Peterson resigned on Thursday, 12 May, the same day that a decision was made to put this company into receivership. I understand that the court has power to overturn resignations in such circumstances and, as directors have personal liability in relation to the affairs of running a company, and so they should, it is a matter for consideration as to whether their resignations should stand at the present time.

Likewise, Mr Nave who retired on 30 June 1982, and Mr Ramsden, who retired at approximately the same time, would come under question as to their involvement as responsible directors prior to their resignations.

Section 113 of the constitution of the company reads:

> The director shall not sell or dispose of the Company's main undertaking unless such sale or disposal is proved by the Company in general meeting or is subject to ratification by the Company in general meeting.

At present the liquidators are negotiating to sell this company and no authorization has been given by the owners as required in its articles. That obviously is a question that needs to be considered immediately.

Another question that has arisen and on which the Opposition has received serious allegations is: Who are the auditors of Quay Developments Pty Ltd, formerly Londra Investment Pty Ltd, one of the developers of the Sydney Quay Development in which The Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd invested and which, in large measure, was responsible for the situation of this company?

A question along the same lines has arisen and needs to be answered in relation to the City Centre Projects Pty Ltd. Full facts need to be known of those companies' association, if any, with any of the entities involved in the liquidation of The Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd.

Another question that needs to be faced immediately by the Attorney-General is whether it is legal for the grant of probate to be issued in the name of the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd and receiver and manager appointed and who can swear the documents. Under section 15 it is a personal and corporate liability of the directors. In regard to the appointment of a receiver and manager, a point of clarification needs to be made. Yesterday the Premier in his capacity as Attorney-General informed the House that he was aware of the general matters facing this issue and said:

> The facts are that following the March half yearly report of the company, the officers of the Law Department made contact with the trustee companies association.

The association communicated with the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd and the Attorney-General goes on to indicate that no knowledge of problems was transmitted to him as Attorney-General and it was not until the receiver and manager was appointed that he was in receipt of the information that he had sought.

Time will not permit me to canvass all matters raised for the attention of the Opposition. Indeed the Opposition is reluctant to raise all the matters, on the basis that the allegations are so grave and serious that in fairness, we would need to be convinced further before bringing them into this House under privilege. However, if even a percentage of the matters raised for the attention of the Opposition which I have not yet canvassed turn out to be true, the ramifications for people involved in The Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd, both in the management side of it and as shareholders and people on whose behalf this company has been managed—there are many serious questions to be faced up to—the only option that the Opposition can envisage available to the Attorney-General in light of the information that is available and some of which I have brought to the notice of the public today, is that a full judicial inquiry must be undertaken forthwith. The Opposition calls for that to be done.

The matters that have been brought to the attention of the Opposition are grave and serious and involve people at the highest levels of business in this State and nation.

Serious allegations have been levelled against people in government in relation to the $3 million that went in and was taken out with such haste. The Opposition is not in a position to establish the facts relative to the claim but I understand that if the Attorney-General is not at present aware of the facts, he should be, and he should take immediate steps to find out what apparently he is not yet aware of, that there are allegations of such impropriety and seriousness that he has no alternative but to overturn the decision that the National Companies and Securities Commission is the sole body to inquire into this matter and that forthwith a judicial inquiry is established to look at the matter. That is the call of the Opposition.

Trustee companies are in a privileged position. This was in a position that no other public company enjoyed. Indeed, the directors can refuse to transfer shares if they are not happy with the proposed purchaser and, indeed, as a result of that privileged position, the management of the affairs of this company should be above that expected of public companies in general. The public expects and is entitled to more and no less than the best management available. These gentlemen are of the highest standing in the community and I am sure that individually they are very concerned in relation to these matters. I have no doubt that the directors would be happy if a full judicial inquiry were established so that all matters that have been raised can be clarified and dealt with in that manner.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—It seems to me that the background information that the

honourable member for Westernport gave in the early part of his remarks is perhaps the strongest backing that I could have in my counter to the wild assertions made by the Leader of the Opposition about what the Government or I could or should have done in regard to this matter. I believe the information provided by the honourable member indicates the way this occurred and the secrecy that surrounds it, and that no action by anybody prior to the time when the balloon went up could have, short of a total intervention, revealed what was taking place. I am fortified by his remarks in that respect. I hope the honourable member makes clear to the Leader of the Opposition the information that he has and what he said. The Leader of the Opposition would be better advised to think before making wild assertions of the kind that he did on the radio in this city earlier in the week about what might or might not have occurred and who is to blame for the loss of millions by people.

I have noted the remarks of the honourable member for Westernport and I ask him to supply me or Mr Masel, the Chairman of the National Companies and Securities Commission, who is charged with the responsibility of conducting an investigation, with all the information he has, supported by any documents available. At present a receiver has been appointed—not a liquidator—and I make it clear that the receiver is in charge. The Supreme Court appointed the receiver, and Mr Crawford and Mr Poulton have obligations to perform under the general authority and tutelage of the court. The view has been taken and senior counsel's advice on this matter that the National Companies and Securities Commission is the appropriate body to be conducting this investigation.

It may be known by the House that there are moneys involved outside the State, so there is the interstate authority to be considered and this commission has been given a capacity that no other form of inquiry has. I am not suggesting there may not be some necessity for some other form of inquiry into matters that are not within the province of the National Companies and Securities Commission.

It could be an inquiry into company aspects of the operation. If there are any other aspects that fall outside the power and authority of that body, consideration will be given to extending the inquiry.

The last thing I wish to say is, as indicated before, that these matters are in the hands of the receivers, subject to the authority of the court. When the receiver was appointed on 13 May, the Government was assured, just as others had been assured—namely, Mr Rawson and his organization—that the only apparent difficulties were in respect of TEA non-trustee activities. It would now appear, as the receivers delve deeper, that there have been breaches of the law by the company in relation to the handling of money which had been placed with that company, for investment in a manner authorized by the relevant trustee legislation. It would appear that some people who expected to be protected by those restrictions in the legislation have been placed at risk and the National Companies and Securities Commission has been asked to investigate that aspect and report on any losses that might occur from that.

It should also be said that a major question raised by the issue is whether or not it is appropriate for trustee companies to operate outside their traditional sphere of activity. I know some companies have been doing so for some years, for more than ten years. The position has been considered on a number of occasions, and a decision has been reached, rightly or wrongly, on a number of occasions that there should not be any interference.

The Government believes it should now be considering whether it is appropriate for those companies, in that situation, to get involved in the general property market, because that is where the difficulties seem to have occurred. The question of the extent of disclosure that should take place to people who deal with trustee companies has also been raised. Questions have been raised on the way in which those peoples' funds would be invested. If a company intended to run a cash management account on the side, as this company did, I point out that cash management accounts, in any operation, are only as good as the people who operate them. There is no getting away from that. That is a fact of the matter and nobody can suggest otherwise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a community, they will try to come to grips with the problem. Salinity occurs in two forms, namely, on irrigated land and on dry land. Salinity in irrigation areas is being overcome with the introduction of new technology including laser grading, new land forming methods, improved layouts and better drainage, land form and re-use schemes. The Government has recognized the problem and allocated $470 000 for the salinity loans programme. The funds this year are fully committed and the National Party would like to see $1·5 million allocated to the salinity loan programme each year for the next three years. This would allow irrigated areas affected by salinity the opportunity of correcting a huge problem area. By so doing, there will be increased production more food and less salt. Farming regions are in business for the production of food and fodder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

That is a fair comment. I note that the honourable member for Doncaster is straining at the leash. I know he is in the slips ready to go, and I will make sure he has plenty of time to make a contribution. Tobacco is the soft option. I would like to see a Government campaign against alcohol abuse with the help of the same advertising company. Many of the gimmicks used were good. Instead of "the great smoke-out", we could have a campaign for "the great dry-out". There are double standards in the community and tobacco has been the easy target. It has been cleverly painted into the corner and it has become a matter of status to say, "I am a reformed smoker. I used to smoke, but I have kicked the habit and I feel terrific".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Problems directly related to alcohol, including industrial accidents, absenteeism and early retirement, cost the economy in this country $1 billion a year. Alcohol is involved in one in two road deaths, one in four injuries, three in four single vehicle deaths, one in five drownings, one in five hospitals admissions result from the adverse effects of alcohol and two in every five divorces are directly related to alcohol-induced problems. It has been stated that almost three- quarters of the men who have committed a violent crime had been drinking before they committed the crime. Alcohol is involved in one in every five cases of child-bashing.

The problem of alcohol abuse is ofmammoth proportions and unfortunately is growing. Last week-end the road toll of eleven deaths shocked and horrified the community—everyone said "Wasn't it terrible!" According to police spokesmen, the reason was the twin evils of speed and alcohol. It is a problem of enormous proportions and, unfortunately, Governments are not addressing themselves to the social evil that is in our midst.

I do not know whether honourable members have seen the report on crime recently prepared by Dr Bartholomew, the psychiatrist at Pentridge Prison. A study of 274 Pentridge prisoners has shown that more than 90 per cent were affected by alcohol or drugs about the time of committing their offences. The study conducted by the psychiatrist superintendent, Dr Bartholomew, covered crimes ranging from murder, rape and burglary to minor traffic offences. Alcohol was by far the biggest influence; only 35 of the prisoners were involved with drugs.

Something that has obscured the issue is the fact that drugs are the great bogey. Heroin, LSD, cocaine and the rest have grabbed the headlines. The figures shown in the study prove that the greatest bogey regarding offences committed by the inmates of Pentridge Prison was the drug of alcohol. In the work place, one in three industrial accidents in this country can be attributed to the misuse of alcohol and costs $100 million a year. Australia has the second biggest industrial accident rate in the western world.

One must return to the most important aspect, that is, alcohol abuse among young people. I am sure the electorate of Noble Park is no different from any other electorate in the State and the problems of youth and drink are horrendous.

The Alcohol Drug and Forensic Branch of the Health Commission states that 87 per cent of children aged between twelve and sixteen years of age drink regularly, with most of these children being at the upper end of the age group. Melbourne authorities claim that around 80 per cent of the city's under 18-year-olds regularly drink in hotels and about 8 per cent come under the label of "teenage alcoholics". In New South Wales, 90 per cent of children aged between twelve and sixteen years of age claim to drink once a week and 20 per cent of them claim to be drunk twice a week.

Mr B. J. Evans—They will have more opportunity on Sundays now!

Mr NORRIS—You are absolutely right. We will have to wait to see the statistics, but that is a consideration.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member for Noble Park will ignore interjections.

Mr NORRIS—Statistics show that marijuana and the things we used to be concerned about are on the wane with a lot of the younger kids. Alcohol is the attraction because the new Aussie image is the Ocker loud-mouth yob. It does not matter whether one goes to the football or a rock concert, one's enjoyment is usually destroyed by drunken louts. Unfortunately it is this aggressive element that is prevalent among the young.

The attraction of alcohol is that it is easily obtained. I have never tried marijuana but I believe it makes one passive and one is inclined to sit in a corner and contemplate one's navel. With alcohol, it is aggression—they are one of the boys or girls. The growing incidence of alcohol abuse among teenage girls is also horrendous.

Without labouring the point, I think we should give the lead in Parliament to a concerted campaign aimed at youngsters. As I stated earlier, I would like to see a Life: Be In It campaign aimed at younger people with well-known personalities, whether they be from the sporting arena or entertainment—who do not drink and who are teetotal—saying, "Look, I am successful. I am popular. I do not have to have grog to be successful or popular."

I am sure members of the National Party are just as aware as members of the Labor Party of the social pressure to drink at social functions. I admit that I am a teetotaller. The pressure is great—"Come on, have a grog, is there something wrong with you?" When a person is sixteen-years-old, the pressure is of great magnitude. If those kids could hone in on someone they admire and who does not drink, it would be a great service to the youngsters who want to try to kick the habit.

If we do have a "Dry-out" day, this Parliament could set an example by closing the Parliamentary bar.

That would be a magnificent gesture above and beyond the call of duty of many honourable members! Members of Parliament are community leaders. Alcohol is a problem of horrendous proportions, and the problem is growing.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister of Health on the "No Buts" campaign, but I urge him now to tackle the great evil, namely, the abuse of alcohol in society and to mount a genuine campaign led by the closure of the Member's Bar in the Parliamentary refreshment rooms and followed by a "Life: Be In It, But Without Grog" campaign aimed at young persons in the community. That campaign could have a beneficial effect on preventing young persons becoming locked into the grog syndrome. If a young person is locked into the grog syndrome either he or she is behind the eight ball for the rest of their lives.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I congratulate the contribution made to the debate by the honourable member for Noble Park. The honourable member reminds me of my rechabite brethren, with whom I was associated in Northcote 35 years ago. That person, the secretary, the late Bill Findlay, as a councillor of the Northcote City Council ran the council with a dry cupboard.

I congratulate the honourable member for Swan Hill on his contribution to the debate. I wish him well. The honourable member may be interested to know that I was born in the Swan Hill District Hospital and educated at Swan Hill High School: Won a scholarship to the University of Melbourne and went to board in Northcote. My father was one of the founders of the Country Party, now the National Party in the Swan Hill electorate. He was the first secretary of the Piangle West farmer's Union and he was a member of the Country Party until the day he died.

On 25 May 1982 in the House, I said that the Bally Corporation, which supplies most of the slot machines for gambling clubs throughout the world, had its front companies pay $30 000 into the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party and $40 000 into a research fund for the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party I also said that four parcels of 200 $50 notes were passed to people whom it was considered would help speed up the legalization of poker machines in Victoria.

On 16 March this year, at the Sydney Court of Petty Sessions, Detective Sergeant L. T. Hanrahan of the New South Wales Police Task Force gave details of an interview with Leonard Hastings Ainsworth, 56 years of age, who I believe is Cy Redds representative for the Bally Corporation in this country and a declared Mafia figure in the United States of America. Ainsworth said that he and Edward Philip Vibert, 44 years of age, an operator of a front organization seeking to have poker machines introduced into Victoria and Queensland, had paid $40 000 in four lots of $10 000—exactly the same figure I spoke about—to the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party He named the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation as the intermediary—a claim that the Minister vehemently denies, but nevertheless, Ainsworth made the claim under oath.

Ainsworth claims that he holds receipts issued by the Australian National Opinion Polls, which is the official pollster for the Australian Labor Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! Would the honourable gentleman be kind enough to indicate to the Chair whether or not he is quoting from either a letter or handwritten notes?

Mr WILLIAMS—I am quoting from handwritten notes. I charge Australian National Opinion Polls with issuing bogus receipts on 6 January 1982, 1 March 1982, 2 April 1982 and 19 April 1982. It is interesting to note that, like all good contracts the fourth payment was withheld until after the last State election campaign. That is most interesting. However, there was

an endeavour to cover up evidence of the payment of the four parcels of money.

It is incredible to read the allegation published in the *Sunday Mirror*. I refer to the *Sunday Mirror* of 15 May 1983 and an article which describes how the Labor Party runs its money laundering through David Combe. The article states:

> David Combe, the former Federal ALP secretary who became the Soviet's favourite lobbyist, was also the link man to the ALP for the Mafia tainted Ainsworth poker machines organisation.

I challenge the Australian Labor Party to deny that David Combe is the public relations consultant and lobbyist for the Ainsworth organization. It has yet to be proven that he was a lobbyist for the Russians, but, according to this newspaper article, it is fascinating that a person who is the subject of a Royal Commission into alleged KGB operations in this country, is the gentleman who has been the subject of these hearings.

Valery Ivanov has been charged with supporting David Combe, the former Federal Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, in facilitating activities for the laundering of money and the supply of confidential information to the Russians—I might add, according to my informants—mainly about political and commercial matters.

No allegation has been made that David Combe has breached security. Therefore, a number of Australian Labor Party members would probably say, despite what the Prime Minister has done to David Combe, that he is really not guilty of any serious breaches of national security. However, I have been informed that Ainsworth Industries and Mr Rod Cameron are close friends of David Combe and that Rod Cameron of Australian National Opinion Polls has provided the vehicle for laundering payments of $200 000 to Australian Labor Party organizations and to trade unions.

Mr Walsh—Cash or cheque?

Mr WILLIAMS—I would think mainly cash. David Combe was also associated with William "Bagdhad Bill" Hartley, who obtained was about to obtain $500 000 from the Irakis for payment into the 1975 Federal election campaign. The newspaper article I have referred to points out that David Combe is currently at the centre of Australia's greatest security scandal in 30 years. A Royal Commission has been established to investigate the relationship between David Combe and the expelled Soviet KGB agent, Valery Ivanov.

There is an extraordinary amount of detail contained in this newspaper article on the relationships between Cameron, Ivanov and Combe. It is on the public record that Combe and Ivanov spoke together at a meeting of the Soviet Friendship Society in Melbourne on 3 April, and it appears that this is how the matter leaked out to other people and led to the split in the partnership of David Combe and his lobbying activities.

Other leading lobbyists include Mr Farmer, who was the brains behind Mr Hawke and who coined the famous statement that there was no place to put money under the bed because the Reds were already there. That statement has bounced back on the Australian Labor Party. How ironic it is that Farmer should have coined that expression because Farmer is tied up with these characters who are very much part of the Reds under a very big bed.

I draw the attention of the House to an article by the labour correspondent of the *Australian*, Paul Ellercamp. The article is headed, "Union boss tells of 'cash from Russians' " and it claims that a Victorian trade union leader, Mr Jim Paterson, Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen, sent an open letter, dated February 16, 1983, to his rank and file members alleging that certain members of the union are supported by money injected by the Soviet Embassy in Canberra.

He said that these people were hell-bent on using the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen to fund and support the promotion of Soviet-line Communist propaganda in Australia. He said that they are supported by what Australian Labor Party-supporting union officials call "Moscow Gold" money, injected into the Socialist Party of Australia by the Soviet Embassy in Canberra.

Mr Gavin—What about the Labor Party?

Mr WILLIAMS—I am talking about the communist cell of the Labor Party. The Socialist Party of Australia broke away from the Communist Party in 1971 to infiltrate the Labor Party, and I make no apology for saying that. There are KGB agents within

the Labor Party in Victoria—one was admitted recently. He has a number of delegates in this House. Members of the Labor Party know who I am talking about. It is not "Red George", but "Red John". I have given the clue and members of the Labor Party know who "Red John" is.

Mr Harrowfield—Go outside Parliament and name him.

Mr WILLIAMS—If the Labor Party wants to put me to the high jump, I will appear before the Privileges Committee.

It is sad that the provision of valuable economic and political information can only be funded by people associated with massage parlours. It is an absolute public scandal that three weeks passed before the so-called reputable newspapers of this State gave any information about the activities of David Combe and Ainsworth. The publication of the hearing in Sydney was delayed for that period. According to one source, David Combe, the top Labor man at the centre of the Canberra–Soviet spy scandal, used his influence to prevent publication of allegations against a mafia-tainted company.

I have detailed the allegations of the payment of large sums of money to the Labor Party through a money laundry set up by Mr Combe and Labor Party pollster, Rod Cameron. It is beyond belief that Combe can exercise influence on Sydney daily newspapers. It is alleged that he telephoned an editor of the John Fairfax press organization in Sydney and requested that reports of allegations to be made against Ainsworth Consolidated Industries Pty Ltd, Mr Vibert and others, associated with improper practices regarding poker machines and the licencing of them in Victoria and Queensland not be published. Ainsworth Consolidated Industries Pty Ltd and Mr Vibert were standing trial for conspiracy to obtain financial gain through deception and, through illegal means, monopolizing the manufacture of poker machines in Australia, the principal witness before the court was Sergeant Hanrahan of the New South Wales Police Task Force.

It is a serious matter that the only way honourable members can get true information to the House is through underground newspaper journalists. I challenge any member of the Australian Labor Party, including the honourable member for Sunshine, to get in touch with their mates in the Socialist left and ask them to obtain the latest issue of *Horse Talk*. That publication makes the most extraordinary allegations against Labor members of the New South Wales Parliament, including the Premier Mr Wran.

Mr Fogarty—We are in Victoria.

Mr WILLIAMS—I wish Victoria were free from the tainted influence of New South Wales, but it is obvious that the centre unity mob in New South Wales has its tentacles out in Victoria. I hate to think what would happen to this country but for the Socialist left and the participants. If they can keep the centre unity mob at bay, they will do this country a great service.

It is scandalous that information must be leaked to the underground press regarding New South Wales police information. One journal states that New South Wales police believe that at least $100 000 has already been passed by the Ainsworth organization to political figures in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. According to the claim in the journal, the Ainsworth organization budgeted for $500 000 to be allocated for Victoria to legalize poker machines. Ainsworth's money went to the Labor Party for use in the election campaign which culminated in Mr Cain's landslide victory of 3 April.

I have always regarded John Cain as an honest man with the same puritanical ideas as myself. That is why he is so successful in the eastern suburbs. On or about 10 May last year, Mr Cain told David Hurst of the *Australian*, and other journalists, that if there was the slightest suggestion of any criminal involvement with the licencing of poker machines in Victoria, they would not be introduced.

A number of my colleagues have persistently asked questions in this House as to why the Premier will not give a categorical statement? Why must the Government waste taxpayers money on an inquiry into poker machines. The evidence is there for all to see in the file of the police task force in New South Wales and the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence in Victoria. Ample information is filed showing that the American mafia is running poker machines in Sydney and will do so if they are introduced in Victoria.

Why will not the Premier come clean? He has knocked out the casino because of the reports of Mr Connor which are based mainly on secret evidence given by members of the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence. Why is that evidence not good enough for the Premier of Victoria to stop the poker machine inquiry and the rampant waste of public money? The Premier stated that if there was any evidence available of organized crime being associated with poker machines, they would not be introduced in Victoria.

I challenge the Premier to contact the Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria, either today or tomorrow, and ask him to make available to him the files on Mafia involvement in poker machines, so that this waste of public funds in Victoria can be stopped. I hope there is not more behind this than appears on the surface, but I have never known the present Premier of Victoria to be so evasive in giving a direct answer, which could give rest once and for all to my suspicions that there is something very rotten in Victoria when it comes to poker machines.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—At the outset I extend my congratulations to the honourable member for Swan Hill on the occasion of his maiden speech in this Parliament, and I suggest, unlike a number of other honourable members in this place, that his maiden speech will not be the only speech that he makes. I can promise you, Mr Speaker, and other members of the House, that we will be hearing a lot more from the honourable member for Swan Hill in the near future. I agree that he has competition from members of the corner party in their willingness to get up in the House and express their points of view, something which is singularly lacking in the other political parties in this House.

It is a most important occasion for members of the National Party that the seat of Swan Hill has returned to the representation that it truly deserves. The electorate of Swan Hill has been a strong point of National Party support ever since the inception of the party, and, indeed, it has one of the largest enrolments of financial members of the National Party of any electorate throughout Victoria. Therefore, it is an electorate that truly belongs to this party. I have no doubt that it will be well and truly represented in this House by the present incumbent for many years to come.

I must express my astonishment at the comments of the honourable member for Noble Park; perhaps not so much at his comments, because he has made known the views that he holds on the use of alcohol and I agree very much with him. However, his views are inconsistent with his actions in this House yesterday, when he was given an opportunity to put his view into effect by voting the way he talks. That is what he has been put into Parliament for, to express his view not only by his tongue but by his vote as well. He was given ample opportunity yesterday to vote against the propositions being put forward by the Government to extend the availability of alcohol, and to make it cheaper to the young people in the community. It is the height of hypocrisy for a person of the standing of the honourable member for Noble Park in the community, to vote exactly opposite to the principle that he advocated this morning. I suggest to the honourable member that before he pontificates about his views, which he holds seriously, he should think seriously about the way he votes.

If a member does not vote according to his views, he does not have a conscience and is not doing his job in this House. There are far too many people in this House who do not vote according to their conscience, and the honourable member for Noble Park, by his speech in this House this morning, has displayed that he has got no conscience. I have a lot of respect for the honourable member, but if he does not vote according to his conscience, no matter how high his ideals, the young people of the community will not respect him, I hope the young people of the community will respect the people who vote the way they see is in the best interests of the community, and not just talk about it.

Mr Norris—I will have a discussion about it later on.

Mr B. J. EVANS—I will be happy to talk with the honourable member because I have a great respect for his opinions. I hope he will put those opinions into practice as members of my party endeavour to do.

In this grievance debate I wish to allude to a question that I asked the Premier this morning when I referred to a geographical feature in this State. I thought every citizen who went to primary school in Victoria was familiar with it, the Mitchell River silt jetties. As a child going to primary school, that featured in all the geography books, and so far as I know, it still is featured in the geography books. The person responsible for this State, who is supposed to know what goes on in this State, did not even know that these jetties existed. I suggest that he ought to take twelve months' leave of absence and do a tour of the State to find out what he is supposed to be governing. He should get around and find out what is beyond 25 miles of the General Post Office. There is a lot more country out there for which he is responsible. The Premier has been elected to look after all of this State, not just the City of Melbourne, and it is time that he found out what is out there. I am astonished that the Premier should admit that he did not even know these jetties existed. I wonder how many other honourable members do not know of the Mitchell River silt jetties. Some of them probably do not even know where the Gippsland Lakes are.

The point I wish to make during the course of this debate is that the question I asked of the Premier this morning directed attention to a unique geographical feature in Victoria. The silt jetties on the Mitchell River have been recognized for 100 years as being unique in the world, and they are in the process of seriously deteriorating. I have directed this to the attention of successive Governments over a considerable period.

The first responsibility of the Government in this State is to look after the heritage of the people of Victoria, but the Government in its wisdom has decided it is going to buy into the argument that is going on between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Tasmania on whether a dam should be built on the Franklin River. This particular question has been very intricate. I always understood, when a matter is being thrashed out before the High Court, that it was the responsibility of the court to make decisions on the facts as presented to that court.

Will the Minister of Public Works explain whether the facts will be changed by the Victorian Government intervening? What difference will it make to the outcome of the case if the Victorian Government, the New South Wales Government or the West Australian Government are involved? I can only come to the conclusion that with the various States becoming involved and becoming parties to this court action it will not be decided on the facts, but on political considerations. Can any logical person explain how the facts will be changed by Victoria becoming involved in this action?

Mr Simpson—You said the High Court will make a political decision.

Mr B. J. EVANS—I said that is the only possible conclusion that can be drawn if the State of Victoria decides that it must be involved. I have never been involved in legal action or court action——

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! The honourable member should not take notice of unruly interjections.

Mr B. J. EVANS—I can understand your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker. The interjections are most disorderly. The ordinary man in the street is asking himself what purpose is served by Victoria spending a considerable amount of money to engage counsel to appear before the High Court of Australia on an issue that does not concern it.

The answer given to a question by the Premier this morning indicates that he does not even know about the problem affecting the heritage of this State. Surely his first responsibility is to be concerned with what is happening in his own State. How does he know what has happened in the south west of Tasmania? Has he sent the Victoria Police to the area, like the Commonwealth has sent spy planes to see what is happening? Where does he get his information on what to base an argument that Victoria has any interest in these questions? Although the Premier cries poor mouth saying that he does not have money for anything important in this State, he can still find thousands of dollars to pay for legal representation before the High Court on a matter that is none of his business. If the Commonwealth Government is not in a position to unearth all the facts and discover all the legal points involved, that is a problem for the Commonwealth Government; it is not a problem for

the State Government. What does the State believe it can contribute to this issue. It is a scandalous waste of money for the State Government to involve itself in this issue. The citizens of Victoria would consider it more responsible of the Government if that amount of money was diverted to the protection of part of Victoria's precious heritage, which I indicated in my question to the Premier.

I refer to the Gippsland Lakes. I had occasion to write to the Minister of Public Works recently. His attention level fluctuates sometimes from full attention on what is happening but at other times one cannot get his attention for love or money. Recently, I tried to direct his attention to the problems of erosion around the Gippsland Lakes. The particular issue concerned erosion around the fringes of Lake Wellington which threatens the area used by the Marlay Point Yacht Club. I was astounded and dismayed by the reply I received from the Minister indicating that the Government was not interested in protecting the foreshores of the Gippsland Lakes from erosion unless some structure was threatened. I regret I do not have the Minister's letter with me to quote him precisely. I think he would agree that the Government was not particularly interested in the protection of the Gippsland Lakes foreshore from erosion unless some structural work was endangered. The Government had priorities and if it happened to be private land being eroded after the foreshore were completely washed away, the adjoining land owner would have to pay half the costs. The Minister did not put it in those terms, but he expected local contributions to meet half the cost of the erosion.

It is low value land and erosion takes place slowly. A landowner would probably not lose as much land in his lifetime to make it worth while spending the amount of money that would be necessary to meet half the cost of the foreshore protection works. That means that the Government washes its hands from landowners and, slowly, and surely and inevitably the Gippsland Lakes foreshore will continue to erode. On the occasion when I mentioned the issue to the Minister, the main point I was making was that there is a tremendous potential benefit for the State, apart from the protection of the foreshore area by the construction of a barrier of some type across the Gippsland Lakes, probably essentially somewhere in the region of Metung. A large volume of water will create a fresh water storage. By this process, a natural cycle of events that occurred before the Gippsland Lakes were permanently connected to the sea by an entrance, could be recreated. Prior to that entrance being constructed about 100 years ago, the cycle of events was that the lakes would be periodically sealed off from the sea during dry weather and slowly the level of the lake would build up until a storm or flood caused a breakout of the lakes into the sea and the channel opened again. That is the regime followed by almost every inlet, all along the east Gippsland coast, and only in recent weeks has Lake Tyers, adjoining the Gippsland Lakes broken out after three years.

The proposal is worthy of serious investigation. I was disappointed with the Minister's response to my request. If the Gippsland Lakes, and particularly the silt jetties of the lakes, are to be preserved for future generations, as a unique geographical feature, the only way to do that is to try to return the Gippsland Lakes to the natural cycle of fresh and saline water that existed before man intervened. This can be done by man-made means. In the process, a much better and improved asset will be created for all people in Victoria. I suggest the State Government would be far better advised to be concerned about Victoria's heritage rather than worrying about the heritage of Tasmania.

The question was agreed to.

The sitting was suspended at 1 *p.m. until* 2.3 *p.m.*

ELECTORAL COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 4, line 11, omit "all Court Houses" and insert "the municipal office of every municipality within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1958".

2. Clause 6, page 2, lines 33 and 34, omit "may be declared by proclamation of the Governor in Council published in the *Government Gazette*" and insert "shall be published in the *Government Gazette* by the Chief Electoral Officer".

3. Clause 6, page 2, line 38, omit "proclaimed" and insert "published".

4. Clause 6, page 3, lines 5 and 6, omit "may be declared by proclamation of the Governor in Council published in the *Government Gazette*" and insert "shall be published by the *Government Gazette* by the Chief Electoral Officer".

5. Clause 6, page 3, line 9, omit "proclaimed" and insert "published".

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Property and Services)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

They arise from discussions between the Honourable Alan Hunt, the Honourable William Baxter, the Minister for Industrial Affairs and myself. It was agreed that they would improve the Bill and it was necessary to overcome a misunderstanding concerning clause 6, which substitutes a new section 14 in the principal Act. That proposed new section included the word "may", and concern was expressed that that proclamation may not actually take place.

The Bill, as drafted, provided that the maps of the boundaries of each proposed electoral province shall be exhibited at all court houses in the proposed electoral province. The Council's first amendment provides for the use of the municipal offices rather than court houses, as that arrangement will be more helpful to the community. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicates by interjection, some court houses have—for very sensible reasons—been closed. Even those that remain open in country areas are not as accessible as municipal offices, so it was decided to accept the alternative of municipal offices.

The second amendment omits from clause 6 the words "may be declared by proclamation of the Governor in Council published in the *Government Gazette*" and inserts in lieu thereof, "shall be published in the *Government Gazette* by the Chief Electoral Officer". This amendment removes any concern about whether the word used should be "may" or "shall". The Bill originally used the word "may" because Parliament cannot direct the Crown, and the amendment removes any suggestion of political interference with the mechanism of electoral redistribution.

The third amendment removes the word "proclaimed" and inserts the word "published". The fourth is identical with the second, and the fifth amendment is identical with the third.

I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The amendments are responsible. I understand that members of the National Party in the other place have made comments on the first amendment. It was originally intended that maps of electoral provinces be exhibited at all court houses but, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out by interjection, many court houses have been closed, so there is little point in including in the Bill a provision that maps be exhibited at court houses.

Municipal offices are the natural and logical centres at which to display those maps.

In the other place, the Leader of the Opposition pointed out that commissioners should be independent and that the issuing of the statement of the commissioners should be taken away from the political sphere. The second amendment is to ensure that the material shall not now be declared by proclamation of the Governor in Council but that it should be declared by the Chief Electoral Officer. The amendment is necessary to enshrine in the legislative measure the independence of the commissioners.

This amendment particularly highlights the importance of the role of the Upper House. The Labor Party Government is forever talking about the need to abolish the Upper House. However, when legislative measures are passed through the Legislative Assembly the Legislative Council has the important role of reviewing them, and this measure is an obvious example of the need for the Upper House.

The Opposition agrees with the amendments and reiterates its belief in the importance of a review of the legislative measures that are passed through the Legislative Assembly to the Legislative Council.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The National Party supports the amendments. I commend the Minister for Property and Services for entering into discussions with representatives of the other two parties from the other place. There has been very good co-operation from some Ministers and I suggest that discussions and conferences on legislative measures should be held as often as possible.

I support the remarks of the honourable member for Midlands on the importance of the role of the Upper House. Sensible discussions between the three parties have resulted in minor but good amendments being made to a Bill that has been passed through this House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Perhaps it is a difference of opinion or a difference in emphasis, but I do not believe the amendments are minor, or that they are adequately explained in terms of "may" and "shall". There is something fundamental which, when the Bill went through the Legislative Assembly to another place, this House overlooked.

It overlooked the fact that if there was in government a Government which for whatever reasons decided not to proceed with the redistribution determined by the commissioners, which was the consensus reached on an earlier Bill then by not taking it to the Governor in Council and not proclaiming it, it would not take effect. This is fundamental, and the House is dealing with fundamental law.

The House is now curing the possibility that a Government could decide not to put it before the Governor in Council and therefore not to accept and implement the recommendation of the commissioners. It is not adequately described however in terms of curing a "may" with a "shall". I acknowledge that the Minister did not say it but it is fundamental to the accord reached between the three parties that there was to be no political or Parliamentary option left once the commissioners had done their work, and that is what the amendment is expressing. I shall not refer again to court houses because I have stated my views on those.

The motion was agreed to.

SUPPLY (1983–84, No. 1) BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 4) on the motion of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The National Party supports the Bill. The amount is large—$376 million or thereabouts. It gives Supply to the Government for the first five months of the next financial year. It is similar to proposed legislation that always comes before the House in the autumn sessional period and it is a necessary part of government. It is a necessary machinery matter for the Government to be able to carry on its activities until Parliament considers the Budget, which is usually brought down in September of each year.

The National Party supports its Liberal Party colleagues in automatically approving the Bill because the Government has a mandate to govern. I make the point that the Government has a mandate to govern and therefore must have Supply and, without labouring the point, I make the distinction that the Government has a mandate to govern but no Government ever has a mandate to do everthing that it has stated in its policy speeches.

The Government came into power through a negative action not because the people of Victoria wanted a Labor Party Government but because they wanted a change. The reasons for people wanting a change have been well and truly discussed in a number of places and I shall not reiterate them. However, I draw the distinction between a mandate to govern and a mandate to pass whatever legislative measures a Government wants.

Traditionally, the Supply debate gives honourable members an opportunity of taking an over-view of the financial affairs of Victoria. It is common knowledge and generally accepted in the business community and Government circles throughout Australia that the Victorian Government is a big taxing government and a big spending government. The figures in the Bill support this. For the benefit of the Minister of Public Works, who is interjecting, I repeat that the Government is big on tax and big on spending.

It is an interesting fact of life that the Government inherited the Treasury benches of Victoria in good order and condition. Great play has been made that the Government inherited a bankrupt State, but that is a lot of rubbish. The financial affairs, despite a difficult time, were looked after well by the former Government. Although it appeared in March 1982 that at the end of June there would be a deficit, that did not take place. I make the point, which is borne out by the fact and with which the Treasurer will agree, that if one examined the figures at the end of March 1982 it would

have appeared that Victoria would have faced a much bigger deficit at the end of June than that which the Treasurer believes and which I believe. I am still concerned at what the deficit might be at the end of June but, for various reasons, the financial position of the Government in this State tends to improve between 31 March and 30 June.

It happened last year to a considerable extent and I sincerely hope it happens this year because, if it does not, we will be in dire financial straits. The former Opposition made great play about it before the last election and the same view has been put forward by a different Opposition in recent times. It had more reason to put its case forward. Enough has been said. At the end of June there will be a substantial deficit but it will not be as bad as it was at the end of March 1983.

A few principles in the financial affairs of this State should be mentioned. The new major tax that was introduced by the Labor Government was the financial institutions duty. It was estimated that in the first six months of this year it would bring in about $80 million net. It is now estimated that that tax will bring in $30 million less—a drop from $80 million to $50 million.

This is a serious situation for any Government and the reason why the Government will obtain $30 million less is the inefficiency and incompetence of the Government and those advising it. The Bill was not introduced as early as it should have been. It was announced in principle very soon after this Government came to power and it was not introduced into the Parliament until late in the spring sessional period. I appreciate that the Treasurer had real problems in drafting the Bill. He was breaking new ground to some extent, but nevertheless the weeks that were lost in this department cost this State dearly.

In addition, the Treasurer and his advisers underestimated the problems of doing all the paper work and getting the tax operative early in 1983. The Government was very critical of the former Government, but here was a good example of a new tax which, because of the ineptitude of both the Government and its senior advisers, lost this State $20 million or $22 million of the $30 million.

There are two other reasons. One is that the Opposition and the National Party persuaded the Government to allow some concessions to certain charitable institutions, educational institutions and local government. A little was lost because of those concessions. However, the most serious loss to this State was caused by the downturn in the economy and perhaps some loss—I do not know the full extent of it—because some people have been able to take action, which is perfectly legal, to avoid paying the full financial institutions duty, by doing some of their operations interstate. This State will never see the $30 million planned in the Budget.

In the first week of May the Treasurer said that he was examining a number of ways to reduce the extent of the deficit. At the time he was questioned as to what the number of ways really meant, and perhaps during this debate would be a suitable time for the honourable gentleman to advise the House what steps he is taking to reduce the serious deficit which faces Victoria. A financial statement issued at the end of March showed the deficit at approximately $227 million, but the estimated deficit for the end of June is $170 million. I hope the deficit is no worse than that because it means that not only will there be less money to be spent next year but also that we will have to try to balance our Budget next year by either much greater taxes or severe pruning of our expenses.

During this financial year the Government has increased taxes by approximately 28 per cent. It is the largest increase in taxes of any State in Australia. Earlier I mentioned that this is a big taxing Government, and that is an example. One of its big spending efforts after the promises made before the last State election was an increase of 29 per cent in salaries in the Educational Department. The teachers' vote was bought, and it cost this Government dearly.

The Treasurer was also faced, through no direct fault of his own, with a falling off in revenue from Tattersall's, stamp duty, land sales and pay-roll tax. All three of those declines must be attributed to the slowing down in the economy of the State. The job of this Government is to stimulate the private sector because that is the only permanent way in which new jobs and new wealth will be created. That message came through

clearly from the Chamber of Manufactures seminar a few weeks ago—that it is a waste of money to create short term Government jobs. If Victoria is to get out of the doldrums that it is in at present, private industry must be encouraged and stimulated, and I commend that to the Treasurer.

Over the years, in the various States and Federally, the Labor Party has earned a reputation of being a poor money manager. The present indications are that, because of the high spending rate of this Government, we are following the path of Neville Wran in New South Wales who has got that State into a serious financial position. It is my aim to look after the interests of Victoria and I want the Treasurer to understand that it will give me no joy to see a big deficit at the end of June 1983. I would like to see this State in a sound financial position and I would like the Labor Party to manage the State well.

The new Government is only a short way down the track in its term of office. Whether it will be its last term of office time will tell. I have a high personal regard for the Treasurer. He is a man of integrity who, I am sure, will put the interests of the State before the benefits of the party. I call on him and other members of the Government to ensure that the deficit is reined in as best it can be for the rest of this financial year and that the Budget for 1983–84 will balance itself by June 1984.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill the House is now considering, the Supply (1983–84, No. 1) Bill, has the purpose of providing for the ordinary expenditure requirements of Government departments from the Current Account of the Consolidated Fund for the first five months of the next financial year. Supply Bills provide honourable members with a regular opportunity of reviewing the state of the Victorian economy, the condition of the Government's finances and the economic and financial outlook for the ensuing financial year.

In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer commented on these matters and I want to take up some of the points that the Treasurer made before turning to the details of the Bill. In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer referred to his intention to provide:

> More complete information on the financial business of this State.

He referred to his monthly statements of financial transactions, or the Niemyer statements, as they are sometimes called. The Treasurer has often claimed in this place and elsewhere that his monthly statements are more informative than those provided by the previous Government. Indeed, this point of the Treasurer has been widely believed, especially by those on the back benches. However, when one examines the monthly statements in detail, one finds that in many cases they conceal more than they reveal. This is particularly so when one compares these statements with those that were issued by the previous Government. By interjection, the Treasurer has just implied that the former Government did not have an accompanying explanatory text. I agree with that and perhaps it should have provided such text, but nevertheless, the statements that were provided by the former Government on a monthly basis provided a lot more detail than has been provided by the Treasurer.

In the statements issued by the current Treasurer, we find that almost 65 per cent of the total expenditure on the Current Account is classified as "Other". This obviously tells honourable members absolutely nothing about trends in expenditure in particular items. In contrast, the monthly statements issued by the former Government—and I urge honourable members to examine copies of the statements which are on record in the Library and which were issued to the Library regularly—provided a more detailed breakdown of expenditure. Perhaps the reason that the statements of the former Government did not obtain the dominance and the attention that those of the present Treasurer have is that, in our days, the accounting procedures were much more factual and better orientated so that it never ran up the sorts of deficits that the current Government is doing.

The analysis contained in the Treasurer's monthly statements is also much less detailed than those issued by his Federal colleagues. The monthly statements of the Federal Government provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure according to the

functional classification used in the Commonwealth Budget documents, so that honourable members and the public can compare trends in expenditure in particular areas of spending with the Budget Estimates.

On the revenue side of the Treasurer's monthly statements, one major deficiency is the failure to break down the item "Miscellaneous Receipts". This includes Government taxes on the various statutory authorities, the energy consumption levy and so on. Yet it is impossible to tell from these monthly statements how revenue collections are standing up as opposed to the Budget Estimates. Another problem associated with these statements is that they are often, if not always, late. It is now almost the end of May, and honourable members are still waiting on the monthly statement for April. If the Government intends to crow about providing information on the state of public finances—and thus far I think the public has been sold a pup in this regard—it should provide for the statements to be issued on a more timely basis.

In the past, those statements have not been made available on a monthly basis but five or six weeks later—they were always late. In answer to the interjection of the Treasurer, we did the best we could in terms of the distribution of the previous Government's documents. I understand they were distributed evenly and widely. They were not picked up by the Opposition of the day or by the media simply because the economic management was not leading this State into bankruptcy, as this Government is doing. If there were any reason to suggest otherwise, the Treasurer has not provided an argument in the document to suggest such a situation.

There are other examples of the Treasurer's refusal or inability to provide detailed and meaningful information about public finances in this State, which makes it difficult for any honourable member in this House to address himself analytically to this Bill. Some months ago the honourable member for Balwyn asked the Treasurer, by way of letter, a series of detailed questions about various financial matters and thus far, regrettably, the Treasurer has failed to provide anything but an acknowledgement of the letter. More importantly, the current Treasurer has failed to provide any details of the performance of the activities of the Government's Cash Management Account. Honourable members may be aware that information regarding the performance of each of the private cash management accounts and trusts is published regularly in the financial press. The *Business Review Weekly* publishes every week in a column called "How the cash management trusts are performing". It gives details, for each of the sixteen trusts, of the average interest rates, average maturity and funds on deposit. This enables investors and potential investors to compare the performance of each fund. If the Treasurer were really serious about providing more financial information to the people of Victoria, he would allow this sort of information to be published about the Government's Cash Management Account and, more importantly, after his disclosures in terms of his ill-advised investment with the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd, we should be given more information on the criteria that he uses. This would provide proper monitoring of the account's performance and the performance of the Treasurer on the way he uses moneys invested in these accounts.

Mr Jolly—Why don't you attend a briefing? It has been offered to you.

Mr KENNETT—Who would go along and have a briefing from a person who introduced new modern management techniques into the State, but who still invested $3 million in a company the day before it went into receivership? Of course, the Treasurer then quickly went to his friends to get the money out.

A final example of the Treasurer's failure to provide meaningful financial information is his persistent refusal to inform this House in any meaningful way of the Government's forward estimates for 1983–84. This failure is particularly important now because today honourable members are being asked to approve the provision of funds for the first five months of the next financial year. However, the Treasurer will not provide honourable members with projections about what is happening economically in this State and how it is to be interpreted in the next financial year. Yet the Treasurer is asking us to approve the Supply Bill for the first five months. How can this Treasurer and this Government say that they are providing meaningful information to the people of this State? It is an

absolute joke. We all remember the claims that the Treasurer made on 19 April last year that Victoria was facing a deficit on unchanged policies of $400 million. At that time, and since, the Treasurer has sought to make much of that figure. Not once did he provide documentation to back up his claims.

In an editorial on 21 April, the *Age*, which could hardly be described as unabashed admirer of the Liberal Party at any time, said about the Treasurer's efforts to portray this arbitrary projection as an example of mismanagement:

> To cite this as evidence of financial mismanagement is to drag the debate down to an infantile level.

In April last year the *Age* said that the Treasurer was prepared to make those projections without any documentation, or none that he was prepared to make available to the public for scrutiny. Yet every time members on the opposition side of the House asked for information from the Treasurer on financial matters, the Treasurer threw up his hands and referred to our inexperience in those matters. The Treasurer never addressed the provision of information which he is leading the public to believe he is making available.

The Opposition has made a serious effort to inform the public of the prospective deficit facing Victoria in 1983–84 and there is no doubt that the basis for justification of the projections put forward is in the Bill. Unlike the Treasurer, who put out a press release when he claimed there was a $400 million deficit, the Opposition issued a 25 page document setting out the details of our forecast for individual items of expenditure and revenue. When we named the original projections for this year the Treasurer laughed initially and finally agreed with us. The honourable gentleman has now increased the projected size of the deficit for 1982–83 to approximately $170 million.

The 25 page document was in contrast to the two pages of rhetoric and two lines of arithmetic that the Treasurer issued on 19 April. The Opposition has made explicit its economic assumptions for the next twelve months which, again, are in marked contrast to the performance of the Government over the past year. The Opposition acknowledges the limitations imposed on that type of exercise, which result primarily from inadequate information—information that is required by the Opposition and, more particularly, by the business community in Victoria.

The Government has made no serious attempt to refute the Opposition's estimates for the Current Account deficit, on unchanged policies, of almost $600 million for next year. If the Treasurer wishes to do so today and back up his remarks with hard information, the Opposition would welcome it, particularly if the Treasurer were prepared to come clean. If he asks the House to approve the Supply Bill for the next five months of this financial year, surely he must have the work completed to provide the Budget projections for next year.

If he cannot; if the Treasurer says that he has not done the work, how can one believe that the projections that were made in 1982 on the proposed deficit for this financial year were anything other than figure grabbing for his own political ends? There will not be a deficit next year of $600 million because Victoria's law does not allow it. How will the Government address itself to the severe financial situation it will face? The Government will have to change its policies and retain the pay-roll tax surcharge. I ask the Treasurer today whether he will be retaining the pay-roll tax surcharge. The Treasurer will say, "No, wait until the Budget is brought into the House".

Mr Jolly—You know the answer already.

Mr KENNETT—Honourable members know the answer because the Treasurer does not have the courage to ask the House, on the one hand, to approve a tremendous hike in Government expenditure, yet on the other hand he cannot tell honourable members or all Victorians how they will pay for it. The Treasurer says that we will have to wait for the Budget.

I ask the Treasurer today to deny that he will increase the rate of the financial institutions duty to fund the new programmes being debated today. The Opposition has it on good advice that the State and its people will have to suffer a huge increase in the rate of the financial institutions duty. I ask the Treasurer to confirm or deny whether that information is correct. It is now obvious that when the financial institutions duty package was put together, as the Leader of the National Party said, the Government

did not have the vaguest idea of how much revenue it would collect.

Even now the Treasurer cannot tell the House how much he expects to collect from the financial institutions duty this financial year, let alone how much he will collect next financial year! The Leader of the National Party referred to the failure and inability of the Government to forecast projections that were correct.

Members of the Government party ought to go to the Stamp Duties Office to witness the difficulties it is having trying to interpret the guidelines established by the Government. No doubt exists that the Government entered into a whole new taxing field without the ability or knowledge of how to introduce measures to achieve the desired effect.

It is of no use for the Treasurer to blame the Opposition in another place, which improved the proposed legislation, for its shortfall in revenue collection. The shortfall is caused by proposed legislation that is full of loopholes being introduced by the Government. So much is being evaded that even officers of the Stamp Duties Office are continually embarrassed and frustrated when trying to answer inquires that are made by honest citizens of the State trying to meet their legal liabilities.

The only notable comment made by the Treasurer on the Opposition's projections was the criticism for having a larger percentage increase in wages and salaries in the public sector than in the private sector. That is a spurious criticism. If one turns to page 8 of the 1982-83 Budget speech, one will discover that the Government allowed for a 15 per cent increase in public sector wages and salaries, yet on page 57 of Budget Document No. 5, one finds the Government forecast for 1982-83 as an increase of private sector wages of 12·5 per cent.

The Treasurer criticizes the Opposition for staging in its document, which was well researched, that there would be a larger increase in wages and salaries in the public sector. Supposedly that was wrong, yet the Treasurer in last year's Budget documents alluded to and commented on the increase of 15 per cent in Government salaries and wages for the public sector and 12·5 per cent in the private sector. That makes a mockery of the Government trying to understand its own documents.

Despite the willingness of the Treasurer to speculate publicly on forward estimates for 1982-83 at this time last year, he refused to give the House any indication of the deficit it projected on the same set of assumptions for 1983-84. The House is debating a Supply Bill, which the Treasurer is asking honourable members to approve for the expenditure of a considerable amount of money, when he is not prepared to inform the House how he will fund the increase. More importantly, the Treasurer is not even prepared to make any predictions on the economic trend and trading for next year. It is interesting that the total amount being provided in the Supply Bill is 25·6 per cent higher than the amount provided in the Supply Bill last year. I accept that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between this year's Supply Bill and last year's Supply Bill because of the incorporation into the Consolidated Fund of a larger number of items of expenditure which were previously funded through the Trust Fund, but the House is being asked to approve what still appears to be significant increases in expenditure over the past year. The estimates in the Bill for the departments under the Treasury alone are $22·7 million or 21·5 per cent more than in last year's Supply Bill.

Yet, pages 75 to 84 of the Budget Document No. 2 1982-83 show that the total amount of expenditure previously funded through trust funds was only $5292.

Therefore this Bill provides for a significant increase in the Treasurer's own allocation. Honourable members have been given no justification for the increase. More importantly, the Opposition does not see how that increase fits into the total economic projections in this State in 1983-84, the year in which this Supply Bill will have to be funded. It is interesting to note that it is clear from a recent issue of the taxpayer funded Australian Labor Party propaganda sheet *Victorian Government Notes* that information about the prospective trends in revenue and expenditure is available and either has been or is about to be considered by Cabinet. I ask the Treasurer whether that is a fact and not a misleading document, as the Opposition considers it to be. If it is a fact, where are the prospective trends? Where is the information that the Treasurer expects to go before Cabinet but which the

Parliament cannot get its hands on to make a realistic contribution to the debate?

Despite repeated requests from this side of the House, the Treasurer refuses to make this information available to Parliament and the people of Victoria. In contrast to his eagerness—his "infantile" eagerness, as the *Age* called it last year—this prompts the inescapable conclusion that the honourable gentleman has something to hide.

This House is being asked to provide moneys for the 1983–84 financial year—or at least for the first five months of this year—in the absence of any information from the Treasurer as to the likely state of the Current Account next year. To what extent, for example, do the provisions in the Supply Bill reflect the attempts which the Treasurer claims he is making to correct what is obviously a deteriorating Budget deficit position in this State?

The Treasurer's most recent monthly statement reveals a Current Account deficit which, after one allows for the delays in getting the Public Authorities (Contribution) (Amendment) Bill before the House, amounts to a massive $301 million for the first nine months of this financial year. We have never in the history of this State had a potential deficit anywhere near that level. I agree, as our projection has shown in the 25 page document trying to give people a forecast for the next financial year, the deficit will reduce before 30 June. It will probably come back to $170 million. That is $170 million more than this Government had spent over and above what it has earnt.

We have never had that deficit problem before. It is not a matter of the seriousness of the deficit any more; it is a matter of how big it will be. Although we have to end up with balanced accounts, there is no doubt as one transfers the deficit from this year, or the borrowings the Government will make from next year's accounts into this year's accounts to balance the books, that we will start the next financial year in a situation of potential bankruptcy.

While it is certainly true that the Government will collect a disproportionate amount of revenue in the last three months of this financial year, the fact remains that this seasonal influence on receipts is scarcely a new development. The fact remains that the Current Account deficit for the nine months to March is the highest for any similar period on record.

It is interesting to note that, in defending this serious situation, the Treasurer sought to suggest that there was a difference between a "cash flow" and a "deficit" and, in his usual abusive way, he said that the Opposition did not understand it. What is becoming more and more evident by the actions of this Treasurer is that only recently the Treasurer has become aware of the distinction. In a press statement dated 25 February 1983, the Treasurer acknowledged a deficit to the end of January of $112·5 million. He used the word "deficit". However, he made no reference to any concept of "cash flow". The Treasurer went on to predict, "the deficit is declining as revenue-raising measures announced in the 1982–83 Budget begin to take effect." What a monstrously inaccurate prediction that has turned out to be.

Private enterprise is being destroyed, revenue collections are falling and expenditure is increasing. The fact is that the distinction between a "cash flow" and a "deficit"—a distinction that we certainly accept does exist, in the sense that the deficit at a given point within a year does not necessarily indicate the size of the deficit at the end of that year—is something seized upon by a desperate Treasurer seeking to divert attention from a mounting State deficit. Time does not permit me to examine in detail the economic background in which the House is considering the Supply Bill.

However, this morning the Minister for Economic Development referred to encouraging statistics regarding the housing industry. The statistics are welcome and encouraging and the Minister has played an important role in stimulating the housing industry, as did the former Federal and State Governments.

However, when one examines the total construction industry, the situation is far less encouraging. The value of new private shops, offices, factories and other business premises approved in Victoria fell by 58 per cent between the March quarter 1982 and the March quarter 1983. The corresponding fall for the rest of August was only 24 per cent.

In this State, the non-dwelling construction sector is traditionally as important as the housing sector. Therefore, it is scarcely

surprising that the total value of all private sector building approvals in Victoria fell by 21·3 per cent over the year to the March quarter 1983, compared with a fall for the rest of Australia of only 19·7 per cent.

One other important factor is the growth of State Government employment. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that since the Labor Government came to office, State Government employment has grown by a massive 4600 employees up until February 1982. By contrast, State Government employment in all other States had fallen by 3600.

Mr Jolly—Do you want to sack people?

Mr KENNETT—No. How will the Government obtain the revenue to pay the salaries? The way the Government is going, this will not be possible. The Government is employing people under false pretences and incurring huge debts, which it will have to recoup through higher taxation. How can the Treasurer deny that? The Opposition is not advocating that people should be sacked. It is advocating that the Government should get its priorities right and get the economy moving to pay for the increased number of jobs.

At the same time, against this increase in State Government employment, full-time employment in Victoria has fallen by 5 per cent in the year since this Government has been in office. This is a greater fall than any other State and compares with the national average decline in full-time employment of only 3·4 per cent. Where are the runs on the board in terms of economic growth? They are not there.The Victorian figure for the fall in full-time employment is 5 per cent.

The honourable member for Coburg laughs while more and more of the people in the electorate he represents become unemployed. Unless members of the Government party independently analyse the work of the Treasurer and where he is sending this State they will find themselves in a difficult position when defending the policies of the Government.

The economic policies of the Victorian Government have been decisively rejected by its Federal Labor Party colleagues at both the summit and, more importantly, in the last mini Budget. The mini Budget speech of the Federal Treasurer last week contained an explicit repudiation of the "Deficits don't matter" line preached by this Government.

The economic approach of the Victorian Government has been dismissed by leading financial editors as "crude expansionism", "funny money deficits" and "nonsense". Most recently, in the *Australian Financial Review,* the economic approach was dismissed as "the nostrums of snake oil merchants".

It is a pity for the people of Victoria that they still have to endure another two years of this sort of approach to economic policy.

I challenge every member of the back bench of the Government to start to think about the Treasurer's policy and actions.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Fogarty)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—In joining this debate I first wish to commend the Leader of the Opposition for the excellent outline he has presented of the very severe problems that are now being faced by the Victorian economy as revealed in this document before the House.

I intend to speak on only one or two areas of the community welfare sevices programme. I have great difficulty in obtaining any real information from this document.

I recall that years ago in the other place honourable members were constantly involved in arguments and debates urging that official documents in relation to Supply and other budgetary matters should contain a great deal more detail. I find it very disappointing to have to stand here today when nothing more than some very large figures are available, figures that do not reveal a great deal of genuine information. It is, therefore, difficult for honourable members to be able to comment specifically on many programmes. Nor are honourable members able to directly compare this year's Supply Bill with last year's Supply Bill because significant items of expenditure that were included in previous Bills under consolidated trust funds are no longer included in trust funds.

For example, in the area of community welfare services it is now recognized that

the total figure includes items of expenditure covering expenditure on emergency accommodation, child care programmes and multi-cultural information for the community, items which were previously funded through trust funds. Items of expenditure on sports and recreation programmes, on changes in recreational programmes, youth services and out-of-hours and school vacation programmes have also been transferred from trust funds. Therefore, it is not possible to directly relate the figures from last year to this year.

There is certainly a substantial increase in the over-all allocations. There has also been a substantial increase in the revenue collected. The Victorian taxpayers are aware of the impact of increased budgetary costs through charges that are being levied.

I refer particularly to some of the problems faced by the community in relation to community welfare services that have not been addressed in any way in recent months. The first issue to which I draw attention is the allowance paid to foster-care parents. Currently in excess of 420 families provide magnificent foster-care services, on behalf of the total community and the Government to needy children.

Since the foster-care programme has been in existence it has been the practice to automatically increase the allowance paid by the Government to foster-care families, consistent with the movements in the consumer price index. That automatic increase should have been included in the Budget for this year. Those people who are serving the community and the Government have been severely knocked in the guts by the Government because it has refused to increase the allowance when it should have been increased last year.

Furthermore, despite the fact that there have been serious requests by all sorts of people who are finding difficulty in maintaining these children in foster-care homes, the Government has refused to make available further allocations. That is most reprehensible.

The allocation made to foster-care families is only $25 a week per child and it has been estimated that the minimum cost of maintaining a child is $53.80 a week. That means that those families who are prepared, out of the goodness of their hearts, to take children into their homes and give them the care, support, love and understanding that they need, are having to dig into their own pockets to the extent of $28.80 a week. The Government should be providing that money. This is one of the most serious neglects of the Government in relation to genuine community welfare services. I ask the Government to seriously consider increasing this payment and removing the pressure from the families who provide an excellent community service.

The Government has also failed to upgrade the allocations for other programmes. That is very disturbing. There has been an effective cut-back in the probation services that will be provided throughout the State. Despite the fact that honourable members and the association of probation officers have been making these statements, the Minister for Community Welfare Services refuses to acknowledge the general understanding and input of the people who are performing the work in the field but is maintaining that by decreasing the services she will somehow improve the services. By withdrawing funds from country regions and co-ordinators, who are the lynch pins in the development of the probation services throughout all of the regions, the country regions will be seriously disadvantaged as a result of a lack of resources being made available by the Government to maintain yet another essential community service.

I draw the attention of the House to the problem of overcrowding in Victoria's prisons. This problem will continue into the future. Since the 1970s there has been an annual increase of about 80 in the number of prisoners being held in Victoria's prisons. It was obvious from projections that the 1982–83 year would be the crunch year for the prison service. Since November Opposition members have been asking the Minister for Community Welfare Services and the Government what action they are prepared to take to ensure that there will be no overcrowding in our prisons. The excuse has always been made that someone is looking at the problem; that a committee of inquiry or some other person is looking at a particular issue. At one stage earlier this year the Minister for Community Welfare Services stated that it was possible the Minister

of Public Works would look into the possibility of lifting into Pentridge Prison a portable building to provide temporary accommodation. That proposal was looked at but was considered unsuitable. Ever since last November regular requests have been made about the Government's plans to overcome the problem of overcrowding in prisons. This problem has been directed to the attention of the Government since it came to office but it has failed to do anything.

No programmes have been instituted to effectively deal with the problem of overcrowding in prisons because, in its first major Budget, the Labor Government reduced the amount of funds available for correctional services by 10·1 per cent. Yet the Government has declared that it has instituted many magnificent schemes in this area. Facts do not relate to claims.

In the last Budget the correctional services area received the most serious reduction in financial allocation since 1974–75. Not only was there a reduction in the allocation for capital works but also there was no real growth in the number of staff. Is it any wonder that there was no increase in the number of staff? Is it any wonder that there were problems with security? The Government provided an increased allocation of only 3·5 per cent to cover staffing and so on in the correctional services area. The allocation did not even keep pace with the normal increase in costs for wages and salaries. The allocation meant an effective reduction in the number of staff.

The Government has been embarrassed by the number of escapes from prison. In March, I asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services what action the Government would take to overcome the problem of holding offenders in police station cells. The Minister replied that the offenders were being held only in those police cells with high security. However, after the Minister made that statement, four prisoners escaped from the cells of the Footscray police station. On any one day approximately 100 offenders were being held in police station cells until two weeks ago. Those offenders were being transported to different police districts for showers, meals and so on until the Victoria Police Association dug in its heels.

The association claimed that it was not the responsibility of police officers to maintain prisoners in police station cells. The association pointed out that the Government was acting illegally. Therefore, other alternate arrangements were quickly made. However, if the Government had taken note of the situation twelve months earlier, it could have instituted other programmes to avoid the incredible embarrassments it has experienced in recent months.

Suggestions were made that the Government examine other alternative facilities for housing short-term prisoners. It was suggested that the Government should either purchase or lease hostels or motels that were under-utilized. The Government decided to examine the prospect of using the Wiltona migrant hostel in Williamstown. The Opposition welcomes the proposal of the Government to establish a work release centre. However, the work release centre will accommodate 80 prisoners, but the problem of overcrowding in prisons will be compounded because the Government did not examine the problem early enough or investigate the legal requirements relating to planning permits.

The Government appears to believe it can quickly take over the Wiltona migrant hostel. I understand that tomorrow at midday there will be an application made for a Supreme Court injunction to require the Government to adhere to the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme, which requires that hostel to be removed from the control of the Commonwealth Government. Under the present planning ordinance, that hostel can be used only for the limited purposes approved by the Commonwealth Government.

If the planning arrangements are to be changed for that hostel to house prisoners, the normal procedures will have to be followed under the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme. That will take time. There is no way in which the Wiltona migrant hostel will be used to house prisoners in the immediate future. Therefore, the Government will be left with the problem of overcrowding in the prisons.

Many schemes have been instituted by this Government to subvert the intention of the courts. Prisoners are being released early under administrative arrangements rather than formal arrangements. Prisoners

are being released under a host of schemes to reduce the problem of overcrowding in prisons.

One of the most disappointing features of the prison system is that it holds a large number of young persons who are serving sentences of less than two months. These short-term prison sentences are more dangerous than they are helpful. The short-term sentences do not assist either the offender or the community.

The Government should act immediately to ensure that those persons who are given sentences of less than two months can serve their sentences in alternative venues such as attendance centres. The provision of an additional attendance centre would house 80 offenders. Rather than mucking around with the Wiltona migrant hostel and having to go through the process of planning appeals and so on and wasting money, the Government should provide an additional attendance centre. That would be a low-cost measure but one of enormous benefit. The majority of offenders serving short-term sentences should be involved in productive community activities that would relieve the problem of prison overcrowding.

The Government admits that the problem of over-crowding in the prisons is of the order of approximately 80 prisoners. An attendance centre could cope with that many. That number of prisoners could also be coped with under the alternative sentencing procedures. If more than one attendance centre were provided, obviously more than 80 prisoners could be dealt with.

At present there is no real information on whether there will be any increase in the community ordered programmes. The explanatory memorandum attached to the Bill indicates that, in calculating Supply provisions, no new policy initiatives involving additional expenditures have been included. Therefore one cannot define what new initiatives will be created. In speaking about extending prison services to Wiltona hostel, in 1977 there was a Senate standing committee on the financing of Government operations, which presented a report on the Wiltona migrant hostel. In the summary of conclusions and recommendations, the committee noted that the site is bordered on all sides by a petro-chemical and gas complex and that it is totally unsuitable for a migrant hostel.

The second recommendation contained in the report is that the decision to build the original hostel was justifiable in view of the circumstances prevailing at the time. The report also stated that the consultative process and the criteria used in the unfortunate decision to rebuild Wiltona were unsatisfactory. However, the procedures governing the use of Government property since 1974 should ensure that no repetition of such a decision will occur again. The large number of Commonwealth and State Government departments and authorities and the involvement of a local government authority created a bureaucratic mess and an enormous waste of time in recommending finality in the disposal or productive use of the public asset, which has lain unused for six years. Those comments were contained in a report made in 1977. The report also stated that, until the safety precautions recommended by the Commonwealth Fire Board were implemented, the hostel should not be used.

Members of the Government have spoken frequently about safety, but are now prepared to put people in a situation that was judged in 1977 by a Senate Standing Committee as being unsafe. The committee accepted that temporary use of Wiltona for migrants and refugees in the near future could occur if there was a sufficiently urgent need and if safety precautions were implemented. The committee recommended that the Commonwealth commence negotiations to sell Wiltona and other facilities nearby.

In 1975, the Commonwealth Fire Board produced a report on the hostel. The report stated that the board would not object to residential use of the hostel because the danger to life of the residents at the hostel would be minimal provided that an audible alarm system was installed that interacted with the watch room so that residents could be alerted in the case of an emergency. The report also stated that it would not object to the use of the hostel if procedures were established for the evacuation of the occupants.

Now, if prisoners are placed in the hostel, honourable members must realize that an evacuation may be possible and plans to

evacuate prisoners must be made. What about security if evacuation is needed?

The Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board inspected the site. In his report to the Town Clerk of the City of Williamstown, the Chief Fire Officer said:

> I am of the opinion that the siting of a residential type occupancy within and adjacent to industrial type complexes is contrary to all concepts of good and safe practice.

The Government is prepared to act against that recommendation to alleviate an embarrassing situation within the prisons.

There are other reports from inspectors of the board and one senior officer said:

> It is my opinion that it is against all principles of good and safe practice to locate residential developments adjacent to industrial complexes and, in particular, tank farms such as this.

A committee of inquiry and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board have made recommendations that the site is not safe. However, the Government is still proposing to go ahead with the measure. Some people are concerned about the danger of their own industrial activities and these facts must be taken into consideration by the appropriate planning authority rather than by a Government which has sweet-talked the Williamstown council. The council was, until fairly recently, violently opposed to the opening of the centre. Because of some political handgrasps, the council is now prepared to enter into a temporary agreement for twelve months.

If the Government is prepared to use the hostel for a short time believing there are alternative programmes that can be put in place in less than twelve months, those programmes should be hastened so that the hostel, which is regarded by all relevant authorities as unsafe, will not have to be used.

I have raised concerns on this matter to highlight the allocation to the Department of Community Welfare Services and to show that the programmes, in many ways, are vastly inadequate. They are misdirected and some people are being disadvantaged by the programmes because they are being undertaken on behalf of the Government. I indicate my grave concern, firstly, about the lack of adequate information being provided; secondly, about the difficulty of being able to compare directly the programmes of this year with those of last year; and thirdly, that there are some significant problems which must be handled rather than Ministers simply saying that they will look into things and at the last minute rushing into a programme that may well be challenged before it can be established. Ministers should be more realistic in the planning of programmes. The Government should have been anticipating the programmes in the past year and taking apppropriate action.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—On 4 May, the Treasurer presented this Bill to the Parliament which allows for the expenditure of the various departments for the first five months of the 1983–84 financial year. It allows for the financial operation of the various departments to continue until such time as the Budget is passed by both Houses. The amount of money sought is $2 367 082 700. It is a large sum, but this Government is a big spending one, and it is to be expected.

In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer referred to the downturn in the economy and the depressed economy of the State. The Government can no longer hide behind the excuse that the previous Liberal Government caused the problems that the Government is having with economic management. The Labor Party has been in office for more than thirteen months.

Mr Gavin—That is a long time.

Mr AUSTIN—It probably seems a long time for many Victorians and for the sake of those people, I hope it will not be a great deal longer. The sad thing is that the economic depression has continued and increased during the reign of the Government.

In the second-reading speech, the Treasurer referred to the fact that the drought had had a worse effect on the economy than he and the Government had anticipated. Members of the Opposition warned the Government many times of the long-term effects of the drought. Those warnings were completely ignored. I understand why they were ignored because no member of the Government understands rural matters. If there is a member who understands such matters, it is a pity he did not warn the Treasurer that the effects of the drought

would be far worse than the Government expected.

The Opposition was well aware that as time went on the effects of the drought would be felt to a much greater extent, even after the drought was finished. During the drought, and half way through it, the cash flow of farmers remained the same. They still had sheep to shear and later sheep were either destroyed or farmers were forced to sell them.

The last paragraph of the second-reading speech of the Treasurer is particularly onerous where it refers to the fact that the Government is currently examining a number of avenues to reduce the extent of the deterioration in the Budget. I find it extraordinary that that is only taking place at this very late stage. The Treasurer says that will be done to ensure that the impetus, which the 1982 Budget is giving to Victoria, is maintained. That in itself shows a lack of understanding of economic management, which does not surprise the Opposition.

It has been a fact of history that Labor Governments have been poor economic managers, and no Labor Government has remained in office for any length of time because of its inability to handle the affairs of the State or the nation. The Opposition admits that the Government has taken some action to create short-term employment and to help the housing industry, but those short-term employment measures will not have any useful long-term effects. In fact, the Government is spending money, which is a one-out occasion and will make the situation worse in the long term, on employing a few thousand people for six months.

The other policy of the Government is to spend money in the public sector. As the Leader of the National Party said, it is only by giving impetus and encouragement to the private sector that the unemployment problems and the economic problems of this State will be overcome. The Labor Government has also increased the total Public Service numerical strength by 1871. That figure is out of date and probably the number is far greater now. Of that number, 200 receive a salary in excess of $30 000 a year.

The Treasurer referred in his second-reading speech to the problems of his own Financial Institutions Duty Bill. He said that when the Budget was presented it was expected that the yield from the financial institutions duty would be $80 million over the first six months of its operation. Then pressure was brought to bear and various concessions were made, and correctly so, in several major areas. So suddenly that $80 million was reduced by $20 million to $60 million for that six month period. Now there is a further decrease of $10 million on the admission of the Treasurer.

I now look at the details of the Bill and some of the aspects that affect the electorate I represent. I make special reference to the area of the arts. In the electorate of Ripon there are two particular festivals of great importance, one is the Golden Gate Festival in Ararat and the other well-known one is the Golden Wattle Festival in Maryborough. Both these festivals have historically received useful grants from the previous Liberal Government and up to now from the Labor Government, and I would hope there would be no reduction in the size of those grants. Those festivals depend very much on these grants which are a small part of their expenditure but are important for the running of the festivals. They would be at risk if there was a change of policy in that area. I am not sure whether the Government has any intention of making any changes, but there have been rumours that that particular area is to be examined. I ask the Minister for the Arts to make certain that, from the Government's point of view, those festivals are protected.

Another area that has worried the people, particularly in country industry, is the Government's attitude towards economic development, State development, and what used to be known as decentralization. I have a letter from the Town Clerk of Stawell which expresses the kind of concern that is relevant to all country industry throughout Victoria. The town clerk says in that letter that the Government should take into account what it is doing with its policy concerning industry in country Victoria because the incentives which have been given and offered in the past have caused industries to expand. He said that many country industries depend on their viability for the incentives that induced them in the first place to relocate in country areas, and then after that they have allowed expansion to take place.

He said that many country towns are dependent for their existence on the establishment of decentralized industries and that not only are these industries being helped, but also the towns are being benefited. He said that the loss of those incentives could cause closure of industries or a reduction in their total operations and, therefore, a reduction in employment.

The last matter I wish to discuss is my main reason for speaking on this Bill. I refer to the forests of Victoria. Victoria has suffered one of the worst fire seasons ever known and extensive areas of forest have been burnt over a wide area of the State. I am particularly concerned at what is happening and what might happen in the Upper Yarra area where there are 490 000 cubic metres of ash which have been burnt. It is important that that valuable timber is salvaged before it deteriorates to the extent where it is no longer millable or no longer of economic value.

Honourable members will understand that timber has to be salvaged for the next few years. It either has to be milled in that period or put to water, and that is an expensive task. The cost of getting that timber to a mill is $30 a metre, and the cost of getting it to water is $25 a metre.

In the case of mountain ash the total cost—the Treasurer ought to be aware of the total allocation—for the operation alone was about $10 million. In the Macedon area alone 100 000 metres of pine is involved. It is most important that the pine is salvaged. The cost of salvaging the pine will be about $2·5 million. It needs to be a much quicker operation with the pine and it has to be salvaged by February of next year before it deteriorates. The other aspect of the total salvage operation of the mountain ash is that the area worth salvaging is to be rejuvenated. The cost of rejuvenation would be $5·75 million, which is a large sum of money.

If it is not rejuvenated in the first year, the cost of rejuvenation at a later time will be far greater because of the overgrowth that would have to be removed before rejuvention takes place. I notice the Minister made a note about the matter a moment ago. I hope he will give it more consideration. The Opposition recognizes the need for the Supply Bill to allow the financial operations of the Government to continue over the next five months. Therefore, the Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The House is presently considering the Supply Bill, which has been introduced by a Government that was elected on the undertaking that State taxes and charges would not have to increase to achieve its objectives. One of the objectives that the Leader of the Opposition of the day, who is now the Premier, put foward was that he would get Victoria moving again, that the economy of Victoria would receive a miraculous rejuvenation on the election of a Labor Government and that it would all be done with an economic painlessness that would be a credit to Dr Kildare himself. One has realized that the Premier is no John Maynard Keynes and the Treasurer is no economic Dr Kildare. There has been a succession of broken promises. The fundamental promise that Victoria would be placed on an economic upturn and start moving again has failed to materialize. Victoria is facing even more economic difficulties now than it was thirteen months ago, before the Labor Party came to power. The difficulties of unemployment have not been alleviated by the Labor Government.

Victoria's record of employment, which was previously extremely good, is now looking extremely tarnished under the administration of the Labor Government. The most extraordinary broken promise of all was that the Premier said that his Government would not need to increase taxes and charges to achieve its objectives. I do not know whether he ever intended to keep that promise, but there is certainly no evidence of it having been considered as a serious proposition once the Labor Party came to government. Taxes and charges have increased by 27 per cent since the Cain Government came to power and the Treasurer became responsible for the economic management of the State.

Unemployment has been increasing and significant industries are under threat. The Government did not understand the ramifications of the most serious drought that Victoria has experienced in its history since European settlement. The Government has lurched from economic blunder to economic blunder as it sought desperately to get itself out of the morass in which it found itself suddenly sinking.

It put into effect the technique that had been applied by the Wran Government in New South Wales, which had been promoted by the Leader of the Opposition in 1979, and which was thoroughly discredited at the time and was proposed once again by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Cain, in 1982 prior to the election. That was the old Labor approach of robbing the till. In New South Wales, Mr Wran referred to money lying around in hollow logs. In Victoria, robbing the till has been raised to the level of an art form by this Government. The hollow logs, so quaintly described by Premier Wran in New South Wales, are the statutory authorities, semi-Government authorities and public utilities in provincial cities, towns and big cities in Victoria. Wherever there is money, the Government has desperately set its sights on it in order to acquire funds by any means and almost at any cost. The Government is now reaching out and trying to gobble up all the funds that it can to get itself out of the financial mess it is in.

In the process, it has imposed additional financial burdens on utilities such as the State Electricity Commission, the Port of Melbourne Authority, the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the Board of Works. I ask the Treasurer whether another public utility is being screwed down by this money-hungry and economically irresponsible Government. What is being demanded of those organizations is that massive contributions shall be made to Government funds by those organizations. The Treasurer blandly told the community when these proposals were announced that they will not be reflected in higher charges. The nonsense of that statement is already being experienced by consumers of electricity, who are finding that their electricity bills are increasing. Gas consumers are finding that their gas bills are higher than they have ever been before, and when people receive their Board of Works rate notices they will really know that they have a Labor Government! Why does the Government need all these extra taxes and charges which it assured the community would not be necessary prior to the election?

The Government has many bills of its own to pay off. It has had to pay off approximately 50 000 teachers who got behind it in the election campaign so, not surprisingly, the salaries bill for the Education Department has gone through the roof. In addition, there are quite a few State Electricity Commission employees and Australian Railways Union members to whom the Government is indebted and who have to be squared off. A multitude of old mates have been put into the system of government at high salaries. Since the Labor Government came to power, the Public Service work force has been increased by more than 1000, and 200 of those new appointments have been at salaries well above $30 000 a year. Among those appointments one sees not just a few who are well-known old mates of the Labor Party. That is the way in which the Labor Party operates.

As an illustration of the way in which the Government operates and what it costs the community, as the Government blunders from one economic crisis to another and from one administrative catastrophe to another, I invite honourable members to consider what is presented in respect of specific portfolios in the Supply Bill. I have a special interest in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. The Supply Bill reveals that that Ministry has become one which will cause steadily increasing embarrassment to the Government.

The first embarrassment it will create is financial embarrassment. That Ministry is in financial trouble. One must draw that conclusion from the fact that there is apparently a need for a massive increase of 47 per cent in that Ministry's allocation. The extraordinary aspect of that 47 per cent increase is that virtually no explanation is given of the necessity for it, apart from the trite note informing the reader that a provision has been included in salaries and general expenses for the costs during the coming five months of the Fuel Prices Commission, which was established during 1982–83. One is not told anything more about why it will cost 47 per cent more to run this Ministry for the next five months than it cost previously. The Treasurer interjects to say that I am misinterpreting the situation. There is no misinterpretation: The fact is that there is a 47 per cent increase on the Government's own figures that are provided in the Bill it asks the House to pass. In those figures the Government says that it will cost 47 per cent more to run this one small Ministry for the next five months. If

the Treasurer wants to pretend that those figures reveal something else, I invite him to explain it at the right time. On the information that is provided, it will cost the taxpayer of this State 47 per cent more to run that small Ministry for the next five months than it did previously.

The only information given about the matter is that the increase is caused by the Fuel Prices Commission being brought into the system. Surely the commission does not cost the taxpayer $1·3 million for five months. If it does, the Government should establish a new costs commission to examine the cost to the taxpayer of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. If the extra $1·3 million is not the cost of the commission, the Government should honour its promise of open government and reveal how mismanagement of this Ministry has led to this unacceptable increase in cost to the taxpayer.

I invite the Treasurer to honour his Government's promise of open government and to provide information, particularly to the shadow Minister. I inform the Treasurer and the House that the Minister of Consumer Affairs refuses to provide any information. It must be placed on record that the Ministry has said, in response to my request for information, that the only person in his department to whom I may speak is his Ministerial adviser. I am denied access to any departmental officer; all of my discussions must be confined to the Ministerial adviser.

If that is the way in which the Minister wants to establish the rules concerning access to information, and if the way in which I am to gain information about his Ministry is through regular and helpful conversation with his adviser, then so be it.

I should love to be able to contact his Ministerial adviser and have those consultations that were promised by the Minister.

I have telephoned his Ministerial adviser every day in an attempt to speak to him to make an appointment to conduct those consultations that the Minister has assured me he agrees to. The fact is that all that he has done is to place continued obstruction in the way of consultation. The Minister of Consumer Affairs is not prepared to provide consultation, and it would seem that his Ministerial adviser is not prepared to follow the instructions of his Minister and consult the shadow Minister.

It is fascinating to note that, as I speak about the Minister, he has scuttled out of this House like the frightened rabbit that he is. He ran from the room the moment I started talking about him.

Nevertheless, it is on the record: The Minister of Consumer Affairs ran from the Chamber when I began talking about him; he has refused to provide information on the way in which his Ministry operates; the Ministerial adviser to the Minister of Consumer Affairs has made himself unavailable to the shadow Minister. One is forced to the conclusion that the Ministerial adviser is the real Minister of Consumer Affairs.

The Minister has already been discredited by the report of the Public Service Board's Management Review Committee, which pointed out the incompetence and administrative bungling in the department that has been managed by the Labor Government for thirteen months.

For thirteen months, the Labor Party has had the opportunity of correcting what it considered to be deficiencies. In fact, when the Government brought in a management review team to comment on the way in which the Government is managing the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the review team in its report condemned this Minister of Consumer Affairs as being totally incompetent.

Further proof of the incompetence of the Minister emerged yesterday in the report of the Motor Car Traders Committee. This committee was set up many years ago by the then Liberal Party Government to clean up the used car trade. The committee did that magnificently and continued to administer the used car trade efficiently and effectively. However, the report of the Chairman of the Motor Car Traders Committee contains a series of trenchant criticisms of the way in which the whole relationship between that committee and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has deteriorated under this Minister. It is this Minister who, once again, has shown himself to be totally incompetent. Page 2 of the report states:

> The persistent intrusion of the Consumer Affairs Bureau into the statutory regulatory functions of the Committee; particularly in relation to the handling of consumer complaints against licensed motor traders, and the investigation on its own initiative and without reference to the Committee of the selling practices of certain traders. The activities of the bureau in the areas

mentioned have for the most part been counter-productive, costly and unnecessary.

That is a crushing condemnation of a Minister who is supposed to be in charge of a department. What incompetence is revealed about that Minister and what divisions are appearing within a relatively small department! One would have thought that even this Minister would have been able to administer a small department like the Ministry of Consumer Affairs but, no, bitter divisions within the department are revealed by the report.

So bitter are those divisions and so strongly does the chairman of this statutory body feel about it that he was compelled to include a reference of it in the annual report of his statutory body. That is how far conditions have deteriorated in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs under this Minister.

One should examine the funds that the Ministry has been allocated. It has been given a 47 per cent increase in funding.

Mr Kennett—It would cost plenty to print the Government's freedom-of-information notes!

Mr RICHARDSON—It certainly would cost plenty. A 47 per cent increase in funding is being given to this small department when the State Government is looking down the barrel of a $170 million deficit by the end of June.

I note that the Minister of Consumer Affairs has appeared briefly. I am not sure whether he will come into the House and take part in the debate. The House is watching and waiting with bated breath to see what he is going to do. I am delighted that he has returned to the Chamber in order to hear the closing stages of my condemnation of the way in which he has mismanaged his department.

The fact that the Government is already facing a $170 million deficit by the end of June and the fact that it is proposing to increase the expenditure in the small Ministry of Consumer Affairs by a further 47 per cent is additional evidence of the inability of the Government to manage departments economically and of the total incapacity of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to even run his small department efficiently. Of course, the $170 million deficit that the Government will be facing at the end of June will need to be found somewhere—the Government will borrow $170 million from the Cash Management Account just to balance the books.

In an examination of the cost of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, one wonders what will happen to the 47 per cent increase. That question is significant when one considers that the Consumer Affairs Council is to be abolished. The 1982–83 Budget allocation for the council was $27 300. The Motor Car Traders Committee, which has revealed so much in its report about the incompetence and mismanagement of this Minister, is a completely self-funding organization and it is a net revenue earner, yet the 1982–83 Budget allocated $91 000 to that committee.

This money is simply a book transaction. No money will change hands. There will be entries in and entries out, but no money will actually leave the Treasury to go to the Motor Car Traders Committee, because the committee pays all of its own bills. It pays the salary of its employees and it has a surplus in its funds of more than $400 000. Therefore, the 47 per cent increase in spending necessary within the Ministry of Consumer Affairs will not be incurred by the Motor Car Traders Committee because that committee is a net revenue earner.

Extraordinarily, in the 1982–83 Budget, $8000 is allocated to the Market Court. That court has not been convened since this Government took office. Where will it spend $8000?

Those are the three organizations for which allocations were made in the 1982–83 Budget but which are not referred to in the Supply Bill, so one must ask: If these three bodies are not going to be costing the Ministry of Consumer Affairs any money, where then will the Ministry be spending its allocation of money that has been increased by 47 per cent! Those bodies clearly do not contribute to the cost increase.

The extra $1·3 million will be added to further when the proposed restructuring of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs begins the process of bureaucratic expansion into the monolith that the Government intends this department to be. Under the restructuring of this grossly mismanaged department, salaries will be increasing by $512 000, accommodation costs will increase by $81 000

and the estimated non-recurrent expenditure will be $867 000, a total further increase in addition to the 47 per cent increase contained in the Supply Bill of $1·46 million.

The Government has made no provisions in the Supply Bill for those additional restructuring costs; so it will have to find another $1·46 million somewhere before it brings the next Budget into this House. The Supply Bill demonstrates the financial mess in consumer affairs and when the cost overruns in this small department are measured against the cost increases in other departments, it is easy to see why Victorians are so heavily taxed and how the Labor Government has totally abandoned economic management.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—In considering the provisions of the Supply Bill as the honourable member for South Barwon, I point out that that electorate is suffering considerably from the aftermath of the Ash Wednesday fires. It will not forget 16 February. Those events have posed certain problems and this Bill goes part of the way in supplying some of the solutions to those problems. During the fires 720 homes were lost but only 140 of those home owners are entitled to hand-outs from Government agencies. People are still waiting to learn what they will receive. I believe disasters should bring all politicians together to work out what are essential needs, what action must be taken and what is left to be done.

Unfortunately, some of the Ministers have taken a defensive attitude when matters have been raised during the debate of the motion for the adjournment of the sitting. For example, on Wednesday, 23 March I made an urgent request for repairs to the Grassy Creek bridge on the Great Ocean Road where a temporary viaduct has been placed. The bridge had been washed away. The Minister has eventually said the bridge will be built but it should have been put in hand months ago.

I have had correspondence with the Minister of Health in an endeavour to assist those in trauma. Because the fires in the area destroyed the undergrowth, only recently there has been a mosquito plague in the Anglesea area, and there is need for a helicopter to spray the mosquitoes and get the plague under control because it is causing great discomfort, particularly to elderly people.

As a result of the fires the situation has become open slather for crooks, people taking free hand-outs or taking money that was given in honesty and charity. Some weekenders who visited their blocks of land saw volunteers clearing blocks and all they could ask was when their rubbish would be removed. During the crisis the Salvation Army raised $3 million and it did not even have a public appeal. That money has all been given out to people who suffered trauma and without strings attached.

There have been many fine examples of dedicated workers, not only amongst of the public servants but amongst members of the Police Force who worked tirelessly. I refer in particular to a brave act by Constable Williams who tore through the forest near Deans Marsh and was nearly killed. His motor bike was destroyed.

The Bill contains provisions to assist in the work of the police, not only in the provisions of facilities that the policemen need, but in accommodation and housing in places such as Lorne. There is an urgent need for a police station in the Grovedale–Belmont–Torquay areas.

There is also a need for the State to recognize some form of award and recognition of the people who not only served in the Country Fire Authority and the State Emergency Service, but also those who gave their lives. I instance the brave act of the Telecom worker and manager from Colac, Mr Elie Mierla, who was killed during the course of his work while maintaining essential communication services. He was caught on the road between Deans Marsh and Lorne.

In today's *Age* newspaper mention is made of the other two people who were unfortunately killed in the South Barwon electorate. Their lives could have been saved if the emergency service people had had the authority to insist on the thorough evacuation of the area. Tremendous efforts were made by the Chief Superintendent of Police, Mr Keith Hawkins, and the officer in charge of the State Emergency Services at Geelong, Mr John Peel, in co-ordinating that work. They had problems and were hampered through lack of money to provide petrol for

their vehicles, to provide adequate equipment to their men and by the need to upgrade the communications network.

During a time of crisis there should be a television or radio channel that provides accurate information so that any organization can ring in and be made precisely aware of the situation and not hear garbled radio reports that create confusion in those who have loved ones, say, in Anglesea or Torquay, and messages that areas have been evacuated, when in fact it was not so.

There is a need for money to be provided for essential services. All honourable members are aware of the magnificent efforts by the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, citizens, members of the Lions Club and Rotary Club, the team of reporters from the *Geelong Advertiser* and radio 3GL. We are all familiar with the work and kind donations by radio stations 3AW and 3MP. Much of the money raised has been welcomed and received. However, so far the money raised by public appeal is not being distributed. Only the interest on that money is finding its way to the people in need.

The Premier should give an undertaking that in the event of any future disaster not only Ministers will have the right to formulate emergency situations but shadow Ministers will also be included in that work. There are instances of national crises in England where Sir Winston Churchill brought men from all sides of Parliament to work in the disasters. There are dedicated people on both sides of the House who have an ability and commitment and skill that can be applied at that time. It is a pity that the excellent services of the shadow Ministers were not used in the follow up from Ash Wednesday.

Much of the media coverage was superficial and of little benefit, sometimes creating confusion if various departments were announcing what they would give the people in the devastated areas. I regret the flying visit from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services who had little to say in the electorate of South Barwon except that he had spoken to a plumber who had lost some tools. Today unfortunately the Minister is in Darwin. I hope he is not waylaid near Ayers Rock and ends up a dingo's dinner!

I have brought to the attention of the Minister time and time again the necessity for upgrading the Country Fire Authority equipment, the need for fire blankets on trucks, the need for chainsaws for fire trucks operating in heavy timber areas. In Cockatoo the lives of firemen could have been saved if there had been a chainsaw but those men were trapped and died in the fire.

There should be a total overview and input by the people who actually volunteer in the field. It is not good enough for public servants to assure the Minister that all is being done because very often all is not being done. In the Western District following the Streatham fires in 1977, a Royal Commission judge's report advocated that the provision of equipment must be given top priority to all those who volunteer and give their services.

I have had brought to my attention by the plumber who lost his tools at Aireys Inlet that the Government is using only the interest on the money raised to pay out to those in hardship and not the principal of $24 million. He is told by the departmental officers in Melbourne that his payment has not come through because the interest has not been paid and his claim cannot be met.

Public statements were made that there was a lack of paper for application forms. From the mountains of paper I have seen produced in this Parliament and sent to politicians and introduced into the area following the crisis, there is no excuse for Mr Smith, now the Chairman of the Bush Fire Appeal Trust Fund, to say to this man who lost his home and all plumbing equipment that he recognized the partial loss of property and that:

> As a result, a cheque for $1200 representing the hardship grant, together with an application form . . .
>
> In addition, you will be eligible for a $3000 rebuilding grant and $3000 for the replacement of essential household items. These application forms will also be forwarded.

The application form has only been forwarded. People are confused and utterly disheartened. It is a trauma for anyone who has lost a home and is left with precious few belongings.

I just want to dwell for a brief moment on the people who may have lost their holiday homes, where they would ultimately retire, because the trauma for them is great. It is traumatic for elderly people to lose their gardens they have tended and the treasures

they had in the homes, for which they will receive no compensation. Some people lost homes to the value of $70 000 and tools to the value of $30 000, and have no insurance and nowhere to turn, because they have only themselves to blame for not having insurance. Those who lost homes that are not their primary residence are not to receive one cracker from the Government from these emergency funds. I put it to the House that it would have been far better to give a little to each of these people because they are facing high costs when trying to replace their homes. They must meet the cost of building permits, licences and the additional works that now need to be done for their residences to meet the requirements of new building codes and health regulations.

I was informed of the instance relating to septic tanks which were fully usable and workable but could no longer be used because of new building and health regulations. Therefore, the owners of those properties will have to spend thousands of dollars more to put in new drainage tanks. It was stated that the amounts of money to be allocated for water supply and sewerage works for these areas would be examined and the services would be brought up to tip-top standard. I suggest that if it is good enough for the citizens who have holiday homes to be insured, it is good enough for all citizens in this State to be insured. It should never occur again that people should look to the Government to make good their folly of not being insured. People should not be encouraged to believe that every time there is a national disaster everyone else will foot the bill.

In some instances people have lost homes worth $70 000 and have nowhere to turn. Alas, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services cannot even address correspondence to the honourable member for South Barwon with the correct names and addresses on it. Today he is in Darwin on other State business. This illustrates how out of touch his departmental officers have been. It is important to have communication and rapport between Ministers and members because they are there to serve the people who voted for them. I will serve the electorate I represent, no matter whether the people voted for the Liberal Party or for any other party. I shall endeavour to assist them in any way I can.

At a public meeting that was held on 17 March at the Aireys Inlet hall, it was a disgrace to hear the comments of an officer from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, who made blatant political statements. I do not believe that paid public servants should be politicking at public meetings. If members of the Public Service want to make political statements, they should leave the Public Service and join this arena.

During that week a committee was appointed to administer the bush-fire relief funds, but the trustees were not appointed until the following day. The address delivered by the departmental officer was false and misleading. I am aware that Mr Neil Smith has had continued meetings with the people who have suffered as a result of the disaster, but unfortunately, the ground rules seem to change from week to week. When a matter is canvassed within an electorate and people begin to compare notes, they find that there are no set ground rules and become confused and disturbed. It is particularly disturbing to those who are waiting for hand-outs.

In considering the Supply Bill, honourable members should address themselves to the cost of all these things in our society. In addressing myself to the high cost of the Public Service, I point out that there are people in the community who spend their lives enjoying themselves to the full, whether it be at hotels or racecourses, and spend their week-ends at leisure. Of course, they claim to be the forgotten people, but it should be realized it is in many of the poorer areas such as Broadmeadows and Sunshine that people often spend the most money. For example, they spend some $15 million a year on Tattersalls lottery tickets. That is a shame because there is no short cut to riches or success, and whether it be instant Tatts, other lotteries or poker machines, these things have a grave and detrimental effect on society in making our State and our nation tick.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—Mr Acting Speaker, on a point of order, I should like to draw to your attention that although liberties are taken during the debate on the Supply Bill, I suggest that the honourable member is straying far and wide in the discussion he is having at present.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—I do not uphold the point of order but I agree that the honourable member for South Barwon is wandering away from the provisions of the Bill and I suggest he consider the actual items contained in the Bill and make his remarks relevant to them.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—There are many areas in the electorate I represent that deserve full consideration with regard to the allocation of Government funds. Many national forests were destroyed, and two of them were in the electorate I represent. One of them was Bunah Road pine forests area and the other in Deans Marsh. There is no intention yet to replant those areas and the indication is that limited funds will be made available by the Minister. There is also a need for access roads in those areas and an allocation provided for this work.

The ACTING SPEAKER—I direct to the attention of the honourable member for South Barwon the fact that the matter he is relating now is more appropriate to the Works and Services Bill than to the Supply Bill, which is now before the House. I ask him to direct his remarks to the Supply Bill and not to other Bills that might be on the list.

Mr DICKINSON—Municipalities have highlighted numerous areas of concern following the Ash Wednesday bush fires. They have directed the attention of this Government to the need for additional transport services, the need for review of the impact of the financial institutions duty, which is imposed on money transactions by municipalities, and those in receipt of insurance monies. These charges should be reviewed.

There is a need to waive pay-roll tax, stamp duties and other duties on building materials used for the restoration of buildings in the areas that have been devastated.

Comment has been made on the problem associated with sulphur-crested cockatoos and long-billed corellas which are destroying crops at present. Anyone travelling in the Winchelsea area will see thousands of cockatoos perched in the burnt-out trees just waiting to descend on the crops or to prey on the stock feed which is still being fed to the stock following the fires. I have directed letters to the appropriate Ministers and I would appreciate their full assistance by liasing with Government officers on the spot in order to fulfil the urgent needs of those municipalities which are trying to rectify the situation in which they now find themselves.

I direct my comments now to the unemployed. It is disappointing to hear the Minister of Housing relate to honourable members that only approximately twelve new houses will be built in the South Barwon electorate, an area that has lost 720 homes. Twelve homes are not sufficient to meet the needs of those people who have lost their livelihood and are suffering the trauma of living in caravan parks or borrowed homes. I am aware of welfare officers in the Geelong region who are fully committed to assisting those families. Those people deserve the recognition of the House and the highest praise.

The South Barwon electorate has many large State forests and national parks and a need exists for the whole community to be re-educated in the use of those forests and parks. Honourable members should not bend too far under the cries of conservation groups when the national assets of our pine forests are at stake. I hope the Government will take immediate steps to provide the money that will assist the full employment of many young people in the electorate. It would represent a healthy attitude for the community of Geelong and the State.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Bill provides for the ongoing operational costs of departments during the first five months of the new financial year 1983–84. It affords honourable members the opportunity of making some pertinent comments to the Treasurer and the various Ministers on the manner in which the operating expenses have been utilized in the previous twelve months and the manner in which they ought to be utilized for the period for which the Bill seeks Supply.

The honourable member for Polwarth says by interjection that the House ought to have a competent Minister at the table who will take note of some of the matters that have been raised by Opposition spokesmen and other honourable members on the Opposition side of the House so that salient points can be passed on to the Ministers who have decided not to make an appearance in the Chamber during the debate.

Honourable members know the Treasurer is right behind the Minister of Consumer Affairs but he will not say at what distance. The Treasurer has sat on the front bench and giggled during the debate on the Supply Bill, which involves hundreds of millions of dollars. The first comment that ought to be made is on the difficulty that faces the Opposition as a result of the failure of Ministers to provide adequate information to members of the Opposition in response to some extremely searching questions, particuarly those posed during question time.

The Government was elected on a wide range of issues. Going back at least two or three elections, foremost among those issues on the Labor Party platform has been its commitment to open government. Although the Government is prepared to go to great pains to legislate for the provision of the most complex structures for guaranteeing freedom of information to members of the public and while it was preparing the complex legislation, it refused point blank to provide the most simple answers to the questions raised in the House.

The Minister of Consumer Affairs knows that is the case because he has been asked so many questions in the House on both ethnic affairs and consumer affairs, yet he dodges the questions and refuses to provide the answers. The honourable gentleman makes statements that may have some news value and may be of interest but they do not relate to the questions asked. The Treasurer has been the prime architect of the most disastrous economic policies the State has ever had. The full repercussions of those policies will not be felt for another year or two, by which time the honourable gentleman will have been delicately and sensitively moved side-ways; this will make it difficult to pinpoint who is responsible.

The Treasurer knows if he were to run his own household expenses in the way in which he is attending to the financial affairs of the State, he would have many more worries and problems. He has thrust those problems and worries on to the people of Victoria and other members of Parliament, particularly those on the Opposition side of the House who are taking an extremely acute and keen interest in the approved economic theories that this unproved Treasurer seeks to force upon the people of Victoria.

The most salient and pointed aspect of the response of the Ministers to the searching questions to which members of the Opposition seek answers is that not only do they dodge giving the answers, but they retaliate with personal abuse as the question becomes more difficult. The Treasurer is not exempt from that. During the last sessional period some of his colleagues, including his Leader, the Premier, have resorted to a series of responses deliberately designed to avoid answers to some searching questions and have attempted to disguise their refusal to provide those answers by making personal attacks on members of the Opposition.

The Treasurer and the Minister of Housing laugh it off. Some people in Victoria do not laugh off that sort of reaction because they regard this Chamber as the centre of protest in the State, the centre in which Ministers should be questioned, and in which there ought to be intelligent debate on a wide range of issues and not as a centre where people like the feeble-minded Treasurer constantly use expressions of the type that I deliberately used against him to ascertain whether he recognized that sort of language and the attitude which has been so prevalent from the Government benches.

Before I turn to education, I wish to make some specific remarks in relation to the substantial increase in expenditure in the current financial year which is mainly due, as the Leader of the National Party indicated, to a 29 per cent increase in the salary bill which must be causing the Treasurer a great deal of concern. It must also be robbing the Minister of Transport of some of the badly needed money that he uses for his elaborate transport plans.

The 29 per cent increase in the salary bill for the Education Department warrants considerable explanation by the Treasurer and the Minister of Education. When one deals with a department with an annual expenditure close to $2 billion, one realizes that any small percentage of careless, misplaced or unnecessary expenditure incurs an amount of money sufficient to probably double or treble the expenditure for the authorities administered by the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the Ministry for Ethnic Affairs as well.

It is important that departments such as the Education Department exercise the maximum degree of efficiency. I agree that

that applies to every department. The Education Department is not an income-producing department. It has a minute, insignificant amount of income. It spends something in the order of $2 billion a year. Some further explanation is required by the Treasurer and the Minister of Education about the reasons why the salary bill in the period in question has proportionately increased by 29 per cent.

I turn to the administration of the Minister for Community Welfare Services, particularly the correctional services area. I administered this department for three years and know the facts, deficiencies and difficulties which face the Minister. I agree that it is a difficult portfolio that deals solely with human problems. Irrespective of whether one is speaking about the Correctional Services Division, the Division of Family and Adolescent Services, the Division of Regional Services, or any other section of the department, every client requires sympathetic, sensitive understanding and often costly advice in terms of human care and money.

I am disturbed by the manner in which the Minister for Community Welfare Services has attempted to deceive the people of Victoria about the reasons for some of the deficiencies and understandable difficulties that exist in the department. I shall cite some examples. Currently the Minister is concerned with the difficult problem with overcrowding in prisons. During my term as Minister, the average prison population in Victoria was increasing at the rate of 5 to 7 per cent a year. That upward trend began eight or nine years ago, after a fairly lengthy period in which there was a substantial decline.

The increase was brought about by a number of reasons. I will not go into the details. However, broadly, the reasons were, firstly, that four or five years ago Parliament substantially increased the penalties for a wide range of offences, particularly those involving violence. The terms of imprisonment were lengthened and, instead of offenders receiving a sentence of, say, four or five years, they received sentences of eight or nine years.

Secondly, because a substantial increase in the number of serious crimes of violence took place compared with the total number of criminal offences and economic crimes, the prison population was increasing. A substantial increase in the number of economic and drug-related crimes has taken place. The number of convictions has increased by 2500 per cent. There are a variety of reasons why the prison population substantially increased and, when the former Government became aware of the trend, it took a number of steps to rectify the situation and to plan ahead for the next five or ten years.

One of the salient features of that planning was the provision of alternative sentencing procedures, notably attendance centres and the community service order scheme. When I ceased to be Minister in April 1982, five attendance centres were operating to full capacity. A sixth attendance centre at Bendigo was about to be opened. The first community service order scheme was about to commence in the southern region, which included the electorate represented by the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

All the incoming Minister had to do was finalize the appointment of staff to administer the programme with the Public Service Board. Within a few months of the Labor Party achieving office, the community service order scheme in the southern region commenced and the Bendigo attendance centre was opened.

Fourteen months later—more than the total period of a Budget—not one additional community service order scheme or attendance centre has been provided. Since that time not one additional cell in any prison in Victoria has been provided nor any additional place in any of the existing or alternative sentencing facilities.

Last week the Minister had the audacity to blame the former Government for bad planning because of the lack of adequate facilities available. As the honourable member for Polwarth says, if the Government put as much money into the correctional services area as it puts into task forces and review committees, it would have sufficient funds for a new community service order scheme which would cater at any one time for twenty minor offenders or twenty convicted offenders of crimes which the courts considered suitable to be placed in community service schemes.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JONA—What did the Minister for Community Welfare Services say?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The Minister for Community Welfare Services knows she used an unparliamentary expression and I ask her to withdraw.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I withdraw.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Minister for Community Welfare Services must find it very difficult to sleep with her conscience!

Mrs Toner—It is hard not to!

Mr JONA—Perhaps her husband finds it difficult to sleep with the same conscience!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JONA—She may be the best Minister ever, but she should not have been appointed the Minister for Community Welfare Services. The people of Victoria are entitled to have a true and proper understanding of the reasons for the deficiencies which currently exist in the Correctional Services Division.

The Minister for Community Welfare Services, who is the most deceptive, misleading and dishonest Minister this Parliament has seen in many a year, had the audacity to issue a press release accompanying the Henderson report, which was provided to her from an expert who had undertaken certain important terms of reference. The report consisted of 100 pages and referred to a substantial number of outstanding attributes within the prison system.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JONA—I will say a word or two about Father Brosnan if I am forced to do so. The less Father Brosnan has to do with the running of the prison the better it will be for the people of Victoria. Father Brosnan has a very important area of responsibility and I have a great deal of respect for that area of responsibility and the people in charge of it. However, there are some areas in which Father Brosnan is not an expert and in which his advice is not of value. The Minister for Community Welfare Services should be able to distinguish between those two areas, in the same way that the Minister would be most incompetent if she sought to try to attend to some of the important tasks carried out by Father Brosnan.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JONA—Perhaps he has been there too long!

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member will ignore interjections.

Mr JONA—Mr Speaker, I am sure you would not want to be Speaker for 28 years.

The SPEAKER—If the honourable member will come into my chamber I will tell him for how long I would like to be Speaker!

Mr JONA—The Minister for Community Welfare Services ought to be considerably more honest when making statements about deficiencies and defects that exist in her department. When an incident occurred at Pentridge Prison in which four prisoners escaped from J Division—a prison within a gaol—which meets every United Nations standard in respect of the containment of prisoners—the Minister's Leader said that the escape was due to a breakdown in communication, but the Minister said it was due to the antiquity of the building and the archaic conditions. A week later the Minister instructed her Director-General to lay charges against individual prison officers who were subsequently convicted and fined for negligence in connection with their duties. Once again the blame was thrown on to someone else.

When the Minister later learnt that her prison officers had been negligent, she should have had the decency and honesty to withdraw the remarks she made earlier about the reasons for the escape.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member for Hawthorn, who is a very skilled debater, to relate his remarks to the expenditure associated with the Department of Community Welfare Services in the Supply Bill.

Mr JONA—I want to indicate very clearly the relevance of my remarks to the Supply debate because the Minister for Community Welfare Services has deceived the Parliament and the people of Victoria so often—on almost every occasion on which a crisis has occurred in her department—that she now claims that the archaic conditions existing in Pentridge Prison have led to many of the escapes that have occurred.

This incompetent, deceitful Minister for Community Welfare Services——

The SPEAKER—Order! I call on the honourable member for Hawthorn to withdraw the word "deceitful" as it is unparliamentary.

Mr JONA—I am happy to withdraw the word "deceitful" Mr Speaker, I note that you did not ask me to withdraw the word "incompetent".

This incompetent Minister who is misleading the people of Victoria almost daily, who causes embarrassment to her own colleagues is presiding over a department for which the Treasurer provided a 10 per cent reduction in real terms for work in correctional services in the 1982–83 Budget.

This is the first year of office of the Labor Government of which she is a part, a Government that followed a Government that in the previous six years had built and opened the Jika Jika division, which is one of the world's finest maximum security prisons—for 54 prisoners; which had opened "J" division and had it operating—also one of the finest and up-to-date prisons in the world, meeting the United Nations standards—and the magnificent Pentridge Prison hospital.

What the Minister tends to overlook but refuses to make reference to is the administrative block at Pentridge Prison, which provides first-class facilities for the administrative management of the prison.

Despite the fact the prison has had an expenditure running into over $15 million, the Minister states she inherited a shambles. Of course there are lots of things wrong with Pentridge.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Hawthorn will ignore interjections.

Mr JONA—As members of Parliament we should appeal from time to time for a little morality, a little bit of honesty and straight talking, and a little bit of truth from Ministers when they are making comments on some very serious matters about which the community is entitled to honest and accurate explanations.

There are occasions when politicking is the proper thing to do, but there are other occasions when facts should be revealed, especially as a result of inquiries and information revealed from inquiries. When a Minister deliberately misrepresents and releases sub-sections of reports out of context and gives the community a different impression to what the officer or researcher recommended, that is wrong. That is what the Minister for Community Welfare Services does.

The officers of the Department of Community Welfare Services know that they have had to juggle, jiggle, sack, fire and transfer, all to keep the Minister in office. Everyone throughout the Correctional Services Division, the Regional Services Division and the Family and Adolescent Division of the Minister's department know that the Minister very often gives instructions in which she does not really believe but which have been given to her by the Australian Labor Party State Conference and which the Minister refuses to challenge. Good examples are the razor ribbon and the ultra-violet marking used for prison security. One can quote many examples. The Minister has been directed to carry out certain directions which she knows are not professionally justified and which her own departmental officers have warned her not to do, but which she has to carry out because she has refused to stand up to those people. She has to carry out these conditions to continue in office.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Forest Hill knows very well that he is out of his place and that it is disorderly to interject.

Mr JONA—The Minister for Community Welfare Services is leaving the Chamber because she cannot listen to what I am saying.

At least the Minister of Consumer Affairs, who was justifiably criticized by the shadow Minister of Consumer Affairs, has the courage to remain in the Chamber to defend himself and his party.

However, as soon as the Minister for Community and Welfare Services comes under any pressure, she runs away. When the Minister comes under pressure from her department, she sacks someone.

Mr Gray—You are a nasty little man.

Mr JONA—I am an honest man.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member for Hawthorn should resume his seat when the Speaker is on his feet. I ask the honourable member for Hawthorn to ignore interjections and to try to be a little less provocative.

Mr JONA—Under normal circumstances, I would not be provocative at all, but it is difficult to be restrained when the Minister for Community Welfare Services has been so provocative over the past six months with the large number of deceitful, misleading and incorrect statements that she has made.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member for Hawthorn to withdraw the word "deceitful".

Mr JONA—I withdraw the word "deceitful". However, the statements made by the Minister for Community Welfare Services have given the community a completely wrong impression and understanding of what has been and is occurring.

Even during the course of debate on the Supply Bill, it is proper that honourable members be reminded that a little honesty, morality and truthfulness should be applied to inform Victorians of some of the important issues that come before the House.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I refer to the allocation for education administration, salaries, general expenses and other services.

Approximately fifteen months ago, the former Liberal Government decided to amalgamate the education regions. One amalgamation that did cause concern to me was the amalgamation of the Wimmera and Central Highlands education regions. Although there were many deputations from concerned organizations, municipalities and so on, the former Government stated that it was not prepared to reverse its decision on the amalgamations.

After the election of the Labor Government, the concerned organizations, municipalities and so on repeated their exercise of approaching the new Minister of Education and requested that the Government retain a separate Wimmera education region. They asked the Minister to act and asked for an assurance that that region would not be amalgamated with the Central Highlands education region, the headquarters of which are based at Ballarat.

The Minister of Education gave an undertaking that there would be a review of the region at the end of a twelve month period. That period has passed. I bring to the attention of the House the changes that have occurred in the staffing arrangements and the reason why a revision of the education regions should occur.

The Wimmera education region should not be amalgamated with the Central Highlands education region. Under the old regional boundaries, the Wimmera and Central Highlands regions were directed by two regional directors of education based at Ballarat. After the amalgamation, there was only one regional director based at Ballarat. The regional director is Mr Bob Dobell, who has done a magnificent job for education throughout the region for which he is responsible but the region on present boundaries is too vast. When the amalgamation occurred, an excellent education administrator was lost by the Wimmera education region.

Mr A. T. Evans—Who was that?

Mr McGRATH—That person was Mr Doug Weir. However, he was transferred to the Bendigo education region. Therefore, the Wimmera education region lost its education director. Under the new boundaries two assistant regional directors were appointed. One is based at Horsham and the other at Ballarat. Two senior education officers are based at Horsham. That was so under the old boundaries.

Under the old boundaries, the two education regions had ten education officers. There are now only seven education officers and five of those officers are based at Ballarat and only two are based at Horsham. When the senior professional staff was lost by the sub-regional office, concern was expressed about whether the Government was providing adequately for the outer education region.

I urge the Minister of Education to revise the regional education boundaries and determine whether the old boundaries can be reapplied to the Wimmera education region, as it existed eighteen months ago. Under the present administration there is no flexibility in the administration of special needs staff. The educational services should not be allowed to fall behind in the Wimmera region.

Prior to the amalgamation of the two regions, the administration of education was at a satisfactory level. Many of the new concepts in education emanated from the Horsham regional office. Mr Doug Weir was the regional educational director based at Horsham before the amalgamation. He and his staff were responsible for the satisfactory administration of education involving the entire community and indeed they commenced new initiatives.

I agree with the interjection of the honourable member for Midlands that Mr Weir was a top operator. The loss of professional staff from a city such as Horsham and a district such as the Wimmera would not be advantageous.

The other matters I refer to relate to lands and water resources. I recently received a letter from the shire of Dunmunkle expressing concern that the Lands Department office at Murtoa may be closed. If that occurs, department officers will be transferred and the town will lose the services of the Lands Department. It is important that the officers are retained. Close co-operation has been built up between the farming community and department officers in the Wimmera area. I venture to say that that takes place in most districts.

The Wimmera has suffered a drought and much soil has been shifted around. Large dust storms occurred and noxious weeds have been blown in from other districts. They will settle and germinate in the district. Officers should be based at local levels, such as at Murtoa, to alert farmers and advise them on the necessary action.

Due to the drought, the cash flow to small businesses slowed and by taking away some of the Government employees and closing offices, the viability of country towns is hit. Honourable members should ensure that the departments are decentralized as much as possible. We should not be looking at endeavouring to centralize various Government departments in either the regional or the metropolitan areas. If the departments are not decentralized to a further extent, they should be retained as they are.

Those comments apply also to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission office at Murtoa. Before the Public Bodies Review Committee came into existence, the Water Commission formed a committee to review its administrative structure and to rationalize some of the offices in country areas. When the hearings of the Public Bodies Review Committee began, the officers of the commission had an added work load and the administration review was slowed down, but the commission is now examining the administrative structure.

The commission's officers are based at various places around Victoria such as Horsham, Murtoa and Birchip. If they are taken away from those country areas, the viability of those communities declines. The office at Murtoa has a large responsibility for urban water supply within a radius of 30 miles from the township. It is responsible for much of the farming stock and domestic water supply and the irrigation projects at Murtoa North. The construction of a water storage has been undertaken at Minyip, and that is pleasing.

At a local level, a strong belief exists that the office should remain in the township to provide services to the people in the vicinity. A workshop is situated at Murtoa and, while it may be easy to move administrative offices, it is more difficult to remove a workshop.

If thoughts exist about centralizing Government departments, the Government should look closely at ensuring that it does not take place and that the word "decentralization" is not just a myth. The services of the State must be offered to all sections of the community; an equal opportunity to be served by Government departments should be given to all. Country areas support the viability of the State through agricultural production. The Government owes something in return for that and the matters I have mentioned are some of the returns country people look for.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—When one peruses the Supply Bill, one realizes the costs incurred by the Government. The Government can no longer blame the previous Administration. It has been said a multitude of times that the Labor Party came into office in 1982 with a surplus of $8 million.

The Government is looking at a deficit of $150 million to $160 million. We have frequently heard about the efficient economic management of the Government, but the fact is that the Premier said there was no

need for any increases in taxes. There has been an increase of 27 per cent in taxes during the past twelve months, and Victoria is the highest taxed State in the Commonwealth. These taxes have been taken up by a whole range of increases, particularly in the salary field—in education $259 million; health $110 million; railways $90 million; Treasury $148 million; police and emergency services $366 million and community welfare services $27 million, making a total of $700 million, which has not created one job.

After the Summit Conference where the Premiers agreed to the prices and wages accord, the Premier of Victoria said there would be no increases in taxation, yet, over the past few weeks in this House, nearly every Bill has increased taxes in one form or another. The argument that there is efficient economic management in this State can therefore be refuted.

I wish to comment on the employment initiative grants. A number of councils in the electorate I represent have expressed concern about the way these funds have been allocated. There is a lack of flexibility in the guidelines laid down, The Wedderburn Mechanics Institute Hall at Wedderburn is a central point for people from the areas around Wedderburn to meet and the council and the people living in the area have been trying to find some way in which to restore this building. It is an old building and requires restoration. Honourable members will realize that the cost of restoration works are considerable. Under the employment initiative grants guidelines, 60 per cent of the funds have to go to wages and on costs. This means that the hall at Wedderburn would not qualify for a grant.

Mr Wilkes—There is a special hall subsidy and you know it.

Mr EBERY—The Minister for Local Government says that there is a fund for local halls, but that fund has almost dried up and it would take many years before money from that fund would become available. There are many young apprentices out of work and if the guidelines were made more flexible, and local government given greater input, in the long term the funds could be better utilized and would benefit the community.

When the council receives the forms for these grants, it then has to submit its applications to the Ministry for processing. Comments are then sought from other departments, consultative committees and other groups. Councils are not even included in any consultations even though in the region I represent, out of 46 applications 33 came from councils. If the Ministry were to meet with councils on a regional basis and explain the guidelines for these grants, that would be of great benefit because councils spent a great deal of time and money in making submissions.

There are 211 councils in the State and they should not be denied the opportunity of having an input at departmental level on how these schemes should be implemented. It is an indictment on the Government when it thumbs its nose at local government in this matter.

The employment initiative grants are similar to the old Regional Employment Development Scheme, where funds were allocated on an *ad hoc* basis with no supervision. Councils would be effective in supervising these funds because they have the expertise to ensure that funds are spent in a most prudent way. The Government should recognize local government as having a democratic right. After all, local government is a part of government as we know it under the Westminster system. Representatives of the department and the Ministry should speak to councils on a regional basis so that councils know exactly where they are.

As I pointed out before, of the 46 applications for these grants, 33 were from local government and very few of the applications from local government were successful.

They are very unhappy about the fact that they were not involved and that they were not told exactly what type of projects would qualify. The number of shire secretaries I have spoken to spent many hours putting submissions together to no avail. I appeal to the Minister in charge of initiative employment training to stop thumbing his nose at local government and allow councils at least to have an opportunity of input at that level.

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North)—As the Minister of Transport is at the table, I

will take advantage of the opportunity to direct his attention to a grave problem facing the survival of interstate trains in Australia. The Minister will no doubt agree that Australia has some of the finest trains in the world. I take every opportunity when travelling interstate or overseas to travel by train. Train travel is important for economic and employment factors in this State, particularly in Ballarat which has a large railway workshop with railway staff of about 1000 people.

Railways play a vital part in the life of Victoria. Recently, I have become gravely disturbed at some of the actions taking place and underlying some of these train services which, I repeat, are undoubtedly the finest in the world and are recognized, used and enjoyed by many overseas visitors. People who visit Australia do not seek casinos as they can visit them anywhere in the world. They enjoy our trains because they are a unique feature. The *Indian Pacific* did not run for about six months because of a staffing problem. I understand they wanted the conductors to operate two carriages or cars instead of one and the conductors refused to abide by that request. More recently, electricians have been on strike demanding that they be guaranteed security in their jobs. The conductors and electricians who have refused to co-operate are destroying their job opportunities. It must be known to them, as it is to any other person who considers the transport and railway position seriously in Australia, that it is the dedicated purpose of the Treasuries of every Government that operates railway systems, whether it be at Commonwealth or State level, or Liberal or Labor Government, to put out demands to cut back losses incurred by railway systems, particularly large losses on interstate services. One can understand that approach from a business point of view.

The railways service the community, provide an attraction to overseas visitors and preserve one of the greatest railway systems in the world. It calls for the Government and its colleagues in Canberra, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland to use common sense to ensure that these systems will survive. Recently, I planned to travel to Queensland by train. I rang the Victorian Railways to find out what time the train leaves. I was told that the *Southern Aurora* was not operating on that day because of a strike. I asked what was the alternative and was told it was buses. I asked what time they left and was told to arrive at Spencer Street station at 6.30 p.m. when the details would be worked out. I am not arguing for an improvement in bus services. An article in the *Age* of Thursday, 19 April by Judith Womersley recounts her experiences with trains. This must have been about the same day that I travelled to Brisbane. She had an English cousin visiting and suggested that they go to Sydney by train. Naturally, she would have been proud of our train services and it would have given her cousin the opportunity to see the countryside. The article states:

> The train is to leave Spencer Street at 9 a.m. but we are not allowed on to Platform Two. "We're waiting to hear," says a young man in built-up shoes and the too-short pants of the railway employee. "There's a strike on. They're meeting now."

They eventually got away at 10 o'clock by bus. She continues:

> At Euroa we grab a paper cup of what is supposed to be coffee but turns to be sugared cocoa (we think, it's a bit hard to tell).

The following passage was interesting:

> There is a nun in the long queue for the ladies' toilet, and she adds her sixpenneth to the discussion the ladies are having about the strikers. "They should be burned," she says. I think I must have misheard this lady of the cloth, but she says it again. "They should burn them." Only her state of grace prevents her from adding "the bastards".

The people who are causing the strikes and hoping to retain their jobs will eventually destroy their jobs and one of the most famous train services.

When I eventually reached Sydney by train, I took the train to Brisbane but there were no lights on the train. The train staff hoped to get electricians on board at Broadmeadows, which is outside Newcastle. The electricians did not turn up and the train travelled to Brisbane without lights. Undoubtedly, the New South Wales railways have decided to run trains without electricians and give a restricted service to the people involved.

The other point I make is that if the Minister and his colleagues are seeking a way around this problem of the battle between employees who are undoubtedly worried about their future and the Treasury demands to cut out the losses of operating

trains, there is one suggestion I put to the Minister of Transport. I do not know what the solution is for the electricians. I do not think their fear of losing their jobs is well based. That matter should be resolved comparatively easily.

I also suggested that conductors could opperate without bringing morning cups of tea to passengers. The Minister should suggest to his Ministerial colleagues in the Commonwealth and the other States that conductors operate a morning cup of tea service on the same basis as European hotels. Conductors would not bring cups of tea to the rooms, but passengers should make their way to a place in the passage where they can make their own cups of tea. There is no reason why passengers in these trains could not go to the conductor's compartment where there is milk and hot water, and make their own cups of tea. That would be an acceptable proposition for the conductors.

Cutting back railway services will have a detrimental effect on the Ballarat North electorate which has a railway workshop employing about 700 people. If railway services are cut back, it will affect the operations of manufacturing and servicing within the workshops of Victoria such as those at Bendigo, Ballarat and Newport. I direct the Minister's attention to a press release that he issued on 21 April headed "Threat to rail services averted". It deals with the threat to rail services and states:

> An industrial dispute in the railways which threatened rail services has been resolved.
>
> The Government's Industrial Relations Task Force held talks with rail unions to resolve the dispute this afternoon.
>
> The task force's Mr Ron Walsh, M.L.A., said that "common sense" had prevailed.

It is obvious that common sense did not prevail because the matters have not been resolved.

The Minister himself then entered the discussion on 22 April.

Mr Crabb—What has this to do with the Bill?

Mr A. T. EVANS—It is very important. It has a connection with the availability of work in the railway workshops at Ballarat. If the Minister allows the railways to deteriorate, he will not need so much money to run them and he will not incur such large losses. If the Minister would listen instead of continually interjecting, he would not question my sincerity of purpose.

The press release of 22 April stated that:

> The Minister of Transport, Mr Steve Crabb, met union officials at 5 p.m. today to discuss the issue.
>
> After two hours of talks both parties announced that all the issues had been resolved.
>
> Mr Crabb said that there are no disruptions to rail services.

That was one issue. I now invite the Minister to try his hand at the interstate rail services.

The next point in the Supply Bill to which I draw the attention of the Minister is funding for the Road Safety and Traffic Authority. I have the highest admiration for that body. It has been a worthy section of the department and has played an important role in reducing Victoria's road toll. Its officers are always willing to co-operate with any person who has a proposal or problem.

It is very difficult, Mr Deputy Speaker, to speak to a Minister who is talking to somebody else.

Mr Crabb—You should be addressing the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr A. T. EVANS—I am thankful to you for listening, Mr Deputy Speaker; I have some audience.

In Ballarat some years ago, a committee on cycle safety was elected following the death of a schoolgirl who, while returning from school, was pushed off the road by a car and hit her head on the kerb. The committee was formed to advocate and educate people in the use of safety helmets, and the Road Safety and Traffic Authority was helpful in that programme. Endeavours were made to have manufactured in Australia an American Cooper helmet. However, the American firm withdrew. Since then, the authority has endeavoured to obtain an approved helmet at a reasonable price which could be made readily available to schools. If that helmet could be made available at a reasonable price, we would be halfway to persuading children to use helmets. The helmet is not considered to be the "in" thing; most children who wear helmets are ridiculed by their mates. That

problem has to be overcome, and the authority is playing an important role in that area.

It is vital that the lives of children who use bicycles should be protected. I hope the day will come, under the present Minister, when every school child who rides a bike will use a helmet, encouraged not only by a reduced price for the helmet but also by education.

As the Minister of Transport has other matters on his mind at the moment, I will deal now with the Country Fire Authority. The honourable member for South Barwon made a worthy contribution to the debate in which he drew the attention of the House to the need for preservation of that authority.

One matter that has not been adequately canvassed is the wider role of the authority in road accidents. Most fire brigades today have equipment that they have purchased at their own expense. The Ballarat brigade paid $40 000 for a crash van. When an accident occurs on the Western Highway, volunteers go out with their "jaws of life" and rescue people from trucks and vehicles and can save lives because of the ready availability of this efficient equipment and because of the dedicated personnel who are available. When the Government is considering the allocation of funds, I ask that it consider this broader aspect of the operations of the authority which goes beyond putting out fires. The authority is involved in road rescue operations and in search and rescue operations.

Recently, a report was made by Mrs Monika Trieb who was commissioned by the works and services section of the authority to examine the efficiency of the operation of that authority. Throughout her report, remarks occur to the effect that the equipment is maintained at the highest possible standard at minimal cost and that the cost is seen as secondary to the services provided.

I raise this matter because the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has told honourable members on a number of occasions that the costs of fire-fighting services are too high and that that is one reason why he is seeking the amalgamation of the two fire authorities. "Bigger" has never necessarily been better and it has never been cheaper, whether in private enterprise, Government or local government. The Minister should not require the organizations to account for expenditure when protecting life and property.

Despite the fact that the Minister chose one paragraph out of 400 to criticize the efficiency of the Country Fire Authority, the main point contained in the report was that the Government's interest in the authority cannot be solely in the matter of cost. The Government has lost sight of the fact that the authority is dealing with life and property.

Mr Crabb—Just because we will not give you the job of chairman of the authority!

Mr A. T. EVANS—The Minister makes another inane comment such as I have heard before from him and from some of his colleagues. He does not know what dedication is about. He does not understand the dedication of the volunteers in this community. He has not yet understood that message.

My interest in the authority is that it should be preserved. The Minister believes that, for one to be dedicated to a cause, one must want something out of it. The honourable member for Bendigo, who is shaping up like the Bendigo pugilist after whom his town was named, would not have any idea of human feeling.

Mr Crabb—I wonder why he wanted the job of chairman?

Mr Walsh—He is doing all right on shopping hours.

Mr A. T. EVANS—I am doing all right on anything I want to undertake, but I did not want the job of Chairman of the Country Fire Authority.

The Government says that it wants to economize and reduce the enormous taxation that it has imposed on taxpayers of this State. I am pleased to see that the Treasurer—or whatever his new title is—is now in the House. He is responsible for a 27·5 per cent increase in taxation as well as for rises in gas, electricity and fuel charges.

The Treasurer did appear at the Summit Conference at which accord was struck. If members of the conference had really examined the performance of the Victorian Treasurer, they would have found that he was making not a little but a major contribution to inflation in Victoria because it takes taxes and increased charges imposed

by him to create inflation. The Victorian Government is conscious of the accord of the summit, but is making a major contribution to the hardship of lower income and pension groups in the State.

If the Treasurer wishes to save money, I refer him to a Parliamentary committee that is examining bottle deposit legislation at present and to a newspaper report I read in which one of the back-benchers of the Government party expressed his support for the South Australian deposit scheme which, when examined in comparison with the New South Wales scheme is costing the State and its consumers a lot of money. As well, it is costing jobs in the State.

I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs quite sincerely to closely examine the New South Wales scheme, which is an industry financed scheme and seeks the co-operation of the community where education of the community is imperative for litter control. Certainly, litter is a problem and I realize that there must be some form of control, but that control should not be through the creation of a bureaucracy that will incur unnecessary costs as the South Australian legislation does.

I request the Minister of Consumer Affairs to call together representatives of the industry, the manufacturers of food and beverage containers, and to ask them to come up with a proposition similar to that which operates in South Australia. I am pleased to note the Minister's indication by interjection that he is examining this aspect of the environment.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—Honourable members must realize that the Bill represents almost $2·4 billion and that it is an amount of money the magnitude of which most members of the community will really not be able to comprehend.

Mr Jolly—It is certainly not pocket money.

Mr LEIGH—It certainly is not and no doubt even the Treasurer is not sufficiently able to comprehend the magnitude of the large amounts of money with which he is playing. While the Government has a mandate to govern, the Opposition believes the Upper House should not block money Bills. However, the Opposition has the responsibility of examining what the Government is doing with its money. I shall not refer to every item of expenditure in the Bill, but I shall refer to a few. Firstly, I refer to the scandal of the expenditure of the Department of the Premier where approximately $6·5 million is being spent in various ways.

Mr Gavin—That is not much.

Mr LEIGH—Certainly in the Government's view it is not too much when it comes to paying the Government's cronies in the media unit of the Department of the Premier. I am concerned that what is going on in the Department of the Premier is not in the interests of Victoria, but is in the interests of the Premier and of the Government party because a group of people is employed with the one job to promote not Victoria and not even the Government, as the Minister of Consumer Affairs interjects, because there are times when all it is doing is promoting the Labor Party.

That is not in the interests of the State. It is merely self promotion and it is a copy of the Wran machine in New South Wales. Indeed, it is an even larger machine than Mr Wran's machine because more people participate in this organization to push out the verbal diarrhoea that is issued by the media unit of the Department of Premier.

Mr Spyker—They get coverage.

Mr LEIGH—It's true to say that the media unit does get coverage. At some point, the people of Victoria will become aware that, although on the surface the Labor Party appears to be a good Government and the community appears to perceive the Labor Government as probably having a "B"-plus, the community will realize that for doing the job and really serving the interests of Victoria the Government must be put in the dunce's corner and given a "D" because it will not address itself to long-term problems that effect Victoria.

Another example is tourism. The Government has taken the view that tourism is so unimportant that it is not prepared to give a Minister sole responsibility for it in the way in which, for instance, the Minister of Consumer Affairs is responsible for consumer affairs and has the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. Instead, the Government advertised and received 60 applicants for the job of Director of Tourism for Victoria and the Minister, who was later retrenched from that job, now the Minister for Industrial Affairs, simply went over the heads of

those 60 people to South Australia to obtain the services of the former Premier of South Australia, who is now somewhat of a party hack.

At the functions I have attended at which the Director of Tourism for Victoria has addressed the meeting, I have seen someone who is supposed to promote Victoria but who in fact is such a well-known identity connected with South Australia that he is not supporting Victoria to the extent that he ought if he is doing the job he is supposed to do.

The tourism industry will supply a substantial number of future jobs in this State because it will expand. The manufacturing industry will not employ the labour that it did in the past and it is up to areas of small businesses and service industries to provide those jobs.

However, the end of the advertising that attracted 60 applicants for the position of Director of Tourism for Victoria was the appointment of a person who had not even applied for the job. The Minister for Industrial Relations telephoned him and said: "Look, Don, how about applying? We will give you a $60 000 a year job." That is atrocious. If an employer in the private sector did that to 60 people, the Government party supporters would soon scream. Unfortunately, they have a double standard that is most obvious in this case.

I refer to the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services. Some honourable members have already spoken about the services of the Country Fire Authority. This Government does not believe in people volunteering. It wants to cripple 100 000 people who want to participate in that service and who accept enormous risks without payment. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of Parliament in attempting to amalgamate the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board.

One can only say that it is not surprising that country Victoria would not support them. I take an interest in the Country Fire Authority because its headquarters are in the electorate that I represent. In that instance the Minister has behaved in an irresponsible manner. If those 100 000 volunteers decided not to participate, the Government might have to find enough money to fund the Country Fire Authority. It would not be able to supply the money to do it. The Treasurer has now admitted that he has a Budget deficit. Even with his new management techniques it is still showing up at $150 million.

Before coming to office the Labor Party promised that when it became the Government it would increase the number of police by 1000. However, there has been an 11 per cent cut in the strength of the force. Policemen are terrified they will be retrenched. One has only to talk to them to learn this. One would have thought that the police had enough problems without having to worry about being retrenched or whether they have enough people to deal with crime in the community.

The Government is increasing the number of unmarked police cars on the roads. It would be better to have a visible presence of police on the roads. One wonders about the seriousness of the Minister of Transport and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in ensuring that people drive safely. The more marked and visible cars on the roads, the more careful the community will be when driving. The more unmarked cars, the more fines the Government will be able to collect. This is matter of the life and death of people versus the collection of fines to provide Government revenue. Members of the Government party may deny it and say it is requested by the police, but a more responsible attitude should be taken to stop people speeding rather than getting them in the ambulance afterwards.

The Minister of Education has cancelled the cyclic maintenance programme in the south central region. When in opposition this Minister attacked the former Government over the cancelling of the cyclic maintenance programme. Why has he changed his attitude? It is surprising that the honourable member for Sandringham, who represents the same region, has not made representations about what is going on. Three other regions have exceeded their budgets, and the result has been that the south central region has lost its funds—$500 000. I do not accept that the $500 000 for Malvern Central School has anything to do with it because that money comes from the so-called Victorian Development Fund. The Government owes that region another $500 000. The maintenance programme has

been cancelled. When applications are made for various projects under the Budget at the time, the applications are rejected because the money is not available. However, when in opposition, the Labor Party spent a great deal of time castigating the former Government for its attitude. The present Government is now doing exactly the things that it criticized.

Government back-bench members like the honourable member for Coburg have had to sit quietly, because they have been ordered not to speak. During this debate and yesterday's debate, the majority of speakers were from the Opposition and National Parties, and the number of speakers from the Government party was very small. Perhaps before a member of the Government party can gain preselection, his contributions to *Hansard* are read for their value. That may be the reason for the lack of speakers. The Minister owes the south central region an assurance that the funds will either be reinstated now or added to other funds in the next Budget. If the honourable gentleman has a conscience, he will supply the funds.

One can dwell on one Minister for too long. I now refer to the "No-Buts" campaign of the Minister of Health who, of late, spends a lot of his time getting on trams. The Minister stated that the school dental programme had been cancelled but the Opposition was prepared to fight for it. The ugly head of the Labor caucus would not accept it. The result was that today the Minister came into the House during question time with a trumped up question from one of his back-benchers that he probably wrote himself and stated that it is on again. One must doubt the sincerity of the Government in that regard.

A significant number of medical students will not be able to do their internships this year and will therefore not be eligible to become doctors. As a result, $100 000 a person of Victorian taxpayers' money is being wasted. Not only is that being wasted, but the value and talents of those people are also being lost. On both those grounds I hope the Minister and the Labor Party will withdraw from their present position. Students from the Alfred Hospital and Prince Henry's Hospital are getting together because they are annoyed about the attitude of the Government. If the Government cares, as it says it does—and we hear much rhetoric from it—it should back away from this proposal.

Yesterday the Minister of Transport announced an $84 million bandaid job.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! I have been listening carefully to the honourable member. He has been getting far away from the Bill. I am conscious of the fact that he has not been a member of this place for very long, but I point out to him that the subject-matters into which he is getting would be better dealt with under the Works and Services Bill, which is the matter for public works. The Bill before the House is confined to providing funds to cover operating and administrative expenses and does not extend into the capital works field. I ask the honourable member to bear that in mind.

Mr LEIGH—I certainly shall do that. I referred to that matter merely because Government funds are being withdrawn from one section of the transport area and placed elsewhere. It is an important matter to a large community, and also to the wider area of south eastern Melbourne.

The Labor Party, when in opposition, said that when it came to power it would lower taxes. However, it doubled them. In Australia at present the practice is that if you are a Labor Prime Minister or a Labor Premier, you promise everything, and when you get into power you declare the situation so bad that you have to change what you promised.

Quite frankly, when checking the books of this State, the Treasurer might like to think about what he made out as being something different. The Government broke its commitment with regard to gas prices, electricity prices and water charges. Everything has been increased. The Government is collecting, through this Bill, a high rate of land tax. In the electorate I represent, the tax bill has increased by between 350 per cent and 400 per cent. There are some people whose land tax bills have been increased by 1000 per cent—there is at least one instance that I know of. I do not care what sort of justification the Government might use; that just cannot be done. The fact that a charge can be increased by 1000 per cent in a year should be entered into the *Guinness Book of Records*. In answer to the

Minister of Consumer Affairs, who is interjecting, I resent that assertion because the person to whom the Minister refers is a judge. There is no doubt in my mind that he is paying his taxes and doing more to contribute to the community than is the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

In a little less than two years, this Government will be removed from office because the people will be sick of the charges they are required to pay. The Treasurer has admitted that he has an enormous deficit. The only way in the world he can fund it is to hit people with another tax. It is the only option that this Government seems to be aware of. I can only say that when the Opposition comes back to government it will be faced with a task of a proportion that will be incredible because there is no doubt that what this Government is practising at present is taking money from various sources and spending it. One can live in a fool's paradise for only so long.

Members of the Government party forced onto the community the idea that one can spend today and not have to pay tomorrow. There is a day of reckoning for everybody. I suggest to honourable members on the other side of the House that, if they are not willing to contribute to what is going on in this House, the day of reckoning will come much quicker than they expect.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I raise with some annoyance and sorrow the fact that because of the mismanagement of this Parliament, you, Sir, and the staff of this Parliament, are put beyond human endurance. You have been put under grossly unreasonable pressure. You have had to sit in this place hour after hour.

Mr Crabb—Well, sit down then.

Mr WILLIAMS—I am doing my job as a member of the Opposition. It is not my function on this Supply Bill to seek to oppose but to expose, which is what I intend to do. However, I apologize to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that both the Government and the Opposition should indulge in a way which would, in any other enterprise, lead to a walkout.

It is a matter of great concern that with all the high-powered expertise that the Government has imported into the Treasury, we are getting, in my opinion, a most pedestrian Supply speech that is no better—in fact it could be worse—than those that the Parliament has had to endure in the past century. I had thought that, because of the promises of the Treasurer, we would have a greatly changed Supply Bill. It looks to me as though the figuring and everything else contained in it are the same as they have been since time immemorial. There is hardly any economic analysis in the Minister's Supply speech and only the bare bones of accounting disclosure. I regret to say that the Treasurer's speech on the Bill reads like an old-fashioned director's report, issued before the passing of the uniform Companies Act, expressing the view, "I will tell them nothing bad. I'll treat them like mushrooms". There is no comparison with last year's figures and there is no explanation. Shame on the Treasurer who promised us that we would get a Supply Bill which those of us who had some training in economics and accountancy would get enjoyment out of reading. I get no enjoyment out of ploughing through the Supply Bill. It gives a paucity of information about community services. It simply lists salaries, general expenses and other services. There is no indication of how these expenses are apportioned over the department's activities. I want to know where the money is going. Is it going to the needy or to the greedy? Not much of it is going to the needy. It is going to the salary fat cats because of the big rises in salaries that have been obtained.

There has been no attempt to dissect regional services to ascertain comparisons between the regions. I am supposed to represent a region in an area which is considered to be affluent. However, with other regions which have the predominance of a Labor member, particularly in the western suburbs, I should like to know how they are getting on. If the level of social and welfare services in my area is not any better than in those areas, Lord help the people in the western suburbs, particularly the 750 000 Victorians who are living below the poverty line. They must really be in dire straits. I ask the Treasurer to give a lot more information in the Supply Bill next year so that we can make those proper comparisons.

I am interested to learn that in the Supply Bill the education vote has been increased by a huge 30 per cent over the past year. However, I again suggest that that will not provide any extra benefits for the children.

It will not give them any advantages to help them get jobs and compete with the rest of the world. In an article headed "Squeeze on Secondary Students—Mr Fordham", which appeared in the *Labor Star* of the March–April edition, it is stated that the total number of qualified students refused a place in post-secondary education in Victoria this year is up to more than 40 per cent on last year.

That is shameful. How are our children going to get good jobs? I am sick and tired of the Labor Government rewarding all the people who helped it at election time and not worrying about the needy people.

I protest most strongly that spending on the arts is to be increased by 85 per cent at a time when one of the world's greatest museums is falling into disrepair and must be rescued by one of those dole grants from the Commonwealth. I am annoyed that this Chamber is going to be turned into a Palace of Versailles, and that we have to sit in that Chamber on the other side while this place is being "titified."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member for Doncaster has been in this House long enough to know he is completely out of order with regard to the remarks he has made about another place and about this place. The honourable member will return to the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—I was referring to the services component, as I understand it. I meant no disrespect for the Parliament, but there are more important priorities. If I may get on my hobbyhorse, I express my disappointment at the $125 million allocated to police in the Supply Bill. How much of those funds will be spent on policing organized crime? I suspect not more that 1 cent in the $1.

Over the past five or six years, despite a report from the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence that is more than seven years old detailing the activities of 100 sleazy organized crime figures in the State, not one of those criminals has been put behind bars. When the Attorney-General was in opposition he was outspoken about the lack of action taken on the allegations by Mr Alfred Zion. The then honourable member for Bundoora said:

> Substantial judgments were obtained in the Victorian Supreme Court against Mr Zion and his wife in 1979.

He continued:

> The judge directed that papers filed in the actions and related petitions for winding-up be referred to the Attorney-General . . .

Those papers are now with the Attorney-General.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! Will the honourable member for Doncaster identify the document from which he is quoting?

Mr WILLIAMS—I am quoting from the *Victoria Parliamentary Debates*, volume 358 at page 8200. I ask the present Attorney-General to read page 8201 from the same volume where it states:

> The Attorney-General should give a full account of his actions in the matter referred to him by a Supreme Court judge.

The file is still with the Attorney-General but he has refused to supply the information which was requested in a question on notice about the voluminous material in the files of the Law Department. The honourable member continues in the same paragraph to state:

> The Attorney-General has a responsibility to respond promptly to both the reference made by Justice Marks and the detailed matters raised by the solicitors.

I want the Attorney-General to get off his tail and investigate those allegations. I ask him to bring before a public forum the allegations by Alfred Zion and George Frew against Rex Davidson, Sir Donald Trescowthick, Eddie Kornhauser, Abe Goldberg, Jeffrey Leo Patterson and the other people named in submissions to the police.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—On a point of order, I draw the attention of the Deputy Speaker to the fact that the House is debating the Supply Bill. The honourable member for Doncaster is straying from the issues in that Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member for Doncaster is making his remarks under the heading of the Attorney-General's department referring to funds being provided and, in his opinion, the failure of that department to provide information which he has sought from the Attorney-General. The debate is open for any member of the Government party to

refute allegations made by the honourable member for Doncaster.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your wisdom.

The matter of illegalities in this State is serious. I want other people to appear before a public forum. I am referring to the people named in the McCabe–Lafranchi report because of what they owe the community. They are: Victor Samuel, Eric and Jack Smorgon, Solomon Lew, Mark Liebler, Arnold Block, David Bendel, David Bardas, George Herscu, Paul Fayman, Maurice Alter, Alfred Branicki, Brian Maher and John Wynard. They are some of the names. All of these people were branded in the McCabe–Lafranchi report and yet not one word or one prosecution has apparently been lodged against anyone.

Mrs Patrick—There were no prosecutions in Richmond.

Mr WILLIAMS—That is right, there were no prosecutions in Richmond. The Government has spent $1 million on that inquiry. For nine years I made allegations about the nefarious activities of the Richmond City Council, which were followed by an expensive inquiry, yet not one prosecution has been lodged and is not likely to be lodged.

What a waste of taxpayer's money, which was spent to no avail because there are not enough people in the Police Force or the Attorney-General's Department to properly put forward prosecutions in a court.

I remember the disaster associated with the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd case. It was an utter disaster because of the lack of staff and the fact that the documents were held in court to be inadequate to prosecute the person against whom the prosecutions were launched. It is a public scandal that the Victoria Police Force is 2300 personnel under strength and because it is under strength, at least 100 staff are off duty due to protracted sick leave. As honourable members are working our Parliamentary staff into the ground, this Parliament through the Executive Government is working the loyal members of the Police Force into the ground. The Police Force is the last bastion of protection against organized criminals who day after day are murdering one another. It appears that internal bickering within the painters and dockers is now resulting in deaths day after day.

I once served on the now disbanded Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. I remember the committee being utterly appalled by the mismanagement and financial laxity in the use of public funds.

An Honourable Member—You didn't do anything about it!

Mr WILLIAMS—I have done a great deal about it in Parliament. I have placed many questions on notice but I have only been ridiculed and faced with obstruction from the Ministers, prevaricating action and downright refusal to provide the answers.

Mr Spyker—I gave you answers.

Mr WILLIAMS—I shall not put up with that sort of response from Ministers for much longer. The total expenditure for the Government Printing Office is approaching $10 million a year so a few thousand dollars spent on answering my questions is not too much to ask. I believe I have already smartened up some of the departments and obtained improvements. I should not be surprised to find, if a cost-benefit analysis were carried out on the various departments, that my questions have led to some beneficial improvements.

One cannot hope for absolute efficiency in Government spending; the most one can hope for is that some of the gross wastage and unnecessary extravagance is eliminated. I regret to say that, despite all the promises made by the Cain Government, there is little evidence in the Supply Bill to suggest that it has yet honoured its promises. Regrettably, there are precious few carrots or, for that matter, the necessary sticks that operate in private enterprise—in other words, sacking people to ensure reasonable efficiency in Government spending. In private enterprise if one does not balance one's budget, one is out of business.

Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case in this State. The State seems to run a Budget deficit into hundreds of millions of dollars. I understood that by law the State Budget was not allowed to incur large deficits. I pay some tribute to the Auditor-General who is trying to get Victoria's accounts into order.

The sitting was suspended at 6.30 *p.m. until* 8.6 *p.m.*

Mr WILLIAMS—Prior to the suspension of the sitting, I was about to speak on Division 103, Parliamentary printing, for which an allocation of $1·08 million is made, and on Division 501 which makes an appropriation of $3·6 million for salaries of those employed at the Government Printing Office, whose total budget for the year 1982–83 is more than $8 million, of which sum approximately $2·5 million is for Parliamentary printing.

I am pleased that the Minister for Property and Services is in the Chamber. I have been doing some snooping around the Government Printing Office and, through you, Mr Speaker, I wish to address some remarks to the Minister and to make some revelations to him.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—The honourable member should reveal them to the House.

Mr WILLIAMS—I am pleased to tell you, Mr Speaker, and the House that the Minister who presides over the Government Printing Office is, in my opinion, responsible for gross mismanagement of public revenue. That office represents an investment of well over $11 million, and in 1981–82 it earned a profit of $60 000 when any good printing business of that size would have earned at least $500 000. The boffins in the Treasury now talk about the opportunity cost and about earning a proper rate of return on equity.

Mr Simpson—Where did you get your Christmas cards printed?

Mr WILLIAMS—I do not want subsidies for my Christmas cards or anything else at the expense of the taxpayer.

Mr Simpson—I am informed that you asked for a subsidy on your Christmas cards.

Mr WILLIAMS—I expect the Government Printing Office to pay its way. I am disturbed that the cost of printing *Hansard* has almost doubled on last year's costs when hot metal was used. It was promised that *Hansard* would be produced at the Government Printing Office when computers were installed, but the Solna 96 offset machine, which cost more than $1·5 million, stands idle for most of the time. Much Government printing that should be done at that office is being contracted out; a great deal of unnecessary overtime is worked by nonproductive staff such as supervisors, clerks and estimators. I do not know why they need to work overtime. There is a lack of skilled junior staff.

Those are the reasons why this Parliament has not been able to get its documents on time. Yesterday honourable members suffered the indignity of having a mimeographed document rather than a printed one. Questions on notice that were lodged yesterday are still not on the table of the Parliament.

Unfortunately, because of a lack of skilled staff to operate the computer it is still necessary to have a hot metal backup. The computer is overworked and not adequately maintained so it keeps breaking down.

It is appalling that our sacred *Hansard* has to be contracted out. A private firm is now printing *Hansard*. Apparently the only jobs that are not contracted out are Bills, examination papers and other highly confidential matters.

What do we have a Government Printing Office for if it is not doing the job? The Minister can still exist as Minister for Property and Services if that gives him any satisfaction, but so far as I am concerned a significant section of his portfolio—that part covering the Government Printing Office—could be done without.

I am concerned about the mistakes that are appearing in *Hansard* and the fact that weekly editions of *Hansard* have to be tossed out and reprinted at the cost of thousands of dollars. I am very concerned by the report of the Auditor-General for May 1983 on the accounts of the Government Printing Office. They do not reveal a businesslike operation. I hope the bright boys at Treasury will examine the documents and start charging the work of the Government Printing Office on true operating costs and ensure that a lot of unnecessary and wasteful expenditure is reduced.

The Parliament is not very well serviced. Of all the departments in the Public Service the Parliament ought to be the focus of attention but the Parliament is treated shabbily and cannot even get proper service from the Government Printing Office.

What about the poor Library staff. There are too few staff members who have to try to cope with the work of the Parliament. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Library has a staff of 151—79 professional and 72 support staff. The budget for the Parliamentary Library in Canberra is well over $5 million and in New South Wales the budget is $600 000. In Victoria it is $450 000.

The staff in our Parliamentary Library are magnificent but are constantly overworked. There are 7 professional librarians and 9 support staff. They have to service 123 members of Parliament. In New South Wales there are 30 staff to service 143 members and in the Federal Parliamentary Library there are 151 staff to service 189 Federal members of Parliament. It is deplorable that our Library staff do not have adequate on-line computer information back-up or the facilities to adequately retrieve the documents entrusted to their care.

I urge that in the next year's Estimates consideration be given by the Government to upgrading our wonderful library and providing more staff and facilities.

I suffer the indignity of personal criticism from Ministers almost daily. They say I am a confounded nuisance for putting so many questions on notice. I inform those Ministers that if they provided the Parliamentary Library with the proper backup service I would not have to ask all of these questions. There would be no need for me to do so.

When the present Ministers were in opposition they were all in favour of freedom of information—open government—but now that they are Ministers it is impossible to get information from them. They have their staff so tied up that it is not possible to get information. Yesterday a senior public servant telephoned me and his opening remarks were that he had the permission of his Minister to speak to me. What sort of Government do we have when a divisional head of a commission has to telephone me and preface his introduction with the statement that he has the permission of his Minister to speak to me?

It is utterly deplorable what members of Parliament, and particularly Opposition members, have to tolerate from lack of backup staff. If we are to do our job as Opposition members we need information. A number of Ministers have made great play of the fact they have been banking money much quicker than under the previous Administration. In all honesty and sincerity, I put a question on notice requesting details of monthly bankings since April 1981. The reply I received from the Ministers was that they are not prepared to give me that information.

To get a proper understanding of costs and proper returns of equity I asked every Minister to give me details of the equity, plus other information, of proper earning rates and so on about qangos operating within their jurisdiction. Without exception the Ministers replied that they would not answer my question.

I trust we will not suffer the humiliation of the gag tonight. I have hundreds of questions I hope to put to Ministers and I hope the Constitutional lawyers will get their books out. If the House is subjected to the gag tonight, in my view it is right and proper for the people in the other place to delay the Supply Bill right through the winter. If I cannot get answers in this place I will consult my colleagues in the other place, give them my list of questions and ask them to stay on their feet until they get answers. It is my understanding that that will not constitute a refusal of Supply.

So far as I am concerned the Labor Government can wait until Christmas for the passing of the Supply Bill. There will be no need to vote against the Supply Bill. If my colleagues in the Upper House do their job properly and seek answers to questions about departmental expenditure, the Opposition is right in obstructing Supply in the Upper House until Christmas.

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—This Supply Bill seeks an allocation of $267 billion—an increase of 25·6 per cent over the allocation for the similar period last year. It is interesting to note that the Government is not managing the financial affairs of the State in the way they should be managed.

The statement of financial transactions in the Current Account for the month of March reveals a deficit at the end of March of $227·1 million. The fact is the Government's cash flow position is far worse at 31 March 1983 than at the corresponding time in any previous financial year.

The Government claims that there will be no wage rises, but the Bill allows for an increase of 25·6 per cent in wages in the

public sector. This year electricity charges have risen by an average of 15 per cent; gas charges have risen by an average of 1·5 per cent, and gas charges for business and industry will have risen by a further 19 per cent by next July; public hospital charges have risen by 52 per cent; ambulance charges have risen by 25 per cent; family health insurance has risen by $1.76 a week and total State taxation has risen by 27 per cent, which is 11 per cent more than the average taxation paid in other States. Indeed, the Government has introduced a new tax, namely, the financial institutions duty. At the bottom of today's date pad is the quote, "Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law". The Australian Labor Party, which claims that it speaks as a people's Government for the ordinary person, is taxing Victoria heavily.

The community welfare services area is starved of adequate staffing. All honourable members have been appalled at the shocking state of affairs at Pentridge Prison and the fact that prisoners have escaped from that gaol. There is insufficient staff to deal with the problems there. The staff are overworked. In the past, I had the privilege of knowing the widow of one of the warders who worked at Pentridge Prison. I was appalled when she told me what went on at Pentridge and how her husband's illness was aggravated by the extreme pressure he was put under when working in that gaol.

Mr Jolly—When was that?

Mrs PATRICK—That was a few years ago, but, nevertheless, the same position would pertain to those warders who are presently working under severe strain at Pentridge. The pressure on the warders is caused by the overcrowding of the gaol and the problems that flow from prisoners being incarcerated in cramped conditions.

The Brighton police station is situated on the corner of Wilson and Carpenter streets. It is an architecturally pleasing building but is of plain design. It is situated opposite the Brighton Town Hall and opposite the police station a sensitive Brighton developer has built some units, the design of which matches the police station and the town hall.

Last week an enormous, ugly, cyclone fence was erected around the police station. Why was that fence erected? I have been informed by one of the local legal practitioners that one of his clients was kept in the Brighton police station lock-up. When I wanted to inspect that lock-up, I was told that it had to be painted before I could see it. So far, I have not been invited to inspect that lock-up. I can only believe that the cyclone fence has been erected so that anybody who is kept in the lock-up for a period longer than a few hours can take some exercise in the yard.

Prior to the erection of that cyclone fence, there was no fenced area at the police station for a person kept in the lock-up overnight in which he or she could have any exercise. Members of the Police Force arrest offenders and take them to Pentridge. However, those members of the Police Force now have to house the offenders in local lock-ups because there is no room at Pentridge. The police station lock-ups throughout the entire metropolitan area are overcrowded. It appears that in one instance mattresses were placed on the floor of the police station lock-up for prisoners to sleep on.

The Minister for Community Welfare Services must be most embarrassed that she cannot do her job properly. I am not surprised. The Minister must have felt embarrassed when she went cap in hand to Cabinet and was told that there was no money. The matter is serious because nobody in the community wants to see offenders held for days in local police station lock-ups.

I have referred to this matter in the hope that the Minister of Public Works, who authorized the erection of this cyclone fence, will explain the reasons for the fence.

I turn now to the allocation for education. The southern education region is being denied $500 000 because the other education regions have overspent their budgets. In the southern region old schools compete with each other for maintenance programmes on simple things such as painting and the replacement of windows. One wonders what type of advice the Minister of Education is being given when an education region that has not overspent its budget is denied $500 000 because other education regions have overspent their budgets.

One wonders what research is being done about the future of technical education. It is a matter of deep concern to the community, especially the people of Brighton. The Brighton Technical School is an excellent facility. For some time everybody has been

nervous about the future of technical education in Victoria. What is the future of technical and further education in Victoria?

Victoria needs more skilled workmen and the creation of more jobs. Insufficient research is being carried out into whether or not the technical education system should be retained. Those persons involved in the technical education system are worried that any amalgamation of technical schools with high schools will result in a lower standard of workmanship in the field of technical education.

It is vital that jobs be created for persons skilled in various areas of trade work. Technical education is an area in which the Government could invest profitably through salaries for trade teachers and by broadening the spectrum of education. The Brighton Technical School conducts a course in the manufacture of plate glass. On the island of Murano off the coast of Italy skilled glass craftsmen produce various glass products. People are willing to pay large sums of money for first-class art glass. Why should that school not be granted more money to extend its course in the manufacture of plate glass? That and other possibilities should be researched in the hope of creating more skilled jobs for those people who are presently out of work.

When one turns to the allocation for public works, one realizes that not much work is being done on beach renourishment. The beaches are of vital importance to Victoria because they provide an opportunity for leisure. This miserable Government has decided that leisure is not an important issue. I have found it impossible to get the Minister responsible to inspect the Sandringham beach. I know that the honourable member for Sandringham has tried repeatedly to do the same, but the Minister will not inspect the beach because he claims that a study is being carried out in Sandringham and that he is not prepared to inspect the beach until after that study is completed. What a weak, paltry excuse.

The ratepayers of both the cities of Brighton and Sandringham contributed large amounts of money to keep the beaches in good condition for the use of the people of Victoria. The maximum subsidy allocated for beach cleaning is $25 000 a year. That is insufficient and should be increased.

When one considers the Law Department, serious worries arise for members of the Opposition. Victoria does not really have an Attorney-General and, therefore, I presume there is no department. The surrogate Attorney-General is a public servant.

Mr Maclellan—He is not a public servant, he is a contract man.

Mrs PATRICK—I stand corrected, he is a contract man. The Attorney-General is proud of being a lawyer and he was a good solicitor. He likes to have the title of Attorney-General, but what he does fascinates me. Honourable members know that four or five days before the collapse of the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd, the Premier knew what was going on. He knew the company was in trouble and one suspects that he possibly knew about that when he looked at the balance sheet, if he had time, on 5 March.

Upon questions being asked about money going from the State Development Fund, the answer received was that it had nothing to do with Treasury or the Government; it is run by an independent concern. That is public money and money from State authorities goes into that account. It is extremely curious that there is no liaison between the Premier—the so-called Attorney-General—and the Treasurer, and that nobody bothered to warn the State Development Fund of the impending disaster of the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd.

Mr Jolly—They were bills of exchange.

Mrs PATRICK—It does not matter whether they were bills of exchange; that means the bank would lose it rather than the Government. That compounds the issue. Why were they bank bills? The State Development Fund was not warned; where is the liaison and what advice is given by the Department of the Premier and the Law Department to the fund? If it is completely independent, and there is knowledge in the Treasury and the Premier's department, does that mean it is not the Premier's duty to warn the fund?

I turn now to the inquiry into the Richmond City Council and I wonder what the Attorney-General is doing about that.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The honourable member is casting the net fairly wide on the Bill.

Mrs PATRICK—Is it a matter of shortage of staff and salaried officers that investigations are not proceeding to decide whether prosecutions will follow the Richmond City Council inquiry? That is the question I ask. Why is it taking so long?

As to health administration, salaries are being paid in the local government area to pre-school teachers, but there is considerable disquiet in the community as to what will happen to maintenance money.

I turn now to the Valuer-General's office. The Valuer-General has been upgrading the valuations of properties throughout Victoria to levels that are unrealistic in today's market and I ask why these valuations are increasing by such an extent. The increase in valuations has wide ramifications for the people living in Brighton, and I have examples of State land taxes that have increased from 1982 to 1983 as a result of the policy of this Government that likes to hit people who own homes, particularly those owning a holiday block of land.

The charges have risen not only because of the Government policy, but also because the Valuer-General has inflated values beyond the level the properties could realize in the market-place. The examples I have of increases in land tax assessments from 1982 to 1983 are: $354 to $1128; $18 to $613; $408.78 to $760.11; $405.16 to $729.94; $262.94 to $620.50; and $38 to $529.65. The last example is an increase of 1293 per cent from the 1982 assessment. These hikes in charges are causing considerable hardship and they are due, in part, to the valuations put on properties by the Valuer-General. This is not confined to the electorate that I represent. A gentleman who owns a shop and dwelling in Sunshine paid $376.26 in 1982 and $479 in 1983. Many of the people living in the electorate that I represent are on fixed incomes and it behoves the Valuer-General to examine a system of valuation which currently does not reflect the valuation in the market-place.

Local government was promised a great deal more money; it was promised a percentage of State taxes by the Government before it came into office. It has not received additional money and the Local Government Department has not received additional salaried officers to undertake the important work that should be done. Most councils are now having to carry out zero base budgeting. Additional staff is needed in the department for several important matters. One is the rewrite of the Local Government Act, which has been on the way for some years but has not yet been written and is a matter of urgency. Research is also needed to provide and prepare an up-to-date list of all grants and finance available to local government from various sources. It is impossible to get a complete list from the department and how councils know what is available to them is beyond my comprehension because no list exists. The Municipal Association of Victoria stated that there is no list. When local government is carrying out its agency function on behalf of the State Government, it ought to be paid fully the salaried costs of the officers employed. The subsidy granted to infant welfare sisters is on a $2 for $1 basis and applies to salaries payable at the time of the Budget. The housekeeper home help services offer various alternatives of service and the employees are subject to the Municipal Employees Award. The provisions of the award should be considered when the subsidy is fixed.

The senior citizens club receives only maintenance payments, no salary payments. Under libraries the level has recently gone up a little under this Government but not sufficient to pay the salaries or to keep pace with the high cost of running a library service.

Other matters that need to be looked at are salaries and grants in the field of immunization, under local government, and school crossing supervisors. The Grants Commission needs some examination. There are many councils throughout Victoria that are concerned about the needs component of the Grants Commission allocation. They were told that it was an accurate formula, an invariable formula, but there is an invariable built into that needs formula. Staff should be employed to examine how this needs formula is being applied and how it works in various municipalities.

This Government introduced an iniquitous tax called the financial institutions duty. It was spelt out that local government was exempt from that iniquitous duty, but it now transpires that investment transactions carried out by local government may

not be exempt from the financial institutions duty. I call upon the Minister for Local Government to make the exact position clear to municipal councils. I have had many letters concerning it and there seems to be confusion.

The Treasurer informs me that local government investment accounts are subject to financial institutions duty. That means one partner in government is taxing another. Let it work the other way; if the State Government is going to tax local government, then the State Government should pay rates on property it owns in local municipalities. *Quid pro quo*—fair is fair.

Local government is hamstrung in borrowing money because, under the Local Government Act, State control takes the form of administrative restrictions and limits on the amounts borrowed. All States, including Victoria, require municipal direction to borrow. Local councils are hampered in their long-term financial planning by the existence of a rather cumbersome loan raising procedure which is required by virtue of the Local Government Act.

In addition, local government has to borrow within the Australian Loan Council framework and the borrowing is hindered to a major extent by the present borrowing procedures within the local council framework.

Local councils are not able to borrow more than a specified amount, and it does not seem to have any bearing on whether or not they can pay it back on their financial standing. All these matters need to be studied.

Last week this Parliament recognized, in the Constitution Act, that local government is a partner, and I would say almost a full partner. Although local government was created by the State Parliament, nevertheless it is a partner in government and much research has to be done to ascertain where local government is going, how it can finance itself, and now that adult franchise has been introduced, whether those people voting should contribute to many of the social services being provided for people over the age of 18 years or whether it should be passed on to the people who own properties and who will have to carry the cost for all those people over 18 years who are making use of libraries and many of the welfare provisions provided by local government. It is a vitally important area.

I have been told that the Local Government Department is understaffed. The staff do an excellent job, and the department would be one of the best run departments in the Victorian Government. However, if the staff are to carry out any kind of reasoned research—and it should do this to know what is going on—more salaried staff and others are needed to carry out this work. I am not being bipartisan when I talk about more staff for local government. I made the same remarks when the Liberal Party was in government.

This miserable Government said it would give more money to local government but it has done nothing to show its good faith in local government. It has been reluctant to give local government any additional help with research so that local government can go forward and continue to grow and increase in strength.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—I join this debate to mention several items in the Bill. The Minister in his second-reading speech said that the major change which has been incorporated in this Supply Bill relates to the appropriation for transport purposes. As I have an interest in transport, I would like to examine the points put forward in this Bill.

The Minister also said that it is the Government's intention to reorganize existing transport organizations to improve the efficiency of the total transport system in Victoria, and he went on further to state:

> To facilitate this re-organization the Government has decided to provide in the Supply Bill for one appropriation covering the likely payments in respect of the relevant authorities, together with those of the Ministry of Transport itself. This provision is made under Division No.720 Ministry of Transport.

I bring to the attention of the House the expenditure that is foreshadowed in the Bill for positions yet to be appointed. I see this as an unusual move because it assumes that there will be changes to salaries and changes to positions some time in this session of Parliament. The Minister talks about the efficiency of transport and the main item deals with salaries.

It is interesting to compare the staffing levels of the Victorian transport system with

other transport systems in Australia and also in the world. There was an interesting article in the *Age* on 16 March. The article was as follows:

> VicRail claims third highest staffing level.
>
> Victoria's rail network is among the most highly staffed of comparable systems in advanced countries, according to a figure released by VicRail. In 1981–82 VicRail had 678 employees per million train kilometres, only exceeded by Italy (700) and N.S.W. (680) which is cutting back its staff.

Because of its high staffing, the New South Wales Government is already taking steps to cut back. The release of the Victorian figure comes shortly after the Victorian Railways was directed by the Minister of Transport to employ an extra 250 station staff. At the same time, the decision was made to sell the ticket vending machines. These machines were purchased some time ago, but because of union pressure they were unable to be used. Commenting on the machines yesterday, the Minister of Transport said they were for sale but not for the original reason stated, which was that they could not be programmed to sell travel cards. That material is in store, and it costs a considerable amount of money to keep it there. It was not beyond the wit of the Ministry of Transport to devise some way of using those machines. The Minister said that although the machines could be reprogrammed for part of the new system, it would cost more than $4000 to alter the larger machines. It is believed the Victorian Railways would lose at least that much with the sale of the machines.

The question of reducing some of the costs of the system was swept aside. I believe the real reason behind selling the machines was the fact that the union had declared them black and would not tolerate their use. The article in the *Age* stated:

> Mr Crabb denied the machines were being sold off because of pressure from the Australian Railways Union, which technically still has a black ban on the units dating from a Liberal Government plan to have them replace station staff.

On the same subject of these mystery machines, I was intrigued to read an *Age* editorial of Wednesday, 6 March criticizing the Minister and saying that he could urgently reopen, if he has not already done so, the strange case of the vending machines for sale, when the former Government bought 150 of the vending machines at a cost of $2 million for use in suburban stations, many of which are unmanned at night. To give the Minister his due, he has taken some steps to ensure that stations have been manned, especially during the night, although there are other stations that have not received that attention. The article indicates that the machines were properly blackbanned by the Australian Railways Union on the suspicion that they would inevitably displace station staff and are still unused after more than two years and have been kept switched on to keep them in running order. The machines have been offered for sale, ostensibly because they were not geared to sell tickets and not geared to sell the new travel cards, but they are not operating because of the triumph of the union over transport economics. However, it now emerges that the machines could be adapted to sell the new type of tickets and that the union has modified its earlier opposition to their use, so why are they for sale? There appears to be a breakdown between the Victorian Railways and the new "beefed-up" Ministry of Transport. The union has apparently adopted a more conciliatory approach to the new Labor Government and acknowledged a heavy leakage of revenue revealed by recent crackdowns on fare evasions.

It is now prepared to accept the use of the vending machines to supplement, but not replace, station staff. This is very heartening, but given the general change with the State's limited finance in meeting public transport deficit, the unions must be much more realistic and the transport authorities must be much less defeatist towards the necessity to improve productivity.

Another matter I take up during the debate relates to police and emergency services. Many people were heartened by the Labor Government's promise to increase the number of police in Victoria. Their expectations were raised in believing that the safety of citizens would be improved. No doubt, many people were persuaded to vote for the Labor Government because of this factor. Despite that factor, the number of police has not significantly increased, and country area stations that were hitherto manned for 24 hours are not now manned at all.

Country police stations are not being manned because the Government has not provided sufficient money to pay salaries for people working during the night. Country police stations have installed telephone answering services. If anyone is burgled or encounters problems during the night, such as domestic situations, instead of receiving prompt service that was supplied previously, the machine answers the telephone calls and asks the caller to state his problem and indicates that a policeman will visit the caller in the morning.

In one town in the electorate I represent a garage that had been burgled many times decided to solve the problem by installing a burglar alarm, which was an expensive piece of equipment. It was designed so that any intruder forcibly entering the garage would cause the bell to ring in the police station.

Mr Gavin—I have heard this story before.

Mr DELZOPPO—Yes, I brought up this matter a few months ago, but nothing has been done about it. If the Government had any concern for people living in that area, I would have thought something would have been done. Despite asking and writing for help, the situation still exists. When the garage was burgled one night the alarm rang at the police station, and was recorded by the answering service. Instead of the previous system when the police station was manned for 24 hours and a policeman would have attended to the burglary straight away with the chance of apprehending the people involved, at 9 o'clock the next morning the police officers ran through the tape and realized that at 2 a.m. the garage had been broken into. It was too late to do anything about it.

The other point about police services in the electorate I represent is that a great influx of visitors go to Mount Baw Baw in the snow season. Because of the wet and slippery conditions and motorists who are often unused to the conditions, many accidents occur. The police are called out from the closest station, but now with the reduction in police services and the closure of stations, the police may have to travel about 20 miles to attend the scene of the accident.

It ought to be the responsibility of the Government to provide adequate services to protect inexperienced people who visit the snow fields during the winter months.

Apparently I annoy some honourable members by constantly raising matters. It is only by drawing the attention of the Government to a matter again and again that something will be done.

I trust that as a consequence of my remarks tonight some of the small police stations in the electorate I represent, that were hitherto manned for 24 hours a day, will be given that service again so that people can sleep in the knowledge that they have adequate police protection.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Honourable members have heard about the Government's mandate, but this Government is a Government of high fliers and economic illiterates and came into power on the basis of, "Give us the chance and we will show you how to run the State". They certainly have shown us how not to run the State. Victoria has the biggest deficit ever in its history. Why? Because economic illiterates are running the Government. Victoria has a Treasurer that never left school. Never did honourable members think we would see the day when a Treasurer in Victoria would make Frank Crean look good, but Victoria has one now.

At present Victoria has a $301 million deficit. The promise was made that figures would be made available to the public regularly and in plenty of time so that they could be considered by the community. Indeed, it is estimated by the Opposition that an expected deficit of $170 million will still remain at the end of June. Victoria has a situation where at Budget time, whatever happens one can be sure that the coming Budget will be framed on the largest deficit this State has ever had. That is not what I call prudent economic management.

How does that contrast with the promises made by members of the Government when they were in Opposition? They said that in many cases State taxes and charges would be reduced. That was their policy statement when in opposition. Opposition members can show brochures that even have a picture of the Premier on the front cover that promise decreases of up to 4 per cent in various areas. What has happened since then? Of course, State taxes have increased by an average of 27 per cent. Health charges have increased.

I want to comment, as I know I am required to, on specific items of supply. Perhaps I shall start with some promises that were made, such as the provision of 1000 extra police. That does not mean that 1000 policemen will be put on and 1100 policemen will retire resulting in a decrease of 100 police. The promise was for 1000 extra police over a three-year period. The way things are going I daresay the Government will be looking for excuses to go to the polls early! The Government has less than two years to deliver on that promise. The situation is, there is no way it will honour that promise, or indeed plan to honour the promise.

Members of the Opposition will stand up on this side of the Chamber within two years and debate the broken promises on the basis of facing an election.

I shall now examine some of the divisions in the Bill. The first is the Department of the Premier. For what is the Government using some of the money that has been allocated? It is an absolute disgrace and it will not give members of the Government any pride to hear what I have to say about the publication of *Victorian Government Notes.* When I first looked through that publication I did not realize it was paid for by the taxpayer. I could not believe it when I was told later because it appears to be an Australian Labor Party publication. That is what it is.

I can show the House many publications that do not show the name of the printer or who authorizes the publication. The *Victorian Government Notes* bears the note, "Authorized by the Secretary to Cabinet" and identifies the printer. The reason for that is so that it can be lawfully used at election time. The Government knows it would be taken to the cleaners on the basis of using that campaign material if it was not properly authorized and did not include the name of the printer.

The Government is only interested in the City of Melbourne and could not care less about country Victoria, but the Government has started a review of incentives that exist throughout Victoria to approved decentralized industries. I realize that metropolitan members have not heard of that. The line around Melbourne—80 kilometres from the General Post Office— is not where the world ends, although I expect it is in the opinion of the Government. That is where country Victoria starts.

The Government is reviewing the incentives that exist and that may have been successful in encouraging industries to move out of the quagmire—namely, Melbourne—into the bush where they can not only get good, clean, fresh air but also a good lifestyle for the families of their workers. What will this magnificent review show up? I am pleased to note that the Minister for Economic Development is in the House because he is allowing tourism to collapse. Regions are folding up. The Minister has been begged to receive deputations but has dismissed them out of hand. The Minister tells the community, "When I want to speak to you, I will". The regions are on the brink of folding up because the Minister is not prepared to meet deputations.

The Minister interjects. If he wants a debate I invite him to follow me. This is the forum for discussion. The Minister has privilege but we want to hear why he is letting the community down. The Minister could not care less about country Victoria. Melbourne is what counts and keeping the drinkers happy. He wants to bring the money in that is presently going to approved decentralized industries; that is what the review is all about—bringing the money into Melbourne.

I now signal loud and clear what the Opposition has been told. The Opposition has been informed that the review will change the decentralization incentives that now exist. I refer to the rebate of pay-roll tax. In some cases the only profit that some country industries enjoy will be removed. I hope that is wrong.

It is to be hoped that during the debate the Government will clarify the situation. If ever I am wrong, I hope I am wrong on this one because I do not want to see rural industries collapse. Under the reviews that the Minister for Economic Development claims are in train, recommendations are being made that the Government should abolish the incentives to approved decentralized industries. I challenge the Minister for Economic Development to follow me in the debate.

What is the future? The Bill does not deal with the future because it relates to only a short period. The incentives for approved

decentralized industries are being drastically altered so that the Melbourne-based Government can pander more to the people of Melbourne. Time will tell.

I have referred to the area of tourism. I am pleased to note that the Minister responsible for tourism is present in the Chamber. I say, "the Minister responsible" because there is no Minister for Tourism. If I am wrong on that, I should like to hear about it. The reality is that the former Liberal Government established the only Ministry of Tourism this State has ever seen. The former honourable member for Frankston was appointed the Minister for Tourism. He was widely respected, well liked and a brilliant member of Parliament. He stood up for his constituents and he never wrote to a justice of the peace and said, "Write back because if you don't I will have your commission revoked". The former honourable member for Frankston never took such action.

Not only did the Government abolish the Ministry of Tourism, it also abolished a regionalization of tourism in this State. Why did the Government do that? It does not care about tourism. It is crystal clear that the Government believes Victoria does not need tourism. The people who live in the bush believe Victoria needs tourism, but the Government knows that there is only one political choice for people who live in the bush and that is not the Labor Party.

Along with the promises to provide an additional 1000 police, many other promises were made. I refer to the small country hamlet of Bass which is a delightful spot on the South Gippsland Highway. For decades Bass has had a one-man police station. What did this bunch of incompetent Ministers do? They decided to staff the San Remo police station, which the former Government had provided on the basis of moving the Cranbourne police station, when Norm Gallagher finally permitted the completion of that building after a debacle lasting two years.

If there is one thing I have regretted in my short time in this House, it was not getting the shadow Ministry of Transport. The Minister of Transport is interjecting. There is no doubt that if I had obtained that shadow Ministry the Minister of Transport and I would have had good debates. However, that is not my area and I am pleased that one of the most competent honourable members on this side of the House is the shadow Minister of Transport, and I refer to the honourable member for Narracan.

Against the backdrop of the promise to provide 1000 extra police, the Government pinched the policeman who was stationed at Bass and moved him to San Remo. The Government planned to close the Bass police station. There are three active honourable members who represent that area and I refer to the Honourable Roy Ward and the Honourable Alan Hunt in another place and yours truly. I regret that modesty is one of my attributes, so I refrain from going further.

Fortunately the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was decent enough to at least acknowledge a reasonable argument. The honourable gentleman was prepared to listen, unlike many other Ministers in the House, and he agreed to ensure that at least the Bass police station would be staffed part-time. So the community has, to a degree, had a reprieve.

I do not know which division to refer to next in the Bill—it is a smorgasbord. I compliment the Minister of Health on his move to legislate against bogus charities. I also congratulate the Minister on the "No-Buts" campaign. That has my whole-hearted support. This morning I heard the Minister of Health on talk-back radio, as I do every day. The Minister was answering questions to justify the expenditure of money on that campaign because that expenditure will ultimately be in the interests of public health. I am one on this side of the Chamber who is prepared to say that I share that view. I again commend the Minister for his actions in that area.

There is one thing that worries me personally and that is the undertaking of the Minister of Health to donate his organs upon death. One never knows what the future holds. Last year, I was involved in a nasty car accident and I fortunately got out of it very lightly. However, I could have been on my death-bed and vital organs might have been necessary for my life to have been saved. I advise the House that I would be most reluctant to ever receive either the brain or the voice box of the Minister of Health! I want to put that on the record.

I now refer to the allocation for youth, sport and recreation. Like many other promises, the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation has ignored his promise to correct the fractions involved in after-race pay-outs. Some months ago, I was pleased to hear the Minister give an undertaking, as he did when in opposition, that the Government would immediately introduce a policy to correct this matter by rounding off the after-race pay-outs to the nearest 5 cents. I have been amazed to note widespread ill-feeling among punters who are angry that the Government has not honoured this promise. Like the financial institutions duty, it sounds small in percentage terms but the reality is different.

For example, if one had a winner on a horse and it pays $1.82, at present one is paid a dividend of $1.80. Under the promise of the Labor Government, the pay-out would be to the nearest 5 cents, which would mean $1.85. The Government has not honoured that promise. The Government cannot back away from promises forever more. It is regrettable that that promise is not honoured in the Bill. The Opposition is prepared to allow the Government until September to honour its promise.

I refer to the allocation for education. I could make a speech on that subject alone. I regret that I could be running out of time, so I will turn to another area that is akin to my interest at the moment.

I now turn to the area of housing. For 27 years of continuous Liberal rule, home ownership in this State became the highest in the world, in terms of percentage. In other words, more people per head of population owned their own homes in Victoria than anywhere else in the world. That is a remarkable achievment and most worth while, but what is happening now? Regretfully, that situation is on the skids. A declining situation exists in the proposition of home ownership. This Government must make a conscious decision to reverse that trend. The reality is that a policy requires an injection of further capital.

The Government is spending money in large amounts, and no one knows that better than I. It is spending money, but it must look at the amount spent on policies to encourage and stimulate home ownership. The Minister promised to control interest rates. He has misled the community. He mislead the media to understand that he imposed a ceiling but, unbeknowns to the media and members of the Opposition, there were at least two societies that I am aware of that charged more than the maximum rate of interest when it was first prescribed.

The Minister indicates, by interjection, that that is not true. I do not know the position today, but I know that when the Minister last stated that there was a maximum rate of interest that societies could charge, upon inquiry, I found out that the Minister had allowed societies to exceed that on the quiet. The community did not know about it. There is no denial from the Minister as to that matter. When he first told the community that he had controlled interest rates, societies were secretly charging in excess of the prescribed maximum.

The Minister recently claimed that he dropped interest rates by 1 per cent. A constituent of mine was charged an increase at the same time the Minister dropped the interest rate. When I inquired of the Minister why that had occurred, he was flabbergasted and made some inquiries. He found out that societies in some instances changed the rules. To the credit of the societies involved, the day they were contacted by the Opposition, the policy was reversed.

The Minister promised that if any other societies had done the same thing, he would fix it up, but he has not done so. Whether it is called misleading the House or simply not honouring a promise, I do not know. His claim to the Parliament and the community that he is controlling interest rates is untrue, as the two matters I have brought forward indicate.

I will not get on to the subject of next weeks press release, but I advise members of the Government to have a quiet weekend because, next week, the Minister of Housing may start——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I ask the honourable member to relate his remarks to the Bill before the House.

Mr BROWN—I am remarking on the issue of housing and debating the amount of money encompassed in the Bill for the provision of housing over the next five months.

I highlight to the House the waste of money perpetrated by this Government.

The Government promised that it would manage the economy well and lower taxes and charges. Against that backdrop, the situation exists of an average increase of 27 per cent in State taxes and charges. The situation occurs in other areas of housing, but the Opposition will become active on this issue next week, so I will go to another matter.

I refer now to transport. The Minister of Transport has disposed of some land, and that is not an unreasonable situation. The Minister has promised to look after the public interest. People lined up to buy the land, some for two days, and he allowed the same people to buy twelve blocks.

The SPEAKER—I ask the honourable member to advise the Chair how his remarks are related to Supply.

Mr BROWN—The matter relates to transport and the amount of money allocated under the Bill for transport, and I am referring to an area of waste. At a recent disposal of land, the Railway Construction and Property Board did not obtain the maximum price possible.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member comes close to being out of order.

Mr BROWN—I cannot deny that. The situation existed where hundreds of people wanted to buy the land, but against the policies of looking after revenue, the Government settled on the cheap and allowed the same people to buy twelve blocks of land.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—On a point of order, the honourable member for Westernport is relating his remarks to the Railway Construction and Property Board, and the funds allocated for that board do not come under the Budget. If one looks at the details of Division 720, a number of boards are listed, but the Railway Construction and Property Board is not one of them. I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that the board is self-funded and is not a Budget item.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On the point of order, I advise you, Mr Speaker, that an employee of the Railway Construction and Property Board is an officer of the Ministry of Transport and his salary is prescribed for in the Bill.

The SPEAKER—I do not uphold the point of order, but I suggest to the honourable member for Westernport that he does not tax the good humour of the Chair in the course he has set upon during his remarks on Supply.

The honourable member has approximately 2 minutes left and I suggest that he use that time in debating the Bill.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Railway Construction and Property Board is to conduct an auction in the near future and the Opposition is hopeful, in the public interest, that auctions will be the future method of sale so that the most money possible is raised for the taxpayer.

The Opposition is glad that it has been successful in overturning the Government's decision not to connect the South-Eastern and Mulgrave freeways. The proposal seems to have a lot of merit, but the Opposition is receiving feedback that the Government's recent proposal is unacceptable. However, we do acknowledge that the South-Eastern and Mulgrave freeways should be connected.

I have indicated before that the people from Dandenong to the border, including people from Springvale and elsewhere, require the connection of this freeway not in the long term but in the short term, and I am glad that the Government has had a change of heart and overturned its policy not to connect these freeways, and that we welcome.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise the House that the Treasurer is closing the debate.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Opposition members have once again demonstrated why they are destined to become the permanent Opposition. During the Supply debate, Opposition members advocated simultaneously a reduction in the Budget deficit, an increase in expenditure and a reduction in taxes. That clearly indicates once again the internal disarray they are in, both economically and politically.

The Supply Bill reflects the continuation of the budgetary measure taken this financial year, and it indicates that the Government is continuing to improve the public sector in this State and is ensuring that Government and economic and financial policies impinge positively on the state of the Victorian economy. That has been dealt with in passing by some members in this debate.

When the Labor Party was elected to government just over twelve months ago, it became obvious that this economy was sliding downhill fast, and of course, we inherited a difficult financial set of circumstances as well. But when one examines the position of the economy now, twelve months after the Labor Government has been in office, one sees that there has been a relative improvement in the Victorian economy.

One must accept the improvement in the Victorian economy in comparison with the rest of Australia. It is no good looking at the position in absolute terms, because every honourable member would be aware that we are in the midst of a severe depression, created by the Liberal–National Party policies in Canberra. But when one does examine the state of the Victorian economy, one can pick out the positive effects of the Victorian Government's policies.

Firstly, and no one denies this, Victoria has the lowest unemployment rate in Australia. It is well below the unemployment rate in any other State in Australia. That is a measure of economic performance of which everybody should be proud.

Secondly, the impact of the Victorian Government's economic strategy needs to be examined in terms of the forward economic indicators of demand. If one measures the major indicators of demand in this State, one finds that Victoria is doing better than other parts of Australia. Retail sales have improved more in this State than in any other State, and Victoria has the best average for Australia as a whole. The picture is true in respect of motor registrations. While there has been a decline overall across the nation, the decline in Victoria in percentage terms has been less than for Australia as a whole. The housing area, which was given priority in the State Government Budget, is clearly an area where Victoria leads the way so far as the nation's economic performance is concerned.

To take up the point of the Leader of the National Party, the Government has emphasized the need to stimulate the private sector of the economy, and it will continue to do that with its economic strategy. The Supply Bill enables this economic course to continue.

Members of the Opposition also made considerable comments on the size of the Budget deficit in Victoria and expressed concern that a continuation of Supply on the basis of unchanged policies will lead to an expanded deficit in 1983–84. There have also been comments about the deficit in 1982–83. It is now an historical fact that when the Labor Party came into government, it inherited a Budget deficit, on the basis of unchanged policies, well in excess of $400 million. The Government's first aim was to restore financial order to this State. With the measures that have been introduced by the Government in the course of the 1982–83 Budget, the Government has come a long way in improving the financial position of the State.

It should be well understood by every member in this House that every State Government is facing severe financial difficulties because of the deep economic recession and because of the fact that in the past State Governments have been starved of Federal Government funds. The deficit position of this State this financial year, and the outlook for next financial year, is not as bad as many other States in Australia.

Honourable members should know that Queensland—the Government that has often been referred to by the Opposition—has a more serious Budget deficit than any other State in Australia, both in terms of the over-all magnitude and *per capita,* so overall the relative position of Victoria compared with other States is better. Victoria is better placed to cope with the economic recession than other States of Australia. The major reason, which cannot be denied, for the deterioration in the Budget position this financial year of $70 million, has been the decline in revenue. There has been a reduction in the revenue collections compared with what we anticipated in the Budget.

The Budget for 1982–83 is right on target in respect of expenditure and it is about time members of the Opposition understood that position. The Government has taken action to ensure that it can rein in the $70 million Budget deficit which has been the measure of deterioration and which has occurred since the presentation of the Budget in September 1982.

Comments during the debate were also made in respect of the monthly financial statement. This Government has done more than any other Government to inform Parliament and the people of Victoria about

the financial position of the State. We have provided a written explanation of the financial performance of the State during the course of 1982–83 and it is one of the reasons why honourable members opposite have been able to take some interest in financial matters. It is a pity that they did not take that interest when in government, because we would not be in the financial position we are now in today.

The Leader of the Opposition made a valid point in respect of the monthly financial statement, that is, the classifications leave a lot to be desired. We inherited those classifications, and we are currently working on them so that the Supply Bill, in future, and the monthly financial statement will be more meaningful documents.

The Government is committed to those economic reforms so that members of the Government and members of the Opposition have a better understanding of the financial performance of the State. In that respect I should indicate that the Supply Bill, and the manner in which the explanatory memorandum is presented, is far superior to the information that was presented by the previous Government. We have attempted to explain in a succinct form why there is any deviation from the 42 per cent proportion of the 1982–83 Budget. That should be confirmed under each particular line item. That information will continue to be provided, and the quality of information over the period of this Government will be upgraded. I also make it clear that the Supply Bill is extremely important to Government, as every member in this Chamber recognizes.

The Supply Bill enables the Government to continue with its economic, financial and social policies. It provides a clear manifestation of the important decisions that have been made during the financial year.

If honourable members had had the opportunity of focusing in detail on the classifications in the Supply Bill, they would have recognized that there have been significant changes in the structure of the public sector. The changes have been designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector because, for too long, it has been allowed to run down and remain in disarray.

The Supply Bill is another step in the continuation of efforts by the Government to improve the performance of the public sector. I strongly recommend it to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Issue out of Consolidated Fund $2 367 082 700)

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Clause 2 is the major clause in the Supply Bill and specifies the sum of money the Government is seeking by way of Supply, namely, $2 367 082 700. I was disappointed that in the second-reading debate the Treasurer failed to give Parliament any further information on the problem to which he adverted when he presented the Bill to the House on 4 May last.

On that occasion the Treasurer indicated that the Government was currently examining a number of avenues to reduce the extent of deterioration in the Budget and to ensure that the emphasis which the 1982 Budget is giving to Victoria is maintained.

The Treasurer indicated that at present there was a serious budgetary situation for a number of reasons. Some of those are recognized by the Opposition, although it believes there are a number of reasons which have not been spelt out during the second-reading debate.

I would have hoped that, since it is now three weeks since the Treasurer indicated that the Government was examining a number of avenues to reduce the deterioration in the Budget, he might have used this opportunity to respond and indicate what those steps are. In seeking a sum of money for continuing Supply for the next five months—and recognizing that that sum of money is calculated on a rate of expenditure which is causing the Government concern about the budgetary situation—it seems to the Opposition that the Government must be taking some steps, not just examining a number of avenues.

If the Committee were aware of these steps, it may cause the Committee to consider further points with respect to the Supply Bill. Supply may well need to be adjusted in line with those steps. I do not want to take up a great deal of time. Is the Treasurer

able to indicate what steps the Government is taking to correct the deterioration in the Budget? Will he assure the Committee that those steps have been successful and that there is no need to make any variation in the Supply Bill? Could the Treasurer indicate what variations could be considered at this Committee stage?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—On a number of occasions I have explained to honourable members that the deterioration in the Budget position compared with the time of the Budget has been in the order of $70 million.

The Government has already begun to implement measures to achieve savings of expenditure this financial year. Steps have been taken to accelerate revenue collection. I have also indicated that, with respect to one-off increased expenditure—or drops in revenue such as those caused by the drought—it is reasonable to finance the Budget position by reference to the Cash Management Account. The Government has taken those major steps. I am confident that it will bring the Budget in line with legal requirements in this financial year.

The clause was agreed to.

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

CONSTITUTION (COUNCIL POWERS) BILL

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

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

WORKS AND SERVICES (SUPPLY 1983-84) BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 4) on the motion of the Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—I advise honourable members that the debate is limited to those matters that are listed in the summary table in relation to Government spending in the Works and Services Summary Table.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—A Works and Services (Supply 1983-84) Bill is a new feature in the annual legislative programme of this Parliament. Such a Bill has not been debated on any previous occasion. Tonight's Bill is brought about by the Government's decision to adjust the annual appropriations for works and services to coincide with the financial year and with the Current Account spending of the Budget, instead of the previous practice of allocating the works and services budget on a twelve-monthly programme; so it presents Parliament with an opportunity of examining the works and services programme at an intermediate stage of the year, before the annual review that occurs in or about November. Honourable members are presented with a Bill to fund the ongoing works and services programme of the Government, requiring an allocation of $704 million to cover the period until the next Works and Services Bill is presented as part of the Budget in November.

That is a fairly large sum when compared with the total works and services budget allocation that was approved by Parliament late last year, when the total works and services appropriation amounted to $1066 million. The Government now requires $704 million for a five-month period of the new financial year, and that figure represents a 70 per cent slice of the annual allocation for the current financial year.

At first glance, that may appear to be an extraordinarily large increase in the works and services programme. However, as the Leader of the National Party interjects, an allocation of this nature must be on the high side because, in the course of those five months, the amount that is made available by the Bill may or may not be totally spent. As the Treasurer pointed out, no works and services programme represents a regular expenditure of money, as one would wish in the Current Account area, but is liable to fluctuations for all sorts of reasons. I do not think Parliament need necessarily be concerned that the figure is so high.

However, the nature of these irregular payments means that, in reviewing what amounts to the expenditure side only of the works and services programme, honourable members are in some difficulty because of being uncertain as to how these projects will be funded. At this stage, one cannot help looking back at the revenue side of the works and services sector as it was presented when the Budget was introduced last year.

Honourable members would do well to recall two items that appeared on the revenue side of the account. One was the amount of $150 million that was made available for works and services from the State Development Account; the other was the $162 million that was to be provided through the sale of railway assets.

When considering the ongoing works and services programme and the $704 million that is to be allocated by the Bill, one needs to think for a moment how this money is to be raised. Is the State Development Account to provide a further $150 million for the next financial year, as it did in the current year, and will the total indebtedness of the State to that account be increased by that amount to finance the works and services that are envisaged by the Bill? Similarly, in the next financial year, are the railways to sell a further $162 million worth of assets to fund their works and services programme?

The fact that the amount sought in the Bill is significant seems to suggest that the Government has plans for producing the necessary revenue, and those plans will no doubt be revealed to Parliament in the next Budget. It is important to ask the Treasurer at this point to reassure the House that the revenue side of the works and services account will not be in serious jeopardy because of the level of activity that is suggested in the Bill.

It is interesting to note the format in which the Bill is presented. Under each of the individual items, a certain amount of detail has been given.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Not too much detail.

Mr RAMSAY—A certain amount has been given in the areas where money is to be spent, but nothing given with detail. The Bill falls short of giving detail on the expected expenditure of items and resorts to only an aggregate expenditure for each of the departments. For example, under item 70, transport, a sum of $242 million is sought and further information given is that this money will be spent over a range of possible projects, not less than 23, without any indication of what level of expenditure is claimed for each of those projects. The Treasurer should inform the House why this is the case.

If it is clearly claimed that works will proceed in these areas, it will help the House to know to what extent the Government proposes moving on each of them rather than having those moneys aggregated into one amount. There may be difficulties in doing this, because of the uncertainty of the speed at which each of these projects is likely to proceed.

However, I congratulate the Treasurer for at least giving the House the information he has. I ask him to consider developing ways of giving the information more thoroughly.

Under item 8, provision is made for an advance to the Treasurer so that if in any one area the rate of progress of a group of projects requires more money than set out in the Supply Bill, the Treasurer has a modest contingency plan to enable that project to continue. This is an important feature of the Supply Bill in the works and services field, because the last thing one would want is for works and services programmes to stop and start as a result of financial constraints brought about purely by the mechanism of a Supply Bill rather than constant financial restraints that any Government finds itself under through the need for funds that may not be available at a particular time because of the sheer shortage of revenue that the Government may be experiencing.

As a first effort, the Bill is not unreasonable and I commend the Treasurer for the effort he has taken to produce adequate information for the House. I repeat the concern of all honourable members about the level of Supply that is being sought; I recognize the difficulties the Government may be facing in sustaining that type of revenue for the coming financial year and it would be as well for the Treasurer to reassure the House that this aspect has been examined and to indicate his confidence that the programme spelt out is one that he believes can be maintained.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—As explained by the Treasurer in the second-reading speech, in 1982–83 for the first time the works and services programme estimates were presented to Parliament on a financial year basis. It is obvious now that each time the normal Supply information is presented to Parliament it must be accompanied by works and services measures to give works

and services Supply for the first part of the coming financial year.

The amount sought is a frightening $704 million. I do not believe the amount determined by the Treasurer is of great significance. It perhaps bears no real relationship to what will appear in the Budget in September. The Treasurer has to make an estimate of what will be needed for capital works in those first few months. It might be higher than will be needed later on in the year or less.

As I said by interjection when the honourable member for Balwyn was speaking, a responsible Treasurer, as this Treasurer is, will tend to over-provide rather than under-provide because he will be the first to be criticized if public works were to grind to a halt because the amount of money required had been under-estimated.

Honourable members are talking about a measure on which there is little evidence to base discussion. It is fair and reasonable to say that the Bill tells honourable members nothing. Apart from honourable members making criticisms based on inadequate and hazy information, it is not really possible to have an intelligent debate. It is possible to mention aspects of from where the money is coming and where it is to be spent, but the Government obviously will not be able to compile its Budget until early in the new financial year and cannot decide what priorities will be given, for good and sufficient reason.

Although an estimate can be made, the Treasurer does not know what the deficit will be for the year ended 30 June 1983, and that will be significant. The Government will have to bite the bullet in the coming months and decide what new taxation methods it will bring in for 1983–84. I remind honourable members that there have been taxation increases of 28 per cent in 1983 and, in the level of spending, it is as certain as the sun dawns tomorrow that there will be further taxation increases in the coming financial year.

Another factor under a cloud is the extent of Federal finance. That also must bring some consolation to the Treasurer because his friends in Canberra have their own problems about raising money and those problems are just dawning on them.

As the honourable member for Balwyn said, provision has been made wisely for an appropriate advance to the Treasurer of $25 million to meet unexpected requirements by Government departments. An amount not exceeding $30 million is provided to give the Treasurer funds to meet urgent needs that may be required before the authority of Parliament is obtained in the new financial year.

I refer the Treasurer to the leasing arrangements for the railways and, I presume, the tramways. All honourable members know that leasing is a modern method of financing that is done in other States. I suppose that whatever Government were in power, a certain amount of leasing finance would be occurring.

The real danger is that the leasing arrangements entered into by the Government are different to the leasing arrangements entered into by a public company. When a public company leases equipment, it can only borrow what the equipment is valued at and that money is paid back as the equipment wears out. I quote an extreme example of Government leasing. An artificial value could be placed on the "red rattlers", on which money could be raised. In that instance the Government is borrowing money at higher rates of interest—not necessarily in this case—than it could obtain from conventional sources. The Government is describing this as "leasing" but it is using an artificial form of leasing.

The capital is unlimited and because it is Government guaranteed people are prepared to lend money far in excess of the commercial value of the rolling-stock, which technically is the security. I hope the Treasurer, from time to time, can provide other honourable members and me with an updated statement on the leasing arrangement, the amount owed, the interest paid and the security.

The Treasurer has assured me that it is a sound commercial proposition. I am certain that if the goods in question had to be sold, their sale would not cover the debt incurred. I am nervous about the financial management of the State for three reasons: Firstly, the size of the deficit that will be reached at the end of June 1983; secondly, the leasing arrangements to which I have referred; and, thirdly, the amount of money

borrowed from the Victorian Development Fund.

To what extent is Victoria mortgaging its future. Can Victoria afford the extent of indebtedness into which New South Wales has got itself? The Treasurer has assured the House that Victoria is not approaching the situation reached in New South Wales. However, I am worried that it was only two years ago that the Wran Government was cited in this House by the then Labor Opposition as being first-class money managers. Today, the Labor Government does not want to be compared with the New South Wales Government. It does not want to be put in the same category as that Government because New South Wales is in a financial mess. I do not want that to happen in Victoria.

Regretably, and through no fault of Treasury, the debate cannot be based on detailed information. The Bill seeks to make a general appropriation for essential work that, in many cases, has already been commenced. The aim of the Bill is to ensure that the construction of those works can continue in the early months of the 1983–84 financial year.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I am most concerned that honourable members have not been provided with adequate information to discuss the Bill despite the promises of the Treasurer. The information contained in the Bill is woefully inadequate. Items are listed generally, covering vast expenditure. For example, there is an allocation of $242 million for transport, but no information is provided on the reason for that allocation.

I have put many questions on notice to obtain information so that I can speak adquately on the various items in the Bill. I draw the attention of the House to the allocation for alcohol and drug services. Last year, I placed a question on notice, asking the Minister of Health——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I advise the honourable member for Doncaster that the debate is not related to the Works and Services (Supply 1983–84) Bill. The honourable member would be stretching the rules of the House by constantly referring to the questions he has placed on notice and which might or might not have been answered. The honourable member should not use those questions on notice as the basis for his debate. The honourable member should use his ability to debate the Bill rather than refer to questions on notice that might or might not have been answered. I realize the difficulty of the honourable member but I ask him to co-operate with the Chair rather than stretch the patience of the Chair.

Mr WILLIAMS—Under the allocation for alcohol and drug services there is no indication of what that money will be used for, that is, whether it will be used for either the Gresswell or Heatherton sanitoriums or the Larundel Psychiatric Hospital. There is no information provided on whether the allocation would be used to provide subsidies for the Odyssey House programme in Lower Plenty, which is situated in the area that I represent.

For the past three years, I have been engaged in controversy about the enormous Government funding for the Odyssey House project. I want to know whether Victoria is getting value for money for the investment in this drug rehabilitation service. That is why I have asked the Minister of Health for information on the success rate of the various drug rehabilitation programmes, especially the Odyssey House programme, which, for a long period, has been developing in New South Wales. I take strong objection to the fact that a question I placed on notice on 7 September 1982 has still not been answered.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I do not intend to rule the honourable member for Doncaster out of order, but I suggest that he cease using his questions on notice as the substance of his debate on the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—I refer to the allocation for the Victorian Brown Coal Council and the establishment of a coal conversion pilot plant. I am entitled to obtain information from the Government to enable me to make comparisons between the costs of various types of power development, whether it be solar, wind, water, or coal.

It is most important to me that I receive assistance from the Ministers in obtaining such information.

Capital investment is vital to the progress and development of this State and the Minister's advisers in the Treasury have come

up with new concepts where they have endeavoured to persuade this Parliament to agree to the imposition of what they call opportunity cost taxes on the consumers of Victoria. We are told that the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the State Electricity Commission and other statutory bodies should be taxed on the equity which is involved, presumably by the taxpayers of Victoria. It is incumbent on the Minister in a works and services debate to provide information particularly in relation to the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission about investments in those undertakings.

If one refers to item 52 (4), the reference is quite clearly "Gas and Fuel Corporation share purchases". I do a little investing from time to time on the stock exchange. Those of us who are interested in our own private future and in the future of this State want to know what we are investing our taxpayers' money in and whether we are buying a pig in a poke. I certainly want to know a bit more about the Gas and Fuel Corporation than the information I have been given. I am most disappointed that I have not been assisted by the Minister for Minerals and Energy in finding out what is the revenue surplus of the quasi-autonomous non-Government organizations under his control such as the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission. I have not been told by the Government what is the prescribed capital of the undertakings and the other shareholders. I have also not been told the total net worth of the undertakings, the total assets or liabilities, the total borrowing and reinvestment of surplus funds and reserves and so on. It is unfair for Ministers of the Crown to impose such difficulties on members of this House who happen to be in opposition.

The amount involved is no mean expenditure. This works and services Supply Bill for a population of just over 4 million people involves an expenditure of $700 million—a great amount of money, particularly when one thinks of the antiquated Budget and financial practices that are still prevalent in too many Government departments. We are lacking cost benefit analyses.

I have here a letter from the Treasurer. I requested that he improve the communication of concise and easily comprehensible information covering the procedures by which the State accounts for public money and other assets under its control. I required information about the financial documents presented to Parliament. I wanted a cross classification of information by sources in the application of funds in various costs benefit and economic matrixes on an annual, quarterly, and monthly basis. I wanted details of all State funds and the management of all cash accounts. I am disappointed with the answer I received that the Government is very much aware of the need for improvement in the communication of the type of information referred to. The Minister gets full marks for that.

Shortly after taking office he said he would establish at Mount Evelyn an Office of Management and Budget Task Force to examine the public assets of departments and statutory authorities. So far so good, but I plead for greater accountability and control of the public sector. The Auditor-General in his various annual reports is still far from satisfied with the internal auditing of Government departments and reporting to the public is inadequate in this day and age, particularly when in the private sector the National Companies Securities Commission is insisting on far greater publication of detailed financial information.

If we are to strengthen financial budgetting and control and improve decision-making in our public capital sector, we must do a great deal better than we have been doing in the past. There is no doubt that there should be much greater concentration through the Public Service Board on management consultancy services to assist our major instrumentalities to identify and address organizational problems. This is important when one realizes that in relation to the Supply Bill alone the sum of $700 million is involved. One does not need to make too many mistakes to be millions out in one's expenditure and and cost the taxpayer and agencies a great deal of money. The tragic fires earlier this year could well increase electricity charges by about 3 per cent because of the burden on the State Electricity Commission in meeting quite unexpected fire insurance damage claims.

I know that as a good Socialist the Minister will want to increase greatly the activities of the Public Works Department and the use of day labour in keeping itself involved in all sorts of public projects. I want

to know what expenditure control we have over this money. I am most disappointed that until this year the department did not—I apologize. The Minister supplied me with an answer about expenditure control the Lands Department and only this year they have appointed an internal auditor. His own department may have improved its activities. I am concerned that it has taken the Lands Department so long to control its internal auditing arrangements.

I respect your advice, Mr Speaker, that I keep within the narrow confines of the Bill, but expenditure should be made available to the Education Department to concentrate on computer education.

When one reads the remarks of the Federal Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Barry Jones—who graced this Parliament for many years—one realizes how Victoria is lagging behind in technological development.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! The time appointed by Sessional Orders for me to interrupt business has now arrived.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), the sitting was continued.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—Victoria is well behind all States, except Queensland, in the introduction of computers into schools. Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money is being spent by Victorian schools on computers and related software without Government bulk buying advantages and with few guidelines to cover the purchases. By the time the Education Department announces a policy, most if not all of the secondary schools will have bought their own computers. More than 100 State primary schools have microcomputers and the number is growing every week. Unfortunately, different schools are operating different computers. They are rarely compatible so that software developed for one type cannot be used on other varieties. It is disheartening to read that Victoria is behind in developing coherent and co-ordinated plans for computer education. The Government must consider that matter.

The State is deficient in works and services within the Education Department. I am concerned that there are a number of portable class-rooms at the East Doncaster High School and I wonder what is going on. There are approximately 1 million unemployed people, yet when one travels around the State one sees that public properties are run down, ill-painted, vandalized and nothing to be proud of. An allocation of $97·7 million has been made to the Education Department.

Victoria still lacks school buildings. Templestowe High School was established in 1961—twenty years ago—and it still does not have an assembly hall. That is a shameful state of affairs. When I entered this Parliament ten years ago, I was a councillor of the City of Doncaster and Templestowe. Wearing both hats, I persuaded the then Minister of Education, Mr Thompson, to do a deal with me. The deal consisted of the State Government buying a block of land and the council buying two blocks. The block was purchased for the establishment of an assembly hall, but it has not been built.

I am a patron of the Bulleen-Lower Templestowe Basketball Club and that club decided to build a basketball stadium on Education Department/council land, provided it received assistance from the Government. In the dying days of the Liberal Government, I went with the director of the club to see the then Minister, Mr Lacy, and he agreed to the project.

The club caters for 8000 young people, housewives and others and it is the largest basketball club in Victoria. It is a viable enterprise and is able to borrow funds for the construction of a stadium. Through the wheeling and dealing of the honourable member for Templestowe Province in another place, I have been frozen out of the negotiations with the Government as the member for Doncaster. The only reason I know what is going on is that I am a patron of the organization. As the local member, I have been kept in the dark.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I have indulged the honourable member for some time on the course he has followed. I do not believe his remarks can be related to the Bill before the House, and I ask him to return to it.

Mr WILLIAMS—I draw the attention of the House to the huge expenditure—$242 million—on transport. No details have been given as to the assignment of that allocation. The City of Doncaster and Templestowe was promised a railway. Money had been

set aside and land was reserved for the railway. It was about to be established when there was a change of Government. The new Government decided to sell the reserved land. To add insult to injury, 78 blocks of land were sold on a first-come, first-served basis at prices below their real value.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is taxing the patience of the Chair in respect of his remarks.

With the experience I have had, I cannot follow where he is going in respect of the works and services contained in the Bill before the House. I ask the honourable member either to inform the House of what course he has embarked on in respect of the matter before the House or to come back to the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—I am charging the Government with bad faith. A number of items are listed.

The SPEAKER—Order! If the honourable member will mention the items in respect of the sale of land, I will hear him.

Mr WILLIAMS—I have mentioned the capital works project; the proposal for a railway line in the Doncaster area no longer exists. It has been wiped out of the Estimates, and I am complaining that a number of these items that are shown under the transport heading give honourable members no idea of what amounts are involved.

Item 70 deals with expenditure associated with reconstruction and upgrading of bridges and associated works. I also do not understand what is meant by "expenditure associated with other railway works". If new amounts of money have been put into these projects, I want to know why, if the Government can find the best part of $242 million, the eastern railway project had to be wiped out. In this day and age, when the traffic surveys clearly indicate that the bulk of commuters in the metropolitan area are using their own vehicles to come into the city or to visit their friends and relatives in other suburbs, I want to know how much is being spent on railway works. This Bill gives honourable members absolutely no information on which to make a judgment. I hope that the bulk of the $242 million is to be expended on roadworks, but I have grave doubts about that happening.

In the City of Doncaster and Templestowe there is a backlog of arterial and unclassified roadworks running into hundreds of millions of dollars, probably some $3 million or $4 million. A lot of the roads in that area were laid down in the days when that area was an orchard. The roads were made for horses and wagons, and now it is a fully developed city with one of the most highly motorized populations in Australia. Yet Doncaster has to put up with these backward rural roads that need to have hundreds of millions of dollars spent on them. It receives some $1 million a year from the Commonwealth and is lucky if it receives another $500 000 in assistance for unqualified roadworks. It will be well into the 21st century when the roads and associated facilities for traffic flow in the City of Doncaster and Templestowe are brought up to scratch.

I hope that in the next year's Works and Services Bill the Treasurer will ensure that his highly paid advisors on his staff cease worrying about esoteric economic pursuits and get down to the nitty-gritty of basic accounting and provide honourable members with proper facts and figures that they need to assess the expenditure of public money.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I do not propose to delay the House on this Bill.

Mr Walsh—That is a good speech.

Mr EBERY —I am in a consensus frame of mind and I assure honourable members that I will not speak at length, but I will speak to the point. During the debate on the Supply Bill, I mentioned employment initiatives grants. Some two months ago, I participated in a conservation tour which the Minister for Conservation kindly arranged, and I believe that these employment initiatives grants could be well placed in helping the Ministry for Conservation and the Land Conservation Council to overcome an enormous problem which is being faced in Victoria, particularly in soil erosion works.

Those who did not go on the tour would certainly be horrified at the state of the Parwan Valley catchment area, which is not far from Bacchus Marsh, where the Soil Conservation Authority has for a number of years endeavoured to overcome an enormous siltation problem. I do not believe that anybody would argue that the amount of money that has been made available from

Federal sources to help the unemployed in Victoria could be spent in a better way than by restoring these badly eroded areas. After all, they will eventually create a sizeable cost factor in making water supplies available to the towns and cities of Victoria.

Some fifteen years ago, a considerable amount of money was spent on the Eppalock Weir and erosion and other siltation works were put into operation. Since the drought has broken, much of that country has grown. The amount of productivity in that area, which was badly eroded before, has been enormous. Anyone can see the transformation that takes place when these sorts of works are implemented. Reforestation is also required in the Parwan Valley, and tree planting has to take place. That is a labour-intensive exercise and any funds that are allocated to those sorts of projects would be money well spent. After the Castlemaine woollen mill was burnt out a couple of years ago, funds were allocated by the then Treasurer——

Mr Simpson—As a result of representations by the current Treasurer.

Mr EBERY—I cannot agree with that. The Minister has forgotten and time has run away with him. The past thirteen months must have been a long time for him, because the funds came from the Honourable Lindsay Thompson, who was then the Treasurer. Funds were provided for soil conservation works and they have been proceeding ever since that time. The point I am making is that the funds allocated to the Ministry for Conservation and the Soil Conservation Authority would be well spent on these sorts of projects.

I urge the Treasurer to ensure that the funds he obtains from the Federal Government for unemployment relief be allocated to these types of projects, because they will have a long-term benefit to the community.

The honourable members for Wantirna and Hawthorn mentioned another urgent problem during the Supply debate relating to accommodation in prisons. At 17 January 1983, the number of cases that were to be heard by the Melbourne County Court were substantial. The total number of accused awaiting trial was 786. I understand that the courts are gradually overcoming these delays. This will result in an increased number of prisoners being sent to the various gaols in Victoria. The total number of cases awaiting trial at 17 January 1983 was 596 and the total number of accused 786. The number of cases that have been waiting two years or more is 55 and the total number of accused is 72. The number of accused who have had cases outstanding between 13 and 24 months is 111, and the total number of accused is 147. The number of cases that have been outstanding for more than 12 months is 166 and the total number of accused is 213.

This is a Government problem and, until more prisons are built, there will be further escapes from the gaols. The Treasurer will have to find funds somehow. I put a proposition to the Minister for Community Welfare Services a couple of years ago concerning the Castlemaine City Council, and the Government was to lease back the gaol on a long-term arrangement. The present Minister for Community Welfare Services maintains that the funds will come from the State Development Fund. This problem is at a critical stage and I do not believe it is fair to the community.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

> That the House, at its rising, adjourn until tomorrow, at half-past 10 o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.57 *p.m.*

Friday, 27 May 1983

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 11.08 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TRUSTEES EXECUTORS AND AGENCY CO. LTD

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—In view of the claim by the Attorney-General to the House that he was not aware of any difficulties in the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd until just before the appointment of receivers and managers, was the Attorney-General's department aware of the company report, made public in March, which showed that the company traded at a loss yet recommended the payment of a dividend; if so, why was the Attorney-General not aware?

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—As I indicated to the House on a previous occasion, the department was aware of the report; as a result it made inquiries at two levels and the company received a clean bill of health. The department was assured that there were no matters of concern. We continued to make inquiries and it was not until 11 May or 12 May that a response was received that indicated the nature of the problem.

As the remarks of the honourable member for Westernport indicated yesterday, the reasons why that occurred are now well known.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION SOCIETY

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Minister for Community Welfare Services to a recently completed review of the three regional protective units of the Children's Protection Society. Will the Minister advise whether she has had an opportunity of studying the report and, if so, whether there will be any reduction in the services of the Children's Protection Society in country Victoria?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—Recently a joint review was undertaken of the services of the Children's Protection Society involving the executive of the society and officers of my department. The review examined the services provided by the society and sought to redefine the level of funding. The report of the review indicated some concern about certain inconsistencies in the practices of the society in some areas. We are addressing those inconsistencies and I have had discussions with the society about matters raised in the report.

Recommendations were made about the levels of service in each region and the department recommended that the service in the Goulburn region be withdrawn. However, it is not the intention of the Government to withdraw a service from any region which currently has a service and, therefore, that is one aspect of the recommendations which the Government rejected. The service will be maintained in the Goulburn region at the level which currently exists, that is, two welfare workers.

Within other regions there will be some consistency. We are moving towards an understanding where the society will work closely with my department which is determined to provide consistent and adequate child protection services throughout the State.

HEALTH FUNDING

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—Is the Minister of Health aware of suggestions that there has been a cut in health funding and, if so, will the honourable gentleman inform the House of the situation?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—Yesterday press reports were issued by an organization known as the Combined Health Employees Council or CHEC concerning cuts in health services. The organization also complains that, as Minister of Health, I did not deal with CHEC. I believe I should make the position of the Government clear. As a Minister, I deal with unions in the health field through the Trades Hall Council, which represents more than 95 per cent of workers in the health area. This organization, which yesterday claimed 50 000 members, does not report to the Hospital Employees' Federation of Australia, Victoria No. 1 Branch, which is the largest union in the health field.

I am in regular contact with the Trades Hall Council and when unions wish to have a meeting, we are available to discuss matters with them. I met with the Trades Hall Council last week to discuss the issue of a 38-hour week. It was alleged that cuts had been made in health services. Over the past five years a 13 per cent increase in staffing has occurred in the public hospital area, which represents an increase of more than 5000 staff.

This is in contrast to the situation in States such as New South Wales and South Australia where fairly significant reductions in the number of hospital staff have taken place over the years. During this financial year, there has been a $165 million increase in public hospital expenditure, which is 17·8 per cent higher than last year. This rise is significantly above the cost of the consumer price index rises and has maintained services throughout the State.

The statistics for both bed days and outpatients are lower than they were five years ago. At that time, the figure was 4 million bed days and that has fallen to 3·866 million for the current financial year. Over the past twelve months, the number of out-patients has fallen by 5 per cent.

We are concerned when reports suggest that patients are dying as a consequence of so-called staff shortages. I am concerned that the Royal Australian Nursing Federation should worry the thousands of people in hospitals and their families when that association has not brought any evidence whatsoever. If it had evidence, it should have ensured that the Government received that material in the public interest.

It reminds me of a similar complaint that was made last year by the Australian Medical Association. On that occasion, when that association was pressed for information it said that to supply the information would interfere with the doctor-patient relationship.

The Government is examining health services and priorities in the health area. The unions are well aware of that as we are consulting with them on the matter. Hospital funding has been increased by 17·8 per cent this year and, given that that is all State money without any additional Commonwealth revenue, it is a major effort by the Victorian Government.

TRUSTEES EXECUTORS AND AGENCY CO. LTD

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Did the Treasurer and the Attorney-General discuss difficulties concerning the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd prior to the Victorian Development Fund investing $3 million with the company; if so, when did the discussions take place and what was the nature of them; if such discussions did not occur, why not?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The short answer to the question is "No", and for a number of reasons, one being that I was not in Victoria at the time.

SCHOOL COUNCILS INFORMATION CENTRE

Mr HANN (Rodney)—With the proposed restructuring of school councils in Victoria, is the Minister of Education aware of a proposal to establish a shop-front situation in the heart of Melbourne where school councils and parents of children can gain access to information on how school councils operate and direct access to information on various areas of the Education Department which it is difficult to locate because they are scattered in a diverse range of buildings in the metropolitan area? If the Minister is aware of the proposal to establish a joint shop front between the Victorian State School Parents Association, the Education Department and the Victorian Council of State School Organizations, is he prepared to support the proposal?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The Government is on record as supporting the notion of parent support and school council support in an information unit to be established in Melbourne. However, it ought to be made clear that the Government is not interested in providing a service to parents and councils only in Melbourne. We want that same facility to exist throughout Victoria and I should have thought that a country member would have been the first to raise that suggestion.

All of the regional directors have been required to make available their resources and their services for purposes of that sort. Parents will be welcome to visit the regional offices seeking the information to which the honourable member has referred.

So far as Melbourne is concerned, the notion of a shop front within Melbourne's central business district has been explored and discussions on the matter are continuing. The administrative section of the Education Department will move into the Rialto building in the city in a year or so. One option that is being considered is the making available of space within the lower floors of the building for this shop-front establishment.

In the meantime, I am considering other options for shop-front facilities of this sort, and I am prepared to keep the honourable member informed of progress.

RIGHT OF WAY FOR TRAMS

Mr IHLEIN (Sandringham)—Will the Minister of Transport inform the House of plans that are being developed by the Government to give trams right-of-way on public streets?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I am pleased to inform the House that at a seminar conducted yesterday with the representatives of the 22 municipalities which are the hosts to our tram tracks, the Government received their endorsement for the Government programme for establishing public transport priorities, a programme which will be implemented progressively over the ensuing months and which will involve the establishment of full-time tram lanes on very wide roads where there is enough room for traffic so that it can be entirely separate from the tram tracks. There will also be part-time tram lanes which will only operate in certain areas while there are clearways.

Once the Ministry has established the specific treatment on each tram route, by agreement with municipalities, it will be then introducing regulations to give trams the right-of-way within the confines of those specific treatments.

TRUSTEES EXECUTORS AND AGENCY CO. LTD

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—What action does the Government propose to take to secure the position of ordinary people who put their life savings into the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd now that it has been revealed that the Victorian Government has got its money back? Will the Government guarantee the investment of ordinary investors including those people such as quadriplegics who invested all their savings in this company?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I believe I made the position of the Government clear yesterday during the grievance debate as to what has been done, what is being done and what will be done in future, if necessary. I invited the Opposition to indicate what additional information it had in regard to the matters that had been raised.

I have not received that information save and expect to receive a copy of the notes from *Hansard* of the speech made by the honourable member for Westernport. I took the step of seeking an examination of the material raised by him. I was not aware of all of the matters to which he referred. I believe they were matters that had been brought to the notice of the various authorities concerned in the matter before yesterday. My belief was confirmed. There was nothing in the speech made by the honourable member for Westernport that had not been previously reported in the press or raised in the court by Mr Tomlinson, the solicitor from Kerang to whom I have also spoken, or was not known to either the National Companies and Securities Commission or the Corporate Affairs Office.

I do not suggest that it was not proper for the honourable member for Westernport to raise the matters. If there are additional matters about which he knows and any documents that he believes should be brought to the notice of the Government or the bodies concerned with the investigation, I invite him to let the Government have them. The Government will continue to proceed in the way it is proceeding with the investigation that is taking place. If any further investigation is required that will also be undertaken.

MUSIC FACILITIES FOR SYNDAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr GRAY (Syndal)—Can the Minister of Public Works inform the House of the development of long-standing attempts to obtain music facilities for the Syndal High School?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Public Works)—The necessity for music facilities at the Syndal High School was mooted as

far back as 1977 when the need was recognized at that time. The school was built in approximately 1967–68 and, as I indicated, about 1977 the necessity for music facilities at the school became clear. That is about six years ago. The previous Administration either would not or could not make funds available for that very necessary facility.

I am happy to announce that it is expected plans will be completed and tenders called in August of this year.

It is expected that the Government will be spending somewhere between $80 000 and $100 000 on the project and I hope the honourable member for Syndal will let the people in that area know about it.

Mr Delzoppo—Rest assured—there are no worries about that!

Mr SIMPSON—The high school is not exactly in the electorate of the honourable member for Syndal. I understand it is in the electorate of Forest Hill, but I am sure that the people in that area will be pleased to learn of the Government's proposals. This will be a very good note for the people in that area.

VICTORIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I ask the Treasurer: Who manages the Victorian Development Fund investments? Does the honourable gentleman have to approve of the investments made or are investments left entirely to departmental heads regardless of the amount of the community's money involved in those investments?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The Leader of the Opposition should understand the nature of securities and investments undertaken by the Victorian Development Fund. They are Governor in Council decisions as indicated in the legislation setting up the fund which came before Parliament.

Within the framework of those general investments that can be undertaken, the fund is responsible for the day-to-day operations of that organization. It makes investments on a commercial basis.

It is about time that the Leader of the Opposition understood what bank accepted bills of exchange are. Those were the investments of the fund in Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd. Bank accepted bills of exchange are, of course, a very secure investment and mean that the bank is the prime obligation for that security.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—Is the Minister of Education aware of a proposal from the Catholic Education Office for a renewed and revitalized religious education programme for State schools? If so, is he prepared to support its introduction into the State system?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I must admit that I am not aware of the proposal which, as I understand from the question, is from the Catholic Education Office for them to be involved in religious education in State schools.

It is certainly a novel approach if it is as the honourable member has outlined. I will be very happy to take up this matter with the Catholic Education Office, as I believe I have an excellent relationship with the office. I will advise the honourable member accordingly.

YOUTH POLICY

Mr SEITZ (Keilor)—Will the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation inform the House of the steps that have been taken to develop a comprehensive youth policy for Victoria?

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—A comprehensive youth policy for Victoria is the intention of the Government and it is the first time in Australia that a Premier has taken this major initiative. Recently, the Premier announced the formation of a task force to investigate the situation and to report back to him in approximately two months. The need for a co-ordinated youth policy is urgent because, after 27 years in office, the former Liberal Party Government had done nothing about this issue.

The task force will be appointed within the next few weeks and its terms of reference will be to describe the parameters of co-ordination, to devise a structure to carry out co-ordinated policy and to work out a time schedule for implementation and to carry out discussion with the relevant Commonwealth department about co-ordination on a national level. When this is

completed, a report will be made to the House.

MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I address my question to the Premier. As it is now clear that the Attorney-General is not on top of the problems either within or known to his department, will he now relinquish the job of Attorney-General to a full-time Attorney-General to ensure the proper protection of the people of this State?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I have already made my position perfectly clear. I have nothing further to add to what I have said.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Miss CALLISTER (Morwell)—Can the Minister of Health inform the House what steps are being taken to improve health services for Victorian women?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—There is an excellent women's health information centre open at the Royal Women's Hospital. That centre is located at the Grattan Street entrance to the hospital. It is an excellent centre which has been developed by that hospital over recent times and it has now been expanded so that its services are available not only to staff and patients at the Royal Women's Hospital, but also to women and their families throughout the State.

The Government has a major commitment to provide both general information services in the health field and special information services for women. There are many matters relating to the health of women which are not readily available to women throughout the State in terms of information and advice. The idea behind the information centre is to provide that information and advice to women.

Both the centre and the hospital are expanding other services, as one would expect a women's hospital to do. The centre has now developed an excellent free, cervical smear service, which is available within the hospital both to staff and to any members of the public who require that service.

Over the years, Victoria has developed adequate Pap smear testing facilities and cytological cancer techniques, which are located at Prince Henry's Hospital. These services have had a significant impact on the problems caused by various forms of cancer that are potentially serious, and indeed fatal to women.

There has been a significant reduction in a number of cancer-caused areas of fatalities. The cervical smear service, which is now available at the Royal Women's Hospital, will assist even further in that process. I recommend that women who have not had a smear test in recent times to avail themselves of either that service or the other service provided for preventative health measures.

TRUSTEES EXECUTORS AND AGENCY CO. LTD

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Following the answer given by the Treasurer that there were no discussions with him on the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd because he was interstate, did the Premier have any discussions with an Acting Treasurer, in the absence of the Treasurer, on the difficulties of the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. Ltd prior to the withdrawal of the Victorian Government investment in that company and, if not, why not?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I want to make it clear that I take no part in the day-to-day management of the funds that are invested through the Cash Management Account of the Victorian Development Fund. I have not done so in the past nor will I do so in the future.

MOTOR CAR TRADERS COMMITTEE

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I refer the Minister of Consumer Affairs to the annual report of the Motor Car Traders Committee, which was tabled earlier this week in the Parliament and which expresses concern at the recommendations of the Public Service Board review team on licensing matters. In view of the excellent record of the Motor Car Traders Committee and the fact that it is funded by the motor car traders, will the Minister give a guarantee that there will be no change to the powers of the Motor Car Traders Committee, especially in relation to licensing procedures, and will the Minister act to ensure full consultation with the motor car traders?

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The honourable member for Murray Valley is well aware that for a number of years the annual reports have of the Motor Car Traders Committee contained a number of criticisms, mainly due to the duplication of work between the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and that committee.

It was of great concern to me that the previous Government did nothing to rectify the situation. I asked the Public Service Board review committee to investigate the matter. The recommendation is—of which the honourable member is probably aware—that the Motor Car Traders Committee should maintain the licensing aspect and the complaint aspect should be handled by the Ministry's conciliation branch. A working party has been established within the Ministry to investigate that, and I assure the honourable member that the industry will be consulted before any action is taken.

GENERAL MOTORS-HOLDEN'S LTD

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN (Ivanhoe)—Will the Premier inform the House of the Government's response to the recent announcement of cutbacks in the work force of General-Motors Holden's Ltd?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The announcement was something of a shock to the Government. No prior information had been given and I learnt of the proposal when I received a telephone call from Canberra fairly late on Thursday night.

It is true that the company has announced plans for the next three years which involve the scaling down of component manufacturing, and Victoria is affected by that decision. I note that Senator Button has expressed views that the company was suffering because of bad decisions and lack of forward planning in the past.

The information I have currently is that some 1300 jobs will be lost at Fishermen's Bend by 1986. There is projected to be no change in employment at the Dandenong plant. The net job loss in South Australia is also around the figure of 1300.

I have made arrangements to speak with both the officers of the union concerned—that has been arranged to take place today—and the general manager of the company. That discussion will take place next Tuesday. The company has expressed the view that the job reductions should take place without retrenchments. I welcome that wish on the company's part, and that it will take active steps to find other placements for the people affected. The Government will do what it can through the discussions to take place over the next three or four days to assist in that desire.

POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—The question I ask the Premier relates to the answer he gave earlier this week to a question regarding the Police Special Branch when he said that no instruction or decision had been made to abandon the branch. Is the Premier aware that the staff of the branch has been and is being considerably reduced; the Fitzroy council is moving to take over the building operated by the branch; the furniture of the branch is being removed from the offices; and that a wine party for the people employed by the branch has already been planned and organized? Will the Premier indicate to the House what is the Government's intention for the retention of that branch within the State?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I am aware of a number of assertions that have been made regarding the domestic and other arrangements of members of the Special Branch. I have made the Government's position clear. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has the branch under consideration; it has been for some time and the Minister will continue to consider it. If a decision is to be announced, it will be announced by him and I have nothing further to add.

GRAIN ELEVATORS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to extend the borrowing powers of the Grain Elevators Board from the current maximum of $45 million to an upper limit of $100 million.

At the present time the net loan amount borrowed by the Grain Elevators Board has reached the limit of $45 million. However, the Australian Loan Council has authorized the borrowing of a further $4 million up to

30 June 1983, which the Grain Elevators Board has not yet been able to take up.

Projected capital expenditure for the next four years amounts to $77 million at June 1983 prices. The board estimates that it will be able to contribute $22 million from internal resources.

In view of the fact that these amounts are expressed in 1983 prices, and bearing in mind that the board's programme for repairs and upgrading will continue after the end of 1986–87, it is proposed that the borrowing authority specified in the Act be increased to $100 million. The last increase in the borrowing limit occurred almost exactly six years ago. During this time inflation has been particularly high in relation to construction costs for which these borrowings are intended.

The board wishes to proceed prior to 30 June 1983, with the loan Australian Loan Council borrowings that have already been authorized, and I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr AUSTIN (Ripon), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the introduction of a new system of dealing in marketable securities on the London Stock Exchange, to provide for a number of exemptions from stamp duty and to strengthen the provisions relating to borrowing corporations.

Some time ago the London Stock Exchange approached the Government with a proposal to facilitate dealings in Victorian marketable securities on the London exchange. Honourable members will be aware that Australian securities are traded on the London Stock Exchange. Transfers of Australian shares must be registered in Australia and this causes time delays which are not only inconvenient; active trading in the shares is inhibited.

Foreign exchange controls were recently relaxed in the United Kingdom, easing legal constraints on dealings in Australian securities. The climate is now right to develop a system which will encourage United Kingdom trading in Australian securities and to ensure due payment of stamp duty. Hitherto, stamp duty has frequently not been paid owing to difficulties in applying Victorian law to overseas broker-to-broker transactions. Other States have also been approached, but the Victorian Government has taken the initiative to introduce the system. The Melbourne Stock Exchange has been fully consulted.

The system involves the setting up of a nominee company in Victoria to hold Australian shares as nominees for traders who deal through the London Stock Exchange. The London Stock Exchange will collect stamp duty from its brokers on each dealing in Victorian securities and transmit the duty to the nominee company, which will remit it to the Stamp Duties Office on a monthly basis. The Stamp Duty will be at the same rate as would apply if the transaction took place in Victoria. A number of exceptions are given, to parallel the exemptions relating to local on-market dealings. It is anticipated that the revenue will benefit annually by some millions of dollars from the system. Clauses 3 and 4 make the appropriate amendments.

There are also several concessional clauses in the Bill. Honourable members may recall that in the decision of *Gazzo* v. *The Comptroller of Stamps* in 1981, the High Court decided that a settlement of the matrimonial home was not exempted from stamp duty under the Family Law Act. This is inequitable as a settlement in those circumstances achieves the same end as a direct transfer of the property, which is exempt from duty.

The Government also believes that it is inconsistent that transfers of land between spouses during marriage are dutiable, whereas transfers on marriage breakdown and transfers in contemplation of marriage are exempt. The Government also believes that transfers of personal property, such as shares and motor cars, between spouses or divorcing parties should also be exempt from duty. During marriage, partners ought not to be inhibited from transferring property between them, and on divorce the payment of stamp duty is an unacceptable burden in the over-all cost. Clause 9 of the Bill provides appropriate exemptions.

Honourable members will note these concessions do not apply to family trusts which are popular tax avoidance vehicles.

The Bill includes a provision—clause 8—to ensure that all bills of exchange payable on demand, other than cheques, and promissory notes payable on demand will be exempt from duty. This is a technical amendment to achieve the Government's intention when exempting legislation was passed in the 1982 spring session.

Clause 6 makes an amendment to rectify the position for first home purchasers who have been technically unable to claim the stamp duty concession even though their transfers were dated after the commencement of the concessional legislation.

I now turn to the remaining clauses of the Bill. Clause 7 amends the provisions of the Stamps Act which allow borrowing corporations to pay duty on their borrowings by way of annual return. A number of borrowing corporations have argued that the effect of the technical language of the legislation is to exempt their private borrowings from stamp duty. There is no reason for a borrowing corporation to have any stamp duty advantage over other borrowers. This Bill puts beyond doubt for the future that both private and public borrowings of borrowing corporations are liable to duty.

Clause 5 rectifies an anomaly which has arisen since the transfer of land provisions were restructured to remove the old "sale or gift" basis of dutiability. The amended subdivision has operated since 1 January 1982. Technically, foreclosure orders of a court or the Registrar of Titles are now liable to duty. Previously they were not dutiable as they were neither sales nor gifts. As it was not intended to alter their exempt status, it was necessary to remedy the position.

Lastly, clause 10 amends the provisions of the Motor Car (Mass and Dimension Limits) Act 1981 as a consequence of the new exemptions under clause 9 relating to motor cars. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

PUBLIC ACCOUNT (ADVANCES) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is required to cover a technical problem which has come to light in dealing with the processing of the drought fodder assistance payments from the Commonwealth Government.

Under the relevant Commonwealth legislation, Victoria is required to make payments to farmers before the Commonwealth payments, by way of reimbursement, can legally be received by the State and called State revenues.

This means that the Government must either have an appropriation to make the payments, which may be impossible to foresee, or must use the Treasurer's advance provisions in the Appropriation Act to cover them.

The fodder payments for 1982–83 are estimated at some $35 million, but could rise to $50 million. As there was no Budget appropriation for this purpose, the payments would have to be met from the Treasurer's advance which would mean that there would be insufficient funds within the Treasurer's to cover these payments in addition to requirements during the year for strictly State expenditure.

The legal situation was the subject of consideration by the Crown Solicitor and the Government has decided that there should be a special legislative framework to cover specific purpose payments of this nature from the Commonwealth.

Accordingly, this Bill empowers the Treasurer to pay out of the Consolidated Fund or the Works and Services Account moneys to which the State is entitled under Commonwealth legislation or other arrangements with the Commonwealth for specific purposes.

There is no intention that this Bill should provide the means of by-passing the Parliament or the normal appropriation procedures. It will apply only to those types of specific purpose payments from the Commonwealth to which I have referred and any such transactions will be fully reported to the Parliament. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

SUPPORTING PARENTS CONCESSION BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

One of the principal objectives underlying the social policies of the Victorian Labor Government is the fair distribution of resources to all members of the community. Access to adequate income, employment, good health services, high quality child care, proper housing and transport should be the right of all Victorians. However, for some groups of people in the community, the essentials of life are by no means guaranteed.

One of the most needy of all disadvantaged groups are supporting parents. Supporting parent benefit levels are significantly below the poverty line and data from the Victorian Emergency Relief Project indicates a high proportion of emergency relief recipients are supporting parents.

In Victoria in April this year, there were 25 226 people dependent upon a supporting parent benefit provided by the department of Social Security.

The purpose of the Supporting Parents Concession Bill 1983 is to incorporate amendments to the Motor Car Act 1958 and the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973 to provide concessions to supporting parents equivalent to those that currently apply to pensioners.

These amendments will redress anomalies which have existed between supporting parents and other long-term pensioner recipients with regard to State concessions since the 1979–80 Federal Budget in which the Federal Treasurer announced the decision to extend Commonwealth fringe benefits entitlement to supporting parents.

The amendments ensure that people receiving a Department of Social security supporting parent Benefit and in receipt of a transport concession card will be eligible for council, water and sewerage rate concessions for the rating period commencing on or after 1 July 1983, and for motor registration/third party premium concessions which fall due on or after that date.

These concessions are currently provided by the State Government to aged, invalid, widowed and veteran's affairs pensioners eligible for Commonwealth fringe benefits.

These amendments to extend rate and motor registration concessions will provide a reduction in half the cost of council rates to a maximum of $135 per annum, an equivalent reduction in water and sewerage rates and a 50 per cent saving on the cost of motor registration and third-party premiums.

These measures will provide significant assistance to supporting parents, and form part of the comprehensive review of the State concession system being undertaken by the Ministerial Committee on State Concessions.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS (APPLICATIONS) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This brief Bill amends the Motor Accidents Act 1973 by extending the period within which persons may make application for payments from the Motor Accidents Board from three years to six years. The Bill is intended to complement the changes to the limitation periods for bringing common law actions made by the Limitation of Actions (Personal Injury Claims) Act 1983 passed earlier this session.

Honourable members will recall the thrust of these changes and the reasons why they were made. They were based on recommendations made by the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee and are intended to introduce a limitation of actions scheme that is both simpler than the existing scheme and more equitable for all persons who may be involved in personal injury claims.

The changes received the support of all parties in the Parliament and I would again

take the opportunity to thank the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee for its valuable work in this area.

When speaking to the Limitation of Actions Bill in another place, the Leader of the Government in that place indicated that the Government had under consideration a proposal also to extend the limitation period under the Motor Accidents Act to six years in line with the similar extension made by that Bill in relation to common law actions relating to personal injuries. This Bill gives effect to that proposal.

The limitation period for making application for payments under the Motor Accidents Act has, from the beginning, been the same as for personal injury claims at common law—three years. The Government believes that this nexus should be retrained.

The Government believes that if persons are to be allowed six years within which to bring a common law action, it is reasonable for the same time to be allowed for making application for payments under the Motor Accidents Act. Although a primary purpose of the Motor Accidents Act is to provide speedy "no-fault" compensation to the victims of motor accidents, the proposed amendments will ensure that where a person's injuries, or the full extent of those injuries, take a long while to become evident, those persons are not prejudiced in relation to their rights under the "no-fault" scheme.

The amendments will also reduce the risk of confusion which could possibly occur to the detriment of motor accident victims. Under the Motor Accidents Act, a person is prevented from making a claim at common law in respect of losses or expenses incurred as the result of an accident if that person is entitled to make a claim with the Motor Accidents Board in respect of those losses or expenses and he has not done so.

At the moment, since the limitation periods under the Act and at common law are the same, this presents few problems. However, if the limitation period under the Act were now not to be extended, a person who failed to make an application to the board within three years from the date of the accident in respect of losses or expenses incurred within that period, notwithstanding the extension of the common law limitation period, would not be able to recover damages at common law in respect of those losses or expenses.

The Bill makes a small number of consequential amendments to the provisions of the principal Act which empower the Motor Accidents Board to enter into agreements for the provision of hospital medical and ambulance services to accident victims. The amendments remove restrictions on such agreements arising out of the three-year limitation period.

In addition, in line with the Limitation of Actions Bill, the Bill provides for limited retrospectivity in that the amendments which it makes will apply in respect of accidents or deaths—whichever is appropriate—which occur not more than six years prior to the commencement of the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill, which re-enacts the Building Industry Long Service Leave Act 1975, extends the portable long service leave scheme established by that Act to include the electrical contracting and metal trades construction industries. It implements an undertaking given during the spring sessional period of 1982 that a scheme of extended coverage would be proposed during this sessional period.

The portable long service leave scheme established by the Building Industry Long Service Leave Act commenced on 1 February 1977. It allows building and construction workers to become eligible for long service leave benefits on the basis of service to the industry rather than service to a particular employer.

At present, however, while electrical contracting and metal trades construction workers may be regarded by the community as building or construction workers, because they belong to different trade unions and works under different industrial awards

they are not regarded as part of the building and construction industry for the purposes of the present Act. Therefore, they do not enjoy access to the same long service leave entitlements as other construction workers. The Bill will correct this anomaly. It will provide the same long service leave benefits to all employees in the construction industry.

The present scheme followed a joint submission to the Government in 1973 from the employer and employee groups in the industry. The proposed extension also follows joint submissions from employers and trade unions both to the former Government and to this Government.

In fact, the proposed changes were first raised by the employers and the trade unions concerned more than two years ago. I am advised that my predecessor in the former Government gave a commitment to the introduction of a scheme providing for portability of long service leave for electrical contracting and metal trades construction workers subject to the employer groups and unions concerned jointly working out the details of a feasible scheme. During the intervening time there have been numerous discussions and conferences between the employer and union proposers of the extended scheme, the Building Industry Long Service Leave Board, the Department of Labour and Industry, the former Government and this Government.

This has now been finalized by the agreement of the employers and trade unions concerned and the Building Industry Long Service Leave Board. What is proposed is an expansion of the industry scope of the present board by redefining and redesignating what comprises the industry as "the construction industry" so that the electrical contracting and metal trades construction workers will be within the scope of the scheme.

Agreement concerning the principal features of the Bill has been reached between the employer parties—the Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures and the Electrical Contractors Federation of Victoria—the trade unions involved—the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the Federated Ironworkers Association, the Federated Engine Drivers and Fireman's Association, the Australasian Society of Engineers, the Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees—and the Building Industry Long Service Leave Board. The Bill principally makes the changes to the 1975 Act which will be necessary to implement this agreement. However, because of the large number of changes it was decided that it was better to re-enact the 1975 Act with these changes rather than to attempt to amend it.

Care has been taken during the drafting of the Bill that the interests of employer contributors to the present scheme are not prejudiced by the proposed extended coverage. Opportunity has also been taken to tidy up the present Act to make it more effective in its operation. Consequently, the Bill contains a number of changes which could be considered as being of a mechanical or administrative nature.

The extension of the schemes to the electrical contracting and metal trades construction industries has caused some changes to the present board. Firstly, the Bill changes the name of the board to the Construction Industry Long Service Leave Board to signify that it now covers the total construction industry. Secondly, the membership of the board has been extended to provide the electrical and metal industries with an equitable representation on the board.

The recognition of service to the industry from 1 March 1978 as agreed to by employer and union parties and endorsed by the former Government has also caused special provisions to be included in the Bill to distinguish electrical and metal trades construction workers from those already covered by the existing scheme.

To illustrate this point, I refer to the need to create two funds, one for the building industry which will be a continuation of the present fund and one for the electrical and metal industries. This will ensure that there is separate accounting for payments into and out of the funds in respect to building trades work and electrical and metal trades work. Also the accounting for the service for each worker will now distinguish between the type of work performed. This separate accounting for payments into and out of the funds and for the service to workers will

ensure that contributions to the present scheme are not prejudiced.

A further change of significance which will be of benefit to all workers in the construction industry is the extension of the period a worker may be out of the industry without breaking his continuity of service. Currently a worker may be out of the industry for up to nine months without breaking his continuity of service. This period is being extended by the Bill to two years.

At a time when employment opportunities in the construction industry are not always available, when unemployment is at tragically high levels, this extension to two years should be of great benefit as it will provide workers with a longer period to return to the construction industry before being in danger of losing accumulated service credits.

The other changes of significance that are being introduced by the Bill improve the administration of the scheme and provide for minor increases in the scope of and benefits under the scheme. These changes have been proposed by the board.

The first change of significance is to allow *pro rata* annual leave to count as worker service and to require employers to pay long service leave charges in respect of this leave. This change is proposed because it has come to the attention of the board that a number of employers have terminated their workers' employment at the end of the year and paid them *pro rata* annual leave but have escaped the payment of long service leave charges even though the same workers have recommenced afterwards. Also workers have been denied a service credit in respect of this period which would in ordinary circumstances be regarded as service for long service leave purposes.

A second change is to provide a clear and precise definition of the wage rate in respect of which long service leave charges and entitlements are to be paid. The Bill proposes that this rate be the worker's total wage excluding overtime, travelling and fares allowances and annual leave loading. It should remove problems and confusion that are currently being experienced by employers.

A further change is being proposed to enable employers to pay long service leave charges in respect of workers employed outside Australia. It will enable these workers to be treated similarly to workers sent interstate. It will enable workers to be credited with overseas service provided the employer pays a long service leave charge. The provisions relating to interstate service are also being made consistent with this change.

The provisions enabling the board to make assessments of long service leave charges where insufficient information or records are maintained are being strengthened by this Bill.

Currently the board is unable to collect charges where a worker cannot be identified. This is allowing unscrupulous employers to escape their liability. It also prevents the board from later crediting the worker, when he identifies himself, with the service he had with the employer. The changes proposed will enable the board to make an assessment without specifically knowing the identity of the worker concerned.

An ability to appeal to the Industrial Relations Commission against decisions of the board on a number of matters is also proposed in this Bill. This will help ensure that justice is seen to be done to all concerned. It also removes from the board an appearance of fulfilling the function of a quasi-judicial tribunal, a function which had never been envisaged.

Finally the Bill proposes to permit the board to recover arrears of long service leave charges which have remained due for up to fifteen years. This will help ensure that an employer cannot evade payments due to the board which may only be identified when a worker applies for his long service leave entitlement. It is a measure which should assist to reduce the burden on those responsible employers who make regular contributions to the board fund with respect to their workers.

To conclude, the Construction Industry (Electrical and Metal Trades) Long Service Leave Act 1982, which was passed during the spring sessional period of 1982 was the first phase of the legislation required for extension of the portable long service leave scheme to electrical contracting and metal trades construction workers. This Bill, which implements this change, is the second stage. It is a change requested by both unions and employers with which the Government

concurs and one which the Government believes will improve the industrial relations climate of the construction industry.

The 1982 Act received the full support of both sides of this House. Because of this and the support the former Government had given the proposers when the extension was first put forward for consideration I believe this Bill should also receive the full support of both sides of this House. I therefore look forward to this Bill having a speedy passage. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

LEGAL PROFESSION PRACTICE (SOLICITORS' GUARANTEE FUND) BILL

Mr CAIN (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As honourable members would be aware from media reports, the Law Institute of Victoria has reached agreement with the Westpac Banking Corporation for payment of interest at the rate of 7·5 per cent on moneys deposited in solicitors' general trust accounts with Westpac. That agreement is the result of extensive negotiations with the banking industry. Both the Law Institute and the Westpac Banking Corporation are to be congratulated for their demonstrated initiative and community contribution for this agreement will greatly benefit Victorians in need of legal aid.

The Legal Profession Practice Act requires the establishment and maintenance of the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund, a fund to provide for client compensation in the event of a solicitor's defalcations. A substantial proportion of the fund is directed to providing legal aid in Victoria after deductions are made for administrative costs and defalcations. The Victoria Law Foundation and the Leo Cussen Institute for Continuing Legal Education are the other recipients.

The Westpac agreement is expected to increase the amount paid into the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund of the Law Institute by up to $2 million annually. Initial agreements have also been made with other banks, and the Law Institute is continuing negotiations in respect of both agreements and specific terms. To help fund legal aid services in Victoria, I emphasize that it is the firm resolve of the Government that interest should be paid on all moneys in solicitor's general trust accounts. If similar agreements are reached with all the other trading banks, the interest earned could be as much as $7 million annually. The boost in legal aid resources under the first agreement is such as to direct to the Westpac Banking Corporation the approbation of the Government.

I now direct honourable members' attention to the purposes of the Bill. The Law Institute proposes to pay the interest earned under the Westpac agreement and any similar agreements into the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund. However, there is no legislative authority for such payment under the Legal Profession Practice Act. Clause 2 provides such authority. This clause is drawn in broad terms to allow for a variety of possible agreements or arrangements that the Law Institute may need to negotiate to ensure interest is paid on moneys held in solicitors' general trust accounts. However, the operation of the clause is limited to agreements or arrangements approved by the Attorney-General. This requirement reflects the nature of the relationship between the Law Institute and the Government enabling the latter to ensure that the best possible agreement is reached in each instance.

The reference to agreements entered into before or after the commencement of the provision is necessary to validate the Westpac agreement which operated from 1 March 1983. Honourable members would be aware that this limited degree of retrospectivity was foreshadowed in the media reports of the agreements.

This amendment attends to the administrative aspects of an agreement that is a further advance in this area. I congratulate the bank and the Law Institute of Victoria for their initiative. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As I am sure there is no need for me to mention to the House, the Government recently tabled the second annual report of the Medical Board of Victoria. The board consists of nine eminent members of the medical profession and is responsible, among other things, for the registration of medical practitioners in Victoria and for the conduct of inquiries into complaints against a medical practitioner of misconduct or a failure to observe appropriate ethical standards of practice.

In view of expressed community concern in this area, the Government is pleased that the board has taken the opportunity in its report to discuss in some detail the nature of the complaints it received during the period of the report and the manner in which they were dealt with by the board. The report deals with the activities of the board for the 1981–82 financial year and, among other things, incorporates the annual reports of the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee and the Hospitals Accreditation Committee, both of which are also constituted under the Medical Practitioners Act.

Honourable members who read the report will note that the board has highlighted the need for various amendments to its enabling legislation and, indeed, the Government takes the view that the Medical Practitioners Act, as well as many other health registration Acts, is out of date and requires a thorough review.

A number of the amendments suggested by the board involve questions of principle which are best considered when the Act is being over-hauled, and I take this opportunity of assuring the House that it is the intention of the Government to initiate a review of the Act at an early date.

In the meantime, the Government has agreed to proceed with limited amendment of the Act, and the present Bill gives effect to various amendments which the board considers to be of some urgency.

The specific amendments to be made by the Bill are best discussed during the Committee stage, but it may be helpful if I initially canvassed the broad thinking behind the changes to the Act which are proposed in this legislation.

For the assistance of honourable members, specific clause notes have been printed and are attached to the Bill itself.

FOREIGN PRACTITIONERS QUALIFICATION COMMITTEE

Among other things, section 19 of the Medical Practitioners Act requires that a person seeking to be registered hold one of two qualifications. One is a degree, diploma or other document from a university, college or other body recognized by the board, certifying to the ability of the applicant to practise medicine and surgery. The alternative is the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee's certificate that the person is qualified to be registered by the board as a legally qualified medical practitioner. That committee was constituted by the Medical (Registration) Act 1957. The stated intention of the Government of the day in establishing the committee was to give foreign graduates an opportunity to prove their skill and ability by test before a body independent of the Medical Board. Advice given to the Government is that the committee is no longer operational.

Both the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee and the Medical Board now accept the results of the examination conducted by the Australian Medical Examining Council (AMEC) and the board has recommended to the Government that amending legislation should be introduced to abolish the committee and to recognize AMEC.

This recommendation had been accepted by the Government and two consequential changes to the Medical Practitioners Act will be made by this Bill regarding the registration of those foreign practitioners who up to now have been registered as holding the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee's certificate.

The first is to delete the certificate as one of the alternative qualifications for registration under the principal Act. Instead of requiring the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee's certificate as an

alternative qualification, the Bill will substitute the certificate issued by AMEC which, among other things, will promote uniformity of recognition between the States and Territories of the ability of those medical practitioners who have trained and gained their experience overseas. This may well be an interim measure, because AMEC itself is currently being reviewed.

The second change made by the Bill is to repeal those provisions constituting the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee. As I indicated earlier, a result of the recognition of the Australian Medical Examining Council examinations is that the need for the Foreign Practitioners Qualification Committee becomes superfluous. This Bill, therefore, repeals those sections in the Act which constitute the committee and set out its functions.

It is appropriate that, in speaking on this aspect of the Bill, I place on record the thanks and appreciation of the Government to those members of the medical profession who have served on the committee over the past 26 years. I particularly acknowledge the work of the late chairman, Professor Sir Lance Townsend, whose contribution to the health services of this State will be long remembered.

REGISTRATION OF OVERSEAS DOCTORS

Over the years, the question of the status of overseas doctors who wish to practise in Victoria has raised a number of vexed issues.

I have already indicated to the House that, as a result of other proposed amendments to the principal Act, the results of the Australian Medical Examiners Council examinations are to be recognized in Victoria as one of the alternative prerequisites for registration under the Act. However, there are several other categories of overseas practitioners registered by the board, one of which is dealt with under section 20. This section empowers the Medical Board to register doctors whose medical or surgical knowledge and skill are of international standing or of such high standing that assessment of professional competence by examination is inappropriate.

One inherent difficulty with this section is that any person who qualifies for registration under the section can be granted only full registration by the board. In other words, although a practitioner may be an eminent and very highly qualified specialist he would, nonetheless, be entitled to practise over the whole field of medicine if he were registered by the board under this section, even though the board is unable to assess his competency in other fields. This situation has led to the board feeling unable to register some overseas doctors, despite the fact that they are clearly eminent in their field.

A striking example of this problem is the case which has been raised on a number of occasions over the past year by senior members of the medical community, members of Parliament and a number of community groups. This case involves a Russian doctor who is acknowledged as one of the world's leading authorities in a particular specialist surgical field, endocrine surgery. This doctor worked in Melbourne as a special guest of a university surgery department, passing on his knowledge to local surgeons. His application for registration in Victoria has been supported by many of Melbourne's leading surgeons and by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, which examined his qualifications pursuant to his application for registration.

Despite this man's unquestioned pre-eminence in his speciality, the Medical Board has refused registration on each occasion the question has been before the board, because of its inability to form a judgment about his competency in other fields of medicine. Of course, it is most unlikely that this particular doctor would wish to work outside his own field if granted registration. The board has made it clear that if it was able to register this doctor only for his own speciality, it would be able to view the matter quite differently.

On this basis, the Government believes that there would be greater benefits to the community if the board were given a greater flexibility in the application of this section. This is to be achieved by the introduction of a new section 27A into the principal Act to establish a system of conditional medical registrations.

The main effect of the new section will be to empower the board to impose conditions, limitations and restrictions on the practice of a person registered under section 20. It will for example, enable the board to

register a highly qualified overseas specialist but limit his practice to his particular field of expertise in the types of situation I have described. However, the new section will go on to give the board an ability to also grant conditional medical registrations to persons who may not qualify for registration under the other provisions of the Act but who will meet a special need for the provision of medical services to a particular ethnic community.

The proposal to provide a capacity for the registration of practitioners to serve ethnic communities is novel and accordingly, it is important that I describe the intentions of the Government in a little more detail to the House.

At the present time, the Government is concerned at the fact that some of our ethnic communities lack access to medical practitioners from a similar cultural and linguistic background and, indeed, that it could be said that such communities are currently disadvantaged in the provision of medical care. The Government believes the situation could be improved if there were a capacity to enable bi-cultural doctors to practise in Victoria, perhaps on a fixed contract and on a Government-to-Government basis, specifically to meet the needs of ethnic communities, notwithstanding the fact that they may not qualify for full registration under the Medical Practitioners Act.

Put another way, the Government is of the view that, provided that there is no significant increase in doctors, and that the doctors concerned can communicate both with their compatriots and with their professional colleagues, there is a case for permitting suitably qualified persons to practise in Victoria on a restricted basis. The need for fluency in a particular language would, for example, be of paramount importance in such areas of practice as psychiatry and it is not difficult to appreciate some of the problems of, say, a Greek-born patient expressing himself to a practitioner who was not well-versed in Greek.

Indeed, the possibility of arranging for Greek doctors to practise in Victoria by contractual arrangement was one of the matters I took up with the Greek Department of Health when I visited Athens in 1980.

The question of whether a programme to allow doctors who have qualified overseas to practise on a restricted scale among ethnic communities is developed nationally will depend upon discussions with the Commonwealth. The Government will raise with the Federal Government the question of lifting the present immigration restrictions imposed on overseas practitioners, to enable this State to bring suitably qualified doctors to Victoria to service our ethnic communities. However, in the meantime, this Bill will provide the legislative framework for the conditional registration of such practitioners in Victoria.

In either the case of overseas specialists seeking registration under section 20 or practitioners seeking to serve an ethnic community, the Medical Board will be empowered to impose restrictions, limitations or conditions on the practice of the person concerned. Provided that the practitioner does not infringe or contravene any restrictions, limitations, or conditions specified by the board, the proposed new section 27A deems that person to be a legally qualified medical practitioner.

I mention, for the sake of completeness, that the new section goes on to provide that a person who is subject to a conditional registration as I have described will be entitled to full registration under section 19 of the Act if he subsequently qualifies under AMEC.

RESTORATION TO REGISTER

One of the objects of the amendments to the Medical Practitioners Act by the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 1981 was to strengthen the disciplinary provisions of the principal Act. Among the changes made by the Act was to vest in the Medical Board a power to impose conditions, limitations or restrictions on the practice of a medical practitioner whose activities had been the subject of an inquiry by the board under section 17. These may include conditions, limitations or restrictions on the prescription of any drug or substance or class of drug or substance.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that a major deficiency in that legislation was lack of a power for the board to impose similar restrictions, limitations or conditions if the suspension of a medical practitioner was to be revoked or his name

restored after being struck off the medical register. One effect is that a medical practitioner who has been deregistered for, say, misprescribing certain drugs, or who has been suspended because he has become addicted to a particular drug, is automatically entitled to prescribe drugs on being restored to the register.

This is a serious anomaly and, in the opinion of the Government, the board should have a capacity to impose restrictions on such a medical practitioner, even if only for a probationary period, in the interests of the community and of the doctor concerned. Among other things, the Bill will insert a new section 27B into the principal Act to give the board such a capacity.

It should be noted that the proposed new section will, in addition to the situations I have described, give the board a power to impose conditions, limitations or restrictions if a medical practitioner has failed to renew his registration for a period of two years. The effect will be that, if a medical practitioner has allowed his registration to lapse for a period, the board will be able to impose restrictions if he desires to return in Victoria, if it is considered that such a course is desirable.

ORDERS

Another deficiency in the Medical Practitioners Act which has been highlighted by the Medical Board is the lack of a power to make orders. The board has suggested that where, after due inquiry under section 16 or 17 of the Act, a deficiency is found in the standard of practice of a medical practitioner, the board should have the ability to order that the deficiency be corrected.

The experience of the board is that deficiencies may occur in a number of areas, such as medical records, practice methods, standard of premises, identification of practice, advertising and so on. The Government accepts that it would be in the interests of both the profession and the community if the board had a power to make such orders. An appropriate provision has been included in proposed new section 17A.

The effect of the proposed new section is that, if a practitioner fails to comply within a reasonable time with an order made by the board, such non-compliance is deemed to be infamous conduct in a professional respect. This, in turn, will enable the board to take one of the courses of action open to it under section 17 (4) of the Act and, of course, will provide the medical practitioner concerned with an avenue of appeal to the Supreme Court pursuant to section 11.

PRACTITIONERS WHO ARE PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY ILL

In addition to strengthening the disciplinary provisions of the Medical Practitioners Act as I have already outlined to the House, one of the objects of the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 1981 was to make a number of improvements to section 18 of the principal Act. This section sets out the powers of the Medical Board in circumstances where a practitioner becomes physically or mentally disabled.

The board has reported to the Government that the section, as amended, is extremely complicated and difficult and complicated to understand, and has expressed the view that the objects of the section should be the prompt protection of the community from the harm that may be done by doctors whose mental or physical health is impaired, and to encourage a sick doctor to seek treatment and to voluntarily accept such limitation on his practice as may be desirable because of his physical or mental disability.

The board has gone on to say that by contrast to the British system, which has as its essential features, the appointment of a health committee and a preliminary screener, whose role is to ensure to the prompt examination of the sick doctor and his suspension from practice. The Victorian legislation is cumbersome and discourages sick doctors from coming forward it is also inhumane to the affected doctor.

The Government is prepared to look at the system adopted in the United Kingdom in conjunction with the review of the Medical Practitioners Act which I foreshadowed earlier.

In the meantime, the Government has accepted the three amendments put forward by the Medical Board as an interim measure. These are, firstly, to remove the present restriction on the board which limits its power of immediate suspension of the registration of a doctor to one occasion only for a particular physical or mental disability; secondly, in lieu of fixing a maximum

period of three months for such suspension, to substitute a requirement that where the board receives a medical certificate certifying that a suspended practitioner is fit to practise, it must within three months either restore the registration of the practitioner or hold a full inquiry into the matter; and, thirdly, to give the board a capacity to impose restrictions on a practice on the voluntary application of a practitioner.

Appropriate amendments to section 18 of the principal Act will be made by the Bill to give effect to the proposals of the Medical Board. That might be of interest to the honourable member for Polwarth who has drawn a case to my attention.

FUNDING

One of the major requirements of the Medical Board at the present time is for additional facilities and resources to cater for a rapidly expanding workload. The board has pointed out to the Government that in recent years its work load has more than quadrupled and that its existing facilities and resources are inadequate to meet the demands being made upon it.

To give the House some idea of the additional work load being carried by the board, I invite the attention of honourable members to the fact that in its second annual report, the board has indicated that the number of complaints it has received has jumped from 40 to 140 over the past five years.

Each of these complaints requires investigation and it is not without significance that over the same period the number of inquiries held by the board under sections 16 and 17 of the Act has risen dramatically from 3 in 1976-77 to 38 in 1981-82.

The Government is convinced that if the Medical Board is to carry out its responsibilities as the Medical Practitioners Act clearly envisages, it is essential that the board have access to the facilities and the resources it needs to effectively undertake the duties and functions vested in it by the Parliament. Indeed, discussions are currently taking place to determine the precise needs of the Medical Board for the immediate future.

Revenue derived from registration fees paid under the Act last financial year was about $168 000. This is roughly equal to the anticipated expenditure by the board this financial year excluding expenditure on salaries of its staff. When these are taken into account, it can be seen that, not only is there a substantial shortfall in the revenue raised through registration fees, but that a great deal of the cost of financing the Medical Board is currently being met from public funds.

The question of the general funding of registration boards under the purview of the Minister of Health is one which the Government proposes to review, but in the meantime, the point should be made that every other registration body within that portfolio is required to be self funding.

The fee for the renewal of registration as a medical practitioner in Victoria is only $15. This has remained the same for a number of years with the result that it is now one of the lowest annual registration fees paid by any of the Medical and para-medical professions in this State. By comparison, the annual fee for registration as a chiropractor is $40, while that for a pharmacist is $60.

The annual fee of $15 for registration as a medical practitioner pales into insignificance when it is compared to the annual fee of $320 paid voluntarily by general practitioners in private practice to be members of the Australian Medical Association.

The Bill amends the Medical Practitioners Act to enable the fees paid under the Act to be brought to a more realistic level. This is to be achieved by fixing a maximum fee in the Act itself, and enabling the actual fees to be prescribed by regulation. In other words, the fees to be inserted into the principal Act are ceilings and will enable the actual fees charged to be adjusted as necessary from time to time to reflect changes in the costs of providing a service to the medical profession and the community.

The target of the Government is to raise $500 000 from fees payable under the Act for the next financial year. This will not only offset the cost of the salaries paid to officers servicing the board but will also meet the cost of the additional facilities and resources requested by the board.

On this basis, I mention to the House that it is intended to fix the fee payable for the renewal of registration as a medical practitioner initially at $50, still less than pharmacists. Proportionate adjustments in the

other fees payable under the Act will, of course, also be made by the regulations.

ADVERTISING

The predominant method of paying doctors in this State is the fee-for-service system. This has been truly described as the pricing mechanism that buys units of service.

There is, of course, a so-called "common fee" and a scale of Australian Medical Association charges but the facts are that, in the absence of any enforceable guidelines for medical charges, a practitioner is free to charge whatever he likes for his services. This, clearly, puts a patient seeking medical attention at a decided disadvantage.

On the one hand, the relationship between a patient and a practitioner is, essentially a contractual one. Yet, on the other hand, the patient, a party to the contract, usually has no foreknowledge of what he will be required to pay unless he has the temerity to ask about the fees before receiving the medical service.

The Government appreciates that a tenet of the medical profession is that no medical practitioner should advertise himself in any way except by proficiency in his work. However, the Government believes this ethic should not be taken to the point of precluding a practitioner from disclosing before a patient receives treatment what is that practitioner's scale of fees.

It is possible under the existing law that any practitioner who published details of his fees, could be considered as being guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect. To overcome this problem, the Bill inserts a new section 29 into the principal Act.

The new section will have the effect of authorizing a medical practitioner to display in his professional rooms details of the fees which he charges for his medical services irrespective of any rule of law or practice to the contrary.

This innovation represents a significant breakthrough in the interests of both the profession and the consumer of medical services and its operation will be closely monitored by the Government. However, the Government hopes that the majority of practitioners will take advantage of the opportunity presented by the amendment to display details of the fees charged by individual practices.

SUMMARY

The amendments to the Medical Practitioners Act which I have outlined to the House will go a long way towards improving the operation of the Act and, in particular, towards giving the Medical Board a better capacity to carry out its responsibilities to the public and to the medical profession. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill will at long last give the technical and further education sector—commonly called TAFE—the recognition it deserves as a most important part of the State's post-secondary education. It fulfils an important election commitment of this Government.

Essentially the Bill provides, through amendments to the Post-Secondary Education Act of 1978, for the creation of a TAFE Board to develop and co-ordinate technical and further education with a view to—

- enhancing the quality of post-secondary education;
- improving the community's access to technical and further education; and
- ensuring that the education and training provided is relevant to the needs and aspirations of the people of Victoria.

I want to give credit to the former Minister of Education who took the first important steps towards placing TAFE on an equal footing with schools, colleges of advanced education and universities. For too long, however, TAFE in this State was the second-class citizen; in fact, long after that position had been reversed at the Commonwealth level and in other States.

As with so many features of Victoria's development, the State's technical education in two decades moved from leading the

nation to trailing behind more progressive States. The reforms contained in the Bill build on and greatly extend the work of the previous Minister to provide the first real opportunity for Victoria's TAFE to resume its national leadership role.

The urgency of these reforms cannot be overstated. As long ago as 1974—now nearly a decade—the Kangan committee on TAFE pointed to the importance of TAFE in developing national resources and taking advantage of technological advances in achieving economic growth.

The committee pressed the claims of technical and further education to remove barriers from education for those beyond the ages of secondary schooling. However, without overlooking the vital skills training role of technical and further education, the Kangan report gave priority to the educational and social purposes of the system. Such considerations have never in our post-war history been more pressing for our attention.

The committee sought to have the system treated as an alternative—neither inferior nor superior—to the other streams of education. It pointed to the strong representations in submissions it received that technical and further education would best be served by a separate department or authority, as was the case in New South Wales and South Australia.

The first report of the Commonwealth TAFE Commission in 1976, reinforced those messages of Kangan when it published powerful arguments for changing priorities in favour of technical and further education. The Williams committee of 1979 on education, training and employment gave further impetus to the recommended reforms in the administration and status of technical and further education.

I am sure that all honourable members in this House and those in the other place will support the principles of the Bill. I believe it will equip the system with the appropriate authority to respond to the community's technical and further education needs more effectively, more efficiently and with a great deal more accountability than has been the case in the past.

The principal features of the Technical and Further Education Board and its regional boards follow, so far as is appropriate in legislation, the recommendations made to me in the report of the review of technical and further education conducted late last year under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Public Service Board and I thank Dr Cullen for his efforts on behalf of technical and further education in Victoria. I have, however, retained the system's links with the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission. The relationship of the Technical and Further Education Board to the commission will parallel that of universities and colleges of advanced education to the commission, through the amendments to existing provisions in the Post-Secondary Education Act 1978. The commission will remain charged with the responsibility to ensure the balanced development of post-secondary education in Victoria.

The Technical and Further Education Board will, in co-operation with the commission, have responsibility for the administration, organization, planning and co-operation of technical and further education, as set out in section 43. Section 59 empowers the board to allocate funds appropriate for technical and further education by the Parliament, for the first time giving the board a measure of control over its budget.

The board will comprise sixteen members; people who represent employers, trade unions, the staff and management of technical and further education and community interests. At least two will be from non-metropolitan regions of the State. I will ensure that rural interests, small providers and the Council of Adult Education are included on the board.

I will be anxious to ensure that the board and the regional boards to be established under Division 2, together provide an appropriate balance between the many groups with a substantial interest in technical and further education. In recognition of the importance and size of Victoria's technical and further education system, the board will for the first time have a full-time chairman.

Mr Peter Kirby has already been appointed to that position, and I know that honourable members recognize that the board has secured a talented chairman who enjoys the confidence of all sections of the system. Mr Kirby has done an outstanding job already since his appointment under the

present arrangements and I look forward to his continued work in this vital area of education. The board is required to make annual reports to Parliament within a specified time.

The Bill, in division 3, creates a Technical and Further Education Teaching Service for technical and further education colleges, similar to the Education Service operating for schools. Provision is made to create this service with the existing teachers in technical and further education on the appointed day. However, teachers may elect to continue teaching in this system without becoming a member of the Technical and Further Education Teaching Service. Where they make such an election, they may change their minds within eighteen months of the appointed day and go into the service.

If they stay out of the service, they will remain employees of the Education Department or their college council, as the case may be, and their position will not be taken into the service until they vacate it.

In addition, the Minister may exclude from the Technical and Further Education Teaching Service teaching positions of a particular description or all teaching positions in the technical and further education college. This provision enables the Minister to exclude from the permanent teaching service such teachers as those on casual and fixed-term contracts engaged for relief purposes or temporary programmes.

It will also enable further special consideration to be given to those technical and further education colleges with long-standing arrangements for employment of their teaching staff. There are four such colleges—Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Swinburne, and the Ballarat School of Mines which operate as companies, and Gordon which operates under a separate statute.

There will be a registration board established under sub-division 2 to consider applications for registration as a technical and further education teacher, grant registration and maintain a register of qualified teachers. In determining qualifications for registration, the board will be required to take into account not only teaching experience, but also industrial and related experience, considerations obviously important to the system.

The selection of teachers for and promotion of teachers in the Technical and Further Education Teaching Service will be subject to procedures at the college level and will embody an appeal system involving staff representatives. Disciplinary action will also be subject to appeal and in this case there will be an element of peer judgment with staff representation on the appeal boards. The emphasis in the selection and deployment of staff will be on college level decision-making.

The rights of people transferring between the Education Service, Public Service and Technical and Further Education Teaching Service are safe-guarded in the Bill.

There are provisions to create an accreditation board in division 5 of the Bill. The board will be similar in status and functions to the Accreditation Board established under the Post-Secondary Education Act. It will be empowered to investigate course proposals, accredit courses of study leading to a recognized award and accredit colleges, where appropriate.

The Accreditation Board will comprise eight members representative of the range of interests in technical and further education. The composition of the board will be determined after consultation with the Industrial Training Commission. The commission will also have to be consulted by the Accreditation Board in regard to any course leading to a technician certificate or apprenticeship award.

Consultation with the Industrial Training Commission and with the Ministry of Employment and Training will ensure there is the closest possible relationship between the technical and further education system and the training and manpower needs of the State.

In the ways I have outlined and in other ways that will be examined in committee, honourable members will appreciate that the Bill will create a clearly identifiable technical and further education administration with the appropriate authority, responsibilities, machinery and accountability. It will ensure that Victoria's technical and further education system can prosper to the maximum extent and with the maximum benefit to the people of this State.

It should also ensure that there is an appropriate level of involvement of the community in the decision-making process and responsiveness to Government policy and the requirements of Parliament.

Finally, the provisions of the Bill, through the machinery and systems they establish, will open the technical and further education system to greater scrutiny and create the conditions for better management and initiative. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr JONA (Hawthorn), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BILL

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to abolish the Consumer Affairs Council and to provide for the establishment of the Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee. Honourable members will know that I commissioned a Ministerial review of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs towards the end of 1982, with the objective of improving the organizational effectiveness and efficiency of the Ministry.

The central recommendation in the review report was that the Consumer Affairs Council be abolished and a more broadly-based advisory committee be established to replace it and that the respective roles of the committee and Ministry be clearly defined.

The council was originally conceived to make policy inputs to the Government at the time when there was no Ministry. Although the council has made a solid contribution, over the years as the Ministry of Consumer Affairs developed, the respective policy formulation roles of the council and the Ministry have become blurred and duplicative. Neither the council nor the Ministry have been adequately resourced to handle needed policy tasks. Further, it has been found difficult to get a co-ordinated policy development programme, which is able effectively to address the Government's policy priorities.

To resolve these problems, the review report recommended a significant strengthening of the Ministry's policy division and this in now in progress. The report also stressed that policy formulation is a process, which should involve the widest possible community consultation, and that the Minister, in considering policy proposals from his departmental officers, should have access to other independent advice. To this end, the report recommended the establishment of the Ministerial advisory committee, which will be complementary to the Ministry's policy division.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs must have information regarding the environment it operates in; constructive criticism of its policies and effectiveness of its services; input from outside community organizations for its policy formulation, and the ability to disseminate information to all users of its services.

The Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee would be a Ministerial advisory committee with clearly defined policy and advice roles, giving the Ministry effective community consultation processes. The committee would report to the Minister, not Parliament.

The recommended functions of the committee are:

At the Minister's request, to advise on the likely medium and long-term effects of the adoption of major consumer affairs proposals or objectives as Government policy;

at the Minister's request, to consider and report on the priorities that should be established in relation to the achievement of objectives related to a particular consumer affairs policy and the priorities between competing policies;

at the Minister's request, to consider and advise on specific plans and projects both in the public and private sectors, having regard to the possible effect on the proposed plans and projects on consumer affairs;

at the Minister's request, to ensure effective co-ordination of the activities of all agencies participating in the achievement of the consumer affairs policies of the Government;

to review and report to the Minister on the effect of changing circumstances on the attainment of the consumer affairs objectives of the Government and to advise if, in its opinion, priorities established by the Government for the achievement of these policies should be revised;

at the Minister's request, to review the progress and performance in the achievement of objectives or projects, which are material to the achievement of the consumer affairs policies of the Government;

to advise on any matter referred to it by the Minister for consideration and report; and

to carry out any duties or functions conferred upon it by any other Act and referred to it by the Minister responsible for the administration of that Act.

Honourable members will note that these functions are captured in the new section 6, which gives very wide discretion to the Minister and the committee.

In commenting upon the composition of the committee, the review report is not prescriptive, rather it is advocated that the proposed structure of the committee be the subject of a community consultation process, an approach strongly supported by the Government. Informal consultations have already been commenced with consumer, industry, union, Government and other relevant groups, with a view to producing a discussion paper, which in itself will be the subject of further consultation before a final decision is made on the structure and membership of the committee. It is anticipated that this process will produce a body, which is appropriately representative and expert.

Honourable members will note that the Bill provides for a considerable degree of flexibility with regard to such matters as appointment of members, length of term and so on. Flexibility on these matters and on the procedures by which the committee will operate will ensure that the committee remains relevant through time to changing needs and circumstances.

Clause 2 replaces Division 1, Part I of the Consumer Affairs Act, which relates to the composition and function of the Consumer Affairs Council, with a new division. This new division sets out the composition and functions of the Victorian Consumer Affairs Committee.

Clause 3 merely amends the interpretation provisions of the principal Act to give effect to the abolition of the council and establishment of the committee. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

In so doing, I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs to confirm the verbal undertaking he gave me that, if required, consultations will be arranged with departmental officers.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

The sitting was suspended at 12.59 *p.m. until* 2.5 *p.m.*

BEER PRICES REGULATION (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) BILL

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to give the Prices Commissioner appointed under the Fuel Prices Regulation Act 1981 temporary power to control the maximum price of beer sold by breweries.

Honourable members will be aware that it is the Government's intention to amend the Liquor Control Act 1968 to abolish the current minimum price for packaged beer. Amending legislation to give effect to this was recently introduced. This Bill forms part of that package.

The abolition of minimum pricing of packaged beer is likely to intensify price competition in the retail trade for packaged beer. Consumers could normally expect to benefit from such competition through lower prices and a wider range of market options.

A study of the economic effects of the abolition of the legal minimum price of packaged beer in Victoria by the Centre of Policy Studies, Monash University, has, however, indicated that there are reasons to

believe that the magnitude of the prospective reductions in retail prices may be reduced to some extent by increases in the brewery price of packaged beer. In fact, the study noted that it was theoretically possible that the brewery price would rise far enough to cause the retail price to rise.

The possibility of an increase in the brewery price of packaged beer exists because there is limited competition between breweries in Victoria. Carlton and United Breweries has a monopoly over the brewery trade and, in the absence of Government regulation, can set prices at levels which may not be in the public interest. The company's market position has probably strengthened in recent years with the closing down of Courage, as well as its acquisition of the Broadmeadows brewery from Tooth.

At present, brewery beer prices in Victoria do not compare unfavourably with those in other States. Price regulation would help to ensure that this continues to be the case and that consumers benefit from the economies of scale Carlton and United Breweries gain as a result of its monopoly.

Following the National Economic Summit, the Commonwealth and State Governments are examining the establishment of formal price surveillance mechanisms. It is possible that Carlton and United Breweries will be subject to formal price surveillance when these mechanisms are established.

The abolition of minimum price for packaged beer, however, highlights the need for brewery prices to be immediately subject to effective price surveillance. Consequently, it is proposed to give the Prices Commissioner, appointed under the Fuel Prices Regulation Act 1981, temporary powers to set maximum brewery beer prices. These powers are to be effective until 30 June 1984, by which time formal price surveillance mechanisms are likely to be in operation.

Clause 3 of the Bill provides that the Prices Commissioner may, by order in the *Government Gazette*, fix the maximum brewery prices for various beers. The Bill further provides that the Minister may however direct that any proposed order shall not be published.

Clause 4 makes it an offence for any person to sell or offer for sale, beer at a price greater than the price fixed under the provisions of the proposed Act.

Clause 5 provides that this Bill shall be read together with the Fuel Prices Regulation Act 1981. This is necessary as there are certain provisions of that Act—for example, section 5 relating to production of books, documents and so on—which are desirable to aid the administration and enforcement of the Bill. Clause 6 provides that the Bill, unless repealed sooner, will cease to be in force on 30 June 1984. This clause also makes section 7 (2) of the Acts Interpretation Act 1958 applicable on expiry of the Bill. Without this provision, prosecution for offence against the Bill would abate on lapsing of the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES (ATTENDANCE CENTRE PERMITS) BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

One of the commitments of the Victorian Labor Government in the corrective services area is to develop an appropriate system of alternatives to imprisonment. This is a significant aspect of Labor's welfare policy in supporting provision of services alternative to the prison system. Particular emphasis has been placed on current community-based programmes such as community service orders and attendance centre orders, with the Government's goal of making these programmes as effective as possible. As such programmes become further developed, security will then be the main reason for imprisonment. Offenders will then have a far greater chance of being integrated into community life.

This proposed legislation aims to further the Victorian Government's commitment to the use of imprisonment as a last resort. It is its belief that imprisonment should be used only for offenders who have committed offences for which confinement in a prison is considered to be a just form of punishment and also for those offenders

who may present a serious threat to the community.

The purpose of the Bill is to introduce in the statutes an additional option which will enable the director-general, with the approval of the Minister, to use discretion in dealing with an offender who is imprisoned in default of payment of a fine by allowing him or her under permit to serve all or part of that term by attendance at an attendance centre.

A similar provision exists in the community service order programme where an offender may make an application to the Magistrates' Court to seek a community service order in lieu of being imprisoned for non-payment of fines.

At present, the Minister is empowered under section 125A of the Community Welfare Services Act 1970 to authorize the director-general to permit an offender undergoing a sentence of imprisonment to serve the unexpired portion of that sentence by way of attendance at an attendance centre. The latter sentencing alternative, which has been available to the courts for some years to deal with minor offenders whose sentences are for terms of not less than one month or not more than twelve months, has developed into and proven to be a most successful corrective programme, because of the following benefits:

The offender is able to continue in his or her family environment and support his or her family by continuing in employment;

he or she is required to participate in some worthwhile community service, as directed by the superintendent of the attendance centre;

the cost involved in including an offender in the attendance centre programme is significantly less than that for his or her confinement in a prison.

Because of its continued success, the 1981 legislation enabled the capacity of the attendance centres to be increased from a maximum of 40 to 60 attendees. This is also a reflection of the regard in which the attendance centre programme is held by the courts and the community.

The proposed amending legislation will allow for increased numbers of attendees to participate in the attendance centre programmes. New programmes will be introduced on alternate nights during the week to accommodate increased numbers of attendees provided for by the new proposed legislation. This will enable attendance centres and their services to be used at a maximum capacity. Additional numbers will also provide the opportunity for the centres to provide increased services to the community at week-ends. It is not intended that any one programme operating at an attendance centre will have more than 60 attendees enrolled, but opportunity will now be available for more than one programme to operate at any centre.

The proposed legislation will therefore give some additional flexibility to section 125A of the Community Welfare Services Act 1970 and, in particular, will also provide an alternative sanction for those persons who, through no fault of their own, may now be imprisoned because of financial difficulties. I commend this Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, 2 June.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (COMMITTEES OF MANAGEMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has two objectives. These are, firstly, to amend the Hospitals and Charities Act, the Cancer Act, and the Health Act to provide for employee representation on the committees of management of public hospitals and community health services, and, secondly, to fix a retirement age of 72 years for members of hospital committees.

The first of these objectives, the appointment of employee representatives to the committees of our public hospitals, gives effect to a long standing commitment of the Labor Party. Indeed, honourable members may recall that an important plank of its health platform for the last State election was an undertaking to amend legislation to permit worker representatives of hospital and community health centre workers on committees of management.

The need for employees representation on Victoria's hospital committee has been

obvious for some considerable time but former Governments have been loath to take advantage of the benefits from employee participation at a management level.

Many times in the past, the Labor Party has been critical of the lack of notice taken of the views of those actually working in the health field. It believes that the person in the job has a role to play in developing health care priorities, in setting goals and ensuring that Victoria's public hospitals and community health centres are run efficiently and effectively.

The appointment of employees to hospital and community health centre committees is designed to give workers a capacity to contribute directly to the management of these institutions—to have a voice on the way in which Victoria's health system is administered.

It will give committees of management immediate access to those who will be required to implement the decisions they make. It will promote closer co-operation and understanding and develop an even greater sense of common purpose between hospital management and those employed by the particular institution.

Although, at the present time there is no legislative barrier to hospital employees holding office as members of committees of management, hospital by-laws contain a provision prohibiting any member of the committee from being appointed to or retaining any paid office of the hospital while he is a member of the committee.

The amendments to be made by this Bill to the Hospitals and Charities Act, the Cancer Act and the Health Act, which I will discuss in more detail shortly, are designed to increase by one the maximum number of members who may be appointed to the committees of management of public hospitals.

The additional member is to be a person elected by the employees of the institution concerned, and provision is made in the amending legislation for the making of appropriate regulations prescribing the method of appointment of the employee representative. Discussions are occurring with the Victorian Hospitals Association and the health unions through the Victorian Trades Hall Council as to the best method.

The second objective of the Bill is to set a retirement age of 72 years for members of the committees of our public hospitals. This reflects the concern of the Government at the venerable age of members of some hospital committees, and will translate into the law a policy adopted by a number of hospitals which have already voluntarily fixed an age limit of 72 years for the members of their committees.

Let me make it quite clear that the Government is appreciative of the dedication of the more senior members of committees, many of whom have served the community for a good many years.

Therefore, it is important that I point out to the House that the introduction of a maximum age limit should not be construed as being critical in any way of the more elderly members of committees, and in fact, the Bill contains savings clauses to enable members who have already attained the age of 72 to remain in office for the balance of the terms of their appointment.

Nevertheless, the Government believes there is a need for an age limit to be inserted in the legislation in the same way as, say, the Constitution Act fixes a maximum age of 72 for a judge of the Supreme Court or the Companies (Victoria) Code precludes the appointment of a person of or over 72 as a director of a public company.

The Bill therefore, will provide that a person of 72 years of age is not capable of holding office as a member of a hospital committee of management except in the case of a person who reaches 72 while a member of a committee. In these circumstances, the member will be entitled to remain in office until immediately before his seventy-third birthday, or until the expiry of his term of appointment, whichever first occurs.

The Bill before the House is in three Parts. Part I amends the Hospitals and Charities Act, Part II amends the Cancer Act and Part III amends the Health Act. For the assistance of honourable members, I now propose to outline the amendments to be made by this Bill to the Acts I have mentioned.

PART I

As I have indicated, Part I amends the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958.

The two major changes to be made to that Act are to insert a new section 43AA to provide for the election of employee representatives to the committees of community health services, and to amend sections 48 and 63F to provide for the election of employee representatives to the committees of public hospitals as I have described to the House.

There are of course, many variables in the manner in which various community health services are constituted and, on this basis, the proposed new section 43AA will enable the Governor in Council to prescribe those community health centres to which the new section will apply. In the case of scheduled hospitals, the Bill increases the maximum number of members of the committees from twelve to thirteen.

The additional member will be the person to be elected by the employees of the hospital, thus avoiding any need to replace any existing members. The overall effect will be that the committee of management of a scheduled hospital will consist of a minimum of seven, and a maximum of thirteen members appointed by the Governor in Council, of whom one will be required to be a representative of permanent employees appointed in the prescribed manner.

The Bill goes on to repeal section 63N of the Hospitals and Charities Act. This section constitutes the committee of the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne and sets out the various persons or bodies who are entitled to be members of, or to representation on, the committee of that hospital.

The Government recognizes the historic reasons why specific provision has been made in the Hospitals and Charities Act for the constitution of the committee of the Royal Dental Hospital but is of the view that there is now no reason why the committee should not be constituted in the same way as the committees of other scheduled hospitals.

The repeal of section 63N will result in appointments to the Dental Hospital Committee being made under section 63F which, following the enactment of this Bill, will fix a minimum of seven, and a maximum of thirteen members.

Appointments to the hospital will also be subject to section 63F (2) which enables universities to submit a panel of names of persons eligible for appointment to a committee where there is established at the scheduled hospital a clinical school associated with the university.

As a result of discussions with Melbourne university, it has been agreed that the university should continue to have representation on the committee, notwithstanding the proposed repeal of section 63N, and an invitation will be extended to the university to submit panels of names for appointment pursuant to section 63F (2) after the enactment of this Bill.

I might add that this opportunity to insert a head of power to specify by regulation those hospitals to which section 63F (2) relate because of the need to clarify whether arrangements made between universities and hospitals in some instances constitute, in fact, a clinical school.

Further amendments to be made to section 63F limit the number of dentists who are capable to being appointed to the committee of the Royal Dental Hospital to one-fourth of the membership of the committee in the same way as the number of medical practitioners is limited on the committees of other hospitals, and fix a maximum age of 72 for members of committees.

The opportunity of this Bill is being taken to make two minor and unrelated amendments to the Hospitals and Charities Act. The first, to section 40 (4) inserts the words "or secretary" after "chairman". This section currently requires the Chairman of the Health Commission to sign certificates for legal purposes that an institution is, or is not registered with the commission. The chairman of the commission is not always available and the need to sign such certificates adds to his already very heavy workload. The purpose of the amendment is to enable such certificates also to be signed by the secretary of the commission.

The second is to section 51 of the Hospitals and Charities Act. This section currently requires the approval of the commission to the appointment of persons to the office of secretary of a subsidized incorporated institution.

Legal advice given to the commission is that commission approval is also required to the appointment of persons acting in such a position. It is considered inappropriate that commission approval should be required for the appointment of persons who

will only act in the position for a short time. Accordingly, the section is to be amended by the Bill to require commission approval only in the case of persons acting in such a position for a period longer than three months.

PART II

This Part amends the Cancer Act and its effect will be to amend those sections of the Act relating to the constitution of the Cancer Institute Board in the same way as the Bill will amend the Hospitals and Charities Act. In other words, the Bill will increase the membership of the Cancer Institute Board by one, from a maximum of fourteen, to a maximum of fifteen, of whom two are appointed on the nomination of the Governor of Tasmania. The additional member is to be an employee representative and, as in the case of other hospitals, an age limit of 72 will apply.

It is perhaps interesting to note that, while Victoria is proposing a maximum age limit of 72, Tasmania already has a retiring age of 70 and advice from that State is that this lower age limit would apply when nominating its representatives to the Cancer Institute Board. We formally sought the opinion of the Tasmanian Government to that change, and they pointed out that they already had an age limit of 70 applying.

This opportunity is also being taken to delete the provisions in the Cancer Act relating to the executive committee. The executive committee was no doubt appropriate when the board consisted of Government, institution and Tasmanian nominees, but now that the board is to be similar to those of other institutions, there is no reason why the committee should continue to be established by legislation.

A further small amendment to section 3 of the Cancer Act will insert into the Act a definition of the expression "Commission". The word "Commission" is used in several places in the Cancer Act such as section 38A and section 38C but is not defined in the Act itself.

The amendment to section 3 will define "Commission" as meaning the Health Commission of Victoria.

PART III

The object of this Part is to amend provisions of the Health Act constituting the Board of the Fairfield Hospital in the same way as the Bill amends the Hospitals and Charities Act and the Cancer Act as regards the constitution of other hospital committees of management. As in the case of other hospitals, the size of the board is to be increased by one to a maximum of thirteen, and provision made for the appointment of an employee representative to the board. A maximum age limit of 72 is also to be fixed for members of the Fairfield Hospital Board.

The changes to the various Acts which I have described to the House represent an important change to the structure of the committees of management of our public hospitals and community health centres and will give such committees a greater flexibility to respond to the needs of the community for health services.

AIDS

One significant amendment which I have not mentioned so far is that proposed to section 92A of the Hospitals and Charities Act. Honourable members will, of course, be aware of reports that acquired immune deficiency syndrome, AIDS, has been associated with more than 1300 cases, including 450 deaths, in the United States of America, and that the disease has spread to a number of other countries including Canada, France and Great Britain. Two confirmed cases of AIDS have been reported to date in Australia and others are suspected. Since this was typed there has been a further case confirmed in Melbourne.

The evidence which is available suggests that the disease is transmitted by intimate contact and by blood. It is, therefore, essential that we identify the groups at-risk in the community and to alert doctors caring for at-risk groups to the signs and symptoms of AIDS.

Recently, the Government proscribed AIDS as a notifiable disease and required medical practitioners and pathologists to notify the Health Commission of details of patients with AIDS.

Although this will have the effect of requiring the commission to be notified of AIDS cases diagnosed by private practitioners, it will be impossible to comprehensively monitor the disease unless similar information is provided by doctors working at hospitals who also become aware of AIDS patients.

Section 92 (4A) of the Hospitals and Charities Act currently provides:

> Nothing in this section or in this or any other Act requires or authorizes the disclosure to the Commission of information relating to the condition or medical history of a person who is or has been a patient in a hospital or private hospital unless—
>
> (*a*) the name and identity of the person is not disclosed;
>
> (*b*) the person has given his consent before the disclosure; or
>
> (*c*) the Minister in special circumstances directs that such information be so disclosed.

This sub-section was inserted by the Health Commission Act 1977 and no doubt was intended to protect the rights of patients with respect to the supply of medical information to the commission. However, some hospitals have used the sub-section as a basis for not notifying the commission of outbreaks of particular diseases, such as hepatitis, which have come to their attention.

The Government believes it is essential that hospital doctors should not be exempted from any reporting requirements which apply to the rest of the community especially in view of the strong likelihood that the cause of AIDS is an infectious disease and that many other people may be at risk.

The amendments to be made to section 92A by this Bill are designed to resolve problems which hospitals may consider they have in reporting diseases such as AIDS because of apparent inhibitions in this section of the Hospitals and Charities Act. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

> That this Bill be now read a second time.

The establishment of the State Board of Education has been a long-standing commitment of the present Government. Soon after taking office in 1982, the Government took steps to establish the State Board of Education as a department of the Public Service Board pending the preparation of legislation to establish it as a statutory authority. That legislation is now before us.

The State Board of Education is to be an independent representative statutory authority with a continuing responsibility to inquire into and publicly report on the needs of primary and secondary education in both Government and non-Government schools.

It is a key element in the development of a more open and participatory, decision-making process for Victoria's schools.

The board will, for the first time, provide a formal means by which the Government can receive independent community advice on primary and secondary education. At State level, the board will complement the work of representative regional boards and school councils.

For the first time the school system will be open to systematic and ongoing scrutiny. This will be a constructive process which I am sure all members will recognize can only benefit the schools and the children they serve.

The board is to consist of a chairman who shall be part time or full time, two full-time deputy chairmen and eleven part-time members. Appointments to these positions, as we are all aware, have already been made and will continue under the new statutory authority. The board will be served by a small but highly qualified team of researchers and policy analysts.

As Chairman of the State Board, we have been fortunate in obtaining the services of Dr Ken McKinnon, one of the country's outstanding educational thinkers and administrators. In Mr Gerry Tickell and Mrs Pat Reeve, the full-time deputy chairmen, we have capable and experienced persons representative of the interests of teachers and parents respectively. The part-time members, representative of all major educational organizations and institutions and both Government and non-Government schools, have been selected for appointment because of the variety of experience that they can bring to the board.

The Director-General of Education is to be *ex officio* a part-time member of the State Board of Education. Relations between the Education Department and the State Board need to be collegial, and communication one with the other will be free and open, based on a mutual understanding of the

purposes and functions of each. The Bill provides for complete access by the board to information held within the Education Department and for the director-general to bring to the board's notice any developments in education which may occur from time to time within the Education Department.

The State Board of Education is to be a planning agency with a most significant role in the development of policy advice to the Minister, the Parliament and the general public, on the future of State education, both Government and non-Government. For the first time in the history of State education, we will have the benefit of independent advice which will complement the advice which will continue to be sought from the Education Department and the Director-General.

State Board of Education advice will be requested by the Minister on certain policy issues as the need arises, and may at any time be offered when in the board's view such advice is in the best interest of the State's educational future.

No matter affecting the future of primary and secondary education in Victoria is outside the purview of the State Board of Education, and hence advice can be expected on a wide range of topics and issues.

The State Board has several functions. A continuing function will be to assess the needs of all schools, to indicate where needs are not being met, and to recommend changes, where necessary, to existing policies and procedures for allocating resources and delivering services to schools.

The board will examine and report upon aspects of the operation of the Education Department, making recommendations for change, where thought to be necessary, in policies, structure and processes, including finance, staffing, buildings and facilities, and curriculum.

The board will operate in the public arena, with its reports being publicly available. It will publish reports, research findings, position papers and critical analyses of issues for the widest possible discussion.

Through this process I am hopeful that we will achieve a greater degree of consensus about, and commitment to, the purposes and processes of education in primary and secondary schools.

The Bill also provides for formal reports of the board to be laid by the Minister before both Houses of Parliament within one month of receiving them. The provision for public accessibility to State Board advice to the Minister is further evidence of the Government's commitment to open processes in educational decision-making.

The board's advice at times may cause some discomfort to the Education Department and indeed to the Government, but the Government accepts this possible cost in return for the undoubted benefits that public and participative educational planning will bring to the State.

I am sure that the aims of this Bill and the benefits which will flow from greater scrutiny and accountability of our school system will be widely supported on both sides of the House and in the community. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr JONA (Hawthorn), the debate was adjourned.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

I indicate to both the Opposition and the National Party that if additional time is required, it will be made available. In addition, officers of the Education Department and the State Board of Education will be available to talk to members of the Opposition and the National Party who may wish to further pursue this important measure.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—On the question of time, I have already advised the Deputy Premier that the National Party will require the extra time and would not expect to debate this Bill before June 14.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

POLICE REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On behalf of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its provisions represent a further step towards achieving the Government's stated

objective of improving the efficiency of the Victoria Police Force.

Since assuming office, the Government has established a committee of inquiry to inquire into aspects of the functions, organization, operations and resources of the force. The committee to date has conferred with members of the force at all levels and received and examined submissions, documents and publications relevant to its inquiries. The committee is hopeful of completing its inquiries by the end of this year and will then proceed to the preparation of its final report.

The Government has also moved to increase the effective strength of the Police Force. In the current financial year, 168 additional members of the force will be appointed, 143 members released from clerical duties to perform operational duties by the appointment of additional Public Service support staff and a further nineteen members made available for operational duties by changes effected in the motor car registration area. The effective strength of the force will thus be increased by 330, a figure consistent with the Government's pledge to increase the strength of the force by 1000 over the life of this Parliament.

The increase in the strength of the force and the implementation of the eventual recommendations of the committee of inquiry will no doubt improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Victoria Police Force. However, there are a number of improvements which can be made now to certain administrative procedures, without in any way pre-empting the results of the inquiry, and which will lead to immediate savings in administrative time and effort.

The Bill before the House effects these improvements in a number of unrelated areas. Firstly, the Chief Commissioner of Police will be empowered to appoint senior sergeants in the force rather than the Governor in Council as at present. Some 60 members of the force are promoted to the rank of senior sergeant every year and in each case a recommendation for their appointment must be submitted by the Chief Commissioner to the Governor in Council through the central administration of the Ministry. This unwieldy administrative procedure will thus be eliminated whilst still retaining the member's right of appeal against non-selection for promotion.

Similarly, the Chief Commissioner of Police will be empowered to approve of the granting of long service leave or pay in lieu thereof to members of the force rather than the Governor in Council as at present. Again, a saving in administrative time and effort will be achieved in both the Police Department and the central administration of the Ministry.

A further saving in administrative time will also be achieved by empowering the Governor in Council to approve of variations in the authorized strength of all ranks of the force by Order in Council. At present the authorized strength of ranks up to sergeant are so determined but the authorized strength of all ranks above that level must be prescribed by regulation. There will also be a cost saving by abolishing the requirement for regulations in this case.

The Bill also empowers the Chief Commissioner to decide whether or not to refer any member of the force who is convicted of an offence which is punishable by imprisonment to the Police Service Board to be further dealt with. At present, the legislation requires the board to inquire into all such matters. As most offences now carry a penalty of a monetary fine or a term of imprisonment in lieu of payment, any member of the force who is convicted of a minor offence must be referred to the Board for a determination as to whether he should be dismissed from the force. The amendment will grant the chief commissioner a discretion to refer a convicted member to the board and thus avoid the necessity for the board to deal with relatively minor matters.

A number of outdated provisions in the Police Regulation Act are also repealed or amended by the Bill. At present, all members of the Police Force are prohibited from taking part in any State election other than by voting or as a candidate. This provision has the effect of precluding members of the force whilst off duty and acting in a private capacity from taking part in any activity associated with a State election. The Government considers that this total prohibition serves no useful purpose, and indeed is discriminatory, and accordingly, the prohibition is amended to apply only to members whilst on duty or in uniform.

The present prohibition on members of the force belonging to any industrial organization and on the Police Association belonging to any political or industrial

organization is also removed. Such prohibitions were introduced following the general police strike in 1923 but are now out of step with modern industrial relations concepts.

Also repealed by the Bill is a provision which empowers the Chief Commissioner to dispose by public auction of the effects of any member below the rank of inspector who dies without leaving a will. This provision no longer serves any useful purpose.

Finally, the Bill reduces the minimum period which a person who marries a pensioner under the police pensions scheme must be married to qualify for a spouse's pension from five to three years. This amendment is consistent with recent changes to the State superannuation scheme to which the majority of the members of the force contribute.

The amendments proposed in the Bill will effect a number of changes to existing administrative procedures which, in total, will improve the effectiveness of the force. They represent further examples of the Government's commitment to improving the resources available to the Police Force to enable it to achieve its primary objectives.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services is at present attending a conference interstate with the other police Ministers. He will certainly make the resources of his Ministry available to assist the Opposition and the National Party, should they require any consultation on any aspects of the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday next.

I do so with the understanding that the spokespersons for the other two parties will be given further time if necessary.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, June 2.

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

The debate (adjourned from May 5) on the motion of Mr Crabb (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—It is a single item measure introduced because of the need for the Road Safety and Traffic Authority to be in a position to borrow moneys. Provision was made in the last Budget for the authority to borrow funds, but on closer examination it seems the Government discovered that the authority is unable under the present legislation to borrow. The purpose of this Bill is to achieve that aim. Two moves need to be taken: The authority needs to be constituted as a legal entity so that these borrowings can take place without the individual members of the authority having to take on personal liability; and provision needs to be made in the Road Traffic Act for the authority to borrow. The amount specified as the limit on borrowing is $1·5 million.

The House should understand that the limit has been imposed on the authority in accordance with Loan Council requirements. At the last Loan Council meeting, it was agreed that similar Government authorities could borrow up to a limit of $1·5 million without Loan Council approval. The previous limit of $1·2 million had applied for several years. The slight increase in the limit has been a significant help, particularly to local government authorities. It also applies to statutory authorities such as the Road Safety and Traffic Authority.

The Bill is purely a machinery measure establishing the authority as a legal entity and making provision for it to borrow money. Naturally, some Government guarantee will need to be behind those borrowings. That provision is included in clause 3 of the Bill, which also gives the authority the right to give security to any institution, person or body lending money in any form it chooses, provided it has the Treasurer's approval, which is also a necessary qualification for supplying securities for borrowing purposes.

The Opposition does not object to the proposal. However, I ask the Minister whether during the debate he could indicate what the intentions of the Government are or on what the authority is planning to spend the borrowings.

During the second-reading speech the Minister indicated the desire of the Government to achieve a further reduction in the road toll and its commitment to the development and implementation of a road

safety strategies programme together with education and training programmes. The Road Safety and Traffic Authority is the main instrument in this area of the Government's endeavour.

The Minister indicated that the funds raised by the authority would be used to assist the funding of the capital programme of the Road Safety and Traffic Authority. It would be helpful if honourable members were given an indication of what is included in that capital programme. The Opposition does not oppose the Bill.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The Bill is only mechanical; it enables the Road Safety and Traffic Authority to borrow funds, as the honourable member for Balwyn indicated, up to $1·5 million. My understanding of the measure is that the Road Safety and Traffic Authority previously had an annual income derived from an allocation in the Budget, but under the provisions of the Bill, the authority will now have the right to borrow funds to carry out some of its work. I understand the authority needs to borrow the $1·5 million for line markings and the erection of stop and giveway signs at intersections.

In country areas there has been a rapid increase in the number of signs erected at intersections of minor roads and roads that lead into highways. The signs are erected to alert oncoming traffic that it is approaching a major road. The type of sign erected depends on the amount of traffic.

The funds are also needed for long-life pavement markings and the maintenance of those markings. The Government is allowing the authority the opportunity of borrowing the money for those purposes, which is in the best interests of road safety in Victoria.

Perhaps the Minister could outline what happens to those borrowings when the new authorities are established on 1 July. Does the new borrowing agency established by the Bill take on the responsibility for meeting the repayments and interest on the capital loan?

The proposed legislation provides the Road Safety and Traffic Authority with the opportunity of increasing the means for providing better traffic protection. Naturally, the National Party supports that measure. The Road Safety and Traffic Authority still has a role to play, although it will lose its identity. It has played a significant part in road safety since its inception and has increased awareness in road safety. The authority has also designed many worthwhile programmes to provide a better traffic flow in many areas and a safer road network for both motorists and pedestrians.

Although the authority will lose its identity, the Bill will become operative later this year and it is hoped that those new authorities will carry on the good work undertaken by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority over a number of years. The National Party supports the proposed legislation.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I thank honourable members for their contributions and support of the Bill. Two matters were raised during the debate: The first was the capital works programme of the Road Safety and Traffic Authority which this year has been diverse. Much of the capital expenditure has been directed to the sophisticated equipment required for traffic signal linking, mainly in the metropolitan area. Funds have also been directed to the black spot eradication programme, which involves a series of different treatments for removing high accident potential sites in both the metropolitan area and the country.

We have been able to increase substantially the amount of funds expended by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority this year in comparison with previous years because, as honourable members may recall, up until this year the authority was not part of the transport portfolio, but was part of the police and emergency services portfolio. The combination of the skills of the authority staff with those of the Country Roads Board has enabled joint projects to operate this year, and this has been beneficial.

The second matter raised concerned the future of the borrowings after 1 July. The $1·5 million that I mentioned during the second-reading speech would become a liability of the Road Safety and Traffic Authority after 1 July just as the borrowings of the Country Roads Board in both this year and previous years would become liabilities of the Road Construction Authority after 1 July. Provisions along those lines are made in the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

GEELONG WATERWORKS AND SEWERAGE (BELLARINE WATER SUPPLY) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 21) on the motion of Mr Simpson (Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Bill is significant, particularly to the people who live in the area encompassed by the proposed region. Basically, from 1 July 1983 the Bill transfers the responsibility for the Bellarine water supply system from the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to that of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust.

This matter has almost become a saga when one considers the time it has taken to reach the stage where the Bill is presented to the House. As I understand it, discussions go back as far as twenty years when consideration was given to the possibility of a Bill such as this coming to fruition. Discussions have been held over the past three or four years in the area concerned and at a local level. A former Minister of Water Supply, the Honourable Jock Granter, was heavily involved with the matter, as was his successor, the Honourable Glyn Jenkins. They have both assisted the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in bringing the Bill forward.

The Government has taken up the thrust of what was proposed during discussions over that period. Basically the purpose of the Bill is to facilitate the amalgamation of the existing water entities in the region. The Opposition is convinced unquestionably that there has been adequate consultation. The entities have no objection whatsoever and are eager to ensure that co-operation is provided by all bodies so that the legislation passes without delay.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has no budgetary provisions after 1 July 1983. Therefore, if there is any holdup in the Bill, the commission will have a grave problem. However, the Opposition is far from sure that all the people at the local level have had adequate consultation. The honourable member for South Barwon will speak about the problems as the locals see them.

The Bill deals with the amalgamation of water and sewerage trusts throughout the State which was discussed recently in this House. I do not want to go over old ground. The Government has finally accepted the view of the Opposition, and should not force amalgamations where they are not wanted. If there is disagreement at the local level about amalgamation, machinery is available so that the amalgamation has to be justified to the public. That is as it should be.

In this case all the entities involved have total agreement, so the argument does not arise. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—The Bill amends the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act to effect the transfer of the Bellarine Peninsula water supply system from the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust.

The Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula water supply systems join one another within a single regional identity. The Bill provides for the amalgamation of the two systems which will improve technical management efficiency as well as improving accountability.

The transfer of the Bellarine Peninsula water supply to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust is an interim arrangement because the sixth report of the Public Bodies Review Committee recommended that the Bellarine Peninsula water system be transferred to its successor body the Geelong Regional Water Board.

The staff involved with the Bellarine system will be looked after. No loss of jobs will occur and staff will be transferred to another authority at the equivalent Public Service level. There will be no loss of entitlements. The Bill also proposes changes in the electoral areas of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust.

The Bill increases the limit above which contracts must be advertised from $10 000 to $50 000. Presumably the reason for that is because the area under the control of the trust has been increased. The Bill increases the borrowing powers of the trust from $60 million to $80 million which also takes into

account the additional area under its control. The National Party supports the Bill.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—The Bill is an important step in implementing the planned restructure of the Victorian water industry in the Geelong area. It amends the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act 1958 and, as the Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula water supply systems join one another within a single regional area, the transfer will improve the technical and managerial efficiency as well as the accountability to the community of such a system.

The sixth report of the Public Bodies Review Committee, as honourable members are aware, recommended that the Bellarine system be transferred to a successor body entitled the Geelong Regional Water Board. The transfer of the Bellarine system from the Geelong trust is to take effect by 1 July 1983. The commission's existing four field staff are pleased to note that they will be offered suitable equivalent positions with the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust. The eighteen longer term field construction and maintenance personnel will also be offered equivalent work with the trust in due course. A total of twenty professional and administrative staff employed by the commission and its Geelong centre will be relocated to vacancies within the Public Service.

It is pleasing to note that it will not be a case of jobs for the boys. Members of the trust will be elected by ratepayers, each representing a specific electoral district, that is the City of Geelong area, the City of Newtown and part of the Shire of Bannockburn, City of West Geelong, Shire of Corio, City of South Barwon and part of the Shire of Barrabool, and part of the Shire of Bellarine.

The Bill provides that Schedule 12 of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act be amended so that the existing electorate of the City of Newtown and part of the Shire of Bannockburn will now also include the relevant parts of the shires of Colac, Leigh and Winchelsea and include the additional part of the City of South Barwon and the Shire of Barrabool and the entire Shire of Bellarine and the Borough of Queenscliff.

At the time the water boards are to be increased, the number of commissioners will be a matter for the existing municipalities and water boards to agree to and recommend to the Minister as part of their application for the formation of the new board.

I remind the House that there are reservations within the country community and the Winchelsea and Bannockburn waterworks trusts have operated efficiently and provided an excellent service. They do not want to be taken over without due recognition to the needs of the committees and the community. I am pleased to note that the Bannockburn Waterworks Trust is operating efficiently and that something will not happen for some five years. People at Geelong expressed fear and a *Geelong Advertiser* headline stated, "Water rates jump by 20 per cent". There is good reason for concern amongst people in the Bellarine area because those ratepayers will have to pay an increase of 25 per cent.

The trust secretary, Mr Len Spitty, said that the rate increases, which follow 17 per cent increases in 1981–82 and 1982–83, could be attributed to increased costs. He said that some increases were inevitable and that increased interest charges were one of the main reasons for an average jump of 11 per cent in water rates. One has to ask why this came about, and I will comment on that matter. The householders are now finding that these rates are likely to add 20 per cent to their existing charges.

The rise reflects the increased cost of supplying Geelong with water. Last month, the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust announced that excess water rates had increased from 23 cents to 31 cents a kilolitre and that minimum charges had risen by $80 for water, $60 for sewerage and $3 for the Barwon River improvement fund. I trust we will not reach the stage that has been reached in Canberra where a toilet tax is imposed and an extra $90 is charged for each toilet in one house. It is a sign of the times: With centralization, big tends to be regarded as beautiful. I believe that sometimes small is tall, and that is the case with these local bodies. They have a finger on the pulse; they know what the people want and they operate efficiently. The small water boards and trusts in the area tried to bring this home to the committee of review that visited the area.

Geelong is also faced with a tremendous burden because of the $17 million payment

to meet the requirements of the Environment Protection Authority in respect of the sewerage outfall at Black Rock. The trust's reserves must be kept as liquid as possible, so this burden has to be passed on to the community.

I draw the attention of the House to the attitude of those members who represent Geelong in another place and who have been described as supporters of the conservationist group. Their obstructionist actions have added greatly to the cost to the community in several areas, such as in respect of pine forests in the Otway Ranges. The pine forests are in the watershed of that catchment area. I am appalled that a local member of the Legislative Council, who is also a local councillor, should jump on the bandwagon and say that, so far as he is concerned, the size of the rate increases announced by the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust yesterday are a big disappointment. He tells the community that the gravy boat supplies of low, subsidized water rates has run dry. He said that he is concerned about the increases for water users on the Bellarine Peninsula and that the Bill now being debated will bring about considerable savings in administrative costs. That is yet to be proven. He says that, with the expanded Geelong water and sewerage system, everyone will pay the same rate for their sewerage and water.

The member concerned is, as I said, also a member of a local council that has gone overboard in its public borrowings to the tune of $800 000, and the ratepayers have to meet those costs.

The rural people who need water from the water channel that comes from the Otway Ranges will be outraged because their interests were overlooked in a time of drought and it was made to appear in the press that the people on the Petavel Wurdebolic channel were receiving subsidized water. That was not the case. For many years, water has been supplied most efficiently to Geelong, and it was necessary that it pass through an open channel. Open channels have a high evaporation point. Rural people are not asking for cheap handouts at the expense of the city dweller, they are co-operative in allowing this water channel to continue in use but, at the same time, they need to be heard and, in due course, they need to have representation as commissioners on the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust.

I would be failing in my duty if I did not bring this matter to the attention of the House. Press reports too often tend to play the country off against the city as though country and city residents were two different groups. They are not; we are all part of a community and a society; if we pull together and work together, we can make a better Victoria and a better Australia.

We do not need to be reminded that this State was governed by a Liberal Government for the past 27 years.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—Order! I ask the honourable member to confine his remarks strictly to the Bill. I am prepared to indulge him to some extent, and I have done so already, but I am not prepared now to hear him on anything other than the subject of the Bill.

Mr DICKINSON—I shall make some concluding remarks on the deficit. When a deficit occurs of $700 000 in a local sewerage trust—and the same pattern is reflected in the Estimates of this State and this nation—that matter reflects on the Government. People in Australia cannot expect to spend money that they do not have; they cannot expect to have facilities that cannot be paid for; Governments must keep their feet on the ground. People have telephoned me because they are disturbed at the hike that has occurred in costs right across the board—for electricity, natural gas, and now sewerage and water. Unless these charges are contained, society will become non-viable. Too many people today believe in wishy-washy Socialism and in obtaining something for nothing.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member to come back strictly to the Bill, or I will rule his remarks out of order.

Mr DICKINSON—I regret it if my remarks are offensive to you, Sir.

The SPEAKER—Order! If the honourable member's remarks were offensive to me, I would take other action. The honourable member is not dealing with the Bill and I invite him to come back to it.

Mr DICKINSON—The people in the rural areas that are to be embraced by the Bill are deeply disturbed at the lack of consultation and the ignoring of their advice.

Both major parties have endorsed the Bill and want to see it functioning efficiently, but certain reservations are held and those reservations are being echoed by people in the street. It is my duty to bring them to the attention of the House, and I will continue to do so.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I thank speakers from the Opposition and the National Party for their constructive comments. I will bring their views to the attention of the Minister of Water Supply in another place.

The honourable member for South Barwon attempted to use the opportunity to raise a number of criticisms of Parliamentary colleagues and the wider social attitudes of the Government. I am sure his views will receive the attention that they deserve.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

MUSEUMS BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 21) on the motion of Mr Mathews (Minister for the Arts) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Bill will enable a further significant step in the major improvements that are being effected to the State's museum and library services. It is gratifying that the present Government shares the view of the former Liberal Government and its predecessors over the past few decades of the importance attached to the development of the visual, dramatic and performing arts in Victoria.

The Bill will give added recognition to the importance of museums in Victoria, and the Opposition hopes it will provide an effective framework for further development—in particular, for the furtherance of their value in education and research into history for the protection of our heritage and for the pleasure and enjoyment of the public generally.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred in some detail to the review that was undertaken by the Public Service Board in respect of the present situation and the future planning of science museums and national museums.

It is significant that the Public Service Board review also embraced the philosophical basis for their separate assistance.

Following consideration of the Public Service Board review report by the Government it has been decided to establish an entirely new organizational structure with a corporate management system to direct and manage a new museum representing the merger of the existing Science and National Museums.

The Opposition does not oppose the proposal: In fact, it concurs in the approach that is being taken and has a great deal of confidence in the successful operation of the new structure.

The new Museum of Victoria should be able to be built upon the great traditions and achievements of the two founding components. In this respect, it is pertinent to refer to one or two aspects in the early history of the National Museum of Victoria which have culminated in the great institution that it is today and the even greater institution it will be in future.

The National Museum of Victoria originated with a collection illustrating Victorian natural history and geology made under the direction of Captain Arthur Clarke. This collection was removed to a university building in 1856, the first year of responsible Government in Victoria. Six years later, in 1862, it was moved to a National Museum building specially built in the grounds of the University of Melbourne. In 1870 the collection was placed under the control of the library trustees whose title was then designed as the Trustees of the Public Library Museum and National Gallery. At the end of 1899, the collections were moved to a building in the public library which was formally opened on 19 December 1899. Seven years later, in 1906, the central block of the existing Russell Street museum building was opened.

Victoria has come a long way since those days, not only in terms of the area in which exhibits are displayed but also in the enormous range of exhibits that have been collected over the period.

Reference should be made to the efforts of the trustees, to successive Governments and to many other people in this State who

have built up a collection of international standard.

There are several salient features of the Bill to which I wish to refer. The first is that the proposed legislation gives recognition to the importance and role of museums. This objective should not be under-estimated for it represents the very purpose and philosophical basis of its role in areas of natural history, science, technology and the comparatively new approach to the history of human society. In that respect it is appropriate that the Minister of Education should be sitting at the table because great emphasis is being attached to the direction of development of education generally in the community—that is, the relationship of education to the development of society itself.

The extent to which the new museum can develop and the manner in which it can present displays, lectures and other educational or entertainment opportunities will be limited only by the financial resources the Government is able to provide. Similarly, the additions to the already remarkable collection of heritage material, to be known in future as the State collection under the amending legislation will be largely dependent upon the funds which this and future Governments are prepared to commit to an internationally renowned and valuable public institution.

It is regrettable that the Minister for the Arts should have been so unfairly critical of the previous Government for the funding provisions for the museum and library services in the State. It is reasonable for him to say that inadequate funds have been provided in the past; but the present Minister for the Arts and future Ministers will have the same problems as former Ministers. Time will tell whether the promises of this and future Governments will be realized.

The fact is that there have never been sufficient funds for Governments to do all they would like to do in all areas. Liberal Governments over the past ten years or so have ensured new grants and priorities have been given to the whole area of the arts in this State and significant funds were forthcoming from the Treasurer during the period of the Premiership of Mr Hamer, as he then was, who established the first portfolio of Ministry for the Arts. That should not go unnoticed.

The Bill makes specific provision for the administration of the new museum including a provision for the placement of the position of director outside the provisions of the Public Service Act. The appointment of the director, who is in effect the chief executive of the museum, must be on the basis of the widest and best possible choice under the conditions appropriately negotiated by the council or by the Minister for the Arts.

The Opposition supports the proposed funding arrangement for the museum and welcomes the fact that the council of the Museum of Victoria will retain control over those funds which it generates itself and which it will derive from its own services and initiatives.

There are a couple of matters to which I wish to refer briefly and on which the Minister may wish to comment or provide some clarification either now or at a later date. They are certainly not matters upon which it is believed the proposed legislation should be delayed.

I refer specifically to clause 11. During the second-reading debate, I do not wish to debate matters more appropriate to the Committee stage but to make a couple of general remarks.

I understand it is the intention of the House to go into Committee so I will keep my remarks brief with respect to a couple of clauses to that stage and indicate that the Opposition supports the proposed legislation and wishes it well.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is happy to support the provisions contained in the Bill which will bring about the amalgamation of the councils of the science and national museums and to constitute a Museums Advisory Board and provide a single council for those two bodies.

It is important to note that there was some opposition from the two councils but I guess in the ultimate result they were forced by the Government to come together. I understand they are now happy with the arrangements.

This matter goes back a number of years and relates to the difficulties experienced by the museums in accommodating the many exhibits they had acquired over a long time

and the many exhibits they acquire daily in recording our heritage and our history.

For many years there was a dispute because of proposals by the former Government to relocate the State Library to the old Victoria Market site. There was widespread opposition from people who were anxious to retain the Victoria Market. The National Party strongly supported that view but it was having great difficulty with the former Ministry for the Arts. The Government has resolved that matter in a satisfactory manner by proposing to establish the new State Library on the site of the Queen Victoria Medical Centre once that hospital ultimately moves to its new site at Clayton. That seems to be a desirable and worthwhile venture, but it is a long-range project as it will be some time before the new hospital is built on the Clayton site.

The Government is bringing the two councils together in an attempt to update and improve museum operations. That is in line also with its philosophy of reducing the number of public bodies. The Public Service Board was asked to examine the functions of the two councils and it recommended that the two councils be formed into one council. It is disappointing in that exercise that some personnel who have been providing expertise, guidance, assistance and support to these councils may be redundant because some very eminent people have served on those councils. It is hoped that as many personnel as possible will be given the opportunity of serving on the new council. It is perhaps the Government's intention to enable some of them to serve on the proposed Museums Advisory Board.

Criticism has been directed at the lack of adequate storage and display facilities of the museum. I know, for example, that a quantity of historical agricultural machinery is being stored at a Government building at Abbotsford. That is unfortunate because it is not being publicly displayed. It is an important part of the history of Australia as an example of the machinery built by pioneers. Ironically, a small historical farm still exists at Abbotsford near where that machinery is being stored.

The Government needs to provide the necessary finance to assist the museum to provide adequate displays of these historically important items and to ensure that there is correct and proper storage. Criticism was made again about that problem in the 1981–82 annual report of the National Museum, which stated:

> Inadequate storage space and storage units continue to be major problems as reported in previous years. Many parts of the collection are severely crowded some to the extent that physical damage is being done to specimens and access by would-be users of the collections is inhibited. Through the lack of proper humidity, temperature and dust control, the condition of some collections continues to deteriorate.

This matter is serious and the Government and Parliament should attend to it. I would hope that with the establishment of the Museum of Victoria as a single entity, the Government will provide additional financial resources for storage purposes.

Research is another important aspect of museums and the National Museum has been very active in research, particularly in Australian anthropology, geology and zoology. For example, museum staff and research assistants have been active in areas along the River Murray, particularly near Echuca. Those areas are an important source of material for that research.

The National Party supports the Bill. It will work only if sufficient financial assistance is provided by the Government. The Government should note that moral support is also required. Museums are one of the first tourist stops people make when visiting any major city in the world—the British Museum has millions of visitors. The Victorian museum attracts many visitors from country Victoria and interstate and from many school children.

It has tended to be a poor cousin in Government funding in the past but the establishment of the Museum station nearby, which will provide a more central transport point for people travelling to the museum, and the possibility that this area of Melbourne will be developed as a major business area in the future, should encourage the Government to provide more support to the museum.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I thank the spokespersons for the Opposition and the National Party for their supportive and constructive comments. The Minister for the Arts, who normally would have carriage of the Bill, is interstate at a Ministerial conference. I know that he

would be delighted with the statements of support from honourable members.

Comments have been made about the often unheralded recognition of the very important role of both of the present museums in Victorian society. The comments of the honourable member for Hawthorn and of the Deputy Leader of the National Party are apt in the circumstances. I am sure that with the reconstituted structure, together with the asperations for the redevelopment of this very important facility, not only will this service be extended but also it will be even more widely recognized. I wish the proposed legislation well and more importantly these museums and the people who are working so hard in them for the benefit of the community.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation)

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

Clause 2, line 12 after ' "Treasurer" ' insert "except where appearing in section 11".

The amendment is required because section 11 refers to a treasurer but the treasurer there relates to the treasurer of the council of the new body. The amendment is required to clarify that issue in the definitions clause.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a verbal amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 3 to 5.

Clause 6 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 7 (Functions of Board)

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

Clause 7, line 5, omit "Museum" and insert "Museums".

Mr HANN (Rodney)—It appears to be quite unnecessary to go through this type of exercise of merely adding one letter to a word. The Parliament ought to examine ways of establishing a mechanism that would allow either the Clerks or someone else to make these types of amendments.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The honourable member for Rodney refers to a matter that has been raised from time to time. There is scope for what are deemed to be amendments of either a spelling nature or a punctuation nature that do not require a decision by the Clerks. It appears that the Clerks have assumed that, by converting a word from its singular form to its plural form, it may have some significance in some circumstances and the Clerks have referred those matters to the Committee for final decision. However, the point is taken.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 8 to 10.

Clause 11 (Members of Council)

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

Clause 11, page 6, line 3, omit "sub-section (5)" and insert "sub-sections (5) and (6)"

It is purely a machinery amendment to make way for the following foreshadowed amendment.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Opposition supports the amendment. It answers partly the deficiency that exists in the Bill.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

Clause 11, sub-clause (5), page 6, omit this sub-clause and insert:

"(5) A person who has attained the age of 72 years shall not be capable of being appointed or re-appointed to be a member of the Council.

(6) A person who has been appointed to be a member of the Council for three consecutive terms shall not be capable of being re-appointed to be a member of the Council unless—

(*a*) he is, or immediately prior to the expiry of his third consecutive term he was, the President; or

(*b*) a period of three years or more has elapsed since he last was a member of the Council.".

The normal period of appointment will be three years. The net effect of the amendment, if adopted, will be to limit the term of appointment to nine years other than the reappointment of a past president or a period of three years or more has elapsed since that person was last a member of the council. It is designed to provide for the appointment of new members. It makes life

a little easier for the Government of the day in having a statutory base on which to base appointments to councils of museums.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Opposition does not oppose the clause and agrees with the objectives outlined by the Minister of Education.

However, a Minister worth his salt must face the realities that from time to time, if a person serving on the council of a museum is not suitable for reappointment, the Minister, the Government or the Governor in Council should be strong enough to replace, if necessary, the person appointed.

However, the Opposition is concerned to note that in an earlier clause of the Bill reference is made to some members of a council, in the first instance, being appointed for one year, some being appointed for two years and some being appointed for three years. Therefore, the reappointments will not arise at one time. In the initial stages there will be no maximum period of appointment of nine years.

However, a person appointed in the first instance for one year will, at the expiration of that period, be appointed for only two years because there may only be a vacancy for a two-year appointment.

A person appointed in the first year for one year may, when his term expires, be appointed for two years because that would be the only vacancy he could fill for his reappointment. Thereafter, he would be appointed for three years, which would mean that, after a term of six years—not nine years—a person appointed to the council in the first instance would, by law, have to be replaced.

The Minister will not be given sufficient discretion to ensure continuity of representation for a period longer than seven years. However, that is something that the relevant Minister can face in seven years from now. I raise the matter because the Opposition believes the clause is not good in principle, although, when adopted, the Minister will be required to act in the best interests of changing representations on museum councils.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party supports the proposed amendment. However, I am unsure whether it is necessary to write this provision into the Bill. The amendment, if adopted, will restrict a Government to fixed periods of appointment. Although nine years would appear to be an adequate period of time for service on such a council, I suspect that some of the existing council members of other museums have held office for longer periods.

The reality is that the Minister always has the option of reappointments every three years. I agree with the honourable member for Hawthorn, that any responsible Minister occasionally has to make the decision of removing someone from a council. Indeed, today Ministers are making similar decisions all the time when replacing a number of persons, some of whom have been on public bodies for much lesser periods than those specified in the Bill.

The National Party registers concern at the Government placing a maximum term of appointment of members to these councils. Although that could be viewed as a goal in legislation, it should not be the ultimate result.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a consequential amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 12 to 14.

Clause 15 (Committees)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—I draw attention to a provision in the clause which is not uncommon because it is contained in other pieces of legislation but which constantly disturbs me. These matters should be reviewed either now or in the future.

Although the Bill provides for a close scrutiny on the background of suitable persons to be appointed to either a committee or council, that scrutiny is not required of persons who are co-opted to sub-committees to which the principal committee has delegated exclusive powers.

Under clause 15 (4) it is possible for a sub-committee to deal with some important matters comprising two members of the council who have been appointed by the Minister and four or five persons from outside. That sub-committee can be delegated important matters by the committee and its decision does not have to be ratified by the council. It would appear as if the sub-committee is being delegated authority to act in such a way that it would not be directly answerable to either the Minister or the Governor in Council because its members

are not appointed by either the Minister or the Governor in Council.

A desirable provision to consider in this situation is that all members of the sub-committees appointed by the general council should be subject to the approval of the Minister.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The suggestion by the honourable member for Hawthorn is interesting. I will discuss it with my colleague, the Minister for the Arts, as it applies to this committee and give the matter further thought.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 16 to 21.

Clause 22 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 23 to 33.

Clause 34 (Transfer of property)

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

Clause 34, line 26, after "real property" insert "(other than the Museum land)".

Real property is the reference to the vesting of property in the council. The museum land is Crown land and the clause makes it clear that the council does not have control over that land.

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

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and passed through its remaining stages.

CROWN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (ASSIGNMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of this Bill is to authorize the Treasurer to assign the interest of the State in the copyright and trade marks relating to "Life: Be In It". The Bill provides for the Treasurer to enter into the assignment on terms and conditions which he deems appropriate. The Treasurer may therefore charge the company for the assignment and gain income for the Government.

It is intended that the interest will be assigned to the "Life: Be In It" Company, which was incorporated in February 1982, on the recommendation of the Recreation Ministers Council when the Commonwealth Government ceased its direct involvement in the funding of the "Life: Be In It" programme. It was decided that the programme should be controlled by a non-profit company limited by guarantee and the "Life: Be In It" Company was established accordingly.

The objects of the company as stated in the company's memorandum are as follows:

(*a*) To further the promotion of the creative and beneficial use of recreational time by individuals and to co-relate the efforts of any branches and committees of the company and to co-relate and encourage the support and assistance of all forms of other organizations, companies, associations, societies, institutions, Governments, statutory bodies and other authorities and individuals interested in or concerned with similar activities.

(*b*) To develop stimulate encourage and sustain public interest and participation in all forms of recreational activities by human beings and to develop maintain and promote positive attitudes towards recreation in the Australian community with a view to improving the over-all identity and well-being of the individual and the community.

(*c*) To arrange for, promote, foster, develop and assist in the acquisition, dissemination and application of knowledge and information concerning the promotion of the creative and beneficial use of recreational time by individuals.

It is anticipated that the assignment of the copyright and trademarks will provide the Government with an additional, though small, source of income.

I believe this Bill will be supported by all honourable members as it facilitates the continued promotion of the "Life: Be In It" programme.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On behalf of the Attorney-General, I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to make two minor amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act 1981. The Associations Incorporation Act was passed in December 1981 and its object is to provide a simple and inexpensive means by which unincorporated non-profit associations may obtain corporate status. The Act is yet to be proclaimed to come into operation.

Since the passage of the legislation, an interdepartmental committee has been working on the establishment of the administrative machinery necessary to implement the Act. A separate registration operation is being established and model rules and guidelines for incorporation have been prepared. Much of this work has now been completed and it is anticipated that the Act will be proclaimed to come into effect on 1 July 1983.

In the course of the committee's work, the Act was seen to be deficient in a number of areas and, in particular, two areas were identified as requiring immediate legislative rectification.

The first problem concerns the question of fees payable to the Registrar of Incorporated Associations upon incorporation of a body under the Act. Section 10 of the Act provides that bodies registered under other modes of incorporation such as the Companies Code and the Co-operation Act may apply for incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act provided certain requirements are met. These requirements are specified in section 10 of the Act. As currently drafted, however, section 10 does not require the payment of a fee upon the registration of such bodies. Sections 4 and 5 of the Act, which provide for the authority to apply for incorporation and the prescribed form of application, are of no assistance in respect of section 10 applications as those provisions relate to applications from unincorporated and unregistered associations. The legislation provides for an incorporation fee in respect of these bodies.

It is anticipated that some 3000 bodies currently registered elsewhere will apply for incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act. It is the Government's view that these bodies ought to pay an incorporation fee similar to that proposed to be paid by those bodies that are unregistered and are seeking incorporation under the Associations Incorporation Act. The fee proposed in both instances is $60. Clause 2 of the Bill amends section 10 of the principal Act to provide for the payment of a prescribed fee for bodies transferring from other modes of incorporation.

The second problem identified as requiring immediate legislative reform concerns the need for an exemption from the payment of stamp duty of certain instruments of conveyance or transfer which vest property in an incorporated association.

Section 8 of the Act has the effect of vesting property held on trust for an association in the incorporated association upon its incorporation. Section 9 provides means whereby an incorporated association may become the registered proprietor of any land under the operation of the Transfer of Land Act which vests in the incorporated association by virtue of section 8. Section 9 also empowers the public officer of an incorporated association to apply to bring land which has vested in the incorporated association pursuant to section 8, under the operation of the Transfer of Land Act.

The original draft of the Bill contained a provision which exempted from stamp duty an instrument of conveyance or transfer which vested property in the name of the incorporated association. The provision was omitted in the Bill introduced in the House because the Bill was to be introduced in the Council. However, it was intended to reintroduce the provision either by way of amendment to the Associations Incorporation Act or by an amendment to the Stamps Act 1958. It is now proposed to make the provision by way of amendment of the principal Act, and clause 3 of the Bill amends section 53 of the Act to that effect.

Having regard to the object of the Act to which I referred earlier, the amendment contained in clause 3 of the Bill is considered essential. The absence of a provision exempting from stamp duty certain instruments of conveyance would deter many organizations, particularly those with substantial property holdings, from seeking to incorporate under the Act. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

MENTAL HEALTH (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a small Bill but nonetheless one of some significance in improving the quality of service which is capable of being provided by the Health Commission to Victoria's health care system.

The specific objective of the Bill is to give the commission a greater flexibility in carrying out minor works and construction programmes at our Mental Health Division hospitals and Mental Retardation Division training centres.

This is to be achieved by deleting the nexus between the Mental Health Act 1959 and the Public Lands and Works Act 1964 and by vesting in the commission appropriate additional functions under the Mental Health Act.

Paragraph (*h*) of section 12 of the Mental Health Act 1959 currently sets out the responsibilities of the Health Commission with respect to the upkeep of the various buildings provided by the State for the purposes of the Act.

The paragraph states that the function of the commission shall be "subject to the Public Lands and Works Act 1964 to ensure that hospitals, clinics, hostels and other places provided by the State for the purpose of this Act are kept in a proper state of maintenance and repair".

The inclusion of the words "subject to the Public Lands and Works Act 1964" has an important bearing on the manner in which the commission is able to discharge the responsibility vested in it by the Parliament. They have the effect of requiring that all maintenance works proposed by the commission at such institutions be undertaken by the Public Works Department.

Although the Government appreciates the intent of this provision, advice given to it is that this arrangement has proved increasingly unsatisfactory for the effective undertaking of such works. This, essentially, has been caused by the large volume of work outstanding and difficulties being experienced by the Public Works Department in meeting programme objectives in terms of priorities and timing.

As a result of discussions between the chairman of the commission and the Director-General of Public Works, it has been put to the Government that its policy of enhancing the standards of facilities in our mental health and mental retardation institutions could be better achieved if the Health Commission was given sole responsibility for carrying out its own works programmes. This would encompass minor and maintenance works at such institutions as well as capital works.

It is important that I emphasize that the proposal does not envisage the severance of the links between the Health Commission and the Public Works Department and, indeed, the Government expects the commission will continue to utilize the services of that department as required. Rather, the proposed change is designed to give the commission the additional flexibility of being able to enter into its own contracts for works at institutions established under the Mental Health Act.

The Government has accepted this proposal and the Bill before the House will make the legislative changes necessary for the commission to take on these responsibilities. As I indicated earlier, this is to be achieved by deleting the nexus between the Mental Health Act and the Public Lands and Works Act and by vesting in the commission additional functions under the Mental Health Act.

The first of these amendments will be made by paragraph (*a*) of clause 2 of the Bill. This repeals the words "subject to the Public Lands and Works Act 1964" in paragraph (*h*) of section 12 of the Mental Health Act and will have the effect of enabling the commission to ensure that institutions provided by the State for the purposes of the Act are kept in a proper state of maintenance and repair without necessarily having recourse to the Public Works Department.

The second amendment will be made by paragraph (*b*) of clause 2. This will insert in section 12 of the Act a new paragraph (*j*) to vest in the commission an additional responsibility of carrying out or arranging for the carrying out of any works or building necessary to provide accommodation or facilities for State institutions.

The two amendments I have described will go a long way towards achieving the goal of strengthening the capacity of the commission to undertake maintenance and construction works and improving the quality of the facilities provided by the State at the various institutions established under the Mental Health Act. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

MOTOR CAR (PENALTIES) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of the Bill is to apply further sanctions against those irresponsible motorists who persistently ignore speed limits and who, by so doing, endanger their own lives and those of their passengers and other road users.

Excessive speed is second only to excessive consumption of alcohol as the major killer on our roads. The higher the speed, the higher the risk of involvement in an accident. In fact, overseas studies of road accidents suggest that the risk of accident involvement while travelling at speeds in excess of the maximum speed limit by 25 kilometres an hour is as high as 95 times greater than if travelling at the speed limit.

Honourable members will be aware that, because of the reaction time of a driver and the braking capacity of a motor car, the time and distance taken to stop a vehicle is increased in proportion to the vehicle's speed. At the maximum speed limit in Victoria of 100 kilometres an hour, an average modern car could stop within 87 metres. At 125 kilometres an hour, such a car would take 126 metres to stop. That extra 39 metres would mean, in many cases, that the driver could not stop in time to avoid an accident arising from an emergency situation.

What is more alarming is that a vehicle travelling at 125 kilometres an hour would still be travelling at a speed of 82 kilometres an hour after 87 metres. If a collision occurred with a stationary object after the vehicle had braked for that distance, the resultant injuries to its occupants would be severe indeed. However, the car would have stopped in that distance and an accident avoided if it had been travelling at the speed limit.

Excessive speed thus has two evils—the chances of being unable to avoid an accident are markedly increased and any resulting injuries are likely to be severe.

In 1982, over 200 000 motorists were detected by the police exceeding the various speed limits applicable throughout the State. The majority of offenders would have received a traffic infringement notice and incurred a penalty of $55 if a speed limit was exceeded by less than 15 kilometres an hour or $90 if a limit was exceeded by between 15 and 25 kilometres an hour. Some 2 per cent of that total exceeded a speed limit by more than 25 kilometres an hour and were prosecuted in court where a maximum penalty of $300 now applies.

It is apparent from the large number of speeding drivers detected, over 550 each day, that monetary penalties alone do not provide a sufficient deterrent. It is the Government's view that the threat of licence suspension would have an impact on those motorists who persistently ignore the speed limits and that such a penalty should be included in the Motor Car Act.

The Act currently prescribes a system which provides for the allocation of demerit points to motorists who commit certain traffic infringements. The accumulation of nine such points over a three-year period attracts a surcharge of $300 on licence renewal and twelve such points in a three-year period incurs an automatic suspension of the motorist's licence for three months. The demerit points system is designed to impose additional penalties on persistent traffic offenders and provides a ready means by which further sanctions may be imposed on speeding motorists.

The offence of exceeding any speed limit currently attracts two demerit points so that the commission of such an offence on six occasions in a three-year period would lead to a licence suspension. This Bill restructures the points allocated for speeding offences by prescribing two demerit points for exceeding any speed limit by not more than 15 kilometres an hour, three points for exceeding a speed limit by between 15 and 25 kilometres an hour and four demerit points

for exceeding a speed limit by 25 kilometres an hour or more.

Accordingly, the motorist who consistently indulges in excessive speeding will be liable to the additional penalties of licence suspension and the payment of a surcharge on licence renewal at an earlier stage than is currently the case.

The Bill also corrects an anomaly which has come to light in the operation of the demerit points system. As I have mentioned, any person who accumulates nine or more demerit points in a three-year period is required to pay a surcharge on the renewal of his driver's licence. The penalty for failure to pay the surcharge is not less than $100 and not more than $200 plus the amount of the surcharge.

However, the Motor Car Act currently prohibits the use of details of points recorded in the Demerit Points Register in any court proceedings other than appeals against the imposition of a licence suspension under the scheme. Thus, it is not open to the prosecution to advance evidence in court that a motorist has incurred nine demerit points and is liable to pay the surcharge, in any proceedings taken against a motorist who has failed to pay the surcharge.

This untenable situation is corrected by the Bill in order to authorize the use of such evidence in proceedings for the recovery of the statutory surcharge.

The final provision of the Bill corrects an omission in the Motor Car (Penalties) Act 1982 which has led to varying interpretations of the effect of the original amendments. Honourable members will recall that the Act passed in the 1982 spring session revised all penalties in the Motor Car Act in order that the penalties would reflect the relative severity of the various offences. Amongst other things, a consistent relationship was established between monetary penalties and alternative terms of imprisonment.

Two provisions of the amending Act reduced the alternative maximum terms of imprisonment applicable to the offences of driving under the influence and of reckless or dangerous driving. Because of the omission of certain words in the statutory construction, the amendments were capable of an interpretation having the effect of also reducing the minimum terms of mandatory licence cancellation applicable to those offences. As that was not the intention of the Government, this Bill effects an amendment to clarify the original intention of the amending Act.

Although this Bill contains two relatively minor amendments to the Motor Car Act, its importance lies in the provisions directed against the speeding motorist in order to achieve a further reduction in the State's road toll. This Parliament has enacted many measures over the years in its continuing campaign to reduce the pain and suffering inherent in the large number of road accidents which the State, regretfully, experiences every year. Much has been achieved to date; there is still much to achieve and the Government will continue to investigate and implement additional measures in the future. This Bill represents a further step in that direction. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SUPERANNUATION BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958 provides for superannuation benefits for officers and employees of municipalities, water trusts, sewerage authorities and other bodies declared by the Governor in Council to be an authority for the purpose of the Act.

The purpose of this Bill is to make general amendments to the Act to ensure that it is kept in line, as far as possible, with other similar superannuation schemes such as the State Employees Retirement Benefits Scheme and the Hospitals Superannuation Scheme.

Additionally, the amendments are designed to enable the Local Authorities Superannuation Board to give increased benefits to members of the scheme who resign or retire from their positions, or who are retrenched by an authority. I will now move to the Bill.

Clause 4 enables deferred benefits to be paid at age 60 instead of age 65. Clause 5 enables the spouse of a deceased pensioner to receive two-thirds of the notional pension entitlement, rather than two-thirds of the reduced pension entitlement which is currently the case where the pensioner has elected to convert part of his indexed pension to a lump sum amount.

Under clause 6 the board will be able to invest in the Cash Management Account, the State Development Account of the Victorian Development Fund, and the Local Government Investment Service. Clause 7 provides for an increased resignation benefit to be made to any person resigning from employment. This will be done by way of an interest payment from the pension side of the scheme, less a charge assessed by an actuary for the employee's share of death and disability cover.

Clause 8 is by far the most important of these amendments to the Local Authorities Superannuation Act. This amendment will enable the board to pay additional benefits to employees retrenched from a particular authority. At present the superannuation scheme does not make any distinction, for payout purposes, between a contributor who resigns his employment and one whose employment is terminated on account of retrenchment. The other major superannuation schemes applicable within the public sector in Victoria provide for a special and higher payment to a contributor who is made redundant.

It is proposed to make the provisions retrospective to 1 June, 1982 to enable employees retrenched by the Port of Portland Authority to benefit from the changed provisions.

Another important measure is contained in clause 10 which deals with breaks in service. These provisions relate to an employee who has been retrenched by an authority which has been restructured. In this instance if the person is subsequently re-employed by another authority within two years of the retrenchment, there will be entitlement to repay all or part of any moneys received at the time of ceasing work and thus ensure maintenance of all benefits applicable if the retrenchment had not occurred. The benefits will be re-adjusted on the amount repaid.

Under clause 11 the board will be able to cancel contracts and repay contributions and any interest accrued thereon, where under the circumstances an employee has been contributing to the scheme in error. Clause 12 enables any surplus amounts or any deficit in the employees pension fund to be transferred to the authorities pension fund.

Although the amendments have been primarily designed to benefit contributors to the local authorities superannuation scheme they will also give the board increased flexibility thereby enabling it to deal more efficiently with the functions which it is authorized to undertake.

The Bill, in particular the retrenchment provisions, has the support of the unions and the Municipal Association of Victoria. I commend the Bill to this House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

ANNUAL REPORTING BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members are aware that this Government was elected on a platform of reform of Government administration. We have already seen the establishment of the Department of Management and Budget, the establishment of the Cash Management Account, the State Development Account, the development of programme budgeting and the significant reduction of trust funds within the public account. The introduction of an Annual Reporting Bill is another important step in the continuing process of reform promised to the people of Victoria. It is a subject that has attracted extensive public debate over the last two to three years.

As is widely known, Victoria has an extraordinarily high number of public bodies. As studies have indicated, many of these bodies do not report their activities to Parliament while others do not report to the responsible Minister, a situation which needs to be rectified. In addition, where they do report, in many cases they report late and there is a lack of consistency in the form and content of financial statements. Similar types of public bodies report their

activities in different ways. Some maintain their accounts on a cash basis, some on accrual, and others on a modified accrual basis. In many cases no depreciation or general provisions have been raised and the capital sector of balance sheets can be very confusing.

The best method of improving accountability and ensuring consistent financial reporting standards is through the provisions of an Annual Reporting Act, that establishes uniform responsibilities for all public bodies by consolidating all reporting requirements in one Act.

The aim of the legislation will be to provide for the reporting annually to Parliament, through the Minister, of all public bodies including statutory authorities, departments and Ministries. All public bodies will be required to submit to the relevant Minister within three months after the end of the financial year—

(*a*) a report of its operations during the financial year; and

(*b*) financial statements for the financial year concerned.

All such reports will be signed by the chief executive and principal accounting officer in each public body. In addition, financial statements will be audited by the Auditor-General.

It is also my intention to introduce annual reporting requirements progressively across all public bodies; this will be done through the categorization of all public bodies into various classes. For example, all Ministers and departments will be one class and all waterworks, sewerage authorities and river improvement trusts another class.

Relevant detailed reporting and accounting standards will be set for the various classes of public bodies and these will be done through regulations. It is my intention to ensure that there is extensive consultation with the relevant public bodies when standards are being set for each class of public bodies.

It is anticipated that it will take three to four years for all public bodies in Victoria to fall within the ambit of the Bill. This time will be needed for the necessary changes to take place in the many organizations which currently do not report.

To avoid the situation where Parliament is flooded by too many annual reports, the Bill provides that all reports with cash payments in excess of $1 million be tabled in Parliament by the relevant Minister and, in all other cases, the Minister will advise the House of receipt of an annual report and it will be tabled at the request of members.

It is not the Government's intention to bring municipalities under the ambit of this Bill. We clearly recognize that local government is the third tier of government and should be self regulating with respect to its reporting procedures. We are naturally willing to assist municipalities in any way if they desire to change any of their reporting standards.

In conclusion, I believe that this Bill will be supported by all honourable members, as it represents a reform long overdue in Victoria. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TEMPLETON (Mentone), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, June 14.

ADJOURNMENT

Election funds—Geelong water sports project—Proposed use of Wiltona Hostel—Recognition of services of people during bush fires

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—A newspaper article in the *Age* this morning on the Australian National Opinion Polls states that my remarks about the participation of Mr Rod Cameron and Mr David Combe in Australian Labor Party money laundering activities were nonsense.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The matters that can be raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting are very carefully circumscribed and are well known, I am sure, by yourself, and I hope by all honourable members. In view of the opening comments of the honourable member, he should direct attention to which Minister he is seeking advice and comment from, and which departmental issue he intends to raise.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker. In my haste to get on my feet, I started my remarks quickly, hoping that the Premier would be present in the Chamber. If he is not present I direct my remarks to the Deputy Premier.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds)—There is no point of order.

Mr WILLIAMS—I ask the Deputy Premier to have this matter urgently investigated by the Premier. I have been told by a media representative this afternoon that the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable R. J. Hawke——

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the motion for adjournment of the sitting is not open for honourable members to raise anything with the Deputy Premier or any other Minister. A matter has to relate to Government administration, and I am trying to understand from the honourable member in what sense Victorian Government administration is involved in the comments made by the Prime Minister or Mr Combe.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member for Doncaster has barely opened his mouth and I have had two points of order. I do not intend to uphold the second point of order, but I will listen particularly carefully to the honourable member because the matter must be related to the administration of this Government, to the responsibility of the Premier, or in this case to the responsibility of the Deputy Premier answering for the Premier.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—Yesterday, in the grievance debate, I made serious allegations about——

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is taxing my patience. He is alluding to a debate that has transpired and been concluded. I ask the honourable member to direct the matter that he is raising to the responsibility of the Premier.

Mr WILLIAMS—My allegations are that money was alleged to have been paid into election funds in connection with the last election. I regard as a serious matter that the Prime Minister of Australia——

The SPEAKER—Order! I am not going to allow the honourable member to tax me to the extreme. I have interrupted him twice, and there have been two points of order. I want him to relate his remarks to the responsibility of the Premier to whom he is directing this matter. The honourable member has 3 minutes.

Mr WILLIAMS—I make the allegation that people described this as crap and nonsense when it was reported in the *Sunday Observer* on 10 April this year that these men admitted knowledge of these activities. That is why I want an investigation by the police or the electoral officer and I want the Premier to ensure that this is done.

I understand that Mr Hogg, the former Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, now adviser to the Prime Minister, refused to confirm or deny that payments had been made to the Australian Labor Party by the Ainsworth poker machine lobby.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member's remarks are out of order in respect of matters that are not the responsibility of the Premier, and I urge him to come back to whatever is the nub of his complaint in respect of Government administration. He has one minute.

Mr WILLIAMS—With respect, this is a matter of some importance to the people of Victoria. The Premier is our senior Minister.

The SPEAKER—It may be of some importance to the people of Victoria, but I am bound by the rules of the House and the honourable member on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting must direct the matter to Government administration and to the Minister who is responsible for that matter.

Mr WILLIAMS—There are so few Ministers in the Chamber.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation relates to representations by Geelong water sports groups, namely, oarsmen, canoeists and water skiers, to the proposal to develop the Belmont common into a 1500-metre rowing course, bearing in mind that since the second world war Geelong has held the Head of the River with the exception of 1957. The venue of the Head of the River has always been in Geelong. It is a major event and is of great benefit to the Geelong

community as it provides a time for families to enjoy other tourist facilities in Geelong. This major event also embraces the oarsmen of other schools, such as St Joseph's College, Bell Park High and Oberon High. It is not an elitist sport by any means. The Barwon Regatta brings oarsmen from Nagambie, Warrnambool, Rutherglen and Melbourne proper to Geelong and unless facilities on the Barwon River are upgraded, Geelong stands a grave chance of losing this annual event and other regattas for all time.

I point out to the Minister that the Geelong Chamber of Commerce has done some preliminary studies in conjunction with the shire engineer of South Barwon and has discussed this matter with the Minister and the Geelong Regional Commission. I request that the Minister's department give some assistance in bringing the matter to finality. It may be that the Victorian Rowing Association is discussing Carrum as the place for an international course. I do not want to enter that debate. At this time I am voicing the need for these facilities in Geelong to be upgraded. These facilities embrace the whole community and attract water sports enthusiasts from all groups, particularly Belmont, Grovedale and Highton, and would be a wonderful asset to Geelong if they were upgraded.

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—I raise a matter of urgency for the attention of the Minister for Community Welfare Services concerning the proposed establishment of a short-term facility at Wiltona Hostel to house about 80 pre-release prisoners to overcome some of the overcrowding problems in the prison system. A number of bodies have considered the adequacy or propriety of using this facility for residential purposes. In 1977 a Senate committee of inquiry was held which reported on its findings in 1978. I understand that the recommendations in the report were adopted by the Commonwealth Government. Part of the recommendations indicated that the facility should not be used for short-term use other than in absolute emergencies. It indicates that the fire danger is considerable and that procedures should be established for the evacuation of persons who are short-term occupants.

I wonder about the advisability of establishing a programme that requires an inbuilt evacuation scheme for housing prisoners and the problems that may be created with security of people in the local area who know there is a possibility of evacuating prisoners should a fire occur. I indicate that the Commonwealth Fire Brigades Board considered this location to be entirely unsatisfactory. It considered that the hostel should not be used because residential occupancy within and adjacent to the industrial complexes is contrary to all concepts of good and safe practices. That view was also expressed by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. The views of those two bodies, especially the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's Board, should be taken seriously because of the security and safety related to potential fire hazards. The Minister has indicated that the hostel would be used in this way only if a proper audible alarm system were likely between the hostel and nearby industrial establishments. Other problems are that the hostel is currently owned by the Commonwealth Government. Specific use purposes are associated with any planning permits that apply to that category and in order for the facility to be used significant arrangements would have to be made for the State to be able to use it with approval.

The transfer of the responsibility to the State requires a local scheme approved by the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme and in order to have the approval through that body, considerable time will be taken. Opportunity must be given to nearby residents and those interested to object to the proposed use of the hostel. My concern is that this process is likely to take some time. I ask the Minister to give further consideration to this matter in light of the dangers that have been adequately pointed out by responsible authorities indicating that the Government should not subject people to potentially dangerous situations or subject nearby industrial establishments to potentially dangerous situations. The Government should be further regarding the possibility of establishing a pre-release attendance centre at possibly the same cost or less cost than this proposal. In addition, weeks and maybe months will elapse before the hostel can be used in this way. I ask consideration to be redirected to providing a facility of a more permanent and long-term nature than that available at the Wiltona hostel.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—I raise a matter with the Minister of Education, for

the attention of the Premier. The situation has been brought to my notice by several people in the Macedon and Mount Macedon areas. I had been considering it for some time and it was brought to a head on Monday by two constituents who lost properties at Macedon and who are performing commendable work in the welfare and resettlement of people. I wonder whether the Government has considered the striking of a particular award or giving special recognition to people who have done so much and given their time, heart and charity during the bush fires.

Victoria has never experienced fires of this magnitude before. People from the Country Fire Authority gave many weeks of voluntary service and several took annual leave in order to do fire-fighting work. Members of the Red Cross have given recognition to some of its members for extra efforts that have been performed. The State Emergency Service, the Salvation Army, the Police Force, the Department of Community Welfare Services, the Forests Commission, the State Electricity Commission, Telecom Australia and other bodies have contributed in this area. I refer particularly to people who have given time freely and not been rewarded financially. There are awards such as Royal awards, the Order of Australia, awards from lifesaving societies for acts of bravery, Royal Humane Society awards and others I cannot bring to mind.

The Government may consider it appropriate in this instance to make awards especially available to the heroes and heroines of the bush fires for acts during and after the fires, particulary in the administering of welfare, charity and assistance to get people back on their feet. Without mentioning names, I know several people in the Macedon area who have been particularly gracious in giving their time, money and effort over recent months. I consider the Government should give special recognition for people involved in this disaster.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The honourable member for Doncaster raised a matter that, I think, he was attempting to relate to Government activities. I do not in any sense question the sincerity of the honourable member for Doncaster or the passion with which he raises the issue he was alluding to. First I suggest that the honourable member consider the appropriateness of making allegations that he is not prepared to back up with sworn statements or evidence.

Second, the honourable member should consider the appropriate Parliamentary form for raising those issues; clearly, the adjournment debate is not the appropriate time. I am sure there are many suitable forms available when one considers the nature of this Parliament. I repeat, the adjournment debate is not the appropriate time. I ask the honourable member for Doncaster to pause and reconsider the wisdom of raising such matters and, indeed, the people to whom he refers, unless he has solid evidence to back up his allegations.

The honourable member for Gisborne raised the issue of recognition of services rendered during the bush fires and during the post-bush-fire period. I will relate the suggestion to the Premier and make sure that the honourable member receives a response as quickly as possible.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The honourable member for South Barwon raised a matter that was of concern to the local community in Geelong and in particular the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and the Shire of South Barwon. They are concerned that the future use of the Barwon River may be lost for rowing races which have been held since the second world war. This is happening with the gradual construction of the new water sports complex at Carrum, which will take it to an international standard for races.

Whether the venue for the Head of the River race should be at Carrum is a matter to be decided by those people and school officials concerned. I presume if the Barwon River site is updated and it is decided not to use it for rowing, it would be a different matter.

By the same token, I am happy to talk with the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and the Shire of South Barwon about the future of the Barwon River as a rowing site. The main issue is not who will row on the river in big events but, naturally, it is a matter of finance. I would be interested to know what people in South Barwon would be prepared to contribute and what the Geelong Chamber of Commerce would be prepared to contribute. After that the funds would

become a matter of priority for the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, bearing in mind the priorities not only in the Victorian area, with many different requests for sports funds, but also in the Geelong area where it is considered that rowing and other water sports have a high priority.

They will all be considered, and if and when a submission is made by the local area to the department, I will be delighted to receive it and give it adequate attention at that time.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The honourable member for Wantirna raised a matter of planning difficulties at Wiltona Hostel and its use as a pre-release centre. Such planning difficulties always arise with proposals of this nature. I am conscious of the long-standing problems that have related to the use of the Wiltona Hostel and that it has been used over the years for a number of emergency purposes.

Some of the matters raised by the honourable member are subject to discussions with the Crown Solicitor and I am not free to make any further comment at this stage.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.44 *p.m. until Tuesday, May* 31.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated.

THE TREASURY OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 442)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer is:

The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMME

(Question No. 534)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

1. Whether departments, authorities and agencies within his administration have an equal opportunities programme?

2. How long the programme has been in existence and what are the aims of the programme?

3. How the aims of the programme are being met and what is each organization's assessment of the success of the programme in achieving its aims?

4. Whether the programme is aimed at covering the whole department or merely a section?

5. What are the procedures for union consultation and involvement and what involvement the Equal Opportunity Board has in the programme?

6. Whether the programme has changed its priority rating within each organization since its introduction?

7. On what basis any decision not to introduce such a programme was reached?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 552.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMME

(Question No. 552)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. Whether departments, authorities and agencies within his administration have an equal opportunities programme?

2. How long the programme has been in existence and what are the aims of the programme?

3. How the aims of the programme are being met and what is each organization's assessment of the success of the programme in achieving its aims?

4. Whether the programme is aimed at covering the whole department or merely a section?

5. What are the procedures for union consultation and involvement and what involvement the Equal Opportunity Board has in the programme?

6. Whether the programme has changed its priority rating within each organization since its introduction?

7. On what basis any decision not to introduce such a programme was reached?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. to 7. I assume this refers to an equal employment opportunity management plan, which is operated by the Public Service Board. As yet, the Education Department does not have such a programme, but since 1977 the Education Department has had an officer, and since 1980 an Equal Opportunity Unit, which works with teachers on a non-sexist curriculum. Also, since 1980 there has been a Ministerial Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee whose membership includes the Chairman of the Equal Opportunity Board. The unit's staff has increased to 11·5 officers in 1983 and it is expected to begin researching and operating an equal employment management plan during 1983 in addition to its curriculum responsibilities.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 586)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer as supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question, please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES DOCUMENTS

(Question No. 592)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. What is the name, designated position and departmental extension number of the officer or officers charged with the duty of assisting persons seeking access to memoranda held by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration?

2. What staff training programmes have been instituted to facilitate implementation of the proposed Freedom of Information Act?

3. What steps have been taken to utilize information technology systems in assisting enquirers to identify and locate specific documents and memoranda?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. Officers charged with the duty of assisting persons who seek access to documents are:

Paul Doherty—Freedom of Information Manager, telephone 654 4222—extension 740.

F. X. Cronin—Freedom of Information Officer, Correctional Services Division, telephone 654 4222—extension 740.

L. Howard—Freedom of Information Officer, Family and Adolescent Services Division, telephone 654 4222—extension 221.

Gayle Upton—Freedom of Information Officer, Personnel Branch, telephone 654 4222—extension 726.

John Abels—Freedom of Information Officer, Inner Eastern Region, Camberwell, telephone 82 8193.

Noel Cornell—Freedom of Information Officer, Inner Urban Region, East Melbourne, telephone 651 7466.

Barry Gunning—Freedom of Information Officer, North Eastern Suburbs Region, Preston, telephone 478 3322.

John Starford—Freedom of Information Officer, North Western Suburbs Region, Broadmeadows, telephone 309 5700.

Geoffrey Cockerall—Freedom of Information Officer, Outer Eastern Suburbs Region, Ringwood, telephone 879 3311.

Terry Guest—Freedom of Information Officer, Southern Suburbs Region, Moorabbin, telephone 553 0711.

Richard Sobczak—Freedom of Information Officer, Western Suburbs Region, Footscray, telephone 689 5777.

John Richardson—Freedom of Information Officer, Westernport Region, Dandenong, telephone 791 5244.

Greg Cattanach—Freedom of Information Officer, Barwon Region, Geelong, telephone (052) 26 4500.

David Bull—Freedom of Information Officer, Central Gippsland Region, Morwell, telephone (051) 34 2355.

Peter Bowler—Freedom of Information Officer, Central Highlands Region, Ballarat, telephone (053) 37 0666.

Peter Sheehan—Freedom of Information Officer, East Gippsland Region, Bairnsdale, telephone (051) 52 4964.

Paul Burgess—Freedom of Information Officer, Glenelg Region, Warrnambool, telephone (052) 62 4055.

Chris Hazelman—Freedom of Information Officer, Goulburn Region, Shepparton, telephone (058) 21 4644.

Alan Clements—Freedom of Information Officer, Loddon-Campaspe Region, Bendigo, telephone (054) 43 8099.

John Byrne—Freedom of Information Officer, Mallee Region, Mildura, telephone (050) 23 3971.

Michael Lawrence—Freedom of Information Officer, Upper Murray Region, Wodonga, telephone (060) 24 3222.

Des Slattery—Freedom of Information Officer, Wimmera Region, Horsham, telephone (053) 82 3044.

David Vance—Freedom of Information Officer, Community Welfare Training Institute, telephone 467 3066.

2. Three briefing sessions have been conducted by the Public Service Board and the Interdepartmental Committee on Implementation of the Freedom of Information Legislation for permanent heads, chairmen of major statutory authorities and appropriate senior officers. The seminars were led by Mr Peter Bayne, LL.B., J.D., (Chicago), Senior Lecturer in the Legal Studies Department at Latrobe University and currently a visiting Research Fellow at the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

A sub-committee on training has been established by the FOI Implementation Committee to pursue a Two Stage training programme as follows:

(*a*) Training for senior and middle-level executive staff who will be required to ensure effective administration of the legislation, as well as those at operating levels, in the requirements of FOI.

(*b*) Commence the "professionalization" of the information management function by providing concentrated staff development in that field.

Continuing training programmes in both areas will be developed as required.

Since August 1982 the department's FOI project team has addressed in excess of 1 200 members of staff with a view to improving staff awareness of the objects and principles of freedom of information legislation.

Intensive training courses for officers charged with the duty of assisting the public under the FOI Act are to be held in late May.

3. Information technology is being actively considered and if justified on a cost basis it will be introduced to facilitate the operation of FOI. Existing technology in agencies may be adapted, where possible, to assist the public.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 604)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

(*a*) Considered unnecessary.

(*b*) Not possible to replace oil powered units with solar power.

(*c*) The best possible use of energy is already an effective policy.

MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 640)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 820)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer, for the Minister of Labour and Industry:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is:

The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 849)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

What percentage of the vote of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration was actually spent in each of the months January to June 1981, and January to June 1982 inclusive?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. *Premier's Office and Public Service Board:*

	Jan.-June 1981	Jan.-June 1982
	per cent	*per cent*
January	8·3	13·5
February	6·4	7·6
March	6·9	9·5
April	11·7	6·5
May	8·7	12·6
June	11·9	10·7

2. *Audit Office:*

	Jan.-June 1981	Jan.-June 1982
	per cent	*per cent*
January	7·3	7·1
February	8·3	10·0
March	11·6	7·9
April	7·9	11·9
May	9·1	8·7
June	10·0	10·3

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET ENTERTAINMENT EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 855)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) Asked the Premier:

1. What was the actual expenditure on entertainment and hospitality of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981-82 and what is the estimate for 1982-83?

2. What positions are held by the persons authorizing such expenditure?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

(*a*) *Premier's Office and Public Service Board*

1. Cost 1981-82—$217 283

Estimate 1982-83—$133 250

2.

(i) Premier

(ii) Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

(iii) Deputy Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

(iv) Agent-General.

(v) Chairman and Division Heads, Public Service Board.

(*b*) *Audit office*

1. Cost 1981-82—Nil

Estimate 1982-83—$1 000

2.

(i) Auditor-General

(ii) Assistant Auditor-General

(iii) Manager, Personnel and Administration

(iv) Deputy Manager, Personnel and Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 856)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question, please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET REPRESENTATION OF TRADE UNIONS

(Question No. 861)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. Which statutory authorities within the responsibility of the Minister have provision for elected representatives or trade union nominated representatives on their boards?

2. What is the basis of their representation and when it was established?

3. Who are the current trade union representatives and who held the positions previously?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. *The Public Service Board*

The Public Service Board has two elected representatives; one is elected by officers of the Public Service who are in the general service and the other is elected by certain mental health officers to act in lieu of the first-mentioned member in matters affecting those mental health officers or employees.

The Promotions Appeal Board

The Promotions Appeal Board has a member selected by the Chairman of the appeals board as the appropriate officer for the appeal in question from persons nominated by the approved associations of officers.

The Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal

The Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal has a member selected by the Public Service Board from persons nominated by the approved associations of officers.

The State Relief Committee

The State Relief Committee has one member who is "a person nominated by the body known as the Trades Hall Council".

2. *The Public Service Board*

The basis of the representation of the elected members is set out in section 6 (2) and section 6 (3) of the Public Service Act 1974.

The basis of the elected representation was established in 1940 by the Public Service Act 1940.

The Promotions Appeal Board

The basis of the representation of the nominated member is set out in section 38 (3) of the Public Service Act 1974. The basis of the representation was established in 1975 by the Public Service Act 1974.

The Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal

The basis of the representation of the nominated member is set out in section 63 (4) of the Public Service Act 1974. The basis of the representation was established in 1975 by the Public Service Act 1974.

The State Relief Committee

The basis of the representation of the Trades Hall Council nominated representative is section 4 (9) (*g*) of the State Relief Committee Act 1958. The Act was assented to on 30 September, 1958 and came into operation on 1 April, 1959.

3. *The Public Service Board*

There are no trade union representatives on the Public Service Board.

The Promotions Appeal Board

The persons nominated by the approved associations of officers are:

(*a*) Mr D. C. Fleming (Victorian Public Service Association).

(*b*) Mr V. J. Nihill (Hospital Employees' Federation of Australasia, Victorian No. 2 Branch).

(*c*) Mr W. A. Barnes (Printing and Kindred Industries Union).

The previous nominees were respectively:

(*a*) Mr O. J. O'Carroll

(*b*) Mr K. Goodger

(*c*) Nominee is continuing.

The Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal—The persons nominated by the approved associations of officers are:

(*a*) Mr J. K. Cook (Victorian Public Service Association).

(*b*) Mr W. A. Barnes (Printing and Kindred Industries Union).

The above nominees have been the nominees since the inception of the tribunal.

The State Relief Committee

The current Trades Hall Council nominated representative on the Committee is Mr L. Carey (Australian Institute of Engineers).

The previous nominee was:

Mr Albert Monk, C.M.G. (former President of the A.C.T.U.).

DEPARTMENT OF PROPERTY AND SERVICES OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 874)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

(*a*) (*b*) and (*c*). The Government is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Programme to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question please refer to the answer of the Minister for Minerals and Energy to question on notice No. 370.

FORMS ISSUED BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 966)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether he is taking action to ensure that all forms issued by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration conform to the requirements of social relevance and language comprehension in 1982; if so; what action; if not, whether he will take such action?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Forms issued by the organizations under my control are under constant review. However, if the honourable member has any particular form he considers should be revised from the viewpoint of social relevance and language comprehension in 1982, I would be happy to receive his advice.

FORMS ISSUED BY MINISTRY FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

(Question No. 967)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

Whether he is taking action to ensure that all forms issued by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration conform to the requirements of social relevance and language comprehension in 1982; if so, what action; if not, whether he will take such action?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 966.

AIR-CONDITIONING IN BUILDINGS OF PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1089)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. What steps the Minister is taking to provide air-conditioning in all buildings within his administration?

2. What proportion of personnel in departments, authorities and agencies within his administration are now enjoying the benefit of air-conditioning?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. No steps are necessary as all buildings within my administration that are appropriate to air-conditioning are air-conditioned.

2. Approximately 94 per cent of personnel within my administration are located in air-conditioned offices.

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES USED BY PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1092)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

What—(*a*) advertising agency services; and (*b*) public relations sources, are retained, used or have been used in the period since 3 April 1982 by departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, specifying in each case—(i) the name of the firm or agency used and whether such firm or agency was used for a general or specific purpose; and (ii) the amounts paid to such firms or agencies?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

Agency	*Amount Paid After 3 April, 1982*	*Purpose*
International Public Relations Pty Ltd	2 420	Publicizing Werribee Park. (Agreement entered into prior to 3 April, 1982).
Geo. Patterson Pty Ltd (Advertising Agency)	18 136	Preparation of a marketing plan for Victoria's 150th Anniversary Celebrations. (Commitment was given prior to 3 April, 1982 and contract finalized after that date.)
International Public Relations Pty Ltd	16 794	Publicizing Victoria's 150th Anniversary Celebrations. (This was an on-going contract, entered into prior to 3 April, 1982 and continued until end of November, 1982).
D'Arcy-McManus and Masius Pty Ltd (through the Australian Advertising Federation)	Nil (Donated Free to Relief Programme)	Bushfire Relief Advertisements

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES USED BY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1245)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Public Works:

What—(*a*) advertising agency services; and (*b*) public relations sources, are retained, used of have been used in the period since 3 April 1982 by departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, specifying in each case—(i) the name of the firm or agency used and whether such firm or agency was used for a general or specific purpose; and (ii) the amounts paid to such firms or agencies?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—The answer is:

The Public Works Department, Marine Board of Victoria, Architects Registration Board and the Port of Portland Authority do not use nor have used advertising agency services or public relations sources in the period since April 3, 1982.

The Port of Melbourne Authority has used the services of Ogilvy and Mather in connection with public loan advertising, World Trade Centre advertising (primarily aimed at leasing of office space), the preparation of some advertisements for magazines and so on.

The amount paid for these services, from April to December 1982, was $100 444.

The Port of Geelong Authority has used:

(*a*) John Wood Pty Ltd, for general purposes; and

(*b*) Pace Advertising Pty Ltd, for general purposes; including the recruitment of staff.

The amounts paid to these firms were $23 458.73 and $9 435.54, respectively.

AIR-CONDITIONING IN BUILDINGS OF DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1287)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. What steps the Minister is taking to provide air-conditioning in all buildings within his administration?

2. What proportion of personnel in departments, authorities and agencies within his administration are now enjoying the benefit of air-conditioning?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. None.

2. An estimated 85 per cent of office personnel occupy air-conditioned offices.

FUNDS GRANTED TO ORGANIZATIONS BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1291)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

What independent audit is required to ensure the proper expenditure of funds granted to non-government organizations by the Minister or agencies and authorities within his administration?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

Funds granted to non-Government organizations are generally for a specific purpose or to carry out a programme approved by my department in line with Government policy.

Major welfare programmes undertaken by the voluntary sector such as the running of children's homes, hostels, foster care agencies, family support services, women's refuges and youth accommodation services are heavily subsidized on pre-determined formulae. These voluntary homes and agencies are funded on a regular basis and these payments are subject to the normal auditing carried out periodically by the State Audit Office. The organizations involved are required to employ their own auditors and to provide annual audited accounting statements to the department. Where staff salaries are subsidized, the salary records of the organizations concerned are inspected on a regular basis by departmental staff.

Twice-yearly grants are made to welfare agencies through FACS programmes after the consideration of recommendations by the regional consultative councils.These grants are monitored by regional secretaries and their administrative staff. Where financial problems are discovered, assistance is available from the department's accounts branch investigations section. Grants in excess of $4000 are subject to an audited financial statement being provided to the department at the end of the calendar year in which the grant was made.The auditor/monitor ensures that the expenditure has actually been incurred and that the funds have been expended for the purpose of carrying out the programme for which the funds were granted.

Apart from the financial auditing of the FACS programmes the regional field staff evaluate the programmes undertaken by each organization. The effectiveness or otherwise of each organization's programmes is reported upon as a guide to the future

funding of that organization in relation to that programme.

MOTOR VEHICLES USED BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1293)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. What is the total number of vehicles operated, leased or otherwise used by departments, authorities and agencies within the administration of the Minister?

2. How many are air-conditioned?

3. Whether steps are being taken to improve this ratio; if so, what steps; if not, why?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. 190 vehicles

2. 8 vehicles

3. Air-conditioning is fitted to vehicles in accordance with the policy of Victorian Motor Transport Committee.

MOTOR VEHICLES USEDBY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Question No. 1329)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

1. What is the total number of vehicles operated, leased or otherwise used by departments, authorities and agencies within the administration of the Minister?

2. How many are air-conditioned?

3. Whether steps are being taken to improve this ratio; if so, what steps; if not, why?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

The total number of vehicles operated by departments and agencies within my administration, and the number of those vehicles that are air-conditioned, is shown in the following table:

Department/Agency	*Number of Vehicles Operated*	*Number of Vehicles Air-conditioned*
Department of Agriculture	647	120
Grain Elevators Board	99	43
Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust	3	1
Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board	2	2
Victorian Dried Fruits Board	1	1
Victorian Egg Marketing Board	24	24
Victorian Dairy Industry Authority	31	21

As departmental vehicles are replaced or added to the fleet, air-conditioning is fitted in those cases where the vehicles meet the criteria, in terms of geographic location and annual distance travelled, set down by the Victorian Government Motor Transport Committee.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WORKS AND SERVICES

(Question No. 1403)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether steps have been taken to reduce the dependence of departments, agencies and authorities within his administration on outside provision of works and services; if so, what steps; if not, whether such action will be taken?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Government agencies such as the Public Works Department and Government Printer, together with internal facilities, are used for the provision of works and services wherever possible. Where it is necessary to go outside the Government for the provision of these services, Tender Board guidelines and Treasury regulations are followed.

EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 1407)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. In respect of departments, agencies and authorities within his administration, what proportion of the expenditure in 1981–82 will be recovered from—(*a*) individual and corporate users; (*b*) Victorian Government taxes and charges; (*c*) other Victorian Government departments; (*d*) Commonwealth Government grants; and (*e*) other sources?

2. What are the estimated proportions for recouping such expenditure in 1982-83?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

At present, the Education Department does not obtain information on the extent to which individual and corporate users contribute to the recovery of departmental expenditure. The extraction of the other information sought by the honourable member would entail considerable work and is beyond the present staffing resources of the department. Some indication of the sources of recovery of departmental expenditure can be obtained from the Budget Papers.

MINISTER OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES WORKS AND SERVICES

(Question No. 1412)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

Whether steps have been taken to reduce the dependence of departments, agencies and authorities within his administration on outside provision of works and services; if so, what steps; if not, whether such action will be taken?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 1403.

MINISTER OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 1417)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

1. In respect of departments, agencies and authorities within his administration, what proportion of the expenditure in 1981-82 will be recovered from—(*a*) individual and corporate users; (*b*) Victorian Government taxes and charges; (*c*) other Victorian Government departments; (*d*) Commonwealth Government grants; and (*e*) other sources?

2. What are the estimated proportions for recouping such expenditure in 1982-83?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable members attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 1407.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO TELEVISION MEDIA BY MINISTRY OF HOUSING

(Question No. 1422)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing:

1. What investigations have been undertaken by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration into the provision of information to television media for dissemination through the telecast system?

2. Whether he will furnish brief details of information likely to be provided, indicating the expected costs both to the department, authority or agency and to the television media?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer is:

1. No investigations have been undertaken in this regard.

2. News statements are provided to all daily media services in Melbourne, and often to suburban and country media services, including television stations. The cost is absorbed in the Ministry's mailing system.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY COMMUNICATIONS

(Question No. 1463)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer, for the Minister of Labour and Industry:

What was the expenditure by all departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981-82 together with the estimate for 1982-83 in the following categories—(*a*) stamps; (*b*) telegrams; (*c*) telex services; (*d*) Telecom land lines; (*e*) printing and stationery; and (*f*) advertising?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is:

The information requested is contained in the following Table:

Organization		*Stamps*	*Telegrams*	*Telexes*	*Telecom Land Lines*	*Printing and Stationery*	*Advertising*
		$	$	$	$	$	$
Department of Labour and Industry (includes Industrial Relations Commission)	1981-82	13 799	—	—	—	406 657	6 491
	1982-83	16 000	50	—	400	450 000	8 000

Organization		*Stamps*	*Telegrams*	*Telexes*	*Telecom Land Lines*	*Printing and Stationery*	*Advertising*
		$	$	$	$	$	$
Workers Compensation Board	1981-82—	13 429	—	—	—	24 095	9 060
	1982-83—	16 500	—	—	—	32 500	10 500
Motor Accidents Board	1981-82—	55 488	975	—	4 107	77 412	11 643
	1982-83—	69 850	330	—	—	80 500	11 000
Hairdressers Registration Board	1981-82—	10 508	—	—	—	13 420	—
	1982-83—	12 000	—	—	—	14 000	—
Building Industry Long Service Leave Board	1981-82—	37 052	—	—	—	40 653	5 948
	1982-83—	33 000	—	—	—	39 600	3 000
Metal and Electrical Trades Section	1982-83—	2 000	—	—	—	18 000	Awaiting board and Ministerial approval

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

(Question No. 1572)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. Whether any department, authority or agency within his administration is installing an automated text communication system, and at what cost?

2. Whether any such system will be linked to any public media group; if so, which group or groups?

3. Which offices are connected to Special Telecom land lines?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

It is assumed that the honourable member in his question is referring to telex and facsimile transfer machines.

1. No.

2. Not applicable.

3. Not applicable.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INSTRUCTION MANUALS

(Question No. 1605)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

1. What are the titles of all instruction manuals issued by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration?

2. How frequently these manuals are updated?

3. Whether a copy of each such manual is available in the Parliamentary Library; if not, why?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

1. and 2. The titles of instruction manuals issued by departments, authorities and agencies, and the frequency with which they are up-dated, are as follows:

(*a*) Department of Agriculture

Title of Manual	*Up-date Frequency*
Supervisors Induction Handbook	as required
Industrial Information Handbook	as required
VAMIS Users Manual	as required
Typing Manual	as required
The Vesicular Diseases Manual	yearly
Animal Health Handbook	yearly
Instructions and Guide for Dairy Supervisors	as required
Milkotester Manual	as required
Australian Code of Practice for Dairy Factories	as required
Dairy Test Manual (Methods for examination of dairy produce and equipment)	as required
Milk Pasteurizer Operator Manual	as required
Milking Machine Testing (Parts I and II)	every 5 years
Manual for Drivers of Bulk Milk Collecting Tankers	as required

Title of Manual	*Up-date Frequency*
Registration Procedures Manual (Procedures for registration and renewal of registration of agricultural chemicals under the Agricultural Chemicals Act 1958 for the registration period 1982–1985)	every 3 years
Chemical Methods (Laboratory Methods used by the Department of Agriculture)	as required
Accounts Branch Procedure Manual	Yearly
Statistical Computer Programs (Parts 1, 2 and 3)	as required

(*b*) Grain Elevators Board

Title of Manual	*Up-date Frequency*
Training Guide to IBM System 38 Text Management	as required
Operations Safety Manual	as required
Officer-in-Charge Manual	as required
Operations Information System Manual	as required
Barley Weighbridge Ticket Manual	as required
Oat Weighbridge Ticket Manual	as required
Oat Registration Manual	as required
Stock Accounting System Manual	as required

(*c*) Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust
Computer Operator Instructions—Continuously

3. copies of the above manuals can be made available to the Parliamentary Library, if so requested.

INJURIES TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

(Question No. 1722)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. How many employees of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration were inred during 1981?

2. How many injuries were reported during the year?

3. How many man-hours were lost as a result of the injuries?

4. What was the total proportion of man-hours lost through injury to total man-hours worked?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

(*a*) Premier's Office and Public Service Board

1. 36.

2. 38*.

3. 1359 hours.

4. 0·94 per cent.

(*b*) Audit Office

1. 3.

2. 3.

3. 180·4 hours.

4. 0·07 per cent.

*2 persons were injured twice.

FLYING OF STATE FLAG

(Question No. 1728)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. What steps have been taken to ensure that State flags are flown each day on all flag poles on Government buildings housing federal affairs administration?

2. If no steps have been taken, why?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

As indicated in my answer to question on notice No. 357, the Government supports the flying of the Victorian flag on all State Government buildings.

The activities of the Ministry of Federal Affairs have been absorbed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Victorian flag does fly on Government buildings which house this department.

USE OF DAY LABOUR BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1740)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. How many contracts for work to be performed by departments, agencies and authorities within his administration will be carried out by "day labour" in 1982–83?

2. What percentage of total contracts awarded this represents?

3. What is the total value of contracts which it is estimated will be let in 1982–83 and what is the estimated value of contracts awarded to day labour?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1, 2 and 3. There are no areas within the administration of the Education Department that involve the engagement of "day labour".

BRIBES PAYABLE TO OFFICERS OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1741)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. Whether he is aware of the obligation of all American listed corporations to file returns with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission listing bribes payable to public officials within the United States and overseas countries?

2. What steps he has taken to ascertain whether the name of any official within the employ of any department, agency or authority within his administration is included in such list, and if no steps have been taken, why?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1 and 2. I consider this question not to be worthy of a reply.

USE OF DAY LABOUR BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

(Question No. 1745)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

1. How many contracts for work to be performed by departments, agencies and authorities within his administration will be carried out by "day labour" in 1982-83?

2. What percentage of total contracts awarded this represents?

3. What is the total value of contracts which it is estimated will be let in 1982-83 and what is the estimated value of contracts awarded to day labour?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 1740.

BRIBES PAYABLE TO OFFICERS OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

(Question No. 1746)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Educational Services:

1. Whether he is aware of the obligation of all American listed corporations to file returns with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission listing bribes payable to public officials within the United States and overseas countries?

2. What steps he has taken to ascertain whether the name of any official within the employ of any department, agency or authority within his administration is included in such list, and if no steps have been taken, why?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Educational Services)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to question No. 1741.

FLYING OF STATE FLAG BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1828)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. What steps have been taken to ensure that State flags are flown each day on all flag poles on Government buildings within her administration?

2. If no steps have been taken, why?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

Flags are flown daily on buildings where facilities are available.

REPAIRS TO MOTOR VEHICLES OF DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1829)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. Which garages handle motor repair work for all motor vehicles within her administration?

2. Whether this work is allocated by tender or otherwise, indicating the cost per hour or other basis of cost determination?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. Repairs to motor vehicles are carried out by private garages in the area the vehicle is operated.

2. Work is allocated on past performance and ability to carry out the repairs.

USE OF DAY LABOUR BY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 1830)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. How many contracts for work to be performed by departments, agencies and authorities within her administration will be carried out by "day labour" in 1982-83?

2. What percentage of total contracts awarded this represents?

3. What is the total value of contracts which it is estimated will be let in 1982-83 and what is the estimated value of contracts awarded to day labour?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

Not applicable. The Public Works Department arranges all contracts for works required by my department.

MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS CORPORATE PLANS

(Question No. 2027)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

Whether a corporate plan has been prepared for all departments, agencies and authorities within his administration showing—(*a*) overall objectives; (*b*) objectives of divisions and sections; (*c*) strategies to be used for meeting objectives; (*d*) priority and timing of strategies used; (*e*) persons responsible for directing strategies; (*f*) criteria for judging effectiveness; and (*g*) the system for monitoring level of effectiveness; if so—(i) where such plan may be inspected; and (ii) whether he would cause such plan to be incorporated in *Hansard*; if not, when it is anticipated that such plan will be available for the information of the member for Doncaster?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

It is the Government's policy that the matters referred to in the question be addressed by departments as part of the over-all programme aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration in Victoria and introducing modern management techniques. Accordingly, such a corporate plan will be developed by agencies within my administration. However, the question of the availability of this plan is unable to be addressed at this time.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE TO OVERVIEW LEGISLATION

(Question No. 2049)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

Whether he intends taking any steps to establish a Parliamentary Committee in the Legislative Council to maintain a watching brief on all legislation and subordinate legislation submitted to Parliament in order to protect the individual from undue interference with his rights and the exercise of undue delegation of power; if not, why?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

The Government does not intend to establish such a committee in the Legislative Council.

Regulations and statutory rules are subject to the scrutiny of the Legal and Constitutional Joint Investigatory Committee.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE DIRECTED TO PREMIER

(Question No. 2056)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. What are the details of arrangements for the answering of questions on notice directed to him with respect to responsible officers on his personal staff and/or within departments, agencies or authorities within his administration charged with the duty of—(*a*) examining the question asked; and (*b*) preparing the answer?

2. Whether he has sought any reports on the large number of questions on the Notice Paper addressed to him which remain unanswered; if not, why?

3. Whether he has instigated any measures to facilitate the answering of questions on notice; if not, why?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. Answers to questions on notice are prepared by the relevant office or division within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and co-ordinated by the Parliamentary branch.

2. No. I am confident that the department is providing answers to questions as efficiently as possible, given the large numbers directed to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the limited amount of resources available to research and process the replies.

3. Current arrangements are considered to be the best possible for handling questions on notice, having regard to the number of questions directed to me and the demands of priorities within my department.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE DIRECTED TO MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS

(Question No. 2078)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

1. What are the details of arrangements for the answering of questions on notice directed to him with respect to responsible officers on his personal staff and/or within departments, agencies or authorities within his administration charged with the duty of—(*a*) examining the question asked; and (*b*) preparing the answer?

2. Whether he has sought any reports on the large number of questions on the Notice Paper addressed to him which remain unanswered; if not, why?

3. Whether he has instigated any measures to facilitate the answering of questions on notice; if not, why?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

1. Answers to questions on notice are prepared by the relevant division or agency of this Ministry and are co-ordinated by the head office administration.

2. No. I am confident that the department is providing answers to questions as efficiently as possible given the large numbers directed to my Ministry and the limited amount of resources available to research and process the replies.

3. No. Although the large number of questions asked by the honourable member for Doncaster has placed considerable stress on the administrative resources of my Ministry and its branches, the existing procedures are considered to be the best possible and will therefore continue to be used for the preparation of replies to questions on notice.

USE OF VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS IN DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES

(Question No. 2099)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. How many visual display units are in use in departments, agencies and authorities within his administration?

2. What plans there are to increase this number, indicating the size of any increase?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. Fourteen.

2. My department is continually examining its information and systems requirements.

USE OF VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS IN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Question No. 2107)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

1. How many visual display units are in use in departments, agencies and authorities within his administration?

2. What plans there are to increase this number, indicating the size of any increase?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

1. Department of Agriculture	74
Grain Elevators Board	36
Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust	2
Victorian Dairy Industry Authority	20
Victorian Egg Marketing Board	2

2. The Ministry is continually examining its information system requirements.

MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

(Question No. 2185)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for the Arts:

1. Whether any monies were allocated by the Ministry for the Arts in the State Budget announced on 22 September 1982, which would be available for distribution at his discretion; if so, what amount has been so allocated?

2. Whether such discretionary funds were available within the 1981–82 State Budget?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

1. In the 1982–83 Budget, an amount of $5·2 million was appropriated to this Ministry for "cultural development and grants in connection therewith". All of this sum has been committed/spent.

2. Yes.

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

(Question No. 2189)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for Employment and Training:

1. Whether any moneys were allocated by the Ministry of Employment and Training in the State Budget announced on 22 September 1982 which would be available for distribution at his discretion: if so, what amount has been so allocated?

2. Whether such discretionary funds were available within the 1981-82 State Budget?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—The answer is:

The Ministry budget is determined on the basis of projected expenditure on defined programmes.

To the extent that circumstances change over time the Minister, on the advice of the Ministry, has to make decisions on the re-allocation of funds within that budget. The extent of this process is similar from year to year. Neither the 1981-82 nor the 1982-83 budgets contained funds specifically designated for use at the discretion of the Minister.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

(Question No. 2195)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. Whether any moneys were allocated by the Department of Community Welfare Services in the State Budget announced on 22 September 1982, which would be available for distribution at her discretion; if so what amount has been so allocated?

2. Whether such discretionary funds were available within the 1981-82 State Budget?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

Listed below are the moneys allocated in the State Budget announced on 22 September 1982, which were made available for distribution at my discretion under the various categories of grants during the current financial year.

Also listed below is the actual amount expended under those categories during the 1981-82 financial year.

Source of Funds and Type of Grants	*Amount Allocated* 1982-83		*Actual Expenditure* 1982-83	
	$	$	$	$
From: Vote (Operating) funds:				
Family and Community Services (FACS)				
Community Correction Grants	150 000		149 006	
Community Service Grants	1 882 000		1 586 333	
Developmemt Fund Grants	60 200		62 075	
Information and Co-ordination Grants	373 000		373 315	
Family Support Service Grants	562 000		297 869	
Local Initiative Grants	—	1 577		
		3 027 200		2 470 175
Welfare Service Fund				
Major Welfare Agencies Grants	897 000		762 822	
Federating Agencies Grants	426 000		402 750	
Ministers Fund Grants	70 000		86 289	
		1 393 000		1 251 861
Total Vote (Operating) Funds		4 420 200		3 722 036

Source of Funds and Type of Grants	*Amount Allocated* 1982–83		*Actual Expenditure* 1982–83	
	$	$	$	$
From: Works and Services (Capital) funds: Welfare Services Fund				
Other Voluntary Agencies Grants	120 000		142 102	
Total Works and Services (Capital) Funds		120 000		142 000
Total Funds		4 540 000		3 864 138

Grants under the Family and Community Services programme are made after receiving recommendations from the various regional consultative councils whereas grants from the Ministers Fund are made at my discretion. Other grants from the Welfare Services Fund are made after receiving recommendations from the Department Funding Committee.

In the case of each grant, eligibility, need and regional and departmental priorities are examined by me to ensure that a rational, equitable and co-ordinated community welfare service system in line with Government policy is developed and maintained.

STUDIES OR SURVEYS ON ILLITERACY

(Question No. 2207)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether any studies or surveys have been carried out in the past two years in any regions of the State to determine the level of illiteracy in those regions; if so, in which regions and whether he will make the findings available to the member for Hawthorn?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

The only study or survey carried out by regions during 1981 and 1982, on illiteracy, was a study conducted in November, 1982, on Grade 6 exit students in those primary schools which feed the secondary schools in the urban area of Ballarat, involving 1295 students.

The test used was the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, which tests literal and inferential comprehension. This was conducted by staff of the Ballarat Special Education Unit, thus ensuring consistency of administration of the test.

Results show—

4·2 per cent	scored at stanine	1 and 2
5·5 per cent	" " "	3
12·7 per cent	" " "	4
40·5 per cent	" " "	5 and 6
37·2 per cent	" " "	7, 8 and 9

Explanation:

Stanines 1 and 2 mean children in extreme difficulty.

Stanine 3 means children needing a lot of support—concentrated remedial action.

Stanine 4 means children making the breakthrough—requiring modified programme.

Stanines 5 and 6 mean average level for age.

Stanines 7, 8 and 9 mean well in advance of norm expected for age level.

It may be of interest to the honourable member that the Australian Council of Educational Research conducted a national survey of ten and fourteen-year-old students in 1980, entitled "Performances in Literacy and Numeracy".

JOB CREATION SCHEME

(Question No. 2216)

Mrs SIBREE (Kew) asked the Minister for Employment and Training:

In respect of the 45 jobs under the $30 million job creation scheme, announced by him on 8 November 1982—(*a*) what are the particular jobs; (*b*) what is the rate of pay in respect of each job; (*c*) who will be the employer in respect of each job; (*d*) how long each employee employed in the 45 jobs has been out of work; (*e*) what steps are being taken to ensure that these 45 people do not replace people currently in existing jobs; (*f*) how the $200 000 revenue expected from these 45 jobs will be raised; (*g*) whether any of the new employees are under the age of 30; and (*h*) whether any of the new employees are women?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—The answer is:

(*a*) Two positions are for experienced supervisors, two are for carpenters and 41 positions are semi and unskilled positions.

(*b*) Award rates are being paid in every case. The majority of employees are covered by AWU Awards, being $6.50 per hour excluding travelling and other allowances.

(*c*) The employer is the Ministry for Conservation.

(*d*) All appointees were referred to the National Parks Service by the Commonwealth Employment Service, after satisfying the CES that they had been unemployed for at least six months.

(*e*) One of the conditions of eligibility of the Small Public Works and Maintenance Scheme is that funds are provided for works which would not otherwise occur.

(*f*) The anticipated revenue of $200 000 will be raised through entrance fees, accommodation fees or similar hire fees.

(*g*) To date, 58 per cent of those employed are under the age of 30.

(*h*) For the 45 positions referred to above, no women were referred for emloyment by the CES to the National Parks Service. Under subsequent employment schemes, the National Parks Service has employed a number of women.

FUNDS GRANTED TO ORGANIZATIONS BY MINISTRY FOR CONSERVATION

(Question No. 2238)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation:

Further to the Minister's answer to question on notice No. 1156 given on 8 December 1982:

1. Whether he will furnish details of statements and/or supporting documents that are required from non-government organizations seeking and/or receiving grants from the Ministry for Conservation and authorities within his jurisdiction, indicating, in particular, whether this includes—(*a*) annual or other financial accounts audited by an independent qualified person; (*b*) receipted vouchers; and (*c*) certification that conditions under which the grant was or will be made have or will be met?

2. What action the Minister has taken or intends to take to suspend grants where these requirements are persistently breached?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is:

For the financial year 1982–83, grants have been made to the following non-government organizations:

	$
(*a*) Australian Conservation Foundation	10 000
(*b*) Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers	10 000
(*c*) Ballarat Fish Acclimatization Society	2 400
(*d*) Conservation Council of Victoria	39 000
(*e*) Environment Studies Association of Victoria	24 000
(*f*) Friends of the Earth	5 000
(*g*) Keep Australia Beautiful Council	55 000
(*h*) Natural Resources Conservation Council	10 000
(*i*) (i) National Trust of Australia—Administration Grant	113 000
(ii) National Trust of Australia—Preservation Grant	50 000
(iii) National Trust of Australia—Labassa	50 000
(*j*) Roadside Conservation Committee	18 000
(*k*) Victorian National Parks Association	6 000

Of the allocation of $20 000 for Voluntary Conservation Groups, a grant of $5000 has been made to the Friends of the Earth (see above).

The grants are not of any specific nature. Therefore statements and/or supporting documents are not required.

Where non-government organizations seek grants from the Ministry for Conservation or authorities within my jurisdiction, financial information is provided to support such requests. However, financial viability is only one consideration in making grants to non-government organizations.

HOUSING COMMISSION PURCHASES

(Question No. 2275)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing:

With reference to the answer given by the Minister for Community Welfare Services on 17 November 1982 in response to question No. 605:

1. Whether the majority of requisites of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration were purchased from Victorian-based manufacturing and/or service industries?

2. What submissions were made to the State Tender Board during 1981-82 in accordance with Regulation 84, Treasury Regulations 1981 for approval to purchase goods, stores and/or services costing in excess of $2000 on behalf of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration from—(*a*) Victorian; (*b*) interstate; and (*c*) overseas manufactures and suppliers?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer is:

1. Yes.
2. Nil.

MINISTRY FOR CONSERVATION PURCHASES

(Question No. 2279)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation:

With reference to the answer given by the Minister for Community Welfare Services on 17 November 1982 in response to question No. 605:

1. Whether the majority of requisites of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration were purchased from Victorian-based manufacturing and/or service industries?

2. What submissions were made to the State Tender Board during 1981-82 in accordance with Regulation 84, Treasury Regulations 1981 for approval to purchase goods, stores and/or services costing in excess of $2000 on behalf of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration from—(*a*) Victorian; (*b*) interstate; and (*c*) overseas manufacturers and suppliers?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is:

1. Yes.
2. (*a*) Victorian manufacturers and suppliers 52
   (*b*) Interstate manufacturers and suppliers 7
   (*c*) Overseas manufacturers and suppliers 12

CARE OF CHILDREN

(Question No. 2293)

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. Whether the Department of Community Welfare Services will in future explore every possibility of having children placed with responsible close relatives instead of into institutions?

2. Whether the department will change its present policy of keeping all the family together in an institution or Government home when a responsible relative is prepared to provide a normal home life for some of the children?

3. In cases where a court is to consider the future of a neglected child, whether she will ensure that the place and time of the hearing is given to—(*a*) the parents; and (*b*) wherever possible a close responsible relative?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1. The Government strongly believes that parents and families provide the most satisfactory care and protection for their children, and are the most effective advocates for their children's rights.

Unfortunately, there are times when children need to be removed from their families for their own protection, or because the parents request my department to care for their children while urgent problems are resolved.

From the first contact with the family, my department attempts to use all available community resources to keep the family together. Meetings are held to determine the best action for the children involved, and to look at alternative placements should the children need to be placed away from the family. Institutionalisation of children will be viewed by the Government as a last resort. Every effort is made to avoid the need to place children in institutions. If there are responsible relatives willing to be involved with the children, consideration would be given to placing the children with them. However, relatives often may themselves be caught up in the family's problems, and there is often a need for a "cooling-off" period, so that the children's short and long-term needs can be properly planned for. In this case, my department would always consider the availability of "family care" (for example, in an emergency foster care programme) before placing the children in an institution.

2. As I stated earlier, my department's primary objective in working with families is to strengthen and support these families, so that they can care adequately for their children. If the family is unable to look after its children, alternative care arrangements will be made. Many factors will be considered in deciding the placement—these include the expected length of stay, the degree of parental involvement, the availability of needs, and if they are old enough, their own wishes. Under normal circumstances, it is departmental policy that brothers and sisters should be kept together as much as possible, so that they can retain their feelings of belonging to a family unit. The Government is committed to increasing the availability of alternative community-based family care arrangements, so that sibling groups can be catered for within family-type structures. Unless there were a particular reason for separating the children, the department would not encourage placing some children with a relative and leaving others in an institutional setting.

3. Where a Children's Court is to consider the future of a child brought before it, the informant is required by section 23 (1) of the Children's Court Act to "cause the parent of the child, if he can be found and is not already party to the proceedings, to be advised to attend at the hearing". Unless there was a special reason why a relative should be informed of the hearing (for example, if the child was living with the relative at that time), notification would be confined to the parents.

If the child has been made a ward, my department will develop a caseplan for that child. During this process, my department will consult with all relevant people to ensure that the best possible alternative is selected for the particular child.

EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET

(Question No. 2297)

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North) asked the Premier:

How many people have joined the Department of the Premier and Cabinet since April 1982 and what is the specific job and annual salary of each?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

A total of 241 people have joined the Department of the Premier and Cabinet since April 1982 either as replacements for staff who have left the various organisations on resignation, transfer, promotion, retirement or dismissal, or as appointees to new positions. The details are as follows:

A. Premier's Office (Total 157)

Position	*No.*	*Salary Range*
		$
Secretary, Department of the Premier and Cabinet	1	69 277
Deputy Secretary, Policy Review and Co-ordination (SES 6)	1	55 096–63 903
Director, Office of Industrial Relations	1*	58 790
Director, Economic and Financial Evaluation (SES 4)	1	47 175–54 825
Director, Social Development (SES 4)	1	47 175–54 825
Director, Cabinet Office	1	48 339
Principal Ministerial Adviser	1	45 912
Marketing Officer, 150th Anniversary Celebrations	1*	44 000
Assistant Director, Parliamentary Branch (SES 1)	1	37 555–43 645
Assistant Director, Justice Branch (SES 1)	1	37 555–43 645
Executive Director, Victoria's 150th Anniversary	1	43 406
Media Consultant	1	42 654
Principal Industrial Officer	1*	40 566
Operations Officer	1*	38 000
Ministerial Adviser Grade III	4	35 498
Assistant Commissioner, Equal Opportunity Office	1	35 498
Industrial Liaison Officer (Class A1 (1))	1*	35 498
Senior Industrial Officer (Class A1 (1))	1*	35 398
Communications and Marketing Manager (150th Anniversary)	1	35 498
Project Manager (150 Anniversary)	1	35 498
Assistant Director, Cabinet Office (Class A1 (1))	2	35 498
Personnel Manager (Class A1 (1))	1	35 498
Policy Analyst	1	32 983
Personnel Manager Class 'A'	1*	30 980–32 434
Ministerial Officer Class 'A'	1	30 980–32 432
Administrative Officer Class 'A'	1*	30 980–32 432
Industrial Liaison Officer Class 'A'	3*	30 980–32 434
Industrial Officer Class 'B1–A'	2*	27 678–32 434
Press Secretary PP6	3	29 855–31 042
Projects Officer	1*	29 855–31 042
Ministerial Adviser Grade I	3	27 678–29 150
Administrative Officer Class 'B1'	4	27 678–29 150
Administrative Officer Class 'B–B1'	1*	24 940–29 150
Press Secretary PP4	1	26 723
Personal Assistant Grade 4	1*	26 598
Administrative Officer Class 'B'	2	24 940–26 103
Research Officer	3	25 076–25 825
Press Secretary PP3	1	24 624–25 527
Publicity Officer PP3	1	24 624–25 527
Press Secretary PP2	1	22 217–23 630
Administrative Officer Class 'C2'	2*	22 476–23 617
Private Secretary Grade III	1	22 476–23 617
Graphic Designer DP-2	1	20 877–21 984
Administrative Officer Class 'C1'	3	19 994–21 134
Private Secretary Grade I	2*	19 994–21 134
Secretary Grade III	4*	19 968–20 674
Research Officer	1*	20 204
Secretary Grade I	3	18 211–18 558
Word Processing Controller Grade I	1	18 179–18 353
Administrative Officer Class 'E'	8*	7 203–17 118
Stenographer Senior	3*	16 721–17 064
Stenographer	14*	8 987–16 066
Clerical Assistant Grade III	3	15 804–16 052
Typist	5	7 395–15 198

Position	*No.*	*Salary Range*
		$
Clerical Assistant Grade 1	17*	7 214–14 725
Chauffer	2	14 247–14 406
Machinist Grade 1	1*	14 143–14 907
Trainee Receptionist/Typist	1	13 918
Telephonist	1*	13 614
Gardener	1	12 220
Butler	1	12 119
Cleaner	1	10 819
Cook	1	10 342
Housemaid	1	10 112
Apprentice Cook	1	6 916
Ministerial Officer, National Party (Temporary and Part-time)	1	6 240
Apprentice Cook	1	5 950

*Indicates category containing one or more employees who have now left the department, employees in this category total 36.

The following are employed on bushfire relief for a period of 2–6 months: (Total—19)

Position	*No.*	*Salary Range*
		$
Stenographer	1	8 987–16 066
Administrative Officer Class 'E'	1	7 203–17 118
Clerical Assistant Grade III	4	15 804–16 052
Typist	3	7 395–15 198
Clerical Assistant Grade I	10	7 214–14 725

B. Office of the Public Service Board (Total 67)

Position	*No.*	*Salary Range*
		$
Principal Consultant (Legal)	1	69 015
Projects Director	1	58 790
Director, Staffing Division (SES Level 2)	1	40 931–47 569
Medical Officer (MO 2)	4	42 491
Projects Director (SES Level 1)	2	37 555–43 645
Senior Consultant, Class A1 (1)	3	35 498
Consultant Class 'A'	1	30 980–32 434
Consultant Class 'B1'	3	27 678–29 150
Administrative Officer Class 'B1'	3	27 678–29 150
Consultant Class 'B'	6	24 940–26 103
Administrative Officer Class 'B'	2	24 940–26 103
Research Assistant	1	21 134
Administrative Officer Class 'C'	3	17 259–18 493
Occupational Health Nurse	3	17 027–18 410
Assistant Administrative Officer	1	17 259
Assistant Administrative Officer	2	7 203–17 118
Administrative Officer Class 'E'	22	7 203–17 118
Stenographer Senior	1	16 721–17 064
Word Processing Operator Grade 1	1	15 829–16 066
Stenographer	1	8 987–16 066
Clerical Assistant Grade III	1	15 804–16 052
Word Processing Operator Grade 1 (Part-time)	2	15 820
Clerical Assistant Grade 1	2	7 214–14 725

C. Office of the Auditor-General (Total 17)

Position	*No.*	*Salary Range*
		$
Auditor Grade I (Class 'B1'–'A')	1	27 678–32 434
Administrative Officer Class 'B1'	1	27 678–29 150
Auditor Grade II (Class 'C2'–'B')	2	22 476–26 103
Administrative Officer Class 'C1'	1	19 994–21 134
Administrative Officer Class 'C'	3	17 259–18 493
Administrative Officer Class 'E'	8	7 203–17 118
Stenographer Senior	1	16 721–17 064

BUSHFIRE COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

(Question No. 2300)

Mr HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

1. Who are the persons appointed to each of the four community committees in each of the major bushfire areas in Victoria?

2. Whether any of these persons have been directly affected by the fire; if so, whom?

3. Whether these committees have been offered financial assistance from the bushfire relief funds; if so, what amount has been offered to each committee and for what purpose?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The answer is:

1 and 2. The people appointed to affected area committees are from local government, relevant Government departments amd community groups and are either supplying services to fire-affected persons or are representatives of fire-affected persons.

This representation is designed to bring together those people with responsibilities in rebuilding and recovery activities with representatives of the communities affected.

3. $150 000 from bush-fire appeal funds have been made available to each area committee for projects of immediate need to communities suffering as a result of the fires.

These funds will not be used to cover any projects capable of being funded from a Government source, though the money may be used for the purpose of getting a necessary project going immediately which will later be reimbursed to the area committee from a Government source.

FUNDS FOR REPLANTING GRASS LANDS

(Question No. 2307)

Mr DICKINSON (Barwon South) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation:

Whether funds will be spent to replant trees and coastal grass lands in the electoral district of South Barwon to prevent soil erosion; if so—(*a*) what level of funds will be made available and whether the Government will undertake to provide the necessary funds for labour intensive jobs to replant the disaster areas during the course of this financial year; and (*b*) what number of persons will be employed on replanting this financial year?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is:

It is anticipated that funds will be spent to revegetate coastal areas in the electoral district of South Barwon to prevent soil erosion.

The Soil Conservation Authority has requested the sum of $34 000 to enable them to undertake the necessary erosion control works resulting from the recent bushfires. This money is required for the construction of protective fencing lost in the fire as well as revegetation works. It is expected that much of the Marram grass burnt in the fire will naturally regenerate and that only spot planting will be required. It is also anticipated that considerable natural regeneration of coastal trees and shrubs will take place. If this fails to eventuate extensive planting will be undertaken.

At present it is envisaged that most of the necessary works will be undertaken during winter 1983 and will be funded from bushfire relief money. The works required are labour intensive and would necessitate a works team in the vicinity of ten people for several months. An accurate estimate of the number of persons to be employed cannot be made at this stage.

SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

(Question No. 2310)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

1. How many children in Education Department schools are known to be hearing-impaired?

2. What funds are provided in the current financial year for the education of these children?

3. Whether any funds are made available by the Department to voluntary agencies or organisations for the purpose of servicing hearing-impaired children in Government schools; if so, how much and through which organisations?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. The number of children in Education Department schools catering for hearing loss	452
Children currently enrolled in Education Department schools receiving Visiting Teacher Service assistance	680
Total	1132

The number of children with mild hearing loss or unilateral loss not receiving special assistance is not known.

2. It is not possible to readily identify with accuracy the funds that are made available for the education of deaf children.

3. The department is unaware of any funds that are made available to voluntary agencies or organizations for the purpose of servicing hearing impaired children in Government schools.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Question No. 2311)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

1. What are the names, positions and classification, salaries and allowances or other expenses respectively, of each person appointed or seconded to service the State Board of Education?

2. What was the position occupied by each staff member immediately prior to taking up appointment with the board?

3. What is the budget expenditure of the board for the year ending 30 June 1983 and what is the estimated expenditure for the same period?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1 and 2. The names, positions and classification, salaries and allowances of each person appointed or seconded to service the State Board of Education, (as at 29.4.83) together with their previous position were:

Dr G. R. Maddocks, Executive Secretary. Salary $56 234 per annum, executive allowance $2444. Dr Maddocks was formerly Assistant Director-General in the Education Department and has been seconded from his present position as Co-ordinator, Policy and Planning Unit.

Dr V. McNamara, Special Projects Policy Analyst. Salary $40 931 per annum, allowance $2000. Dr McNamara was formerly a Senior Lecturer with the University of Papua New Guinea and was appointed under section 40 (5) of the Public Service Act.

Ms L. Hannan, Policy Analyst, Class A. Salary $30 980 per annum, Ms Hannan was formerly a development officer with the Migrant Education Branch, Education Department of Victoria and was appointed under section 32 of the Public Service Act.

Dr T. Reilly, Policy Analyst, Class A. Salary $30 980 per annum. Dr Reilly was formerly a Senior Research Officer with Deakin University and was appointed under section 32 of the Public Service Act.

Ms Patsy Segall, Policy Analyst, Class A. Salary $30 980 per annum, Ms. Segall was formerly a Research Consultant for Profectur Prop. Ltd and was appointed under section 32 of the Public Service Act.

Ms S. Walker, Policy Analyst, Class BI. Salary $27 678 per annum. Ms Walker was formerly a Clerk Class 8 with the Schools Commission and was appointed under section 40 (5) of the Public Service Act.

Mr A. Browne, Office Manager, Class B. Salary $24 940 per annum, Mr Browne was formerly Senior Administrative Officer (Class C2) for the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research and is a permanent officer of the Victorian Public Service.

Mr S. Trembath, Administrative Assistant, Class C1. Salary $19 994 per annum, Mr Trembath was formerly an Administrative Officer Class E with the Technical Schools Division of the Victorian Education Department and is a permanent officer of the Victorian Public Service.

Mr A. Williams, Clerical Assistant Grade 1. Salary, $11 566 per annum, Mr Williams was formerly employed as a Clerical Assistant with the M.R.B. and was appointed under Section 40 (5) of the Public Service Act.

Mrs D. Benvenuto, Secretary, Grade I. Salary $18 211 per annum, Mrs. Benvenuto was formerly a Stenographer with the Community Welfare Department and is a permanent officer of the Victorian Public Service.

Miss E. D'Abreo, Secretary, Grade III. Salary, $20 674 per annum, Miss D'Abreo was formerly a Stenographer, Senior, with the Education Department and is currently on secondment from that Department.

Mrs F. Lynn, Secretary, Grade III. Salary, $19 968 per annum, Mrs Lynn was formerly a Secretary Grade I with the Victorian Health Commission and is a permanent officer of the Victorian Public Service.

Miss C. Perry, Secretary Grade I. Salary $18 211 per annum, Miss Perry was formerly a Stenographer with the Titles Office and is a permanent officer of the Victorian Public Service.

Miss J. Bennett, Typist Grade I. Salary $15 047. Miss Bennett was formerly unemployed and was appointed under Section 40 (5) of the Public Service Act.

In addition the officers listed above are entitled to reimbursement of those expenses incurred whilst engaged on board business in accordance with the relevant Public Service determinations.

3. The budget of the State Board of Education for the year ending 30 June 1983 is $320 000 and it is expected that this amount will be fully expended. The estimated expenditure for the same period will therefore be $320 000

AUSTRALIAN PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(Question No. 2312)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

1. What discussions have taken place with him or the Education Department in respect of the proposed establishment of an Australian Peace and Development Research Institute?

2. What are the aims and objectives of the institute, the nature of its funding and the areas in which the institute will be contributing to curriculum or other developments in the State education system?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1 and 2. The proposal from the Victorian Association for Peace Studies has been received. There has been some exchange of correspondence and limited discussion with officers of the Education Department at this stage.

The aim of the association is to have established a resource base whereby appropriate teaching material could be prepared. The contribution to curriculum development would be inter-disciplinary in nature.

No additions to curriculum services are envisaged for 1983. The above proposal will be considered along

with others for 1984. Funding has not yet been considered.

VISIT OF MRS MELINA MERCOURI

(Question No. 2326)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for the Arts:

In respect of the visit of Mrs Melina Mercouri:

1. How many invitations were sent to—(*a*) members of the public; and (*b*) politicians?

2. How much notice the departmental head had of the visit of Mrs Mercouri?

3. Whether it is the intention, in the future, to issue invitations from the Ministry for the Arts giving only four day's notice of functions for persons to be honoured by the State Government of Victoria?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

1. All members of the Parliament of Victoria were invited to the reception given by the Victorian Minister for the Arts for the Greek Minister for Culture and Sciences, as were some 150 members of arts organizations and bodies funded by the Ministry for the Arts.

2. The permanent head of the Ministry was advised of Mrs Mercouri's visit on Thursday, 10 March 1983, following advice to protocol section of the Premier's Department by the Prime Minister's Department in Canberra. The tentative arrangements then made for her visit were approved only four days before her arrival—the day invitations were issued, to the reception hosted by the Minister for the Arts. The reception was originally planned for guests with arts connections only, as Mrs Mercouri is Minister for Culture and Sciences, however, following representations made to him by his Parliamentary colleagues, the Minister extended the list to include all Parliamentarians.

3. Because local arrangements were dependent on approval by both the Federal Government and the Government of Greece, it was only possible to issue invitations four days before the reception hosted by the Minister for the Arts.

It is the Ministry's intention to provide guests with as much notice as possible of such functions, and this procedure will continue.

ISSUE OF BOOK OF ETIQUETTE AND PROTOCOL

(Question No. 2327)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Premier:

Whether all ministers of the Crown are issued with a book of etiquette and protocol; if so, how many copies have been supplied to each department; if not, whether such a publication will be issued?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

There is no single comprehensive text on etiquette and protocol issued to Ministers. The Protocol Branch of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet provides Ministers and all Government departments with a range of information booklets on these subjects. I regard this service as adequate and do not intend at this stage to ask for the preparation of any further publication.

ASSISTANCE TO PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

(Question No. 2337)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

In respect of his public release of the details of Government assistance to each private school in Victoria for the 1983 year, what amount was allocated to each State primary, secondary and technical school for 1983 and what amount had been spent to date?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Unlike the direct and specific nature of capitation grants to non-Government schools, the outlays made in respect of Government schools are diverse and take a variety of forms. Indirect costs associated with the administrative infrastructure of the Education Department would likewise need to be counted in the assessment of over-all costs, given the contribution of administration to the support of education programmes in Government schools.

The department's accounting structure follows the lines of the Appropriation Acts passed by Parliament and no special emphasis is accorded the allocation of direct and indirect costs on an individual Government school basis. The resultant pattern of outlays has no comparable relationship with the information provided in respect of capitation grants to non-Government schools.

Accordingly, the task of identifying the separate outlays made in respect of some 2127 Government schools, and the apportionment of overhead costs would represent a very formidable accounting task without providing comparative data and cannot be undertaken.

OPERATING COSTS OF TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

(Question No. 2346)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether he will give an assurance that the system of monthly maintenance cheques to meet recurrent operating costs will continue to apply for technical schools

in 1984 and beyond; if not, what changes are envisaged and from what date?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

No significant changes in the system of administering monthly maintenance cheques to technical schools is proposed. However, in line with the restructuring of the Education Department, and the discontinuation of schools divisions, regional offices will undertake the administration which was previously the responsibility of technical division.

BRUCELLOSIS ERADICATION

(Question No. 2354)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

1. When the campaign commenced to eradicate the disease brucellosis, more commonly known as contagious abortion, in Victorian cattle?

2. Whether the State was declared to be free of such disease, if so, when?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

1. The National Brucellosis Eradication Programme commenced in Victoria with the order made on 4 August 1970, by the Governor in Council and published in the *Government Gazette* on 5 August 1970, declaring the State of Victoria to be a control area in respect of brucellosis and specifying the requirements that were to operate in that area with effect from 5 August 1970.

An order made on 9 September 1975 by the Governor in Council and published in the *Government Gazette* on 10 September 1975, declared the whole of the State of Victoria to be an eradication area with effect from 1 January 1976.

An order made on 26 May 1981 by the Governor in Council and published in the *Government Gazette* on 27 May 1981 declared the whole of the State of Victoria to be a provisionally free area in respect of brucellosis with effect from 1 June 1981. These orders reflect the progress made to date in relation to the eradication of brucellosis from this State.

2. The State of Victoria has not been declared a free area with respect to brucellosis. The Standard Rules of the National Brucellosis Eradication Programme that an area must comply with before it may be declared a free area are—

(*a*) the defined monitoring system is in operation;

(*b*) all herds have been tested;

(*c*) no herd is classified as suspect, infected; restricted or provisionally clear, i.e., all herds are tested negative or confirmed free;

(*d*) vaccination has been prohibited for a minimum of five years prior to declaration except with chief veterinary officer approval. All cattle vaccinated within the previous five years must be slaughtered prior to the declaration of a free area;

(*e*) all herds where there has been evidence of brucellosis within the previous five years must have had a negative whole herd test within one year prior to declaration; and

(*f*) monitoring will be continued for three years after the declaration of a free area, or until no longer deemed necessary by the Animal Health Committee.

It is anticipated Victoria will be eligible to be declared a free area in 1987.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY FOR INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS

(Question No. 2364)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer, for the Minister for Industrial Affairs:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April 1981?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Industrial Affairs is:

As the Ministry has only recently been created, the question is inapplicable for the greater part of the time period involved. Currently, the Ministry's functions do not involve any collection of monies from the general public.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY OF ETHNIC AFFAIRS

(Question No. 2370)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April 1981?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

Revenue collected since April 1981:

	$
1981—	
May	2 559.73

	$
June	975.03
July	1 025.36
August	1 268.58
September	2 041.18
October	2 142.01
November	2 634.84
December	2 466.91
1982—	
January	499.40
February	2 148.37
March	2 112.95
April	4 251.19
May	4 159.96
June	2 263.88
July	3 479.79
August	3 039.40
September	4 074.73
October	4 350.18
November	2 079.31
December	1 907.30
1983—	
January	66.52
February	2 203.69
March	3 228.71
April	990.23

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY FOR CONSERVATION

(Question No. 2381)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation:

With respect to the revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April, 1981?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is:

	$
1981—	
April	639 212.16
May	790 357.21
June	336 927.46
July	804 300.84
August	524 539.73
September	652 224.95
October	434 640.12
November	624 778.48
December	458 307.78
1982—	
January	675 041.94
February	817 692.59
March	968 872.82
April	948 241.44
May	730 402.44
June	800 277.54
July	819 736.03
August	852 062.93
September	576 601.21
October	644 977.68
November	820 116.49
December	558 331.72
1983—	
January	771 952.27
February	737 028.77
March	830 957.13

REVENUE COLLECTED BY DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY

(Question No. 2382)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer, for the Minister of Labour and Industry:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April, 1981?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort required to do so cannot be justified.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY LANDS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 2389)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister of Lands:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April, 1981?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time required to do so cannot be justified.

ENTRY TO PRIVATE PREMISES

(Question No. 2421)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

1. Which departments, agencies and authorities within his administration have right of entry to private

premises to—(*a*) interrogate and/or arrest persons; (*b*) inspect and/or seize documents, records, land and objects growing, built or otherwise located thereon; (*c*) sell or otherwise dispose of anything so seized; (*d*) discontinue or otherwise interfere with an individual's civil rights to benefits, services or any other privilege as a result of such entry; or (*e*) impose any penalty or other sanction for breach of the law?

2. What are the broad details of such powers, indicating their legal basis?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

1. and 2. No departments, agencies or authorities under the administration of the Minister for Property and Services have right of entry to private premises.

(Question No. 2430)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

1. Which departments, agencies and authorities within his administration have right of entry to private premises to—(*a*) interrogate and/or arrest persons; (*b*) inspect and/or seize documents, records, land and objects growing, built or otherwise located thereon; (*c*) sell or otherwise dispose of anything so seized; (*d*) discontinue or otherwise interfere with an individual's civil rights to benefits, services or any other privilege as a result of such entry; or (*e*) impose any penalty or other sanction for breach of the law?

2. What are the broad details of such powers, indicating their legal basis?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

1. None.
2. Not applicable.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

MINISTRY OF HOUSING OIL CONSUMPTION

(Question No. 766)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Housing:

What steps have been taken to conserve oil consumption within departments, authorities and agencies within his administration by instituting—(*a*) cost/benefit studies into employee flexi-time and off-base location; (*b*) replacement of oil-powered energy with solar power; and (*c*) better use of energy through methods, engineering and personnel training?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer is:

The Goverment is establishing, within the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Government Energy Management Program to assist all departments and agencies in the systematic reduction of energy consumption.

For a more comprehensive reply to this question, please refer to the Minister for Minerals and Energy's answer to question on notice No. 370.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET EMPLOYEES

(Question No. 850)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. Whether any employees of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration have been granted permission to engage in outside employment; if so, how many?

2. In which divisions such employees are employed, indicating the approximate salary range and the nature of the outside employment approved in each case?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

A. *Premier's Office*

1. No.

2. Not applicable.

B. *Office of the Public Service Board*

1. Yes. 9.

2. *First Division*

$48 339	Permission granted to work as a member of the State Panel of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters.
$54 005	Permission granted to hold the office of President of the Mentally Retarded Citizens Welfare Association.
	Permission granted to hold appointment as a Commissioner of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.
$45 912	Permission granted to engage in a project in Borneo for the Government of Malaysia.

Second Division

$45 498	Permission granted to take seminars at Moorabbin Technical College.
$35 498	Permission granted to present tutorials on Taxation Law at Monash University Law School
$30 980–$32 434	Permission granted to undertake part-time lecturing at the Australian Institute of Management.
$30 980–$32 434	Permission to hold appointment as a Commissioner of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.
$30 980–$32 434	(i) Permission granted to engage in part-time tutoring on "Machinery and structure of Government" at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.
	(ii) Permission to continue to hold office of Honorary Secretary, Victorian Regional Group of the Royal Institute of Public Administration.
$27 678–$29 150	Permission granted to engage in part-time lecturing at Whitehorse Technical College.

C. *Audit Office*

1. Yes. 2.

2. *Second Division*

$27 678–$29 150	Permission granted to write a book.

Third Division

$16 639– $17 316 Permission granted to type a thesis.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET STAFF

(Question No. 852)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

Whether the Minister has made any representations for a review of staff in departments, authorities and agencies within his administration; if not, why?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

Yes.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET FEMALE EMPLOYEES

(Question No. 859)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. How many women in the departments, authorities and agencies within his administration are—(*a*) first division officers or officers of comparable status; and (*b*) second division officers, indicating the positions they occupy?

2. What total percentage of first and second division employees are women?

3. What total percentage of employees are women?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. The number of First and Second Division women officers in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet at 6 October 1982 were:

(*a*) Two

(*b*) 86

The positions occupied were:

First Division, or officer of comparable status—

Senior Medical Officer; Chairman

Equal Opportunity Board (Statutory Appointee)

Second Division—

2 x Administrative Officer, Class "A1 (3)"

4 x Administrative Officer, Class "A1 (1)"

4 x Administrative Officer, Class "A"

5 x Administrative Officer, Class "B1"

9 x Administrative Officer, Class "B"

15 x Administrative Officer, Class "C2"

9 x Administrative Officer, Class "C1"

19 x Administrative Officer, Class "C"

19 x Administrative Officer, Class "E"

2. At 6 October 1982, 4·5 per cent of First Division officers and 23·3 per cent of Second Division officers in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet were women.

3. As at 6 October 1982, 33·3 per cent of employees in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet were women.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET "STRETCHING" TAXPAYERS' DOLLAR

(Question No. 860)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

1. What steps the Minister has taken since taking office to "stretch" the taxpayers' dollar through—(*a*) organization and method reviews; and (*b*) staff reviews?

2. What expenditures have been curtailed, and revenues increased, as a result of such reviews?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. The Public Service Board provides a management consultancy service to assist departments identify and address organizational problems. The board also conducts various management reviews to assist Government to assess the performance of agencies and to resolve management and organizational issues which reach beyond the responsibility of a single agency.

The board has completed management consultancy studies and reviews for twenty-two Government agencies since April, 1982.

2. The board monitors the costs and outcome of each assignment. Detailed benefits for these assignments are difficult to quantify and usually emerge over a period of time.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO TELEVISION MEDIA BY TREASURY

(Question No. 1449)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer:

1. What investigations have been undertaken by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration into the provision of information to television media for dissemination through the telecast system?

2. Whether he will furnish brief details of information likely to be provided, indicating the expected costs both to the department, authority or agency and to the television media?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer is:

1. Nil, although as the honourable member would be aware both the State Bank and the State Insurance Office are involved in commercial advertising.

2. Not applicable.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO TELEVISION MEDIA BY LANDS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1620)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister of Lands:

1. What investigations have been undertaken by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration into the provision of information to television media for dissemination through the telecast system?

2. Whether he will furnish brief details of information likely to be provided, indicating the expected costs both to the department, authority or agency and to the television media?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

1. No investigations have been undertaken.

2. Not applicable.

INTERNAL AUDITORS EMPLOYED BY LANDS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1622)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister of Lands:

How may internal auditors were employed by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981-82 and what is the estimate for 1982-83?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

1981-82 Nil.

1982-83 Nil.

FLYING OF STATE FLAG BY LANDS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1857)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister of Lands:

1. What steps have been taken to ensure that State flags are flown each day on all flag poles on Government buildings within his administration?

2. If no steps have been taken, why?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Public Works)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is:

The Government supports the flying of the Victorian flag on all State buildings and the Department of Crown Lands and Survey is aware of this policy.

MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF

(Question No. 2243)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

Further to the answer to question No. 618 given on 10 November, 1982, what increase in staff has resulted from this review and whether it was subject to programme priorities budgeting?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

The review is still in progress. In accordance with Government policy, future allocation of resources will be made on the basis of programme priority budgeting.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMME

(Question No. 2251)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

With reference to the answers to question No. 588 given by the Minister of Agriculture on 14 December 1982, question No. 606 given by the Minister for Community Welfare Services on 17 November 1982 and question No. 804 given by the Minister for Conservation on 3 November 1982:

1. Whether the departments, authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration have established an Equal Opportunity Committee; if so, when each first met and what are the duties of such committees?

2. What surveys have been instituted to—(*a*) compare the positions of men and women in terms of their classification level, qualifications, length of service and general career profile; (*b*) identify those factors which have inhibited the career development of women; and (*c*) indicate what action is required to eliminate these inhibiting factors?

3. What strategies are being designed to implement the aims of the Government's equal opportunity programme, including—(*a*) consultation with staff; and other interested parties; (*b*) dissemination of information; (*c*) incorporation of equal opportunity into staff training and development programmes; (*d*) career counselling; and (*e*) monitoring of practices by date collection, questionnaires and surveys?

4. What action is being taken to encourage women to participate in management development programmes which are aimed at providing training for potential middle-managers?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

I direct the honourable member to the reply given by my predecessor to question No. 624 given on 10 November 1982.

MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

(Question No. 225)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

With reference to the answer given on 12 October 1982 by the Minister of Health in response to question No. 775:

1. Whether he will indicate examples of any similar action recently taken by departments, authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration to—(*a*) develop five and ten year capital works programmes; (*b*) review the role and objectives of such bodies; and (*c*) re-assess the aims, organization and management of such bodies in accordance with documented policies of the Australian Labor Party?

2. What specific public documents would assist in evaluating the applicability of Labor Party policies to such action?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

1. (*a*) This Ministry is not involved in capital works programmes. However two authorities under my administration, the Geelong Regional Commission and the Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation, are required to produce three and five year programmes respectively.

(*b*) Review of the aims and objectives of this Ministry and its authorities is an ongoing process.

(*c*) I refer the honourable member to my predecessor's reply to question No. 613 on 10 November 1982.

2. (i) Preparing for Government: Financial Management and Economic Strategy.

(ii) Any publication on programme budgeting and good management practices.

MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURCHASES

(Question No. 2280)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

With reference to the answer given by the Minister for Community Welfare Services on 17 November 1982 in response to question No. 605:

1. Whether the majority of requisites of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration were purchased from Victorian-based manufacturing and/or service industries?

2. What submissions were made to the State Tender Board during 1981–82 in accordance with Regulation 84, Treasury Regulations 1981 for approval to purchase goods, stores and/or services costing in excess of $2000 on behalf of departments and/or authorities and agencies within the Minister's administration from—(*a*) Victorian; (*b*) interstate; and (*c*) overseas manufacturers and suppliers?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

1. The majority of the requisites of this Ministry and its agencies are purchased from the Education Department store and accordingly, the honourable member should direct his question to that department.

2. Twenty-five submissions were made to the State Tender Board in 1981–82, involving a total expenditure of $877 760. Of this $7215 was for overseas services and the rest was paid to Victorian firms or firms with subsidiary offices in Victoria.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(Question No. 2368)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Economic Development:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April 1981?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Economic Development)—The answer is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort required to do so cannot be justified.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY FOR PROPERTY AND SERVICES

(Question No. 2377)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since 1981?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort required to do so cannot be justified.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

REVENUE COLLECTED BY DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET

(Question No. 2369)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Premier:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April 1981?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort required to do so cannot be justified.

REVENUE COLLECTED BY MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS

(Question No. 2385)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

With respect to revenue collected from the general public by departments, instrumentalities, authorities and agencies under his administration, what amounts were actually banked in respect of each month since April 1981?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort required to do so cannot be justified.

ENTRY TO PRIVATE PREMISES

(Question No. 2407)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

1. Which departments, agencies and authorities within his administration have right of entry to private premises to—(*a*) interrogate and/or arrest persons; (*b*) inspect and/or seize documents, records, land and objects growing, built or otherwise located thereon; (*c*) sell or otherwise dispose of anything so seized; (*d*) discontinue or otherwise interfere with an individual's civil rights to benefits, services or any other privilege as a result of such entry; or (*e*) impose any penalty or other sanction for breach of the law?

2. What are the broad details of such powers, indicating their legal basis?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

There are no departments, agencies or authorities within the administration of the Ethnic Affairs Commission which have the right of entry to private premises to—

(*a*) interrogate and/or arrest persons;

(*b*) inspect and/or seize documents, records, land and objects growing, built or otherwise located thereon;

(*c*) sell or otherwise dispose of anything so seized;

(*d*) discontinue or otherwise interfere with an individual's civil rights to benefits, services or any other privilege as a result of such entry;

(*e*) impose any penalty or other sanction for breach of the law.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO TELEVISION MEDIA BY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Question No. 1602)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

1. What investigations have been undertaken by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration into the provision of information to television media for dissemination through the telecast system?

2. Whether he will furnish brief details of information likely to be provided, indicating the expected costs both to the department, authority or agency and to the television media?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

1. Agreement has been reached with the television media to provide prepared material for three television programs as follows:

(*a*) *Livestock Market Report* (State-wide)

(*b*) *On the Land* (Mildura)

(*c*) *Farming Today* (Gippsland).

2. The estimated annual costs to the Department of Agriculture in respect of the above programmes are:

(*a*) $9600

(*b*) $7500

(*c*) $8300.

The costs to the participating television stations are not known.

INTERNAL AUDITORS EMPLOYED BY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Question No. 1604)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

How many internal auditors were employed by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981–82 and what is the estimate for 1982–83?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

	1981–82	1982–83
Department of Agriculture	Nil	Nil
Citrus Fruit Marketing Board	Nil	Nil
Grain Elevators Board	1	1
Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust	Nil	Nil
Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board	Nil	Nil
Veterinary Board of Victoria	Nil	Nil
Victorian Dairy Industry Authority	Nil	1
Victorian Dried Fruits Board	Nil	Nil
Victorian Egg Marketing Board	Nil	Nil
Western Metropolitan Market Trust	Nil	Nil

Provision has been made for the appointment of an internal auditor in the Department of Agriculture and it is expected that an appointment may be possible in 1983–84.