Tuesday, 17 April 1984

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 2.5 p.m. and read the prayer.

SPEECH TIMING ARRANGEMENTS

The SPEAKER—I advise honourable members that a digital speech timer has been installed in the Assembly Chamber and will operate as from today. Although the displays are located at each end of the Chamber, I still propose to give honourable members the usual 2-minute warning.

PHOTOGRAPHING OF PROCEEDINGS

The SPEAKER—I advise honourable members that I have arranged for official photographs to be taken in the House tomorrow by the Lands Department. Further, I have authorized the use of flashlights for that purpose.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

The SPEAKER—I advise honourable members that the Minister for Local Government is in New Zealand on Ministerial business and will be absent from the House this week. The Deputy Premier will be responsible for local government matters.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

ALCOA OF AUSTRALIA LTD

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of the concern expressed by industry groups about the impact of the Victorian Government's high taxes, charges and energy costs, will the Premier inform the House which aspects of the Government's economic plan that was announced last week will be instituted immediately so that the Alcoa project at Portland may be revived after two years of inactivity?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I should have thought that, at this stage, even the Opposition would be beginning to understand the way in which the economic strategy has been received by the people of Victoria. The Opposition should also understand that the best way of ensuring a return of confidence in this State—to achieve what the Leader of the Opposition says he wants but which his actions seem to deny—is for the Opposition to get in step with the rest of this State in supporting the Government on this strategy. The praise and respect for the strategy has been overwhelming.

Mr Ross-Edwards—I have not noticed it.

Mr CAIN—That is because the Leader of the National Party goes only to the country. This is the first time that a State or Federal Government has produced an economic strategy.

Mr Ross-Edwards—That is not true either.

Mr CAIN—One has to go back to the 1940s to find an occasion when a Federal Government produced a strategy. It is not like the stunts and the publicity ventures that the Liberal Party staged just before the election.

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier is now debating the issue that was raised in the question and is therefore out of order. I ask the Premier simply to answer the question that was asked, as the Alcoa smelter is the most important project confronting this State.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the House that there have been continual interjections since the question was asked, and I am having difficulty in hearing the Premier's answer. I do not uphold the point of order, and I ask the House to come to order so that all honourable members can hear the answer.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Opposition does not seem to want to understand what this strategy has done, not merely in respect of Alcoa but in respect of every proposed economic development in this State; that is, to restore confidence in the State to get it going again.

The praise that has been received from across the community has been overwhelming. I shall quote a few of the testimonials that have been given about the strategy. The Chairman of the Melbourne Stock Exchange, Mr Ian Roach——

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—Honourable members on the Opposition side of the House do not like to hear it.

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I put it to you that the Premier is deliberately flouting your ruling and is still not talking about Alcoa of Australia Ltd.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order. I have made no ruling on this matter.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The testimonials about the economic strategy that I shall quote indicate what the people of this State believe of the strategy. The Chairman of the Melbourne Stock Exchange, Mr Ian Roach, stated that it was a conscientious effort at analysing Victoria's situation. The Director of the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, Mr Brian Powell, said that it was a positive step in the right direction. He said, "It is the first real effort by any Australian Government to look at where we are going." The Managing Director of the Capel Court Corporation Ltd merchant bank, Bill Gurry, made the fine statement that it is something Victoria has been lacking for some time.

The testimonials continue along that line. Similar comments have been made in the *Age* and *Herald* editorials and by Bob Herbert of the Metal Trades Industries Association. Everybody in Victoria, except the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party and Mr Gude, the candidate for the Hawthorn electorate who is masquerading as someone concerned with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce, supports the strategy.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to mouth platitudes and asks about Alcoa of Australia Ltd. What happened to the Alcoa company when the Liberal Party was in government? It made two false starts. The point that the Opposition seems not to want to understand is that the Alcoa project or any other project, large or small, in this State will not be commenced unless the Government of the day has the confidence and respect of the electorate. For the first time for fifteen or twenty years in this State, a Government has that confidence and respect. Opposition members are the only people out of step. The criticisms that have been made of the strategy are negative, carping and destructive.

The Leader of the National Party, by way of interjection, said that in two years the Government has done nothing. From conversations they have had, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party are aware of what has been done. The comment of the Leader of the National Party reflects no credit on him. He can do much better than that. I expected that sort of comment from the Leader of the Opposition but not from the Leader of the National Party. The only positive response that the Government had from members of the National and the Liberal parties, after the Liberal Government was in office, were two proposals—each a false start. Their only response is to say, "We will have an Upper House committee". This was to try to make people breach a confidentiality agreement. However, they backed off from that proposal as well.

The opposition parties are well aware of the way in which the Government's economic strategy has been received across the State. I know that they are embarrassed because they have continued to alienate themselves and have totally lost the confidence of their traditional electorate, namely, the business community. They are no longer taken seriously by the business community.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question has been asked but the Premier is debating the subject. The honourable gentleman has now been debating the subject for nearly a quarter of an hour and he has still not answered the question.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Polwarth is well aware of how question time has been conducted in this House during the time in which he has been a member of the House. Each Minister replies in any manner that he sees fit, and that principle was set well before my appointment as Speaker. There is no point of order. I ask the Premier to round off his answer.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—Mr Speaker, the economic strategy that was announced by the Government demonstrates the recognition by the Government, the business sector and the community of how important it is to work together for the good of Victoria.

The only group that appears not to accept that concept and that precept is the Opposition.

The spirit that has led to the birth of the economic strategy and will lead to its success in Victoria will be followed by both the Government and Alcoa of Australia Ltd in ensuring that they do what they can to get this project started again.

VANDALISM ON TRAINS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Minister of Transport to the problems that the suburban railway system is facing through the vandalism and larrikinism of some children on their way home from school in the afternoon. Will the Minister consider following the New South Wales lead in concentrating railway officials in plain clothes travelling on many of the trains that operate between 3.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m.?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—We are, particularly with the railways, more than on trams and buses—although there are occasionally some difficulties—concentrating on unruly passengers, some of whom are school children and some of whom have not been school children for a long time. That unruly behaviour tends to reach its peak on Saturdays during the football season and, surprisingly, on the evening of Anzac Day, when there appears to be a lot of problems on country trains.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CRABB—It is a fact of life. I am not denigrating school children, football supporters or even the honourable member for Malvern. The fact is that it is difficult to staff the railways investigation office in such a way that one can man those trains at all times. Rather, we have tried to encourage more rational and responsible behaviour. That certainly works reasonably well on trains that are quite full. On a crowded train, people tend to behave much better than they do on an empty train. To that end, we have tried to run three-carriage sets on the suburban system at times when there is likely to be light patronage and, indeed, we reduce that to one carriage by automatically locking the doors and leaving the lights off in the remaining two carriages of the new Comeng trains. That works successfully.

The level of unruly behaviour has not been totally reduced, but, nevertheless, honourable members would discover that there has been a marked reduction in the level of unruly behaviour on trains. The success of the Victoria Police Force community involvement programme in Broadmeadows in the past couple of years has led to a marked diminution of unruly behaviour and—I hate to say it without crossing my fingers—it has diminished the problems of vandalism in that area. The Government will continue to try to improve the situation.

STATE BANK

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—Can the Premier advise the House whether the Government has any plans to change the role of the State Bank in the Victorian economy as a result of the successful and publicly acclaimed economic strategy that was announced by the Premier and the Treasurer last week?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Government sees the State Bank as being a most important ingredient in the economy of the State. That is the bank which the Leader of the Opposition would throw away with a flippant one-line response.

The Government acknowledges that the State Bank of Victoria has a profit motive, but it also has a social responsibility to provide banking services for all Victorians. It has fulfilled this role very well, and it is a major provider of housing loans to Victorians.

The Government believes it is desirable that the capital structure of the bank should be strengthened by converting the $45 million of existing Government loans to the bank into capital, as a public shareholding, and, in return, the bank has agreed to play its part, as it has always done in the past, to develop its export-import financing and foreign exchange services, to expand its corporate lending facilities and to undertake research into the economic base of its clients' industries. It will provide one-stop shopping in financial services for consumers, it will expand its capacity to meet the capital needs of Government and semi-Government authorities, especially in the international market, and it will expand its overseas representation, particularly in south-east Asia.

The Leader of the Opposition interjects and says it is a pity that I do not know my subject. It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition did not know the feelings of all Victorians before he made the comment that he did about disposing of the State Bank. That is a great pity, because I do not think he appreciates how keenly the people of this State feel about the State Bank and how outraged they are at a Leader of the Opposition who would say that he intends selling off a portion of its functions, the competitive functions. The Leader of the Opposition goes on denying it; I know he is desperate, but those are the facts. He tried to back off, but he went on saying it into the later hours of the same day when he made the comment.

The honourable member for Polwarth, who is interjecting, should not try to tell me that the Leader of the Opposition did not say that. The honourable member heard him. Does anyone else opposite say that the Leader of the Opposition did not make that comment? It is Liberal Party policy, because the Federal colleagues of the Leader of the Opposition intend to do the same thing with the Commonwealth Bank.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the Premier that he is now starting to debate the question, and I ask him to round off his reply.

Mr CAIN—All I want to say is that it is obviously Liberal Party policy to sell off the assets of the people of this country. The Opposition in Victoria wants to sell off the State Bank in Victoria and the Federal Opposition wants to do the same with the Commonwealth Bank. Members of the Opposition are characterized as quite irresponsible, economic illiterates who left this State and country in an unholy mess from which the State is just now starting to emerge.

I do not believe anyone realized until recently the depths to which the economy of this State and the Commonwealth had fallen under the people who now parade themselves as economic experts and who want to sell off the country's assets, such as the State Bank and the Commonwealth Bank. They want to sell off the assets of the people of this State and of this country—assets that have served those people well.

The State Government considers the State Bank to be a central part of its strategic policies and economic development for this State, and it will continue to do what it can to strengthen the role that that bank plays.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY DIVIDEND PAYMENT BY BOARD OF WORKS

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Has the Treasurer been advising the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to borrow funds to pay the public authority dividend for next year in order to avoid a rate increase of approximately 30 per cent to cover the consumer price index and the dividend, and has he received an indication from the Premier of the Premier's support for his proposal?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The Opposition once again demonstrates that it has an open-mouth policy towards economic matters, and it really does not appreciate the pricing principles that have been established by this Government.

The Government has made it quite clear to the major public utilities in this State that their pricing policies will operate on the basis of a real rate of return. That pricing policy will apply also to the Board of Works. In the case of those public utilities, the Government made a clear statement in the economic strategy document that, so far as the business authorities of this State are concerned, the Government is confident that the price increases that will follow during the course of 1984–85 will be at the level of the inflation rate or below.

That means that to the extent that one is successful in increasing prices at less than the rate of inflation, one has a real decline in the price level. That has already occurred with industrial gases.

With the financing policies of the Board of Works, the Government has endeavoured to expand its borrowing base so that the over-all capital works expenditure commitment can be met. It is also an important part of the economic policy of the State to increase the capital works programme of the Board of Works. Honourable members would be aware that that reaches a peak during 1983–84.

ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Is the Minister of Health aware that the Royal Children's Hospital is facing a financial crisis as a result

of Budget cuts by the Government? Is the Minister also aware of the impact of those cuts and that the hospital has had to employ outside staff—some of whom have never been in the intensive care ward of a hospital—because of the shortage of staff? Is he aware that the psychiatric unit is also facing closure as a direct result of those Government cuts?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I thank the honourable member for his question, but I wish he would show more interest in the health area, because if he did so he would not have to ask the question. On the psychiatric unit, I point out that there have already been several instances where that matter has been raised in the House and with the hospital.

The Royal Children's Hospital has made it clear that it has nothing to do with any financial arrangements. The decision was a professional one taken by the hospital. Since that decision was made, the Government has been working with the hospital to ensure that the most appropriate care is provided for each of the children. That is being achieved.

On the intensive care ward, I remind the Deputy Leader of the National Party that this matter was raised by the honourable member for Benambra approximately six weeks ago. In my answer to that question, I pointed out that there had been great difficulty in gaining sufficiently qualified staff. I think I also mentioned that the Royal Children's Hospital in particular was having difficulty in obtaining adequately trained staff for the intensive care area.

A month ago the hospital faced a situation in which it had to employ people from other parts of the hospital in order to reach an adequate level of trained staff. The hospital asked every agency in the system whether it had adequate staff who could fill the positions available. Simply, the agencies did not have adequate numbers of trained staff for that area. If the problem were financial, one would not employ outside staff because one would have to pay the agency the margin for agency staff.

The four hospitals certainly are in need of trained and qualified staff. For that reason special funds were made available by the Government for a special training programme for the four intensive care units at those hospitals. That amount was announced more than a month ago, and the four hospitals concerned have commenced by adopting methods for increasing the number of adequately trained staff. On three occasions, I have mentioned that difficulty. It is shameful that the Deputy Leader of the National Party was not aware of it.

STOCK EXCHANGE OF MELBOURNE

Mr MICALLEF (Springvale)—Can the Treasurer inform the House of the action taken in relation to the Stock Exchange of Melbourne as a result of the economic strategy of the Government?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—All honourable members would be aware that in preparing the economic strategy document the Government had close consultation with a range of business organizations and also the trade union movement. The stock exchange is one of those organizations with which the Government has been working closely to strengthen the financial centre of Melbourne. I am pleased that, following the announcement of the Government's economic strategy, one of the areas suggested by the Government has been taken up by the stock exchange.

That was to establish a second board at the stock exchange to provide a mechanism for selling shares for smaller companies in Victoria. That is a significant step forward for small companies in Victoria. It also means that the range of choice open to investors in the share market has been expanded.

It is an important initiative taken by the Stock Exchange of Melbourne to establish a second board. It will mean that small family companies will have greater access to the capital market and that the companies involved in investment in new technology will also be able to have access to capital through the stock exchange.

I welcome the announcement made by the stock exchange in relation to a second board, and once again it highlights the economic strategy being implemented by the private sector.

ITEM PRICE MARKING

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs whether, now that the Government is claiming a new

found interest in the importance of the private enterprise sector, the Minister will reconsider his position on item price marking, a position which is anti-business, anti-technology and, most importantly, anti-consumer.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I thank the honourable member for Forest Hill for his question. As he has found in the community, he has no support for his opposition to the proposed legislation. The Government announced this policy during its last election campaign, which this was keenly debated and it has the support of all consumer groups, some retail groups, pensioner groups and women's groups. The Government sees no reason to shift from its current position.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN (Ballarat South)—Will the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology inform the House of the advances that have been taken recently to assist country interests?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The economic strategy announced by the Premier and the Treasurer last night will put Victoria very firmly, as it now is, on the road to economic recovery. The Government has recognized and the previous Government failed to understand that 77 per cent of jobs are in the private sector and the Government is determined to develop programmes and policies which will assist job growth within the private sector. In other words, everybody in Victoria, whether they live in the metropolitan area or in country Victoria, will benefit from the programmes announced in the economic strategy.

When the Liberal Party was in government, it gave the same assistance to everybody. It failed to recognize that different industries have different problems. It failed to recognize that different regions have different competitive strengths from those of other regions. The Government's policies are designed to recognize the essential difference between one industry and another and to recognize the competitive strength of each region in Victoria.

Members of the Opposition who decry the new policies so loudly today should be prepared to get behind the Government to encourage progress and development in Victoria. The Opposition is not prepared to get behind the Government and it is not prepared to support progress and development.

I have made it clear that additional funds will be available to country Victoria for the development of industries and the development of manufacturing. It is all very well for the Leader of the Opposition to sneer and laugh, but that is a fact. The Government is prepared to back up its programmes with additional commitments and additional money. That is what is upsetting the Opposition.

Specifically, in the next financial year there will be no decrease in the amount of ongoing assistance. In other words, every firm that paid pay-roll tax this year will be fully rebated next year. Additionally, an extra $1·83 million will be made available and specifically allocated to regional centres in country Victoria. Some $1 million of that will be for infrastructure, perhaps to help the development of nursery factories, but that would not interest members of the National Party. The Government wants to see services and factories developed within country regions of the State.

Some $330 000 will be allocated to regional centre development committees. That is a big increase compared with the allocation last year. Some $500 000 will be available for firms locating and expanding in regional centres. One must add to that programme of industry assistance which exist across the whole of the State. Again, one must add to that an adjustment assistance programme to ensure that any firm that can show it has been disadvantaged by the changes in the policies will be able to apply for an increasing level of assistance.

That means there will be no job losses at all. It seems to disturb the Opposition that Victoria has a Government which is committed to the manufacturing industry, committed to growth and committed to jobs.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—In the light of the answer just given by the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology when he suggested that the Opposition ought to get behind him—the Opposition would love to get behind him if it thought the Minister was promoting jobs for country areas—how can the Minister justify having policies that

will bring about the sacking of people in country areas with permanent jobs on the offchance that they will obtain jobs in the metropolitan area?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—I do not know where the honourable member for Ripon was during the past ten minutes, or the past ten years for that matter; obviously he did not bother to listen to the answer I gave.

The Opposition continues to put up a straw man and then spends a great deal of time and effort in demolishing it. Time and again I have given an assurance that no jobs will be lost as a result of the Government's policy. I have further given an assurance that the Government is concerned about growth. The period when the Opposition was in government was the greatest period of decline in manufacturing industry that has ever occurred. The Government will ensure that manufacturing industry has a future, whether it is located in the country or in the city.

LAND ACQUISITION

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—In view of the widespread disquiet among property owners, particularly in rural areas, following the disclosures last week of the Government forcing the sale of the Field family property at Condah in the Western District, will the Premier indicate under which Act of Parliament the threat to compulsorily acquire that property was made to the Field family?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The honourable member should take the time to examine just what occurred with the project at Lake Condah and the Field family.

Mr Field negotiated the sale of his property, after being advised to obtain separate legal advice, based on a sum more than $20 000 above the highest of the three valuations obtained. The property was valued at between $83 000 and $93 000, and Mr Field received approximately $123 000 for it. The Government agreed to the top valuation plus the legal costs of Mr Field and the cost of his moving from the property.

It was not a compulsory acquisition; it was a matter of agreement between Mr Field and the Government. Mr Field was helped by the Government to purchase a replacement property. Honourable members should see the project in its perspective. It is an important project in Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Some $750 000 was put aside by the committee to advance an Aboriginal project of real worth involving the Aboriginal people. The Lake Condah project and the re-creation of the mission and the Lake Condah area itself is such a project. It will be one of which this State can be extremely proud. It is a major reconstruction of our Aboriginal inheritance on an historical site which was occupied by the Aboriginal people.

The restored mission will depict an Aboriginal community in transition from its traditional life and will be of real worth and consequence to this State. Nothing like it will exist in Victoria nor in the rest of Australia. The Government believes the property is of national significance, and it was perfectly proper and desirable to negotiate the purchase of that property from Mr Field. He has been adequately and generously compensated for the transfer.

EMPLOYMENT FIGURES

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—Will the Treasurer advise the House of the details of the latest employment figures and what their effect will be on Victoria?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition has not asked a question about employment or unemployment because, in January, he was prepared to rely on dodgy statistics. In February, he issued a press release based on incorrect information.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the Treasurer that he is debating the issue.

Mr JOLLY—The employment figures for March show once again that Victoria is leading the economic recovery in Australia. I will deal firstly with the unemployment figures for March. The unemployment rate in Victoria is 8·5 per cent.

Mr Williams—That is too high.

Mr JOLLY—It is still too high, but it is better than that of any other mainland State in Australia. The figure of 8·5 per cent in Victoria is compared with the 9·7 per cent national rate. It is the lowest rate of any

mainland State in Australia, and Victoria is the only mainland State that has an unemployment rate of less than 10 per cent.

As to employment growth, since the employment trough was reached in April last year, the employment growth in Victoria has been 4·8 per cent compared with a national average of 4 per cent. The increase in employment growth in Victoria has been 20 per cent higher than the national average. It is clear that recovery is well under way in Victoria, and the new employment figures highlight that that recovery will continue throughout 1984 and that Victoria will be in a much stronger economic position than any other State in Australia.

LAND ACQUISITION

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Further to the acquisition of land from the Field family, I ask the Premier whether the Government intends to acquire any additional privately-owned land for Aboriginal purposes or usage; and does the Government propose to proceed with the Aboriginal Land Claims Bill in the coming spring sessional period.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I am not clear whether, in the first part of the question, the honourable member for Westernport is referring to the Lake Condah project, about which there was some publicity this morning, or whether he is referring to land generally.

So far as the Lake Condah project is concerned, discussions are continuing in respect of a portion of land that is necessary to provide a link between the mission land and the lake. That link involves two potential pieces of land. Discussions have been continuing with one owner—Muldoon—whose name appeared in the newspapers this morning. The intention is to obtain sufficient land to provide that link because it is in the best interests of the project that the two pieces of land be linked and land sufficient to ensure that link will be sought.

So far as the second part of the question is concerned, as the honourable member for Westernport is aware, the Bill before the House has been left in its present position to enable the Aboriginal community to consider all aspects of it. It is not the intention of the Government to proceed until that consultation with the Aboriginal community has been completed.

I take the opportunity to try to remove a myth that seems to be around; that the Lake Condah project should be seen as part of the Government's land rights policy. Nothing could be further from the truth. I hope that myth is not being peddled to those people to whom some members of this House have access and currency.

The Bill is before the House and will be considered by the House in due course. The Government has, unashamedly, a land rights policy which it believes should be implemented, but in good time. The Lake Condah project involves this State's and this nation's heritage being demonstrated in a very worth-while project. As I stated earlier, the project which has the support of the honourable member for Westernport, has been selected by the 150th anniversary committee. It has the support of the Government and will, I hope, be supported by all Victorians during our 150th anniversary celebrations.

It is a recognition by this State of the role played by the Aboriginal people who were here long before us—a recognition of their great traditions and one which, I believe, will be enjoyed by and be instructive to all Australians, be they white or black.

The proposed land rights legislation will proceed in due course, after consideration has been given to it by the Aboriginal people.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN (Ivanhoe)—Can the Minister of Transport advise the House of proposals to improve transport services as part of the economic strategy?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—In regard to the economic strategy, the thrust of the transport component is largely related to freight transport rather than passenger transport, and is directed towards the improvement of Melbourne or the Port Phillip district as the major transport centre in the Australian nation.

The Government has already embarked upon a very significant reorganization of its transport authorities, firstly, through the passing of the Transport Act last year and, secondly, through the Transport (Victorian Ports Authority) Bill which is currently before the House.

The Government has also embarked upon a number of practical programmes, including the construction of new heavy locomotives which are being constructed in Victoria, the first locomotive to be built in this State since the age of steam.

The honourable member for Murray Valley interjects and asks, "Who is paying for them?" The fact is that they will pay for themselves by providing an efficient freight service which will be paid for on a rational basis.

The Government has also embarked upon a large programme of construction of large bogey wagons to replace the ancient four-wheel vehicles it inherited from its predecessors so that major bulk crops, such as grain, can be carried adequately. Other capital works in regard to grain will come from the CANAC study which is in its last stages now. V/Line is already carrying petroleum on block trains. Having resolved the problems on which our predecessors procrastinated for twenty years, the Government is currently rationalizing the freight centres.

The Government is embarking upon the construction of the rail link to Webb Dock, reconstructing the Ararat–Portland rail line and is introducing centralized traffic control on the western line.

Work has commenced on the access to Swanson Dock and major roadworks have commenced on the Western Highway. I can inform the House that my colleague, the Assistant Minister of Transport, opened the final stages of the Keilor bypass road to the Calder Highway this morning.

Progress is being made in the construction of the Barwon River bridge, which will have significant implications for grain movement in the area.

In the metropolitan area, two major undertakings are in progress. The first is to remove problems that have been created in terms of movement around the metropolitan area, and that is a bypass so that large trucks will not have to use Pascoe Vale Road, a problem on which the previous Government procrastinated for some time. The second major undertaking is the construction of an arterial road link between the Mulgrave and South-Eastern freeways. Several of my colleagues, including the honourable member for Malvern, were present when the first hole was dug just two weeks ago.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I direct my question to the Treasurer and I relate it to the answer given earlier by the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology. I ask the Treasurer how he equates the response of the Minister that no unemployment will be caused by the removal of the decentralization benefits with the Treasurer's own admission that unemployment will be caused by the phasing out of unemployment initiatives. Can he tell the House what additional initiatives by this Government will be necessary to prevent that from occurring and which views the Opposition and the public should take as to which Minister is telling the truth?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The Leader of the Opposition is once again following his open-mouth policy and does not appreciate the significance of the policies being announced by the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology. The Government has in place a number of policy measures which will ensure that the employment growth in this State will be higher than it otherwise would have been, and that is not achieved, of course, by the switching of employment from one area to another.

The Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology has made it clear that if there is any problem in terms of employment, assistance will be available which will ensure that there will be no retrenchments as a result of this policy. When one examines the policy one will see that there will not be any employment loss in Victoria but an increase in employment as a result of the policy.

PETITION

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

Essendon and District Memorial Hospital

TO THE HONOURABLE THE PREMIER AND PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:

We, the undersigned "Friends of the Essendon and District Memorial Hospital", having waited patiently for the opening of the new facilities, do humbly pray

that Parliament take immediate action to open all services now available for the provision of patient care at the Essendon and District Memorial Hospital.

By **Mr Lieberman** (3811 signatures)

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

PAPERS

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

Consumer Affairs—Report of the Director for the year 1982-83—Ordered to be printed.

Dandenong Valley Authority—Report and statement of accounts for the year ended 30 September 1983.

Decentralized Industry Housing Authority—Report for the year 1982-83.

Dentists Act 1972:

Dental Board—Report and statement of accounts for the year ended 30 September 1983.

Specialist Practitioners Qualifications Committee—Report for the year ended 30 September 1983.

Egg Industry Stabilization Act 1973—Report of the Poultry Farmer Licensing Review Committee for the year ended 28 February 1983.

Friendly Societies and Benefit Associations—Report of the Government Statist for the year 1982-83—Ordered to be printed.

Friendly Societies—Report of the Registrar for the year 1982-83—Ordered to be printed.

Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978—Summary of variations notified to 31 March 1984—Ordered to be printed.

National Parks Act 1975—

Consent of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands to the extension of a miner's right to Clive R. Douglas in respect of land situated in Chiltern Park.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Chattel Securities Act 1981—No. 76.

Environment Protection Act 1970—No. 66.

Estate Agents Act 1980—No. 65.

Groundwater Act 1969—No. 59.

Hospitals and Charities Act 1958—No. 72.

Legal Profession Practice Act 1958—No. 73.

Nurses Act 1958—No. 71.

Public Service Act 1974—P.S.D. Nos. 14 and 17.

Supreme Court Act 1958—Nos 78 and 79.

STAMPS BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169 (*b*), moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend subdivisions (4), (4A) and (6) of Part II. of and the Third Schedule to the Stamps Act 1958, to amend the Cattle Compensation Act 1967 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER 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:

Gas and Fuel Corporation (Borrowing Powers) Bill

Transport (Victorian Ports Authority) Bill

PSYCHOLOGISTS BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is designed to give effect to the proposals of a working party constituted some years ago to examine the Psychological Practices Act 1965 and to recommend such amendments as appeared necessary.

The Psychological Practices Act was drafted in the wake of the Anderson inquiry into scientology and, indeed, some of its provisions reflect the hysteria of the time.

These included the sections aimed at inhibiting the practice of scientology, which were repealed only as a result of legislation introduced by the present Government.

The Act was also designed to prevent potential harm caused by the misuse of hypnotism as a stage entertainment.

The Victorian Psychological Practices Act was the first of its type to be passed by an Australian Parliament but, apart from the repeal of those sections relating to scientology, has remained virtually unaltered for the past nineteen years. The Government understands that a number of criticisms of the existing Act were raised with the then Minister of Health, the Honourable Vasey Houghton, by a deputation he received from the Australian Psychological Society in 1979. As a result of that meeting, the Minister agreed to the establishment of the

working party I mentioned earlier, whose recommendations form the basis of the measure now before the House.

The working party was chaired by Dr J. L. Evans, a member of the Health Commission of Victoria. It consisted of Dr R. D. Frances, senior lecturer in applied psychology, Caulfield Institute of Technology; Dr R. Montgomery, senior lecturer in clinical psychology, La Trobe University; Mr David Ross, Chief Psychologist, Mental Health Division, Health Commission; Mr A. R. Farmer, Principal Officer, Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Services, Education Department; Dr Mary Nixon, Faculty of Education, Monash University; Mr I. Crook, Registrar of the Victorian Psychological Council; and Mr M. Croke, legal assistant, Health Commission.

The working party did not submit a formal report but, rather, produced a series of amendments to the Psychological Practices Act. Details of the amendments suggested by the working party were published by the Government in July 1982 and interested members of the public were invited to comment on the proposals.

The Bill before the House takes account both of the recommendations of the working party and the views subsequently expressed to the Government in submissions from interested organizations and members of the community. Honourable members will note that the proposed legislation being presented to the House is not in the form of an amending Bill but is in the nature of a re-enactment of the Psychological Practices Act.

Although the working party proposed only that the principal Act be amended, this, in fact, would have created considerable drafting difficulties.

The simple recommendation that "all of the sections relating to the duties and powers of the (Victorian Psychological) Council which are at present scattered throughout the Act should be drawn together", for example, could be implemented only by a battery of related amendments to various sections of the Act. This would result in the House having to consider what would be an unnecessarily complex piece of proposed legislation.

The Government has opted for the more straightforward alternative of re-enacting the Psychological Practices Act incorporating the amendments it would otherwise have sought through an amending Bill. The report of the working party sets out in detail the various amendments which the Bill has taken on board. Accordingly, there is little need for me to take up the time of the House by referring to each amendment specifically. However, generally speaking, the changes made by the new Bill can be grouped under five broad headings.

These are, firstly, to incorporate a revised definition of "psychological practice"; secondly, to reconstitute the Victorian Psychological Council with a majority of psychologists; thirdly, to strengthen the academic prerequisites for registration; fourthly, to provide for the registration of probationary psychologists; and fifthly, to enable the council to recognize suitably qualified psychologists as specialists in branches of psychology.

The Bill also adopts most of the other proposals of the working party, including its recommendation that a register of psychologists be published annually, and that the council have power to cancel the registration of a psychologist if it was obtained irregularly or fraudulently.

One recommendation adopted in this Bill to which I particularly invite the attention of the House will be the capacity to prescribe additional study and practice which must be undertaken by a psychologist before his registration can be renewed under the new Act.

Although this is an established procedure overseas where health professionals are required by law to keep abreast of advances within their profession to retain their rights of practice, it will be a novel feature in Victorian health legislation. The Government expects this proposal to be the precursor of similar requirements to be introduced in other health registration Acts.

It is appropriate that I should go on to mention to the House that, although not proposed by the working party, the Government has provided for the appointment of a member on the new Victorian Psychological Council to represent the interests of the public.

The Government takes the view that it is important that any body constituted to regulate a medical or paramedical profession

should also be cognizant of the needs and concerns of society at large, and the additional appointment proposed by the Government will ensure that the community is directly represented on the membership of the council.

I point out that the recent report of the Medical Board made similar suggestions. It is intended that, with the review of all the Acts currently being undertaken, this will become a uniform provision. Lawyers have been coping well with it for some time.

In submissions received by the Government, some concern has been expressed about the status under the new legislation of members of the Australian Hypnotherapists Association, who were exempted from the Psychological Practices Act by Order in Council made under section 2 (7), and priests and ministers of recognized religions who were exempted under section 2 (3).

The intention of the working party in advocating that all existing exemptions be withdrawn was that any group which needed to be excluded from the scope of the Act should be exempted by Order in Council under the amending legislation. Nevertheless, the Government appreciates that the adoption of this proposal could result in some uncertainty in the future. On this basis, the Government has retained in the Bill the existing exemption for members of the Australian Hypnotheraptists Association.

The Government also acknowledges the need to exempt from the ambit of this legislation a priest or minister carrying out his or her functions. A priest or minister, during the course of his calling, assists a variety of people in a guidance and counselling manner and has also been subject to training experience and often an extensive apprenticeship.

The Bill provides for exemption to be made by regulation at the time of the passage of the Bill. It is my intention to consult with the Australian Council of Churches to establish the criteria upon which a religion will be considered suitable for exemption.

It is clear that the major denominations, such as the Catholics, Anglicans, Uniting and Orthodox churches and Islam and Jewry will be automatically exempt. Indeed, some fourteen denominations cover nearly all Victorians who declare their religion. However, there may be other religious organizations, apart from those with major followings, which need to be exempt in addition, and this will be a subject of the previously mentioned consultation.

I might add that, among other things, the present prohibition on the use of hypnosis as a form of entertainment will be continued into the new Act. However, the Bill will authorize the use of hypnosis by a registered psychologist or probationary psychologist, a medical practitioner, a dentist, or by any person permitted to practise hypnosis by the Victorian Psychological Council.

The Bill preserves the essential nature of the legislation passed by the Parliament in 1965. It will also make some long overdue reforms to the law governing the practice of psychology in this State. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, September 4.

MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND BILL (No. 2)

The debate (adjourned from April 5) on the motion of Mr Cathie (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—This Bill presents an unusual situation and makes it difficult for the Opposition in this place to support the project, which is to upgrade the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and provide lights at the ground in order that the most magnificent sporting arena in the State, and perhaps in Australia, can be used for leading sporting events during the evenings. The Opposition makes it clear from the outset that it supports the project and that it would like the measure to be put in place.

However, the procedures and the background to this proposed legislation cause the Opposition grave concern and they have created grave concern and anguish in the community. They have caused the Government's stocks to drop substantially with many people in the community who were prepared to believe this Government was one that would live by its word and consult with the community on proposals that would have an effect on the environment

and on planning matters. Many people accepted that the Government was fair dinkum when it stated, in the months leading up to the State election and since then, that it would do that. However, to their dismay, this has not been the case, and there is much disquiet in the community, as well as in the planning profession, about many aspects of the Government's handling of this project.

The Bill, when passed, will enable the construction of six floodlight towers, and the Government tells honourable members that the Bill is urgent because it wants to permit the World Cup cricket matches to be held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in February and March next year.

The proposal has been on the drawing board for some time. I make it absolutely clear that the proposal has been in the hands of the Government for almost two years, on the best information that I have been able to glean, and that the only reason Parliament is being asked to deal with it in April 1984 in the dying stages of the current sessional period is that the Government, for some reason or other, has not been able to get its act together and has not been able to pluck up the courage to say to Parliament and to the people of Melbourne that it intends that these lights be built and that it intends to pass laws to make it possible to do so.

The whole shambles is due entirely to the Government's handling of the matter. The consequences have been not only that the Government has lost its reputation and credibility but also that it has caused many people to suffer a substantial financial loss. It has caused many people to incur expenses, for example, by way of legal fees, in pursuing what they thought were their rights. The Minister for Planning and Environment in another place, the Honourable Evan Walker, went to great pains to tell the people that they would be able to pursue their rights under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act and the Environment Protection Act, which he said he would invoke in order that the project be tested.

I understand that it was around September last year when the Government indicated that it had accepted the proposal to construct floodlight towers at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and, since then, discussion between various interested parties have taken place. At the time, the Government indicated that a definite decision would be required so that the February 1985 deadline could be met. It stated that it would undertake a certain process of consultation.

The Opposition proposes to move a reasoned amendment at a later stage of the second-reading debate so that the House can have an opportunity of considering the plight of the people who have been prejudiced, who have been disadvantaged and who have incurred legal expenses as a result of the way in which the Government has handled the matter.

I foreshadow that that will be the case. I also indicate that, because the Opposition supports the project and would like the project to go ahead speedily, on behalf of the Opposition I would be glad to withdraw that amendment, and even not to move it in the first place, if the Minister of Housing could indicate during the debate that the Government accepts the thrust of the argument that compensation should be paid to the people, whom I shall mention shortly, and that it will give an undertaking that the bona fide reasonable costs incurred by these people will be reimbursed to them.

Should the Minister indicate that, the Opposition will not proceed with the reasoned amendment. The consequence of the moving of the amendment would be that the Bill would be delayed. However, if the Government gives that undertaking, there will be no need for the Bill to be delayed. Therefore, the whole purpose of the exercise will be avoided, and the outcome is entirely in the Government's hands.

The history of the matter, which I believe constitutes a very disappointing display of Government administration, is that, last year, the Minister for Planning and Environment in another place indicated to the community and to the Melbourne City Council, as well as during the debate on this Bill in another place, that it was his intention that the proposal to erect floodlights should be the subject of proceedings under the Town and Country Planning Act, by way of an amendment to the planning scheme under section 32 (6) and (7) of that Act, and also by way of an exhibition under the environmental laws.

In fairness to the Minister, at that time he contemplated that the town and country planning side of the proposal would be the

subject of exhibition, followed by a panel being appointed by him to examine and deal with submissions made by people about the proposal; that the panel would report to the Minister, whose responsibility would be to make a decision, which he would then take to the Governor in Council by way of recommendation.

During the debate on the Bill in the Legislative Council last year, members of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Alan Hunt, and the Opposition spokesman on planning in the Upper House, the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, put to the Government representatives and to the Minister that the Government had made up its mind to construct these lights.

The Government was not being truthful in suggesting that it had not made up its mind, and that the rights of people to make submissions for and against the project would be left open, that no decision would be made on whether the project would go ahead until the results of the proceedings and that the provisions of the law had been followed through.

Unfortunately some people, who were against the proposal, began proceedings which questioned the legality of the Minister for Planning and Environment in establishing a panel to hear the submissions under section 32 (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act. When this was established, the Minister indicated his dilemma that perhaps a defect in the legislation existed and that perhaps it was a valid point that the independent panel could not deal with the submissions in the circumstances proposed by the Minister.

Unfortunately, when the Minister was faced with this decision, whether by his own choosing or by other advice, he made a tragic error of judgment. Instead of plainly stating that Cabinet had discussed the matter and decided that the project would go ahead regardless of the disquiet, displeasure and objections of some people, which would have been the honest, gutsy thing to do, the Minister said, "I will hear submissions myself under section 32 (6) of the Act". Instead of stating, "The Government will build the towers; the Government is honest and fair dinkum and, although it knows some people are concerned, it has been elected and the towers will be built", the Minister heard the submissions himself.

I understand that the Minister spent a day hearing submissions for and against—mainly against, I understand—the construction of the towers. Any reasonable person who stood back and observed the Minister in those circumstances must have formed the view that the Minister was fulfilling the obligation and undertaking he had given to the Legislative Council during the debate on the issue last year.

At that time, the Minister said, "I have not made up my mind, but I will give you a chance to put your view and I will then make up my mind." The Minister indicated that it was not a lay-down misère and that the Government would not go ahead with the project until the weight of the arguments had been considered. The Minister indicated that he would give the residents his ear and provide them with an opportunity of presenting their submissions.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Did that not happen?

Mr LIEBERMAN—It did. The Minister heard the submissions and apparently took account of what they said. Last week, when the Bill was in the other place, I understood that the Minister more or less said that there were grounds established whereby the project would have an adverse effect on the environment in question but that, on balance, he believed it was worth while. Therefore, obviously the submissions from those people who took the trouble to make them in good faith to the Minister under section 32 (6) of the Act had some merit and weight. The Minister had committed a tragic error of judgment. Had he been determined to follow the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act and make a decision, he should have gone to the Governor in Council, after discussing the matter with his Cabinet colleagues, with a recommendation under section 32 (6) to amend the Metropolitan Planning Scheme to give effect to the decision the Minister decided was the best under the circumstances.

Mr Ross-Edwards—But there would have been appeals.

Mr LIEBERMAN—The position is that under section 32 (6) of the Act, once the Minister for Planning and Environment makes the decision and goes to the Governor in Council and the Executive Council

makes the necessary decision, it is a recommendation and is therefore gazetted. There is no appeal. In a way, it is like a private Act of Parliament because there is no appeal.

As a former Minister for Planning, I can assure honourable members that it is not an easy task to make those sorts of decisions. Often it is a lonely task for the Minister because he must make those decisions in the face of submissions from genuinely concerned people who present valid points of view and who often establish, in part, a potential problem to the environment or neighbourhood. The Minister must make a balanced judgment and then make a recommendation.

The Minister promised Parliament and the community that that was what he would do. The Minister said that he would hear submissions and make a recommendation. It may well be that the Minister had an open mind on the matter. He could have decided, on balance, that the project should not go ahead because, under section 32 (6), he is bound to take into account all the matters put to him before making the final judgment.

That was the agreement in which the Minister invited the citizens of Melbourne and interested people in the neighbourhood to participate. In other words, the Minister said, "You will have an opportunity of putting forward your arguments and it is up to you to convince me". That is what the residents did. Correctly, some residents sought the advice of legal counsel because town planning and environmental law is not always a simple issue. Many people considered that they needed the benefit of professional advice and they sought legal advice and representation. They made that decision because of the process that the Minister assured the Legislative Council, the community and everyone else would be followed.

We now discover that the Minister has decided the project will go ahead per medium of the Bill before the House, which the Minister for Planning and Environment says is urgent and required. Why did the Minister not introduce the proposed legislation last year? If that had been the case, it would have saved everyone the difficult problem of having to obtain legal advice, prepare submissions and visit the Minister on the day set aside as well as attending the Environment Protection Authority panel—which is another panel that took part—to put forward their arguments. Why did the Minister let them do that when it was apparent that the Government had decided that the project would proceed regardless?

When one reads the comments reported as having been made by the Minister for Planning and Environment in the Legislative Council *Hansard* of 4 April 1984, one can see clearly that a firm decision was made by the Government that the project would go ahead. As a former Minister for Planning, I hate to say this, but I cannot disagree with the observations made by Mr Hunt and Mr Chamberlain when debating the issue in the Legislative Council when they referred to the whole process as being something of a charade. I do not like to use that word. However, the honourable members mentioned had the opportunity of scrutinizing the file. I have not seen the file, but I do not want to suggest that the Minister for Planning and Environment was involved in a charade.

It is evident that the Minister for Planning and Environment was faced with one of the difficult dilemmas that Ministers have to face from time to time.

His dilemma was that he knew he had an unpopular project on board. He knew that the Premier wanted the lights erected so that World Series cricket and other games could go on at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The people in the community had valid reasons for worrying about the erection of lights because the idea of floodlights flooding into the lounge room of one's home at night is not a popular prospect.

The Minister for Planning and Environment wanted the best of both worlds. He wanted the project to go ahead because the Premier was so committed to it, as were most Victorians. I want the project to go ahead because I think it is a great idea to have floodlights erected in what is by far the greatest sporting arena in Australia. The Premier knew that some people were worried about it and he wanted them to feel that they were being consulted and that they would have a right to argue the merits or demerits of the project.

As a former Minister for Planning, I know exactly how the Minister would have felt. The Minister obviously said to himself,

"What can I do? The Premier and the Cabinet want the project and yet I am a Minister and I am aware of the implications from a planning point of view in East Melbourne." One could almost write a text-book on town planning in East Melbourne because it has been a hotbed for many years. The people with whom the Minister was dealing in East Melbourne are the very ones who have argued for reform and more consultation in this State. Honourable members would be aware that I, as a former Minister for Planning, have spoken to them from time to time. Undoubtedly the Minister has made promises and given pledges that he would make sure the residents of that area would have their democratic rights protected at all times. That is his dilemma. He is a Minister of the Crown and that is what he gets paid for, but I know exactly how he felt.

The Minister for Planning and Environment should have had the courage to say to the people, "Look, on this occasion I know how you feel and I know you are going to be disappointed with me and my Government; however, we are not going to embark on a process of appeal through the town planning mechanism. The Government wants the project. We are going to amend the planning scheme and bring in legislation, one way or the other." The people would have respected him for that, even though it would be difficult to face the prospect of those floodlights without being able to argue the merits of the matter.

On the other hand, they would appreciate the honesty of the Minister and would say, "At least we know where we stand and we are not up for any costs for any abortive proceedings that make it appear that we have a chance of persuading you, as Minister, that the project should not go on because of environmental or planning matters." I do not know why the Minister did not do that. I think a lot of the Minister, but on this occasion I believe he has made a blue. That is the fact and it is on record.

The issue is that those people have incurred expenses in defending their rights and in doing what they thought was their right to do, but they are now left out of pocket. Not only are they left with the situation that the proposed legislation, once enacted, states that the lights will go there no matter what they say to the Minister and no matter what proven detriment to the environment has been established by an independent panel, but they are also left with the costs that have been incurred which they would not have incurred ordinarily. There is no way in which they would have incurred these costs if the Minister had been forthright to them.

If the Minister had said, "My Cabinet has told me as Minister that this project is going on", none of this would have occurred. What do I, on behalf of the Opposition, say to these residents when they speak to me? Do I say, "Oh well, too bad, mate. You had the choice and you did not have to incur these expenses. You should have realized the project was a goer at all stages and that you were wasting your time. You should not have incurred the expenses"? I cannot say that to them. I do not think honourable members would want citizens in this State to be treated in that way. That is why the Opposition wants to move the amendment. Accordingly, I move:

> That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "this House refuses to read this Bill a second time until the Government undertakes to pay the bona fide costs reasonably incurred in respect of the preparation and presentation of submissions in relation to the planning and environmental aspects of the proposal during 1983".

The amendment is expressed in very clear terms and contains a simple proposal that is reasonable for any Government to accept.

If the Government will give an undertaking that it will seek details of the costs and arrange independent advice for them to be assessed and pay whatever is agreed, the Opposition will seek leave to withdraw the amendment and the Bill will be passed. If the Minister of Housing cannot give that undertaking—and I should be very disappointed if he cannot do that because I have tried to understand why the Government has told these people to jump in the lake and forget about it; I really cannot think of any justifiable reason—the Bill will face some delay.

Everyone makes mistakes. I believe the Government has made a very bad mistake with this Bill through wanting to appear reasonable and available for consultation. The Government wants it to appear that it does not make planning decisions of this nature without consultation. It wants people

to believe that it respects the planning laws and that no decisions are made until planning submissions are exhibited and the hearing of submissions is completed.

The Government wants the best of both worlds, while all the time wanting the project to go ahead. It has really made a mess of this matter. I believe I am too charitable in saying that everyone can make mistakes and thereby saying to the House, "Let's pass the Bill if the undertaking is given." I am letting the Government off lightly in saying that. If the Government will not give this undertaking and the reasoned amendment goes to a vote and the Opposition is defeated, it will be on the Government's head and will be a scar on the reputation of the Government which it well and truly deserves and which people will not forget.

I indicated earlier to the House that the Minister for Planning and Environment was made aware of the legal difficulties of establishing an independent panel as provided under section 32 (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act and the Minister, therefore, decided to hear the submissions himself. He spent a full day hearing those submissions. I said all that and I acknowledge that that is the situation.

I have acknowledged that the Minister for Planning and Environment found himself in a difficult situation, which highlights the crisis of his decision. Not only did the Minister decide that there was a legal obstacle to establishing the panel that he promised the residents, but also he turned around and arranged a day for people to have eyeball to eyeball discussions with the Minister on the basis that under section 32 (6) the amendment would not be recommended by the Minister if those residents established their case. That is what section 32 (6) is about. That is why the Minister put aside the whole day. That is what people were entitled to believe and that is what anyone would believe, because that is what the Minister for Planning and Environment must do.

The Minister should not make up his own mind on this matter if he decides to have this process adopted. The Minister has had these discussions, but he has then turned around and introduced the proposed legislation. The whole issue revolves on what was said in another place. Mr Chamberlain stated that the Government had made up its mind. It is nonsense to speak about consultation, exhibitions and panels if the Government has already indicated that the project will go ahead. The Minister for Planning and Environment in effect said last year during a debate in the other House, which was lost on a vote, "I have not made up my mind and I will not make up my mind until this process is completed." He made that statement several times.

The debate last year was lost on a vote because the Council believed the Opposition had failed to make out its case. That decision reaffirmed the beliefs of East Melbourne residents that they did have a genuine chance of persuading the Minister for Planning and Environment that, in this case, he should not exercise his discretion and that he should not make a recommendation to the Governor in Council to amend the planning scheme because, in their submission, there was an environmental problem. It is a very rare thing for the Minister for Planning and Environment to set aside a full day to hear submissions, but that is what occurred. I suspect that what happened was the Minister for Planning and Environment honestly thought that the Government would allow him to do it but, for some reason which has not been explained because it would be embarrassing to the honourable gentleman, Cabinet decided it should override the planning provisions.

The decision to erect these lights, which the Government made last year, was not passed on by the Minister for Planning and Environment, but the decision was to be implemented. This is the crux of the proposed amendment. If the Government had said that last year, these people would not have incurred out-of-pocket expenses and legal costs, and there would not be a problem.

I ask honourable members to support the amendment on the basis of justice, fair play and equity. If honourable members do not support it, I ask them to inform the House and have it recorded in *Hansard* why these people have suffered all this humbug and nonsense and why they have had to incur expenses when, at all times, the Government was going to override the Minister for Planning and Environment, or else the honourable gentleman was not fully aware of the impact of the decision by Cabinet.

I confirm that the Opposition wants to have these lights erected. However, it is concerned that there will be some detriment to the area, particularly to the babies' home, which was mentioned in the other place. The Opposition is concerned that the environmental effects statement and the panel that heard submissions indicated that erection of the lights would be detrimental to the environment. However, on balance, the Opposition has the courage to say, as Mr Hunt and Mr Chamberlain said last year, that the project is worthy of support and it should go ahead. I am prepared to put that on the record and be honest about it. It is a pity that one of the problems with living in an area such as East Melbourne, surrounding Australia's best sporting stadium, is that this environmental situation can occur. Unfortunately, the East Melbourne residents have chosen a place to live which, from time to time, has some problems associated with it. It is unfortunate, but it is a fact of life and one cannot hold back the development of such a wonderful amenity, even though it is acknowledged that it does cause and will cause some environmental detriments.

The wording in the Bill has some intriguing elements about it because it states that the lights can be turned on 365 days in the year.

Mr Ross-Edwards—You are supporting the Bill!

Mr LIEBERMAN—That is right. It is my duty as spokesman for the Opposition to highlight the meaning of the Bill, whether it is good or bad. I do that because I want the Government to know that it is the understanding of the community, although the Bill permits lights for 365 days, that the Government would not have a policy that would envisage the use of lights for 365 nights in the year. It is on that understanding that I am prepared to recommend to the Opposition that the Bill not be opposed.

The Moonee Valley racecourse issue was a famous one dealing with lights in a residential neighbourhood and I personally checked on this aspect while I was Minister for Planning, and since then, to make sure that those planning decisions, concerning rationing of the use of lights, were working. I am pleased to say that they have been working satisfactorily. The Moonee Valley racecourse would have provided the Government with an excellent example if it had introduced the proposed legislation last year. The Government could have referred to the Moonee Valley racecourse and the Bill would have been quickly passed in the House. Unfortunately, that did not occur.

I hope the amendment receives the justice and equity that it deserves and that the East Melbourne residents receive some compensation for the legal expenses they honestly believe they have incurred in an attempt to obtain their legal rights. However, it eventuated that they did not have the legal rights that the Act said they had. That is the main issue. They did not have those rights because they were taken away from them and Parliament should redress that wrong.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The National Party supports the Bill. The Liberal Party also supports lights being erected at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on the terms and conditions laid down in the measure. The only reservation that the Liberal Party has—and I say "Liberal Party" because I do not want to confuse the word "Opposition"—is that it believes certain residents in the area should have their legal and out-of-pocket expenses paid for in respect of their appearance before the Minister for Planning and Environment. In another place, it was suggested that the Bill be withdrawn, but that would have simply delayed the passage of the proposed legislation. That was an irresponsible action. It does not matter if that action occurs in this place but it matters in another place. If the National Party had not stood firm and supported the Government, there would have been an even bigger mess and there would be no world cricket series in February 1985. The Liberal Party would have been responsible for that.

It is all right for the Liberal Party to go on with this nonsense in this place when it cannot win if the matter is put to a vote, but in another place it could have won but it did not gamble on the National Party showing some common sense and supporting the Government. If the National Party had not done that, there would have been an even bigger mess.

These lights are necessary to ensure that the Melbourne Cricket Ground remains the most prestigious cricket ground in Australia

and one of the best in the world. The world cricket series is due to be held in Australia in February 1985 and there is not much time left. I do not want to speak about the Bill being delayed, but the first opportunity the National Party had of assisting with the measure was two weeks ago and it has done its best to have the Bill passed in the shortest time possible. The National Party would have preferred to have had the Bill passed last Thursday week, if it had received the co-operation of the Liberal Party, but permission was not given to have the matter debated immediately after the second-reading speech.

I have lived opposite sports grounds in my time. My first home, when I had young children, was opposite Deakin Reserve in Shepparton and from time to time night functions were held and there were noisy activities and lights. I went to that area, as these residents have moved to East Melbourne, knowing that a major sports arena was in proximity to where I had purchased a home.

The homes have been there for a long time, although most of the residents have come there since the Melbourne Cricket Ground became a major sports centre. Nevertheless, those residents must have expected development there; they were fools if they did not.

I have been to night functions at that ground. The Catholic Church had a week of activities there some years ago and I attended the activities on two or three evenings which were attended by 40 000 or 50 000 people. The Military Tattoo has been conducted there with pipe bands at night. A whole host of functions have been held there, including pop concerts.

Mr Lieberman—They are too loud.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—They probably were. I was spared the experience of attending those.

The people for whom I have some sympathy are those at the Berry Street Child and Family Care Centre. I have commented that the Government may need to consider those who spend a night there from time to time with a view to relocating them. I understand that only 25 or 30 children spend a night there from time to time; as a day centre, it is not affected in the slightest. For that consideration alone, one could not conceivably oppose the development of the ground to its full potential.

It is imperative that the Bill be passed speedily. I point out that speed is also essential in the construction of the towers, and that will need the co-operation of the unions. I do not wish to inflame the situation, but I pass on to the Minister and to Parliament the message that the people of Victoria expect the Government to use its best endeavours to ensure that silly delays do not occur in the project. I will say no more because to do so would not be in the best interests of the project.

From a planning point of view, it must also be remembered that this is a public facility. It is not a private enterprise, money-making scheme like some company erecting an 80-storey building in the area for profit. This facility is for the benefit of the total community of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and even beyond. It is the showpiece sporting centre in Australia. The National Party would adopt a different attitude if it were a private, money-making project, but it is a public facility in the interests of the community generally. From time to time, we as individuals must make sacrifices for the good of the total community, as happens day after day and year after year.

I refer now to the hearing of objections by the Minister. I have been fairly closely involved in the project in a variety of ways. As I understand it, the Minister for Planning and Environment, for whom I have high regard, was acutely aware of the types of objections that were likely to be lodged—those relating to noise and lights. The Minister was also aware of other minor inconveniences—perhaps bad behaviour and a certain degree of vandalism. However, he decided—rightly, in my view—to make himself available for a day to hear whether there were any objections that had not been considered by him, the Government, the trustees of the ground or the committee of the Melbourne Cricket Club. As I said, the Minister knew full well what most of the objections would be. Obviously, those objections had been given due and serious consideration. As I understand it, the Minister did not receive any objections that were new to him or that he considered would justify the halting of the project. In those

circumstances, he decided that the project should continue.

The honourable member for Benambra says that the residents concerned should be reimbursed for their costs. He can put his argument to the Government. However, when these people incurred that cost, they would have needed to be rather optimistic to believe they would be reimbursed. They instructed town planners, lawyers and advisers and they accepted the responsibility for paying those people.

Mr Lieberman—They thought the Minister would make a neutral decision.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—They were not going to court where, if they won, they stood some chance of the other side paying the costs. Even when one goes before the court, one makes a conscious decision that one may have to pay one's own costs and perhaps the other party's costs as well. When the objectors went into this matter, they would have decided, like any responsible person, that the exercise could cost $X, and it has cost them $X.

Mr Lieberman—They did not even get a hearing.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—They were given a hearing by the Minister.

Mr Lieberman—What sort of a hearing?

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—They knew the type of hearing they would be given. One does not normally go to the Minister to put a submission. This was different from the normal procedures.

Mr Lieberman—The outcome was different.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—So was the hearing. I am happy that the Government should consider the matter. The honourable member for Benambra has changed his tack a little. When he opened his contribution, he made some threat about delaying the Bill, but nothing that he can do will delay it; it will be passed. The honourable member is asking the Government to consider paying the costs incurred by the objectors, but he has given no indication of the amount of those costs.

Mr Lieberman—The Minister knows.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I am contributing to the debate, and I do not know what the total cost is. Consequently, it is difficult for me to suggest that the Government should pay the costs.

Mr Lieberman—They are fair and reasonable.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—But how much is involved? Is it $10 000, $100 000 or $200 000? Not one word has been mentioned. It is easy to say that the Government should pay the costs, but for it to do so would set a tremendous precedent. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know what the costs are. Have they been documented? Has everybody submitted a list of his costs or made any request to the Government, or is this simply an exercise by the Liberal Party?

There has been sufficient debate on the Bill. It is necessary in the best interests of Victoria, the best interests of Australia and the best interests of sport. Melbourne has a magnificent ground which is well administered by the Melbourne Cricket Club. I have the privilege of being a trustee. That is an honorary job and I do not need to mention it in the sense of it being an interest; nevertheless, it is of interest to me and a job that gives me enormous satisfaction. I am pleased that the lights are to be installed and that substantial other improvements are to be made in the next couple of years. Those improvements will keep the ground at a high level and will cause it to be the envy of sporting bodies throughout the world.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I thank the Leader of the National Party for his support of the Bill and of the terms and conditions for the floodlighting as laid down in the Bill.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, the honourable member for Benambra said that he supported the project but he has now introduced a reasoned amendment which seeks to further delay the project. The Government rejects the reasoned amendment. If the amendment were accepted, further delays would be caused while the details indicated by the Leader of National Party were examined to determine what would be an appropriate amount for reimbursement to the objectors, and we would not reach the stage of having day-and-night cricket

matches next year or, for that matter, even the 1985 World Cup matches, which will require floodlighting at the ground.

Mr Lieberman—You will not even look at it.

Mr CATHIE—I will not give any such undertaking. The honourable member for Benambra has criticized the procedures that the Government has undertaken in examining the objections of the residents of East Melbourne. I do not believe the Government has lost any credibility concerning the procedures it adopted in this case. I believe the Bill is supported by the vast majority of the people of this city.

The community expects the Government to resolve the issue to ensure that the Melbourne Cricket Ground maintains its position as a first-class sporting venue.

The reasoned amendment suggests that the costs that were "reasonably incurred" by the objectors in preparing and delivering their case should be reimbursed, presumably by the Government. The Minister for Planning and Environment in another place listened to the arguments for and against the installation of floodlights at the ground. It has been alleged that the objectors believed the Minister was open-minded and that later they were disappointed at his decision. However, the Minister did take into account the views of the objectors and the grounds on which the objections were based. After listening to all of the reasons for and against the installation of floodlights, the Minister made a decision, and that was an appropriate way to proceed.

The Bill, when passed, will give effect to the decision of the Minister and the subsequent decision of Cabinet. It is not true to say that the Government did not provide an opportunity for persons who opposed the installation of floodlights at the ground. Those persons had every opportunity of voicing their concerns and making their submissions. The hearing of the objections was determined by the Minister under the Metropolitan Planning Scheme.

Indeed, it should be noted that there was an environmental effects statement and the appropriate amendment to the planning scheme. It was the intention of the legal representative of the East Melbourne residents to challenge the validity of the establishment of an independent panel. What was the Minister to do when he discovered that the process that he had established was being challenged legally? The Minister determined that the only way to get around that was to hear the submissions personally. Indeed, a further legal challenge was indicated and that only reinforced the view of the Minister that there was no alternative to proceeding as he did.

The persons who opposed the installation of the floodlights challenged the power of the Minister to establish an independent panel. That was their right, but they also had inherent responsibilities for the procedures they embarked upon. It was the residents and the objectors who decided to employ legal counsel. They sought to frustrate the normal planning procedures. The residents must have been well aware of what they were doing and what the consequences of their actions would be.

The Leader of the National Party has indicated that the National Party supports the installation of floodlights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on the terms and conditions set out in the Bill. The Government will govern. It is determined to govern on behalf of the people of Victoria. The Government believes it has made a decision that has the full support of most Victorians.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Lieberman to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	51
Noes	19
Majority against the amendment	32

AYES

Mr Cain	Mr Hann
Miss Callister	Mr Harrowfield
Mr Cathie	Mr Hassett
Dr Coghill	Mrs Hill
Mr Crabb	Mr Hockley
Mr Culpin	Mr Ihlein
Mr Ernst	Mr Jasper
Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Jolly
	Mr Kennedy
Mr Fogarty	Mr Kirkwood
Mr Fordham	Mr McCutcheon
Mr Gavin	Mr McDonald
Mr Gray	Mr McGrath

Mr McNamara	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Mathews	Mr Simpson
Mr Newton	Mr Spyker
Mr Norris	Mr Stirling
Mr Pope	Mrs Toner
Mrs Ray	Mr Trezise
Mr Remington	Dr Vaughan
Mr Roper	Mr Wallace
Mr Ross-Edwards	Mr Walsh
Mr Rowe	Mr Whiting
Mr Seitz	Mr Wilton
Mr Sheehan	*Tellers:*
(*Ivanhoe*)	Mr Micallef
Mr Shell	Mr Steggall

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr Reynolds
Mr Brown	Mr Richardson
Mr Burgin	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Delzoppo	Mrs Sibree
Mr Ebery	Mr Tanner
Mr Jona	Mr Templeton
Mr Kempton	Mr Williams
Mr Lieberman	*Tellers:*
Mr McKellar	Mr Dickinson
Mr Ramsay	Mr Leigh

PAIRS

Mr Miller	Mrs Patrick
Mrs Setches	Mr Kennett
Mr Simmonds	Mr Maclellan

The motion was agreed to.

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

WATER (CENTRAL MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURING) BILL

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Discussion was resumed of clause 8.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 10, line 32, omit "(2) The" and insert "(2) Subject to sub-section (3), the".

This amendment relates to the power of the Governor in Council to remove or suspend a member from office at any time. The National Party believes this power should not relate to members appointed to the board of the Rural Water Commission. It should be subject to sub-section (3), which relates to the chairman.

The National Party believes the Governor in Council should not have the power to remove or suspend those members from office. I commend the amendment.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition supports the amendment. It supports the view that, with the exception of elected members, a mechanism must exist to remove people from office.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The Government cannot accept the amendment. It is an attempt to make the representatives of the irrigators immune from the same type of sanctions to which other members are subject. The National Party agrees with the principle that, should there be a good reason, such as incompetence or inability of a member to perform his duties, a member can be removed or suspended from office. Therefore, there can be no quarrel that, if irrigators want representation, that representative should be subject to the provision that the Governor in Council may remove or suspend a member from office. The Government opposes the amendment.

The Committee divided on the question that the word and expression proposed by Mr Hann to be omitted stand part of the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	41
Noes	27
Majority against the amendment	14

AYES

Miss Callister	Mr Pope
Mr Cathie	Mrs Ray
Dr Coghill	Mr Remington
Mr Culpin	Mr Roper
Mr Ernst	Mr Rowe
Mr Fogarty	Mr Seitz
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan
Mr Gavin	(*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Gray	Mr Sheehan
Mr Harrowfield	(*Ballarat South*)
Mr Hassett	Mr Shell
Mrs Hill	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Ihlein	Mr Simpson
Mr Jolly	Mr Spyker
Mr Kennedy	Mr Stirling
Mr Kirkwood	Mrs Toner
Mr McCutcheon	Mr Trezise
Mr McDonald	Dr Vaughan
Mr Mathews	Mr Walsh
Mr Micallef	*Tellers:*
Mr Miller	Mr Hockley
Mr Newton	Mr Norris

NOES

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

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mr Kennett
Mr Crabb	Mrs Patrick
Mrs Setches	Mr Richardson
Mr Simmonds	Mr Maclellan

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 12, line 10, omit "Four" and insert "Five".

The amendment increases the number of persons constituting a quorum of the board of the Rural Water Commission. The National Party believes the quorum should represent a maximum number of members on the board. I hope the Government will support the amendment.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The Government has had discussions in relation to this matter. The Government accepts the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 12, line 10, after "being" insert "(of whom at least one is a member taking office under section 20 (3) (*d*) (i)".

The reason for the amendment is to ensure that a quorum shall include a person at all meetings of the board appointed under proposed new section 20 (3) (*d*) (i), who represents the irrigators. The National Party would not like to see a situation arise where a meeting could be held without an irrigator being present. The basis of the amendment is to ensure that one of the practising irrigators, already agreed to by the Committee, should help make up the quorum on all occasions. I hope the Government will support the amendment.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition supports the amendment. The second-reading debate covered the role of irrigators relative to water in this State and there was consensus that irrigators were the dominant body relative to usage. Accordingly, it is reasonable that at least one of the irrigator representatives, of which there will be two on the board, must be in attendance to ensure that a quorum is present.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—This amendment is aimed at ensuring that if both of the irrigator representatives are not present there is no quorum. This proposal places the irrigators representatives in the position of being designated as the special interest which must be present if the board is to meet. The difficulty is that one could equally think of good reasons why other members of the board are of equal importance. This is not a single function board. The irrigators, being two in number, already have less chance of being without representation at a board meeting than any other section of the industry and so the Government opposes the amendment.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is disappointed with the Government's attitude to this amendment. It believes it is a practical and reasonable proposition for the Government to ensure that irrigator representatives are present at all meetings of the board. The Minister is either ignoring or refusing to acknowledge that, by far, irrigation will make up the larger component of the activities of the proposed Rural Water Commission than any other area of the commission's activities.

The thrust of the measure is to divide the water industry into an urban function and a rural function. That rural function is largely irrigation. I should have thought that, in granting irrigators the right to be on the board, the Government would have recognized that it is important to ensure that irrigators are present at all meetings of the board. I am disappointed in the attitude adopted by the Government on this matter. Irrigators throughout Victoria will be equally disappointed in what appears to be a token effort by the Government to give them recognition on the board.

The Committee divided on Mr Hann's amendment (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	25
Noes	40
Majority against the amendment	15

AYES

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

NOES

Miss Callister	Mr Pope
Mr Cathie	Mrs Ray
Dr Coghill	Mr Remington
Mr Culpin	Mr Roper
Mr Ernst	Mr Rowe
Mr Fogarty	Mr Seitz
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Gavin	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Gray	Mr Shell
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Hassett	Mr Simpson
Mrs Hill	Mr Spyker
Mr Ihlein	Mr Stirling
Mr Jolly	Mr Trezise
Mr Kennedy	Dr Vaughan
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Walsh
Mr McCutcheon	
Mr McDonald	
Mr Mathews	
Mr Micallef	*Tellers:*
Mr Miller	Mr Hockley
Mr Newton	Mr Norris

PAIRS

Mr Kennett	Mr Cain
Mr Maclellan	Mr Simmonds
Mrs Patrick	Mr Crabb
Mr Richardson	Mrs Setches

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I move:

Clause 8, page 13, lines 35 to 39, omit all words and expressions on these lines.

Basically, the same reason applies for this amendment as a previous amendment that I moved relative to delegation by the Rural Water Commission. As it stands, if a mistake is made, however innocent, no method will be available to ratify same even if the Minister agrees that the mistake was made without malice or intent of any kind and that it would be in the interests of all to ratify it.

If the Bill is not amended there will be no power for ratification or validation to be implemented and that could leave a member of the public without a remedy, which is the concern of members of the Opposition. As I said earlier, a person could hold a licence, such as a diversion licence, which would be useless unless once a mistake were made it was able to be ratified. The Opposition believes the amendment is fair and reasonable and I hope the Minister is able to accept it.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—As the honourable member for Westernport indicates, this amendment is identical to an earlier amendment which the Government supported and it supports this amendment also.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 14, after line 10 insert:

"22B. (1) In this section "irrigators", in relation to an irrigation district, means persons—

(*a*) who are the occupiers or owners of lands in that district; and

(*b*) who are entitled to be included on the roll of irrigators compiled under section 20.

(2) The Board shall in each irrigation district convene an annual general meeting of irrigators and if at any such meeting a resolution is passed calling upon the Board to do so, the Board shall provide for the election in accordance with the regulations of a Board for that district (in this section referred to as a "Local Advisory Board") consisting of such number of persons as the Board thinks fit to advise the Board on irrigation management and development.

(3) The members of a Local Advisory Board shall not by virtue only of their office as such be subject to the provisions of the Public Service Act 1974.

(4) Subject to this Act and the regulations, a Local Advisory Board shall regulate its own proceedings.".

This amendment proposes to establish in legislation for the first time a structure of local advisory boards in irrigation districts. In many irrigation districts, particularly throughout northern Victoria and in the Macalister River and Werribee River areas, local advisory boards have been established by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to provide a consultation process for the commission and irrigators to discuss

matters of mutual interest. More recently, the commission has given greater responsibility to these district advisory boards.

As a result of discussions with irrigators, the National Party believes this particular function should be written into legislation so that a structure of local advisory boards is set up for irrigators to have the permanent opportunity of being involved in the decision-making processes at local district levels. The existing advisory boards have had a unique function over the years. Many years ago, the commission showed a great deal of initiative in establishing these advisory boards and in informing irrigators of the actual local management of their districts. These matters relate to financial questions, discussions on annual budgets of local irrigation districts, the maintenance and works programmes carried out, and so on. These boards have provided a useful forum on water pricing and on water policy generally.

In the electorate that I represent, members of these boards are highly respected people in the community and many have held office for several years. I have no doubt that the new Rural Water Commission will endeavour to establish a similar structure. However, the National Party would like the function of the advisory boards written into legislation so that they become a permanent part of the structure. Ultimately, they should be given a much greater say in the management of local irrigation districts. I hope the Minister will support the amendment.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition supports the amendment. Members of the Opposition are aware of the very good advice, work and assistance given by local advisory boards over many years to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Indeed, the advice given over this lengthy period has been welcome. There is no doubt that local people, besides being the ones directly affected in this instance, are the ones best able to manage their own affairs as far as is possible. Whereas the concept of local advisory boards has an emphasis of being advisory only, it is true that local people are better able to judge proposals and to make recommendations for consideration.

The Minister may in some manner debate whether the Government should enshrine local advisory boards in legislation. The Opposition is of the view that, as the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission agrees that local advisory boards have performed a valuable role and service for many years, there is no reason not to accept the amendment and to incorporate these bodies in the legislation. Certainly, if it is to be done at all, this is the time to do it.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—At present, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission runs an increasingly successful advisory committee system and it does so without the powers or obligations in legislation for it to do so. The Bill seeks to regularize and endorse this general principle. The problem with the amendment is that it will hamstring the power of the Rural Water Commission to a particular method of running and involvement with irrigators through members of local advisory boards of their districts.

As will be readily agreed by irrigators through consultation with them, there are wide differences between the districts.

It would be unwise to assume that irrigators in all districts would want their involvement run in this way in perpetuity. For that reason, the Government opposes the amendment.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The Minister of Labour and Industry has indicated that he does not completely understand the amendment. It would actually give irrigators the opportunity of deciding whether they want to establish advisory boards. It would not automatically inflict advisory boards upon irrigation districts. I would have thought that the Minister would understand the amendment. There is no reason why some irrigators cannot ultimately decide that they do not want to continue involvement in that advisory function, although I doubt that that will be the case. My colleague from the National Party will endorse my comment that irrigators generally have indicated a real desire to be involved in the decision-making process.

I cannot understand what the Minister is saying to the Committee. The only argument he has against the amendment is that some irrigators may not wish to be involved in local advisory boards. I ask the Minister to reconsider his decision on this matter or to give an assurance that he will reconsider

it when the Bill is between here and another place. In any case, the National Party intends to proceed with the amendment and force a division if the Government is not prepared to support it.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition does not accept the proposition that a board should be hamstrung as a result of the amendment, particularly on the point that irrigators in some districts may not want that type of involvement. All they have to do is not attend the annual general meeting or attend it and indicate by resolution that they do not want the board to involve them at that level in the twelve-month period.

Protection is provided for irrigators in each district. A vehicle exists so that they may attend a meeting at least annually and voice their approval or disapproval. Anyone who does not want to be involved on an advisory basis, does not have to be. It is humbug to say that the board would be hamstrung by the amendment.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—The Government has indicated that it will not accept the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the National Party. The Government must understand why rural producers and users of the Rural Water Commission do not have much faith in what the Government is doing.

In the past four or five years, advisory committees probably have been one of the best assets of the Water Commission in its delivery of services throughout Victoria. The commission has developed a good understanding in the past few years on the delivery of water. The Government has rejected the three-member concept for water users on the Rural Water Commission. It has refused to define the functions of the department and the Rural Water Commission in the Bill so that people will know exactly what they are doing. It has also refused to include a definite statement that the Department of Water Resources has no power or direction over the Rural Water Commission.

The Bill does not contain much about which rural people can be confident with regard to irrigation areas. The bulk of the work of the Rural Water Commission will be related to irrigation. Most of the other areas, with the exception of minor urban works, will be the responsibility of the department. The ridiculous situation is that one does not know what activity will be carried out by which department. The situation is that the irrigators of Victoria, together with the Water Commission, have established advisory boards throughout areas that have worked well.

I hope that while the Bill is between here and another place the Government will consider the points being put forward on behalf of the people who will be vitally affected by the proposed legislation. No one in Melbourne will be affected by the measure and no one being represented by the Labor Party will be affected by it. I suggest that the Minister of Labour and Industry and the Government start paying attention to how the measure will work and the links that it will create throughout rural Victoria.

The amendment would not change the thrust or direction of the Bill. It would give the end user some assistance and provide links thoughout the system to make the project work better. I am disappointed with the attitude of the Minister and the Government on this amendment and other amendments. The Government has a long way to go in securing the faith or trust of country people. Its attitude to the amendment is another example of its "chop, chop, chop" approach.

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—I congratulate the Deputy Leader of the National Party in moving this and other amendments to the proposed legislation. He has done an excellent job in trying to improve the mish-mash measure. I was astounded at the parrot fashion way in which the Minister read his answer to the amendment. The Government has turned its back on being genuine, in achieving consensus and reflecting the wishes of people in the community by rejecting the amendment.

The amendment would provide for advisory committees to advise the board of irrigation management and development. It would operate in a democratic manner. It would not be forced on irrigators. They would have the option of exercising their choice by informing the board. By the Minister of Labour and Industry saying that he will not have a bar of the amendment and that everything will be run from Melbourne, he is adopting the "Big Brother" attitude as demonstrated in *Nineteen*

Eighty-Four. The Minister seems to exemplify that approach.

In water terms, the Minister could not run a bath, let alone try to administer the implementation of the Bill to ensure that everyone is properly represented! In representing the Benalla electorate, I represent Victoria's greatest river, namely the Goulburn River and its catchment areas. I have a considerable interest in irrigation and in the provision of water supplies. If it were not for an outstanding Premier such as Sir John McDonald, Victoria would not have the significant storages such as Lake Eildon that it has today. All Victorians should be eternally grateful for the contributions of National and Country Party Premiers over the years in ensuring that country Victoria is properly represented.

This Bill is another example of the Government hammering the nail into the coffins of country people. The Government is refusing to allow them adequate representation on the advisory boards. It is refusing to allow them to have a voice on this matter. The National Party will continue to fight for the interests of country people here and in another place. The Government does not know what happens beyond the Melbourne tram tracks. It thinks that Victoria stops at Broadmeadows.

In conclusion, I commend the Deputy Leader of the National Party for putting so much work into the proposed legislation to try to reach some semblance of workability because, if it is passed in its original form, it will have no hope of operating effectively. I urge the Minister to consider seriously the argument put forward by the National Party.

The Committee divided on Mr Hann's amendment (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	26
Noes	40
Majority against the amendment	14

AYES

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

NOES

Miss Callister	Mr Newton
Mr Cathie	Mr Norris
Dr Coghill	Mr Pope
Mr Culpin	Mrs Ray
Mr Ernst	Mr Remington
Mr Fogarty	Mr Roper
Mr Fordham	Mr Rowe
Mr Gavin	Mr Seitz
Mr Gray	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simpson
Mr Hassett	Mr Spyker
Mrs Hill	Mr Stirling
Mr Hockley	Mrs Toner
Mr Ihlein	Mr Trezise
Mr Jolly	Dr Vaughan
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	
Mr McCutcheon	
Mr McDonald	*Tellers:*
Mr Mathews	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Micallef	Mr Shell
Mr Miller	

PAIRS

Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)	Mr Simmonds
Mr Kennett	Mr Cain
Mr Maclellan	Mr Crabb
Mr Richardson	Mrs Setches

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 15, line 33, omit "may" and insert "shall forthwith".

The basis of the amendment is that the National Party proposes to require the proposed Rural Water Commission, when it has been given a direction by the Minister, to publish that direction in the *Government Gazette.* Concern has been expressed by irrigators that the Minister may tend to give too many directions to the proposed commission and it may become virtually a rubber stamp of the Ministry. It was felt that to leave that as an option could give the Minister responsible and the commission a way out for not having the direction published.

Any directions given to the proposed Rural Water Commission should be published so that not only irrigators but also those involved in urban water areas are

aware of what the Minister and the commission are doing. The thrust of the Bill is to give the commission independence from Ministerial direction. The amendment is particularly important. The National Party hopes the Government will support it.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Opposition supports the amendment. Surely the Government will also accept it. The Government claims to be open. That claim was made when it was in opposition and it is still its claim. The Labor Government introduced the Freedom of Information Act.

Very simply, the amendment will enable the public to be informed of what the Government is directing the proposed Rural Water Commission to do. It is not too much to ask the Government to accept it. The National Party, as no doubt will the Opposition, will have some questions to be answered if the Government will not accept the amendment.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The Government will oppose the amendment which provides that any direction "shall forthwith" be published in the *Government Gazette*. Although the whole clause is unlikely to be used often, some directions which may be published in the *Government Gazette* may not occur.

For example, a direction to the commission to put something in its annual report would come under this clause. That would be totally unnecessary, and the Government believes the existing provisions are, therefore, more appropriate.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Once again, in his reply to my proposed amendment, the Minister has failed to convince me that the National Party should not proceed with it. The only excuse the Minister has given is that the Minister of the day might direct the Rural Water Commission to put something into an annual report. The National Party is concerned that the Minister might also direct the commission to withdraw a particular reference from its annual report; for example, some unfavourable reference to the Government in an election year. That is something of which Parliament and the community should be made aware through the *Government Gazette*.

The Minister, through his own mouth, has highlighted why the National Party is anxious for this amendment to be supported.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—This is another strange situation, and it leads from the debate that took place a fortnight ago when honourable members talked about the role of the commission and the department and just where they will stand in relation to one another. If the Minister directs the Rural Water Commission on Government policy, which is the type of thing I would imagine he would be directing the commission on, I see no problems with this clause. The type of thing that the Minister uses as an example would appear once only because, once that direction was given, I would imagine that the direction would stay.

A strange situation exists where the Department of Water Resources will be advising the Minister, who will be directing the Rural Water Commission. If the Government is fair dinkum about creating a department which will be a policy co-ordinating body for the Minister, it should not have any worries with the substitution of the word "shall" for the word "may".

I hope, while the Bill is between here and another place, the Minister will start spelling out to members of the commission what position the irrigators of this State will have and how the power play will take place.

Honourable members have spoken about whether the commission will have any say or whether it will be dominated completely by the Department of Water Resources, and the academics of that department. The refusal of the Minister to accept the amendment is another example that proves to the National Party that the department will end up being the all-powerful body in the water industry and that the Rural Water Commission will be a lame duck.

The Minister has assured honourable members time and again that that will not be the case. I should like the Minister and the Government, at some stage during the debate on this Bill, to put that in writing so that the National Party can see for itself that they are fair dinkum and not just putting forward a heap of words.

The amendment was negatived.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 8, page 15, lines 35 and 36, omit all words and expressions on these lines.

The amendment has the effect of deleting proposed new section 26 (4), which states:

Failure to publish that direction under sub-section (3) shall not affect the validity of the direction.

The National Party believes that effectively gives the commission an "out" in regard to proposed new section 26 (3), because that sub-section suggests that the commission may publish the direction in the *Government Gazette* or that it shall publish the direction in its annual report. Yet proposed new section 26 (4) has the effect of saying that if the direction is not published it does not matter. Therefore, it is important to delete that proposed sub-section so that there is a requirement for the commission to ensure that the direction is either published in the *Government Gazette* or in the commission's annual report.

The Committee divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Hann to be omitted stand part of the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	40
Noes	25
Majority against the amendment	15

AYES

Miss Callister	Mr Newton
Mr Cathie	Mr Norris
Dr Coghill	Mr Pope
Mr Culpin	Mrs Ray
Mr Ernst	Mr Remington
Mr Fogarty	Mr Roper
Mr Fordham	Mr Rowe
Mr Gavin	Mr Seitz
Mr Gray	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simpson
Mr Hassett	Mr Spyker
Mrs Hill	Mr Stirling
Mr Hockley	Mrs Toner
Mr Ihlein	Mr Trezise
Mr Jolly	Dr Vaughan
Mr Kennedy	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	
Mr McCutcheon	
Mr McDonald	*Tellers:*
Mr Mathews	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Micallef	Mr Shell
Mr Miller	

NOES

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

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mr Kennett
Mr Crabb	Mr Maclellan
Mrs Setches	Mr Tanner
Mr Sidiropoulos	Mrs Patrick
Mr Simmonds	Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)

The clause, as amended, was agreed to, as was clause 9.

Clause 10 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 11

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I move:

Clause 11, page 17, line 32, omit "Minister" and insert "Board".

Proposed section 43F (2) states:

The report of operations referred to in sub-section 1 (*a*) shall—(*a*) be prepared in such form and contain such information as is determined by the Minister;

Some Ministers are dictators in their own right. If a dictator also has the capacity for total censorship, that is unpalatable in the extreme. The Opposition is not prepared to accept the degree of censorship which would be available if the proposed section remains unchanged. Without any problem at all, the Minister could censor a report.

The Opposition supports proposed section 43F (4), which authorizes the Minister to direct that additional information may be included in the report. The Opposition opposes proposed section 43F (2) (*a*) which, as it stands, allows the Minister at his whim to dictate the information which can be contained in the report. For this to be left to the sole discretion of the Minister is unpalatable and unacceptable. The Minister should not be able to write the report of the board and, as the clause stands, that is the proposal. That is repugnant to the Opposition.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party supports the amendment because it concerns a matter to which I referred earlier. The Minister should not have the power to interfere in the preparation of the report. If that were the case, in an election climate, the Government of the day could ask for any embarrassing information to be removed from the report. For that reason, the National Party supports the amendment.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The amendment aims to ensure that the Minister does not specify what form the reports are to take. It is consistent with the whole thrust of the accountability of public bodies for the Government to determine the type of annual reports and the sort of information that they should contain. It is not a means of censorship of the board. The trend is to ensure that the information given is sufficient for the Government and the community to judge the performance and responsibility of the body. The existing provision is designed to ensure just that and not leave these matters entirely to the board. For that reason, the Government opposes the amendment.

The Committee divided on the question that the word proposed by Mr Brown to be omitted stand part of the clause (Mr Wilton in the chair).

Ayes	38
Noes	25
Majority against the amendment	13

AYES

Miss Callister	Mr Miller
Mr Cathie	Mr Newton
Dr Coghill	Mr Norris
Mr Culpin	Mr Pope
Mr Ernst	Mrs Ray
Mr Fogarty	Mr Remington
Mr Gray	Mr Roper
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Seitz
Mr Hassett	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mrs Hill	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Hockley	Mr Shell
Mr Ihlein	Mr Simpson
Mr Jolly	Mr Spyker
Mr Kennedy	Mr Stirling
Mr Kirkwood	Mrs Toner
Mr McCutcheon	Mr Trezise
Mr McDonald	
Mr Micallef	
Dr Vaughan	*Tellers:*
Mr Walsh	Mr Gavin
	Mr Rowe

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr McGrath
Mr Brown	Mr McKellar
Mr Delzoppo	Mr McNamara
Mr Dickinson	Mr Ramsay
Mr Ebery	Mr Reynolds
Mr Evans (*Ballarat North*)	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Hann	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Jasper	Mr Steggall
Mr Jona	Mr Templeton
Mr Kempton	Mr Whiting
Mr Kennett	*Tellers:*
Mr Leigh	Mr Wallace
Mr Lieberman	Mr Williams

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mrs Patrick
Mr Crabb	Mr Tanner
Mr Fordham	Mr Maclellan
Mr Mathews	Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mrs Setches	Mr Richardson
Mr Simmonds	Mr Burgin

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I move:

Clause 11, page 18, line 19, after "interest" insert "but the Rural Water Commission shall state in the annual report that such additional information was included by direction of the Minister".

The Bill provides, in proposed section 43F (4):

The Minister may in writing direct the Rural Water Commission to include in an annual report such information additional to that contained in the report of operations and the financial statements as the Minister considers it necessary or appropriate to have included in the public interest.

The Opposition has no objection to the Minister requiring and being able to ensure that additional information is included. In fact, it should be the right of a Minister of the Crown to have that information. However, without amendment, the public would not be aware from reading a report whether the Minister had issued an edict on including additional information in the report.

The Minister could by Ministerial edict have ensured that a considerable amount of material advantageous to the Government is incorporated in the report at the request of the Government. People may read a report on Alcoa of Australia Ltd which may

be advantageous to the Government, but which is not relevant to what is happening in Victoria. If moves are made behind the scenes to ensure that reports are changed in any way, shape or form relative to the report that is proposed to be issued, the public needs to be informed what edict the Minister has given, which would have the effect, no doubt, of making the Government look better in the public image.

The Opposition is moving an amendment which is clear in its intent and I hope the Minister has the capacity to understand that at least this amendment is one which he should support.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The National Party is happy to support the amendment put forward by the Opposition. It appears to make some sense and the Government should support it.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—It appears that the amendment is already incorporated in the Bill, but in a spirit of goodwill the Government will accept this amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Clause 11, page 19, after line 26 insert:

"(4) The Minister shall cause notice of the carrying out of an effectiveness and efficiency review by a person appointed under sub-section (1) to be published in the *Government Gazette* prior to the commencement of the carrying out of that review.".

In line with the Government's policy on accountability, the Government is anxious to ensure that a Minister will be required to make known results of efficiency and effectiveness reviews conducted in accordance with the Water (Central Management Restructuring) Bill.

However, for obvious reasons, some aspects of a report may not be able to be published, especially if it refers to matters which are the subject of criminal proceedings. Accordingly, it is proposed to amend the Bill so that prior to the commencement of an efficiency and effectiveness review, the Minister is required to give notice in the *Government Gazette*. Under this arrangement, the community and the Parliament will be aware of the commencement of a review and of its scope. Should a Minister withhold publication of the results of such a review, the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act would apply and thereby the provisions will ensure that all matters that can be published will become available.

The Government hopes the Opposition and the National Party will accept the proposed amendment.

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

Clause 12 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 13

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—I move:

Clause 13, lines 6 and 7, omit "or that is necessary to be prescribed".

Clause 13, 61B (1) states:

The Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to any matter or thing that by Subdivision 1 or 1A is authorized or required or permitted to be prescribed or that is necessary to be prescribed for carrying Subdivision 1 or 1A into effect . . .

The issue to which the Opposition takes exception is the statement "or that is necessary to be prescribed". It is really a matter of what that phrase means. It is a matter of significant interpretation and the Opposition, in considering the matter at length, was not able to decide what was meant by "or that is necessary to be prescribed".

However, even if the Minister of Labour and Industry could outline what is the meaning of the phrase, the Opposition would still not agree to what undoubtedly would be a blanket regulation-making power. The Opposition is not prepared to see any Bill passed that provides a blanket regulation-making power to the degree that the provision does in this Bill. It is so wide sweeping that it is absolutely necessary that the proposed amendment be carried.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The regulation-making power provided in clause 13 is commonly provided in legislation of this kind. It has been found that this wording would provide the regulation-making powers that are necessary to ensure that the intentions of Parliament are carried out. Any regulation must be within the regulation-making power provided by the principal Act.

The omission of these words risks a situation where a regulation, which legally may

not be covered by the remaining wording of the clause but which is necessary to give effect to the Act, cannot be made. The Government opposes the proposed amendment and I hope that my explanation will satisfy the honourable member for Westernport.

The amendment was negatived, and the clause was agreed to.

Clause 14

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Clause 14 provides for the abolition of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Water Resources Council and the transitional powers or provisions. The matter I raise relates to the statement by the Minister of Labour and Industry in his second-reading speech when he referred to the inquiry which had been continuing since early 1980 by the Public Bodies Review Committee into the water industry and, more especially, into the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and all associated bodies. The Minister in his second-reading speech stated:

> Further, it is the Government's intention to provide the committee with an appropriate term of reference to ensure that it can continue its investigation after the date when the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission formally goes out of existence and its irrigation activities are taken up by the proposed Rural Water Commission.

The second-reading speech also acknowledges the amount of work undertaken by the Public Bodies Review Committee. I draw to the attention of the Committee an extract from an opinion tendered by the Solicitor-General, Mr Berkeley, dated 8 March 1984 in which he states:

> My attention has been drawn to clause 14 (*h*) on page 21 of the Water (Central Management Reconstruction) Bill. I do not think that this provision would enable the committee to continue its reference. In the context of a resolution referring the commission to the committee the reference to the commission could not be read as a reference to the Rural Water Commission. Even if it could that would then require the committee to consider the functions of the Rural Water Commission (which is not desired).

In other words, what the Solicitor-General has indicated in his opinion, which was provided to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in relation to the inquiry being conducted by the Public Bodies Review Committee, was that once Parliament and the Government effectively abolished the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—and I hope the Minister of Labour and Industry is listening—that would terminate the current inquiry being conducted by the Public Bodies Review Committee.

As honourable members are aware, some outstanding terms of reference remaining before the Public Bodies Review Committee concern water restructuring and those matters relating to the question of water management, the financial costs associated with irrigation and the financial structure of the irrigation industry. Of course, the Public Bodies Review Committee engaged, at some considerable expense, consultants from the Centre of Policy Studies of the Monash University, who recently presented a controversial report to the committee on the costs and benefits of irrigation.

One would have expected that the Public Bodies Review Committee would ultimately report to Parliament on specific aspects of the Water Commission and would complete its inquiry concerning the whole water industry. If the Solicitor-General is correct—and it would seem to me that he is—once Parliament proceeds with the provisions of clause 14 in abolishing the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the inquiry into the water industry will have to cease.

If the Public Bodies Review Committee is asked to review the Rural Water Commission, it will be necessary to start again from scratch. That commission has only just been established, so it would be ridiculous to have a full-scale inquiry into that body; in fact, it would be totally impractical.

By interjection, the Minister states that there have been two opinions, and that is a valid comment. In fact, as a former member of the committee, I can state that there have been three opinions. The first was given to the committee in approximately 1981 by the then Crown Solicitor and it indicated that one of the early reports of the committee, specifically in relation to water restructuring, was a final report and that, consequently, the references in that report to the sunset component—which meant that if, after twelve months, no action was taken on the recommendations, those bodies recommended for abolition would automatically be abolished—indicated that that was the case. The then Crown Solicitor indicated that that was a final report in line with

the provisions of the Public Bodies Review Committee Act.

Subsequent to that, the Solicitor-General advised the committee that, in fact, it was not a final report and that, until the committee presented its absolute and final report in relation to the whole of the water inquiry, none of the recommendations concerning the abolition of various bodies, structural changes and so on would commence to operate after the expiration of the twelve-month period. The third opinion from the current Solicitor-General deals with the same question and states that the committee's eighth report was in fact a final report and that the twelve-month period would commence to operate, but that is not relevant to the matter that I am now raising with the Minister.

I am saying to the Minister that, once Parliament abolishes the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission under this clause, regardless of what the Crown Solicitor or Solicitors-General have said in the past concerning final reports, the committee must immediately cease any further consideration of its inquiry into the water industry and, more especially, into the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It seems that there is no way in which the Government can ask the committee to investigate the new Rural Water Commission, because it would be quite impractical to do that in that the committee would be investigating a brand new body, putting that new body through the review system again and imposing on it the same threat of a recommendation that it should be abolished.

I find that proposition ridiculous. The Government has put honourable members into a dilemma by proceeding with the Bill prior to the presentation to Parliament by the Public Bodies Review Committee of its final recommendations on structural changes in the water industry. The Government should have waited until the committee had presented its final report and then responded to that, but it has proceeded in the interim with it own internal inquiry through the Ministry of Water Resources and Water Supply. At the same time, the Public Bodies Review Committee has continued with its inquiry and, as I have already pointed out, the Salinity Committee has also been engaged in examining other matters. Furthermore, a number of internal reviews have been undertaken within the commission itself.

One would have hoped that the valuable work that has been carried out by the Public Bodies Review Committee, especially in recent months, would have come to fruition, but it will now have to be abandoned. I shall be interested to hear the Minister's comment on that situation. One would expect the Government to acknowledge the expert opinion from the Solicitor-General who has advised that, if the Government proceeds with the proclamation of the Bill, there is no practical way in which the present inquiry of the Public Bodies Review Committee can be completed, for better or for worse. I ask the Minister to comment on that situation.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The matters canvassed by the Deputy Leader of the National Party were, in fact, raised by several speakers during the second-reading debate. As he has advised me, in fact three legal opinions were obtained. I knew of two and I believe there are in fact two legal opinions on the matter.

However, it is proper for me to relay to the Minister of Water Supply the comments made by the Deputy Leader of the National Party and, while the Bill is between here and another place, I will do so.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I am happy to accept that undertaking because obviously the Minister of Labour and Industry is not in a position to answer the serious matter I have raised. The Bill should more appropriately be delayed until such time as the committee can complete its inquiry. To do as the Bill proposes and to proceed in the interim to restructure the organization, regardless of the ultimate outcome of the committee's inquiry, makes a farce of referring matters to a Parliamentary committee. In this case, it will mean that we have wasted many thousands of dollars because the Public Bodies Review Committee will not be able to report to Parliament on its inquiry.

The Minister said he believed three legal opinions were obtained and then he said that two had been obtained.

Mr Simpson—I said two; you told me three.

Mr HANN—But the Minister was not listening when I explained the matters to

which those three opinions were related. They related to the actual final reports of the committee and to whether an interim report is a final report. That matter is quite different from the matter with which I am now dealing in this debate. So far as I am aware, and I challenge the Minister to produce any other opinions to which he has access on this matter—I am sure he does not have access to any others—item 8 on page 3 of the Solicitor-General's letter of 8 March 1984 states clearly and concisely that, once the Bill is passed, section 14 (*h*) will have the effect of not allowing the committee to inquire into the activities of the Rural Water Commission, and of course that is not desired anyway; the desire is to continue the inquiry into the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. However, the dilemma is that, in the decision that the Committee is about to take, it will abolish the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It is totally impractical to inquire into a body that has been abolished.

I put it to the Government that it should delay the passage of the Bill until such time as the committee has had an opportunity of completing its inquiry. Unless it does that, it will make a farce of the whole Parliamentary committee system and will almost be in contempt of Parliament.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 15 to 19.

Clause 20

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

Clause 20, line 6, omit "relevant bodies" and insert "Director-General and the Rural Water Commission".

The basis of the amendment is a belief within the National Party that it is necessary to define the bodies referred to in the clause. Concern was expressed by my colleagues that the clause could effectively mean that, when the assets such as properties and so on are transferred, it may move away from the Director-General of the Rural Water Commission.

I suspect that that is not the case and I will be advised by the Minister. In examining the clause more closely since the amendment was proposed, I believe it suggests that the "relevant body" means the Director-General of the Rural Water Commission. I ask the Minister to comment on that matter.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The Government has examined the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the National Party and is prepared to accept it.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 21.

The heading preceding clause 22 was verbally amended, and the clause was agreed to.

New clause

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Insert the following new clause to follow clause 22:

'AA. After section 400 of the Principal Act there shall be inserted the following section:

"400A. No person shall have any right of action against any Authority or any member of any Authority in respect of anything done in regard to the disinfection or fluoridation of water in accordance with the provisions of section 400".'

The new clause was agreed to.

Schedule

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Schedule, page 27, after the entry relating to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act 1958 insert—

'6266 Grain Elevators Act 1958. In section 3 (1) in the interpretation of "Public corporation" for the words "State Rivers and Water Supply Commission" there shall be substituted the expression "body corporate known as the Director-General of Water Resources established by section 17 of the Water Act 1958, the Rural Water Commission of Victoria established by section 18 of the Water Act 1958".'

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Schedule, page 28, after the entry relating to the Health Act 1958 insert—

'8506 Health (Fluoridation) Act 1973. In section 2 in the interpretation of "Water supply authority" for the words "State Rivers and Water Supply Commission" there shall be substituted the expression "body corporate known as the Director-General of Water Resources established by section 17 of the Water Act 1958, the Rural Water Commission of Victoria established by section 18 of the Water Act 1958".'

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Schedule, page 28, in the entry relating to the Land Conservation Act 1970, omit "nominee of the Minister for Water Resources" and insert "Director-General of Water Resources or his nominee".

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Schedule, page 36, after the entry relating to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (Special Projects) Act 1969 insert—

'6386 Superannuation Act 1958. In Part II. of the Second Schedule the expression "Chairman or other Commissioner of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission," shall be repealed.'

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

Schedule, page 48, in the entry relating to Act No. 9895, omit "1982" and insert "1983".

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

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and the amendments were adopted.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I wish to briefly canvass the general thrust of the Bill and to express the disappointment of the National Party that the Government was not prepared to accept a number of major amendments to the Bill. Those amendments were proposed by the Victorian irrigators. The rejection indicates that the Government has snubbed its nose at the irrigation community.

The Government has refused to accept proposals by Victorian irrigators for restructuring the proposed Rural Water Commission. The Government has refused to clearly define the division of responsibility between the Department of Water Resources and the Rural Water Commission.

The National Party believes it is absolutely vital that the division of responsibility be clearly spelt out in the interests of the future autonomy and independence of the Rural Water Commission, if it is to be a genuine replacement for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

The SPEAKER—Order! I should advise the Deputy Leader of the National Party that there are some limitations on what he can say at the third reading stage. The honourable member may not introduce any new material, nor may he argue matters outside the Bill. The honourable member may deal only with matters inside the Bill.

Mr HANN—I certainly hope that I am not introducing new material. I did give a rather lengthy oration on the first occasion and there was not too much left to say.

The National Party was adamant that irrigators should have had at least three representatives on the proposed Rural Water Commission. The National Party also argued strongly that the functions of the Rural Water Commission should have been spelt out clearly in the Bill. In other words, the responsibilities being transferred from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to the Rural Water Commission should have been clearly presented to the Parliament before it was asked to make a decision on the proposed legislation. That has not occurred and it is a matter of grave disappointment to the National Party.

It is also a matter of grave disappointment to the National Party that the Opposition has not been prepared to acknowledge the representations made to it by the irrigation community, especially the irrigators from the Goulburn–Murray Irrigation District and in a joint approach from the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association and the other irrigator groups who ask for three elected representatives on the Rural Water Commission.

I can hardly believe that the Opposition would refuse to accept that request because it is a reasonable and logical request. That request, if acceded to, would not have given irrigators an absolute majority on the commission. It would not have provided an unreasonable balance of management by irrigators. It would have legitimately provided irrigators with an opportunity to have a greater say. The irrigation district extends from the Macalister district through to

Werribee and across the northern part of Victoria up to Mildura.

It is a very large area for two persons to represent. The Bill completely restructures the present water management within Victoria. That is a matter of concern because, as I mentioned during the second-reading debate, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is held in high regard interstate and overseas as a highly expert body in the water industry. Water Commission personnel have been sent overseas to assist many countries in their water management projects. The future of the water industry in Victoria is dependent on the proposed legislation being right. Because the Government has not been prepared to accept the major amendments to this proposed legislation, the National Party will oppose the third reading of the Bill.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	51
Noes	6
Majority for the motion	45

AYES

Mr Austin	Mr Miller
Mr Brown	Mr Newton
Miss Callister	Mr Norris
Mr Cathie	Mr Pope
Dr Coghill	Mr Ramsay
Mr Culpin	Mrs Ray
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Remington
Mr Dickinson	Mr Reynolds
Mr Ebery	Mr Richardson
Mr Ernst	Mr Rowe
Mr Fogarty	Mr Seitz
Mr Gavin	Mr Sheehan
Mr Gray	*(Ivanhoe)*
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Shell
Mr Hassett	**Mrs Sibree**
Mrs Hill	Mr Simpson
Mr Hockley	Mr Spyker
Mr Ihlein	Mr Stirling
Mr Jolly	Mrs Toner
Mr Kempton	Mr Trezise
Mr Kennedy	Dr Vaughan
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Walsh
Mr Leigh	Mr Wilton
Mr McCutcheon	*Tellers:*
Mr McDonald	Mr Micallef
Mr McKellar	Mr Sheehan
Mr Mathews	*(Ballarat South)*

NOES

Mr Hann	*Tellers:*
Mr McGrath	Mr McNamara
Mr Wallace	Mr Steggall
Mr Whiting	

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mr Jasper
Mr Kennett	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Templeton	Mr Evans *(Gippsland East)*

The Bill was read a third time.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (RENEWAL OF LEASES AND LICENCES) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry), was read a first time.

The sitting was suspended at 6.21 *p.m. until* 8.5 p.m.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS (APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES) BILL

The SPEAKER 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 Magistrates' Courts (Appointment of Magistrates) Bill.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to the appointment and tenure of stipendiary magistrates and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LANDS (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) BILL

The SPEAKER 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 Lands (Miscellaneous Matters) Bill.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to revoke the permanent reservations of certain lands, to revoke the Crown grant of certain lands, to

provide for the sale of certain lands, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITIES (FURTHER RESTRUCTURING) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 29) on the motion of Mr Simpson (Minister of Labour and Industry) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—The Bill introduces amendments to the Water and Sewerage Authorities (Restructuring) Act and other relevant Acts to bring the Geelong, Mildura and Ballarat urban water servicing bodies within the ambit of the restructuring Act. This will allow the authorities to be abolished and their functions and responsibilities to be transferred to new water boards, together with the functions and responsibilities of other water and sewerage authorities in the respective districts, which will also be abolished.

As honourable members would be aware, the Bill is really a flow-on to a Bill that was implemented and proclaimed last year, known as the Water and Sewerage Authorities (Restructuring) Bill. Honourable members will recall that the Bill was debated during the autumn sessional period and I understand the subsequent proclamation took place in June 1983.

The Bill is a continuing effort by the Government to change the role and structure of water trusts and sewerage authorities in this State in what it deems—and what the Opposition acknowledges, in the main—is a change for the better.

A substantial momentum has developed in the restructure of local water supply and sewerage authorities since the proclamation of that legislation last year. Indeed, the House is aware that, of the 339 original waterworks trusts, sewerage authorities and local governing bodies responsible for delivery of the various services throughout Victoria, 170 have been abolished already as a result of the investigations of the Public Bodies Review Committee, which was set up by the former Liberal Party Government. Members of the present Government, the Opposition and the National Party have contributed to the ongoing activities of that committee and all would agree that the recommendations mainly were good and have been supported by all parties.

However, the Opposition is aware that not all of the Government's proposals are good and I shall cover some of those aspects later in the debate. Depending on the outcome of further investigations under way at present on the management of water services in the Mornington Peninsula and Pakenham areas, what is in store for the future of those areas is unknown. The Government has backed away from introducing changes in the Mornington Peninsula area because of what one calls a political decision.

There is no question that there were cries from entities all over the State opposing amalgamation as recommended by the Public Bodies Review Committee but, of course, as often happens with this Government, those cries fell mostly on deaf ears. However, aside from the Mornington Peninsula being in a unique situation with its supply of water and sewerage, it is also an area containing two marginal Government electorates.

There is no doubt that if that were not the case that community would not be getting the benefit, which I applaud, of a re-examination of the matter by the Government. The investigation is occurring because the local community raised grave doubts on the recommendation for virtually one entity to control all water and sewerage functions on the peninsula and, thankfully for that local community, there is a marginal political situation in the area and, hence, the Government has agreed to give the issue further consideration.

The functions of the original 339 bodies will now be managed by 100 water boards and 43 municipal councils. Some members of the present Government when in opposition talked of small being beautiful and, conversely, I have heard some of those honourable members say both in opposition and recently that large is better. If one examines the present Government's philosophy of centralism and doing away with what some would call effective entities for the delivery of water and sewerage functions throughout the State, one would question some of the amalgamations that have occurred.

I do not make that statement lightly and certainly not against the good work that has occurred in many areas of the State as a result of substantial improvements emanating from the recommendations of the committee, but the fact remains that in all cases the Government should be prepared to re-examine these matters when a local community raises concerns, even in areas of the Latrobe Valley, Madam Acting Speaker, for which the present Government has not had regard. If concerns are raised by the local community the Government has a responsibility to re-examine the issues.

Included in the Bill is a continuous upgrading of the Government's purported aim to ensure—and I say "ensure" advisedly—that these communities will ultimately achieve a rate of real return relative to their assets. In other debates the House has heard me express the degree of lunacy of the Government requiring such a thing in all cases, because the rate of real return means that it does not matter how low one's rate is if one is a water trust because "Big Brother" comes along and says that one is sitting on $1 million-worth of assets and the rate must be put up because of the investment of money placed in the wherewithal of the delivery of the services. I refute that argument.

If a local water trust or sewerage authority can offer its users, the people who pay, a low rate through efficient management and through having repaid its debts, that is good luck. Why should the Government force on those bodies a situation where they must put up the rates they are charging solely because the Government as "Big Brother" has issued an edict that those bodies are not getting enough value relative to their assets and the Government wants to return as much of those assets a year to the State Treasury coffers as possible? That proposal is abhorrent and I reject it.

In the second-reading speech, in part, the Minister said that the Government recognizes that these changes will place demands on the managers and administrators of water services throughout the State. The Minister is not known for understating the case and, certainly, that would be one of the gross understatements in Parliament. The Opposition regularly receives representations from local communities. It is fair to say that many are being abused up hill and down dale because, not at their behest but at the behest of the Government, as a result of changes in philosophy, edicts are being issued whereby what was normal practice up to a couple of years ago has been thrown out and changed. In some places such as Mildura, the Bellarine Peninsula, Phillip Island and others, tourism forces on local communities the need for upgraded services and that cost, not only for water but also for the provision of sewerage, is placed on the ratepayers in those communities.

For example, Phillip Island has a permanent population of under 4000 and the requirement for water and sewerage generated by local ratepayers is not great but there is a massive influx of tourists and, as a result, those services must be upgraded on a basis considerably more than the needs of the local community. Some could say that in many cases that would benefit the local communities and, therefore, why should the local people not support the additional costs and added burdens of upgrading facilities.

However, the majority of those ratepayers derive no direct benefit from the influx of tourism. Many of these areas are inhabited by large numbers of retired people and it is true to say that they derive no direct benefit. Certainly, some areas do derive a benefit, such as the upgrading of a highway between Melbourne and the tourist destination, but those benefits are limited relative to the return of those ratepayers.

The situation in Victoria now is that rates are two and sometimes three times in excess of the State average for pensioners in those situations. The Government has belatedly recognized that fact in part and has introduced a scheme whereby assistance is given to some of the water trusts and sewerage authorities in that situation. However, the burden inflicted upon people throughout the State has not been entirely recognized. It is good to note the acceptance in part, but it does not go far enough. Only last week the Government issued a blueprint of its next step. The majority of people in rural Victoria regard it as the next step backwards. If the Government intends to promote tourism, the large increases in costs on ratepayers and taxpayers, in the main, should be a cost to the State. If the Government wants to promote tourism far in excess of the normal influx for regions such as Paynesville, Gippsland Lakes, the Bellarine Peninsula,

Mildura or anywhere else, the costs should fall upon the wider community, not just on the ratepayers, and especially on pensioners.

In the second-reading speech, the Minister indicated that the Water Structures Task Force completed its work in March 1983. It advised the Government on the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee's sixth report. The Government recognized an ongoing need for a unit to provide a focus for local authorities during the implementation stage of the structure. As honourable members are aware, the implementation group was established under the chairmanship of Commissioner J. C. Maglen, a person in whom the Opposition unquestionably has confidence as a true and professional public servant. Part of the charter of the implementation group was to develop formal mechanisms to implement the restructuring of the management of urban water services in Victoria in accordance with directions given by the Minister of Water Supply.

Mr Simpson—That is its right.

Mr BROWN—Yes. I shall indicate one situation in which an additional burden was thrust upon local ratepayers as a result of a Government edict. I do not in any way suggest that the Minister would hasten to use his powers, because the group will operate in accordance with the directions given. A sewerage scheme has been proposed at Inverloch. Two years ago, the plan was to reticulate sewerage in the township. A programme has been under way for some time to create lagoons and to have a treatment works to pump the effluent, after treatment, out into Bass Strait. Many of the local residents regarded that as a wise advancement. There is no doubt that sewerage is a necessity at Inverloch, which receives a large influx of tourists. However, the Government, in its wisdom and at the directive of the Minister, insisted that the scheme should not proceed, but that a full land disposal system be implemented. That is at considerable extra cost to the community at Inverloch. The Government gave an edict solely on conservation grounds that the proposed ocean outfall was not to proceed. It has been a long and sorry saga. It even included black bans by a union at one stage, although I understand that at present no black bans are in force. The Government and the Minister decided what was best with a more expensive scheme, even though the original scheme had received community acceptance and unquestionably would have done the job well.

The Government should be required to contribute equally to the additional cost of the more expensive scheme it has chosen. The additional cost is forcing a considerable burden on residents of that small community, where there is a high proportion of retired people. The State should consider the matter before it and act to relieve some of that burden. In circumstances of this kind, the State should foot the Bill for the increased cost.

The Bill directly covers the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust and the Mildura Urban Water Trust. I understand that the communities in these areas have been consulted, also by the Opposition, and the consensus is that the Government's proposal appears to have community acceptance, and that, at the local level, there is no opposition to the proposal. The management of water supply in Victoria will be an ongoing saga. The Minister stated that another review will take place, which will be a major piece of work aimed at introducing a simpler, briefer and more systematic legislative framework for the industry.

At this stage, water bodies can anticipate changes to their management and administrative procedures. This Bill is nowhere near the end; the community can anticipate more changes. All I can say is that I hope the Government does not procrastinate too long. It has been in office for two years now and changes are constantly being made. Some people believe that at times changes are made simply for the sake of change. The water industry must be getting near its optimum, relative to its ongoing management of a scarce resource in the supply of water. I hope honourable members cannot look forward to continued change in future as has occurred in the past two or three sessions.

Before concluding, I shall mention a couple of machinery amendments to the Bill. It gives the Minister of Water Supply the same power in respect of an existing water board as the Act already provides in relation to other relevant authorities, that is, to recommend to the Governor in Council that the water board be amalgamated with another relevant body, notwithstanding that

no application has been made by the bodies. The same safeguard on the exercise of this power is also applied in that the Minister is required to give his written reasons to both Houses of Parliament and to the relevant bodies 90 days in advance. The House is aware that the safeguard is at the behest of the Opposition acting in a vigilant manner, as it should, to ensure that the Minister gives those reasons 90 days in advance.

Another provision will enable the Governor in Council to increase or diminish any district under the jurisdiction of a water board. This same provision already exists in the Act with respect to municipal councils responsible for water and sewerage functions. The Opposition considers that is a fair and reasonable proposition.

Clause 18 will enable a district or districts of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to be transferred to a water board on the date of constitution of the water board. However, I urge the Minister of Labour and Industry to indicate exactly which districts will be covered by clause 18.

The Labor Party was elected on the basis of saying to the community, "Give us a chance; we can do better". It is a pity that I am confined to debating water and sewerage authorities because I should like to debate the proposed changes to the decentralization policy of the Government. Unless the Government has an early election, as undoubtedly it wants to, it has another year left in office to fulfil the promises it made.

The Government should not effect change merely for the sake of change but for the sake of improvement. The reason behind any change made by the Government should be to effect cost savings for the consumer of any Government services. Unfortunately, there has been no Government more bereft of fairness to the consumer than the present Government. The cost of changes made by the Government is astronomical for the consumer. The Government should recognize that the cost of its services must form part of its deliberations with regard to change.

The Government has committed itself to an overhaul of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. The Government has twelve months in which to rectify the problems it has alleged exist in the board. With only twelve months before the next election, it is time that the Government started to deliver some of the promises it made rather than examine some soft options and merely effect change for the sake of change, which imposes a heavy financial cost on the community.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—Last year, when the Public Bodies Review Committee was examining water and sewerage authorities, I was involved with the water trusts and sewerage authorities in the area I represent. It is interesting to be now involved in the debate on the Bill which implements some of the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee on restructuring Victoria's water and sewerage authorities.

Although the Bill deals only with the proposed restructuring of the Geelong, Mildura and Ballarat water and sewerage authorities, the Public Bodies Review Committee has recommended the total restructuring of water trusts and sewerage authorities throughout Victoria. By and large, the Public Bodies Review Committee has done a good job.

The City of Swan Hill now has a district water board. It is interesting to note that the functions of the 170 water trusts and sewerage authorities that will be abolished will be taken over by 45 water boards and 30 municipal councils. The operations of the municipal councils could have been extended into many water and sewerage areas if there had been a better understanding by the various departments on the proposed restructuring. It is to be hoped that Victoria does achieve the target of 100 water boards and 43 municipal councils handling all of the water and sewerage operations. It is to be hoped that those involved in the restructuring have the necessary flexibility to cope.

The Minister of Labour and Industry has said that the Government is hoping to introduce revised accounting and reporting methods for the water industry. The financial year for local government runs from September to October and for the water boards it is from July to June. Many of the water boards will be attached to councils. It is to be hoped that the Minister will address the accounting problems of the two financial years by introducing a common financial year.

It is proposed that the Mildura Irrigation and Water Trust will be formed into the Sunraysia Water Board. The responsibility for irrigation in that area will be placed with the proposed Rural Water Commission and the responsibility for the urban area will be placed with the Department of Water Resources. However, there has been no clear definition of responsibility of functions in that area.

The Mildura Water Board will be made up of three Mildura shire councillors, one each from the sewerage authorities from Red Cliffs, Merbein and Irymple. The Mildura Urban Water Trust will have two representatives, and one representative from Merbein. The Mildura Sewerage Authority will have two representatives on it. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will have one representative from the Red Cliffs area, which has been regarded as a little more than a minor urban supply but which has been controlled by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

Unfortunately, another unanswered question is: Where will that representative come from when the two Bills are put before the House together because the function of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will go to the department which will be based in Melbourne and will be an advisory body to the Minister?

The minor urban trusts should be given a mention. The Public Bodies Review Committee endeavoured to put the minor urban trusts into the water boards throughout regional Victoria, with unfortunate results. They were not accepted because they really have only one position and that is with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission or the new Rural Water Commission. By virtue of their size they have to be a subsidized reticulated water system. Otherwise it would be too expensive to have water supplied to the towns in the rural areas, especially in the Wimmera and Mallee.

The Bill covers the three areas of the Geelong and District Water Board, the Sunraysia Water Board and the Ballarat Water Board and much debate has taken place. The Minister for Local Government has been using the Mildura area as a planning situation with the Mildura Water Board to try to effect an amalgamation of the two councils there. The councils have rejected the idea, so now the Sunraysia Water Board has been formed and will come into action on a given date in the future.

If those two councils wish to amalgamate, the water and sewerage content for those areas is already formed and ready to go. It is hoped that there will now be an end to the matter of those communities being forced and cajoled into amalgamation, which may or may not be in their best interests. It is hoped that they will make those decisions on a basis different from the promises and threats of the Minister. The National Party supports this proposed legislation.

The three organizations and three communities involved will, I am sure, as they work out their problems with the transition, find it to be a successful and economic approach to the delivery of water and sewerage services within those areas.

The honourable member for Westernport mentioned that this is only an interim Bill because there will be an overriding clean-up Bill before the House at this time next year, which will tie these matters together. The National Party supports the Bill.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I thank the honourable members for Westernport and Swan Hill for their contributions to another of these very important water Bills. It is true, as both honourable members have indicated, that there have been a number of Bills relative to the matters of water in the Parliament in the past two years. Honourable members understand the importance of expertise, knowledge and deep consideration regarding the utilization of this important resource. This proposed legislation, although it continues from the restructuring Bill that was introduced into this place also—to be fair to the previous Government—follows on from Bills which it initiated and which had the support of all parties within this place.

The honourable member for Westernport raised a matter with relation to clause 18 which refers to the transfer of a commission district. He wanted to know whether there would be any intention of the Government in this proposed legislation for the Otways or Mornington areas to be affected. I can assure the honourable member that there is no intention in relation to the Otways or Mornington areas. The relevant areas are from the State Rivers and Water Supply

Commission districts of Robinvale, Wonthaggi and Red Cliffs and include the areas of Inverloch, Sunraysia and Shepparton. All relevant bodies are in agreement in relation to those matters. I thank those few honourable members from the Opposition party who have spoken for the support that they have given on this very important Water and Sewerage Authorities (Further Restructuring) Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

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 6.

Clause 7 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 8 to 13.

Clause 14 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 15.

Clause 16 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

The heading to Part V was verbally amended, and the remaining clauses were agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2 were verbally amended, and, as amended, were adopted, as were the remaining schedules.

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

STATE INSURANCE OFFICE BILL

This Bill was returned from the Council with a message relating to an amendment.

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

FORESTS (WOOD PULP AGREEMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 29) on the motion of Mr Cathie (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—The Bill ratifies, validates, approves and otherwise gives effect to an agreement between the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, the Forests Commission and Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd.

The Bill gives effect to an agreement, which amends the present supply agreement, whereby Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd obtains hardwood and pulpwood from State forests.

The company, the Government and the Forests Commission all support the Bill, which is a small but very important Bill because Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd is an important company in Victoria: It is a very important employer of labour and plays an important part in the economic activity of the State and the nation.

The original supply agreement was enacted in 1936, following the great depression, to encourage and support a commercial enterprise and to utilize a renewable resource in this State. A new agreement was reached in 1961, with further agreements being made in 1966 and 1974.

According to the agreement, the Forests Commission must provide a required amount of raw material to the company. At present the quantity of raw material is 750 000 cubic metres. Over the years, the demand expectation of Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd has not been as high as might have been expected and the company has not taken more than 340 000 cubic metres during that period.

Under the new agreement—that is, between 1983–84 and 1997–98—the quantity required to be taken will be 320 000 cubic metres. A change will then take place and from 1998 until 2004 the quantity required to be taken will be 370 000 cubic metres.

In spite of the renegotiation of supply to Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd that has taken place since 1974, the company has not used the total amount available to it because of a lack of demand and the company has been forced to pay penalty royalty payments which has had a severe affect on the company. In the year 1982–83, the total penalty payment Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd was forced to pay was close to $1 million. Up until now, the company has either had to take or buy 80 per cent of the agreed amount or make penalty royalty payments.

Under the new agreement, because of negotiations that have taken place between

the Government and the company, the penalty royalty payment will not operate if the company takes less than 80 per cent of the total requirement but only if the total falls below 90 per cent of the amount required to be taken. Flexibility regarding several other matters will also be built into the new agreement. One is that the total forest area from which Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd will receive its supply will be reduced. The Forests Commission will be able to sell to Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd up to 30 per cent of the quantity from outside the area and, at the same time, pulpwood not required within the area can be sold to outside interests.

The Opposition approves of the measure and wishes the Bill a speedy passage. It is understood that Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd is keen to see the Bill passed. The Bill is the result of negotiations between the Government and the company and, as it is in the interests of the company, therefore, the Opposition does not wish to obstruct it in any way.

I express concern about the fact that the Government is downgrading the Forests Commission. The Government has been unsympathetic to the activities of the Forests Commission and to the sawmilling industry as a whole. The Government has failed to recognize the importance to the State of the sawmilling industry as an employer.

I know from personal experience that the Government has very little regard for the sawmilling industry. In fact, if Victoria were unfortunate enough to have the Government stay in power for long enough, the Forests Commission and the sawmilling industry would disappear. I repeat, the sawmilling industry is a very important employer of labour and has played an important role in the total economy of the State.

The Opposition is concerned about the attitude of the Government towards both the activities of the Forests Commission and the downgrading of the importance of the sawmilling industry. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The National Party supports the Bill although it does so with a certain amount of sadness because it represents a downturn in an industry that has played a vital role in the development of Gippsland over a long period.

Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd has carried out its operations in Gippsland in a responsible manner. Unfortunately, the Bill is indicative of the fact that the expansion that was anticipated would proceed on a steady basis over a fairly long period has not taken place. It is a reflection of a downturn in the economy and of changing habits within the community. For example, a fairly dramatic change, which may not be apparent to most of the male members of the community, is the simple change from brown paper bags to plastic bags in supermarkets. That change has had a dramatic effect upon the industry. It does not appear to be an earth-moving change but it shows what effect a change like that can have.

Anyone who has carried out research into the measure and has gone to the trouble of finding out what happened in 1974 may have been puzzled by the fact that two Bills were introduced in that year. One Bill was introduced but was not debated—it was withdrawn and replaced by another Bill.

The *Hansard* report does not record all the toing and froing that went on behind the scenes at that time. I played a leading role in opposing what I believed at that time was a too generous extension of the area granted to Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd for the extraction of pulpwood. The original agreement, which was already signed and agreed to by the Government, was simply put before the House for ratification and it extended pulping rights as far east as Bemm River, which included virtually the entire forest area of east Gippsland. My principal objection was that it would inhibit the possible future extraction of pulp or paper manufacture in the eastern area of the State. It has the resource base on which an industry of that kind could be established.

It is strange that in 1974 I was a lone voice in opposition to the proposal to extend wood chipping operations in east Gippsland. I did not hear one conservationist raise his voice in opposition to it. They did not seem to be around at that time. It seems ironic to me that in recent times—the past four or five years—there has been vehement opposition to the utilization of waste resources from sawmilling operations which

would provide jobs and help build up the prosperity of the country.

Several years ago there was a move to establish an industry, but people were inundated with material, publications and reports about all the terrible things wood-chipping does to forests in southern New South Wales and Tasmania. Never once did any of those critics take up the challenge and indicate where any of this devastation was taking place in central Gippsland, where Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd, under the direction and control of the Forests Commission of Victoria, has been carrying out wood chipping operations since 1934.

It is an excellent illustration of how, with proper management and care, this type of operation will lead to better forests than exist today under what one might term natural conditions. There is evidence that in the forests north of Traralgon and Morwell, where this operation has been carried out over many years, proper regeneration can take place and that industry is not the great bogy so many people have implied it is over many years.

Honourable members have heard from the Government about this plan for economic recovery and growth, but the people in east Gippsland have found that their opportunities are being strangled by the Government, as they were by the previous Government, because the Government took too much notice of people who do not really know what they are talking about.

One of the most shameful episodes I have struck in my years of experience as a member of the House was when the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands took the extreme step of banning a Forests Commission publication on the area I have been discussing, which illustrated to the community what can be done with proper forest management techniques. It seems to me that the Government is not too concerned about pornographic material being available, but when it comes to the question of wood chipping, the Minister imposes censorship and will not allow a Government department responsible for the forests of the State—a body to which I am sure the average man in the street would look with utmost confidence to get a fair and impartial assessment of this important industry—to publish a document such as this.

Obviously there is some difficulty in putting forward a case for wood chipping because the sawmillers and companies like Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd that are engaged in the industry are immediately denigrated to some degree because they have a financial interest in it; they will put the rosy side of the picture. The people who put the other side of the story—the conservationists—receive a great deal of financial support from Government as well as other unknown sources, and they put their views very effectively.

If people are to obtain a true and impartial picture of the situation, they should be able to obtain that from the Forests Commission. It was a sad day when the very Minister who should be upholding the expertise, authority and experience of the commission has virtually rubbed the noses of commission officers in the dirt by making them withdraw several publications that they put out of their own volition to help educate the public about the true effects of proper forest management techniques that have been devised and practised in the State over many years.

There is no question in my mind that these techniques work. There is no question in my mind that as a result of those techniques the community will have a better forest than it would without them and, indeed, there are vast areas of forest which will never be decent forests again unless some action of this kind is taken to enable them to regenerate and rejuvenate. Vast areas of forests have been cut, logged for sleepers or poles and all the best timber has been taken out leaving the old damaged trees to survive, but still providing a canopy that prevents regeneration, which is essential if future generations are going to enjoy the forests of the State.

I am convinced, after many years of representing the area and from studying the matter, of the value of the industry and the necessity of establishing new forests. I believe it would be beneficial to the bulk of Victorian forests. I do not suggest every forest should be gone over in this way, but there are vast areas of forest which need this form of treatment if they are to become assets for future generations.

The Government has made a decision that in the case of Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd it no longer needs such a large

area from which to draw its hardwood, and there has been an agreement to reduce the area for which the company has a permit to extract pulpwood.

In 1974 a second Bill was introduced to delete what was then known as the eastern extension which would have extended the Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd area eastwards from Nowa Nowa as far as Bemm River and would have included the now notorious Errinundra Plateau. That is now history and is a matter for the future, but it is important that the country should become self-sufficient in its timber requirements because it is not beneficial to allow surplus material from sawmilling operations to lie and rot on the floor of our forests.

In other parts of the world where care for the environment is not as advanced as in this country, particularly in Indonesia, Borneo and South America, vast areas of forest are being cleared daily.

In many cases, that has been done to meet a demand which Australia could fulfil from material that was being allowed to go to waste. This matter should be considered in a global context. Certainly, forests are of concern throughout the world and it is a tragedy, although this valuable surplus to sawmilling requirements is going to waste in Victoria, that other countries are slashing vast areas of rain forests. However, that decision was made by Governments in the past and represents a sad state of affairs. The National Party supports the Bill.

In time, the National Party hopes Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd will continue its expansion. Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd is not going backwards but it is not growing at the rate it originally expected. Perhaps that is unfortunate, but it is hoped better days will come and that the company will continue to provide many opportunities for employment and that the initial prosperity which it has brought to Gippsland, in particular, and to Australia will continue.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I thank the honourable members for Ripon and Gippsland East for their support of the Bill. The new agreement has the support of Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd, the Forests Commission of Victoria and the Government. It is an important agreement which must be passed in this sessional period to come into effect on 1 July 1984. As opposition speakers have indicated, the agreement does reflect changes, particularly a major downturn in the products marketed by Australian Paper Manufacturers Ltd. One of those changes is that brown paper is no longer used as a supermarket carry bag because it has been replaced by plastic. The hopes expressed in 1974, when the previous agreement was reached, that the company's requirements for wood pulp would rise to 765 000 cubic metres by 1983 were not realized. Last year, it was only 256 000 cubic metres and the anticipated intake for the current year is 320 000 cubic metres.

The agreement is an important one which reflects that reality. The agreement provides more flexibility for the Government in its forests management procedures. I reject the view put forward by the Opposition that the Government is unsympathetic to the sawmilling industry. The Opposition apparently wants to put its head in the sand and completely ignore the fact that the Cain Government, followed by the Hawke Federal Government, has provided increased funds for the house building industry in Victoria and has revived that industry to the point where there has been a boom in house building. This revival also represents a boom for sawmillers.

I thank honourable members for their support. It is an important agreement that will meet all the requirements that the Government can foresee at this stage.

The motion was agreed to.

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

GROUNDWATER (RESERVES) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry), was read a first time.

GRAIN HANDLING IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITIES (ABOLITION) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 29) on the motion of Mr Simpson (Assistant Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—The main purpose of the Bill is to abolish the Geelong Grain Handling Improvement Authority,

the Portland Grain Handling Improvement Authority and the Country Grain Handling Improvement Authority and to transfer the assets, liabilities, properties, duties and obligations of those authorities to the Grain Elevators Board.

The Assistant Minister of Transport, in his second-reading speech, stated that the main reason for the establishment of the authorities was to provide the Grain Elevators Board with access to additional Australian Loan Council borrowing rights to enable the board to carry out major works at Geelong and Portland. Those authorities were established in 1979 and, therefore, it is reasonable to ask why, some five years later, they are to be abolished?

Circumstances have changed and there is now availability for alternative financing arrangements for major works. There were also extreme difficulties with the administration of those various grain handling improvement authorities and difficulties in meeting the requirements of the Auditor-General.

I am fully aware of the difficulties that arose from time to time because I was Minister of Agriculture when Mr Ken Gross, the then Chairman of the Grain Elevators Board, used to come to me, pointing out the problems the board was having with administration and with the Auditor-General. That is no criticism of the Auditor-General, but it was difficult under the Act to operate in a way that kept within the rules concerning some areas of efficiency. It should be recognized that the Liberal Government, which established those authorities, enabled work to be undertaken and much-needed facilities to be constructed by the Grain Elevators Board at Portland and Geelong, which constructions were in the interests of the industry and which played an important part in allowing what has been two record grain harvests to be handled over the past three or four years.

One important facility built was the loop at Geelong. Before that, the rail access to Geelong allowed the trucks to come in, be unloaded and be shunted out of the unloading area. That process was inefficient and slow. Since the building of the loop, trains can come in, unload, move out forward and allow unloading to continue. A new and automated weighing system was also constructed at that time. That was all part of stage one. At the same time, there was supposed to be an improvement in the road unloading facilities adjacent to rail.

Stage two was to be the provision of access to the horizontal sheds allowing for 3000 tonnes an hour loading, and the outloading capacity of the belts under the horizontal sheds at Geelong was to be increased to 1500 tonnes an hour. I ask the Treasurer to inform the House what is happening with regard to those stage two proposals and whether the Grain Elevators Board is treating them as matters of urgency. I also ask him to inform the House what is happening to the new electrical control centre which was to be part of those proposals.

Under the Portland Grain Handling Improvement Authority, a big boost was planned to capacity by the establishment of new elevators and associated equipment, including the reconditioning of one ship's loader from 400 tonnes to 800 tonnes an hour. That has been done since the establishment of that authority and has boosted the outloading capacity at Portland, making it more competitive and more efficient. I understand that a second ship's loader was scheduled, that the capacity of the gantry was to be increased to 1500 tonnes an hour and that plans were in hand for new road unloading facilities at Portland. Again, I ask the Treasurer to inform the House what stage has been reached with those proposals. Have they gone to tender? The Opposition has not been informed on the matter and cannot obtain that information unless the Minister makes it available to Parliament.

The third authority was the country authority in the northern area of the State. It had more difficulties than the other two. It was originally envisaged that there would be a terminal in the north but, because of problems concerning the buffer zone, problems concerning proposals for a standard gauge railway and problems concerning transport and inquiries into transport and so on, it was not possible for the Grain Elevators Board at that time to decide on any future constructions under the grain handling authority in the northern part of Victoria.

There are sub-terminals at Dunolly and Marma Lake, and there is still a need for a terminal in the northern part of Victoria. The problems at Dunolly and Marma Lake

relate to the need for substantial upgrading of those centres. In 1940, two temporary sheds were built with a capacity of 200 000 tonnes; they are now close to the end of their workable life and need to be replaced.

Many things need to be done in relation to the total grain handling situation in those three centres at Geelong, Portland and in the north of the State. I ask the Treasurer to give an assurance that the Grain Elevators Board will have access to funds in the future for capital expenditure. On the establishment of the various handling authorities, the previous Liberal Government made funds available to the board to enable it to carry out the various improvements and the building of the facilities that I have outlined and, in the future, the board will need to have access to funds to carry out its requirements over the next few years. I do not believe the taxpayer should have to provide all of the funds to allow those improvements and new facilities to be built; some of them should obviously come from the profits that may be generated by the activities of the board. However, I express concern on behalf of the Opposition at signs of the board being milked of its funds, and the Opposition hopes the funds that are generated by the board will not be lost to it and used for other purposes. The Opposition and the people of rural Victoria are becoming nervous about the activities of the Government in maintaining the facilities and the proper role of rural Victoria.

I ask the Minister to answer the questions I have asked. I am sure he will recognize the need to continue to upgrade the facilities of the Grain Elevators Board so that it can handle future grain crops in this State. Victoria may not see a record grain harvest again for a year or two but, undoubtedly, as technology advances, it will not be long before Victoria has a total grain crop in excess of the 5·2 million tonnes that it harvested this year. It is absolutely essential that the Grain Elevators Board should move with the times and be able to handle those crops in the future.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—As the honourable member for Ripon has said, the Grain Handling Improvement Authorities Act 1979 established certain authorities to undertake the development and construction of various improvements in relation to the transport and storage of grain. It established grain handling authorities at Geelong, Portland and one inland centre.

The idea was to enable those authorities, through the parent board, to borrow $1·2 million annually for improvements to the over-all facility.

I mentioned that in 1979 the average Australian wheat crop would be approximately 15 million tonnes. Even in that year Australia would have had a record export crop of approximately 12 million tonnes. This year that expectation has been reached with the harvesting of 20 million tonnes of grain throughout Australia, approximately 5·1 or 5·2 million tonnes of which came from Victoria. The Australian Loan Council showed foresight in allowing those bodies to borrow money to carry out improvements. It was particularly valuable for the grain handling facilities at Geelong and Portland.

The honourable member for Ripon mentioned the loop being established at Geelong. I do not think any honourable member will disagree that that was the right thing to do. The loop has speeded up the process of taking the grain which is delivered by rail.

It only failed during the harvest when it was needed most. Honourable members should analyse what happened at Geelong this year when it was planned that nine trains a day would be unloaded during the peak of the grain harvest. The best was an average of 7·5 trains a day. It was only at the end of the harvest that the railways reached its objective of unloading nine trains a day. Now, after the peak of the grain harvest, ten trains are arriving at Geelong each day.

During March approximately 230 000 tonnes of grain were delivered from country installations to port terminals, which is an excellent effort. The system fell down when that grain was being unloaded from both road and rail transport on to the ships. The installation at Geelong was not able to meet the target set for it. Further works may be needed at Geelong so that grain may be unloaded at the rate at which the rail transport delivers it to the installation.

During the peak of the grain harvest, a number of loaded wagons were positioned at the Geelong terminal waiting to be unloaded but because of the inefficiency of

the unloading belts the operation was slowed down. That aspect should be examined so that the same situation does not occur again. The facilities at Portland for handling grain should be retained because Portland is the best deepwater port in Victoria. Many of the grain carrying ships are becoming larger and many have a capacity of more than 50 000 tonnes. Portland is the only port in Victoria at which those ships can be fully loaded with grain.

At present at Geelong the ships are only partly loaded with grain; then they return to Portland to be topped up at the terminal before heading off overseas. Work still needs to be done at Portland to ensure that the port facilities are geared to handle more grain. Again I emphasize that it is the best port in Victoria. Facilities should be improved so that the grain handling ships can be filled at one port.

During the second-reading speech, the Assistant Minister of Transport said that the Geelong Grain Handling Improvement Authority had a net deficiency at 30 November 1983 of just over $1·3 million, which undoubtedly will be transferred to the Grain Elevators Board and will be settled through its mechanisms. I ask the Treasurer how that will affect the public authority dividend tax. Does it mean that now, because there is a liability through the board, the public authority dividend tax will be lowered? Will it mean that because those authorities have constructed various works the board will receive more assets, or will the dividend tax be increased?

The farming community will be interested to hear the Treasurer's response on that subject. It would appear from my understanding of the second-reading speech by the Assistant Minister of Transport that no longer will there be a necessity for these three authorities to remain in operation with different financial mechanisms which can be achieved through loan facilities arranged by the Federal Government.

The National Party has decided to support the proposed legislation. In 1979 the then Government was justified in introducing the legislation and attempting to arrange loan funding. That has been achieved to some extent. Improvements will still need to be made, as they always will, as the structures age and suffer from wear and tear over the years.

From time to time, the Grain Elevators Board will need to take out loans to increase the efficiency of the facilities. Those loans will always be serviced by the farmers who pay the handling charges imposed on them by the board. Farmers fail to see how the proceeds of the public authority dividend tax of $4 million through the Grain Elevators Board as described by the Treasurer will create greater efficiency and aid people in country areas. The National Party hopes the Government will continue to show interest in and concern over the continuation of the Grain Elevators Board and will assist the board in every possible way to ensure that the handling facilities are comparable with those in other parts of the world because the wheat industry is important to the over-all economy of Australia.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I thank honourable members for their support of the proposed legislation. It has been recognized that the borrowing requirements resulting from the grain handling improvement authorities are no longer applicable to meet the capital works programme in the grain elevators area. It has also been recognized by all parties that the 1979 arrangement was designed to temporarily boost the borrowing power in that area. That has caused administrative difficulties which have been referred to by the Auditor-General. Under those circumstances, it is considered appropriate to transfer the assets and liabilities of the grain handling improvement authorities to the Grain Elevators Board.

The honourable member for Ripon raised a number of questions concerning the progress of capital expenditure in the Geelong and Portland areas. I shall refer those matters to the Minister of Transport so that he can give a considered reply to the honourable member.

The honourable member also sought an assurance that, in future, the Grain Elevators Board, will have access to capital funds for future capital expenditure. As was noted by the honourable member for Lowan, the Government has decided that the board should operate on commercial principles in respect to future investments, and I can give an assurance that, where future investments are going to earn a real rate of return—that is, where they can be justified on economic

grounds—funds will be made available to meet those capital expenditure programmes.

I point out that the normal sources of funds are obtained through the Australian Loan Council, but the Government has also established a Victorian Development Fund, which is able to make funds available to organizations such as the Grain Elevators Board, when the investment can be justified on economic grounds.

Therefore, I can give an assurance to honourable members that, when investment is justified on economic grounds, the funds of the Grain Elevators Board will certainly be made available.

The honourable member for Lowan raised the deficiency of the handling authorities and how that will affect the board and, in turn, how it will affect the calculation of the public authority dividend. To the extent that the transfer of assets and liabilities from the handling improvement authorities to the Grain Elevators Board results in a net reduction in the equity of the Government in the board—that is, a reduction in the value of the assets minus the liabilities—all other things being equal, the calculation of the public authority dividend would be less than it otherwise would be. As the honourable member is aware, the Government has a target in regard to public authorities that the public authority dividend be a real return of 5 per cent on the equity of the Government in those particular organizations.

Therefore, if there is a reduction in the equity as a result of the transfer, that would correspondingly result in a reduction in the notional value of the public authority dividend. I also point out that the Government believes the Grain Elevators Board is an important part of the economic infrastructure of this State. The Government looks forward to building up the organization so that it can provide an even more effective service than it has provided in the past; and the Government recognizes the quality of the service it has provided in the past.

The Government, along with all other parties represented in Parliament, looks forward to making additional funds available to the Grain Elevators Board, through Australian Loan Council borrowings and other sources, and to continue to build on the efficiency and effectiveness of this organization to meet the needs of the farming community in Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

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

METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADES (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

The debate (adjourned from March 29) on the motion of Mr Mathews (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Bill contains a number of unrelated amendments to the principal Act, some of which are interesting. The majority of the amendments have the support of the Opposition. Nevertheless, the Opposition wishes to raise a couple of queries, to which I shall refer later.

The first of the amendments to which I refer relates to the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act which, as it stands does not encompass the port of Melbourne. That has created some difficulties in attending to fires in the port of Melbourne which is not part of the metropolitan fire district, and thus physically separated from the areas serviced by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. This has the potential to create a liability factor which is unsatisfactory, and there is no corridor for the board to be able to service that area.

Provisions are also contained in the Bill that will include all lands above the high water mark and all wharves, jetties and similar structures which are vested within the Port of Melbourne Authority. Therefore, the board's area of responsibility will be extended to include those lands and structures to which I have already referred as well as all vessels that are berthed at those structures.

There has been concern regarding the legal position of the brigades that have attended fires outside the metropolitan fire district. The Bill will allow those brigades to legally attend fires in areas outside their jurisdiction.

As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, the Country Fire Authority Act has been amended to empower the authority's brigades to attend fires outside

the country fire district and provides insurance cover to the authority when attending fires outside that area.

It is reasonable to expect that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board should have the same opportunity, direction and power to cover its brigades when attending fires that are subject to district control, and that they should be subject to the same control as are Country Fire Authority operators. In this regard, a joint working party of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Board and the Country Fire Authority has been set up. My understanding is that this working party has existed for some time and that discussions have occurred between the two authorities.

Some criticism was made of the Country Fire Authority after the Ash Wednesday bush fires by officers of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. The officers criticized the authority for not seeking assistance from the board during that time. I do not believe the criticism can be justified because many brigades throughout the State were not called on to attend fires on that day.

There certainly has to be some provision for fire brigades to be on the ready in case fires start in other areas. If all the fire brigades were sent to one point, a disastrous situation would result. I do not say that the situation on Ash Wednesday was not critical, but there is certainly a need to ensure there is some cover of new fires that may start in other areas.

The criticism that was generated by the board officers at that time did not do their cause much good because, under the circumstances, their equipment was probably unsatisfactory, and to put men into high fire-risk areas during such a period without satisfactory equipment would put their lives in jeopardy and would not achieve any reasonable purpose.

The Bill gives further powers to the chief fire officer regarding the demolition of buildings. Currently, those powers are restricted. A question mark exists on whether the powers currently contained in the Act are sufficient, and the Bill clears up that uncertainty. Delays have occurred in securing permission from the owner of a gutted building for demolition to take place. It can be difficult for mopping-up operations to take place efficiently and effectively when the powers given to the chief fire officer are in question.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister indicated that the Bill empowers the chief fire officer to order the demolition of a building that has been damaged by fire. The expense of such a demolition is to be borne by the owner of the building, although such expense can be offset by the proceeds of any sale by the board of materials salvaged from the demolition. The owner of the property will have insurance cover, and I wonder how the Bill empowers the board to sell the materials to offset the expense incurred through the demolition of a damaged building. I would like the Minister to explain how that can legally take place. In my view, under those circumstances, the board should not have the power to sell the materials, and a question exists as to how the board can be empowered to carry out the sale of such materials.

The Bill refers to inspections and gives broader powers to the board to service fire hoses and reels throughout its jurisdiction. It is desirable and necessary that the equipment is regularly serviced to ensure that it is in first-class condition. The Bill empowers the board to sell fire extinguishers and other fire-prevention equipment to ensure that the standard of the equipment is kept at a high level. I ask the Minister to explain the "average retail price" and how that decision is arrived at.

The Bill also amends the Country Fire Authority Act to enable the appointment of a full-time acting deputy chairman of the authority because there is currently no chairman of the authority. I give notice that I propose to move an amendment during the Committee stage because the Opposition believes the chairman should be appointed from within the authority. I ask the Minister to comment on the matters I have raised, and I will make further comments during the Committee stage.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The honourable member for Midlands has detailed the various provisions contained

in the Bill. None of them are earth shattering, nevertheless, they are important for the smooth operation of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, and they will rectify some of the anomalies that are causing problems in the operation of the board. The alterations regarding the port of Melbourne are potentially the most important, and it is strange that that area should still be under the jurisdiction of the Country Fire Authority. It is a perfectly logical step to make the changes contained in the Bill.

The other amendments are of a machinery nature, but I am a little curious about clause 9, which is designed to take out any inference of sexism from the Bill by substituting the words "spouses members of their families" for the words "wives families widows"; the words "the members of" for the words "men belonging to"; and the words "force of men" for the words "force of persons". One wonders how far down the track we are going with these types of amendments.

I refer to the current edition of *Equal Opportunity Forum* which reports a comment made by a Tasmanian Senator who objected to a Medibank Private advertisement. He stated that it was sexist and offensive because it indicated that Medicare clients would be dealt with by "a friendly girl with a computer". The Minister for Social Security, Senator Grimes, indicated that he had not heard of the advertisement but would be concerned if a statutory authority indulged in the type of sexist advertising referred to.

When the expression "a friendly girl with a computer" can be called a sexist expression, one wonders what we will be able to say in the future. This is supposed to be a free country, but when people in places of authority are going to such absurd extremes to try to completely take out any inference of sexism from our legislation, we will have a lot to deal with in future years. They are unnecessary and futile amendments when Parliament is dealing with important matters such as the operation of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board.

When the Minister gave notice of this Bill and the Country Fire Authority (Amendment) Bill, there was a certain ripple of apprehension around fire brigade circles, particularly within the Country Fire Authority, about whether these were the Bills in which the long-awaited axe was to fall. It was with some degree of relief that the two Bills were found to be as innocuous as they turned out to be. I assure the Minister that many people have examined the Bill with a finetoothcomb, and I hope they have got all the nits out, although I am not sure. The honourable member for Midlands referred to clause 13, which amends section 9B of the Country Fire Authority Act. The National Party supports the proposed amendment to be moved by the honourable member for Midlands. The National Party wants the provision tightened up to ensure that there will be no further fooling around with the important positions of chairman and deputy chairman. The National Party supports the Bill with the proviso that it will support the proposed amendment to be moved by the honourable member for Midlands.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I refer to the second-reading speech of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services where he said that the Bill amends the Country Fire Authority Act to enable the appointment of a full-time acting deputy chairman of the authority while the incumbent of that office is acting as chairman or is otherwise unable to discharge the duties of his office. That is fair enough so long as the full-time acting deputy chairman is not retained in that office for a lengthy period.

For a number of months, the fire services have been waiting for the Minister to appoint a permanent Chairman of the Country Fire Authority. Yesterday, I attended an annual meeting of region No. 17, which Mr Ed Baines, the Chairman of the Rural Fire Brigades Association, attended also. Strong concern was expressed about the morale of the volunteer members of the authority and about the Minister not moving as quickly as most members would like in the appointment of a chairman.

Further, a motion was passed at the meeting that the rural fire brigade would not accept any type of integration. It was prepared to stand strongly and firmly on that point. Region No. 17 represents some

90 brigades throughout the Wimmera and southern Mallee. I request the Minister to indicate when he will appoint a Chairman of the Country Fire Authority.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I thank members of the Opposition and the National Party for the support given to the measure. The honourable member for Midlands, in the course of his remarks, asked where the Bill provided the power for the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, through its chief officer, to recover the cost of demolition of a building through the sale of material salvaged from that demolition process. That power is expressly conferred in proposed sub-section (1c) contained in clause 8 and I think it is beyond doubt.

The honourable member for Midlands queried the meaning of the words "average retail price" where they applied to the sale of fire-suppression appliances conferred on the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board by the proposed legislation. The answer is simple. That calculation is based on the prices collected from the principal manufacturers and suppliers of fire-suppression equipment, totalled, and averaged.

The honourable member for Gippsland East took some exception to the fact that the Bill amends the terms of the principal Act through the substitution of gender-free terminology, namely, the substitution of spouse for husband, of fire fighter for fireman and of persons for men. I understood the rephrasing of the legislation in this instance to reflect a change in reality of fire services. A short time ago, only persons of the male gender were employed as fire fighters or took the field as fire fighters in a voluntary capacity. That reality is in the process of change.

As yet, the first woman fire fighter has not joined the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board in Melbourne, but there are women fire fighters in the metropolitan brigades elsewhere in Australia. Certainly, in the Country Fire Authority brigades women now fight fires shoulder to shoulder with men. Indeed, one of those women tragically lost her life in the Ash Wednesday fires. No artifice or affectation is intended in the re-wording of the Bill on this aspect but rather a simple recognition that the world is changing and that the language of legislation should change along with it.

The honourable member for Lowan raised the appointment of a Chairman for the Country Fire Authority. I am very anxious to see this position filled but I am anxious, too, to ensure that it is filled by the best person for the position whom this Government can possibly obtain. It is a matter of record that in November last year the Government placed advertisements in a wide range of news media for the position of Chairman of the Country Fire Authority and a number of applications were received.

Mr B. J. Evans—Outside the State?

Mr MATHEWS—Some of the advertisements were circulated outside the State. At that time I was engaged in discussions with the Urban Fire Brigades Association and the Rural Fire Brigades Association and, in the course of those discussions, I put to the two associations the proposition that it might serve the interests of both the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board if they had a common chairman.

The people who were involved in those negotiations on behalf of the two associations agreed that there was merit in that proposition as there was merit in several other proposals which similarly were discussed. They, however, were not authorized to commit their organizations and agreed that they should take back the proposals for discussion with their respective executives.

The respective executives rejected the other proposals and advised me of their rejection by letter dated 14 December. They did not advise me of the objection to the proposal for a joint chairman and I assumed from the fact that I received no such advice that at least they considered this proposal worthy of further discussion. Therefore, I took no further action on the appointment of the Chairman of the Country Fire Authority pending the resumption of our discussions in the New Year and, when the resumption of those discussions occurred, I was advised that it had been the intention

of the associations likewise to reject the proposal for the common chairman for the two fire-fighting authorities.

Once that matter had been made clear, naturally I set in train again the process of finding a suitable chairman for the authority. I might say that it is not through advertisements alone that the Government is now trying to find the best possible person for this job.

I take the opportunity to re-affirm my belief that the interests of both the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board would have been well served if the President-Designate of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, General Hughes, had become the common chairman for the two organizations. I believe in the course of the recent fire season that General Hughes, in his role as Deputy Co-ordinator-in-Chief of State Disaster Legislation, won himself great respect in the eyes of all the people in the fire and emergency service areas with whom he had to deal.

He is a man with an exemplary military record and a man of immense administrative skill and commitment to the achievement of high standards of efficiency and effectiveness on the part of all the organization with which he has had to deal in a long and distinguished career. I regret that the opportunity that his availability presented for the whole fire-fighting community was not taken up. However, the decision has been made, advertisements have been placed and other channels of finding a suitable chairman are being followed. I will be making an appointment at the first possible opportunity. In the meantime, the proposed legislation has been introduced in recognition of the excessive burden that is imposed on an acting chairman of the Country Fire Authority when that acting chairman is obliged, as in the present instance, to serve for an excessively long period, and does not have the benefit of an acting deputy to back him up in the way that a deputy normally backs up the chairman of the authority. That deficiency will now be remedied with the passage of the Bill. I will have no difficulty in accepting the amendment foreshadowed by the honourable member for Midlands in the Committee stage.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 12 were agreed to.

Clause 13

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—I move:

Clause 13, line 40, omit "an eligible person" and insert "another member of the Authority".

The reason for the amendment is that the Governor in Council may appoint an eligible person to act in the place of the deputy chairman during a period of inability. As the Minister outlined in his response to comments made by the honourable members for Lowan, Gippsland East and myself, certain problems have occurred in the appointment of a new chairman and the problem regarding the deputy chairman made it difficult for the deputy chairman to operate because his duties were time consuming in the absence of the chairman. The Opposition considers that the provision, in referring to "an eligible person", is far too wide and that the person should be a member of the authority. As the Minister outlined, he has no objection to accepting the amendment. I thank him for that.

The amendment was agreed to, as were consequential amendments, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

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

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (BORROWING POWERS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 29) on the motion of Mr Mathews (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Bill is similar to other Bills that have been introduced on a number of occasions in this House to increase the borrowing powers of the Country Fire Authority. The Bill increases the statutory limit on borrowings from $30 million to $40 million. One may consider that to be a substantial increase, but the Opposition has no objection to that increase.

It is perhaps time to reflect on the work that Country Fire Authority members have done, particularly in a voluntary capacity. I should like to comment on the funds that have been expended by the authority, and also on the money raised by it to upgrade its equipment. The Country Fire Authority has done magnificent work since the 1940s when it came into operation.

I refer now to the Country Fire Authority annual report for the year ended 30 June 1977.

The SPEAKER—Order! The time appointed by Sessional Orders for me to interrupt the business of the House has now arrived.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), the sitting was continued.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—According to the annual report for 1977, the number of self-propelled vehicles and trailers that were brigade-owned totalled 109. However, according to the 1982 annual report of the Country Fire Authority, the authority owned a total of 466 vehicles and the brigade owned a total of 335 vehicles. The number of trailers owned by the authority was 466 and the number of brigade-owned trailers was 24. The number of authority-owned vehicles was a total of 1685 and the number of brigade-owned vehicles was a total of 335. Compared with the figures for 1977, when there was a total of 109 brigade-owned trailers, in 1982 there were 335, which indicates the massive amount of work performed by volunteers to upgrade the machinery used by the Country Fire Authority to ensure the protection of life and property during bush fires.

Unfortunately, volunteer workers for the authority are not covered under public risk insurance. It is essential that the Government do everything possible to ensure that volunteer workers who raise significant amounts of money to upgrade brigade equipment are covered by public risk insurance.

The SPEAKER—Order! I presume, in view of the events of the past few days, that the honourable member for Midlands is making a passing reference to these matters with a view to making some point to suit his purposes for the future. The Bill is particularly restrictive in its ambit. Perhaps the honourable member could return to the Bill.

Mr EBERY—The work performed by volunteer workers for the Country Fire Authority has saved the Government a considerable amount of money. If it were not for this work, larger borrowing powers would be required to cover the demands of the various brigades throughout Victoria.

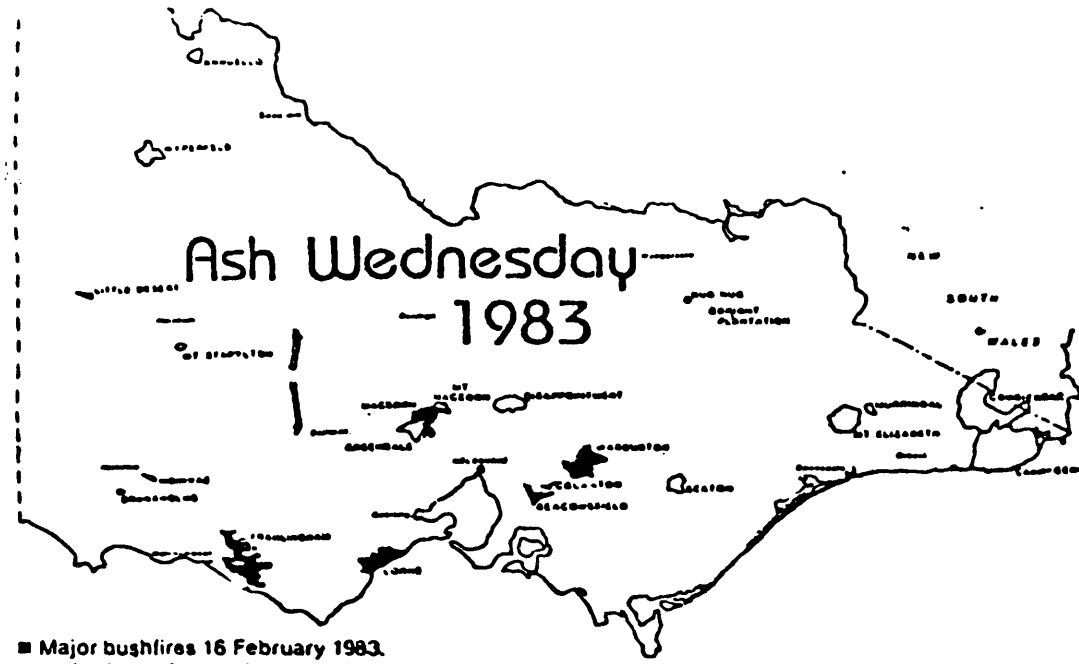
The SPEAKER—The honourable member is in order.

Mr EBERY—I should have clarified that point earlier. All volunteer organizations in Victoria deserve Government assistance because they save the taxpayer a lot of money. The Opposition welcomes the Bill.

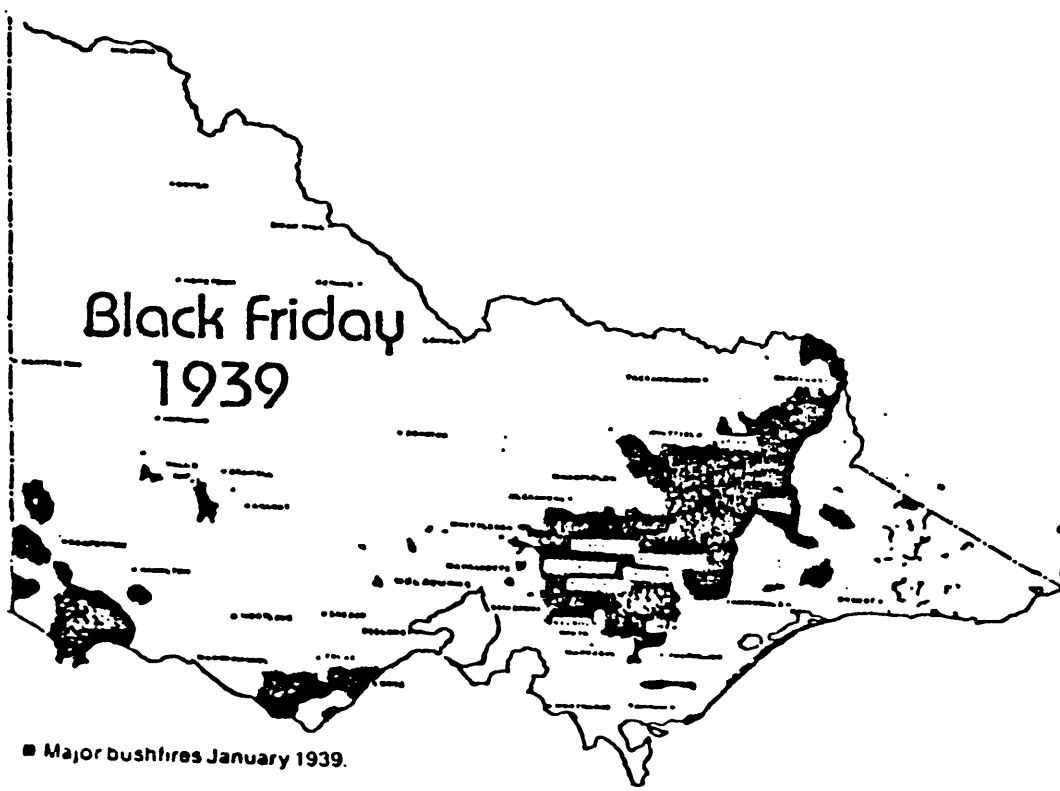
Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The National Party supports the Bill, which, when passed, will increase the borrowing limit of the Country Fire Authority from $30 million to $40 million. It has been estimated that the 1983 bush fires caused approximately $200 million worth of property damage, apart from the appalling loss of life. When one considers that figure, one realizes that the amount of money which the community at large stakes in fire-fighting equipment in country areas is not particularly large.

Last year was considered a bad bush-fire year. However, in a recent issue of the *Natural Resources Conservation League Journal*—the league is a fine conservation organization—maps were published showing a comparison of the areas of the State burnt in the Ash Wednesday bush fires 1983 and the areas of the State burnt on Black Friday 1939. I seek leave of the House for these maps to be incorporated in *Hansard.*

Leave was granted and the maps were as follows:



■ Major bushfires 16 February 1983.
□ Major forest fires before and after 16 February 1983.



■ Major bushfires January 1939.

Mr B. J. EVANS—The maps illustrate the dramatic extent of the bush fires that Victoria could again face. The maps clearly demonstrate that the fires of Black Friday 1939 burnt an area twenty times greater than the area burnt by the bush fires of Ash Wednesday 1983. The major difference between the two bush fires was that by 1983 people were working and living in forest areas. A Royal Commission was established to inquire into the causes of the Black Friday bush fires. One of the recommendations of the Stretton Royal Commission was that sawmills, which had traditionally been established in forest areas, should be moved out of those areas because of their potential fire hazard.

I do not believe the Government has learnt the lessons of Ash Wednesday 1983. I believe another disastrous bush fire will occur. It may be 30 years away, but under Australian conditions it is virtually inevitable that another tragic bush fire will occur. The *Natural Resources Conservation League Journal* states:

> Victoria is one of the most hazardous bushfire areas in the world. Its climate, nature of its forest and the fierce northerly gales that sometimes accompany days of searing heat combine to produce potential disaster situations with regularity. On days such as 'Ash Wednesday', those potential disasters are realised.
>
> Fires in these conditions are intense and difficult to control. If this is further compounded by such fires occurring during drought periods and northerly winds persist for a number of days, then the probability of damaging and disastrous fires is very high.

That screed ought to appear on the wall of the home of every person who chooses to build in a forest area which is vulnerable to these disasters from time to time.

Although it is fine to encourage the use of native plants and trees in the gardens surrounding houses, in fact they are serious fire hazards. Unless people become more aware of this danger, the community will face fire disasters more often in the future.

It is hoped that some of the funds that will be provided under the proposed legislation will be applied to improve safety for fire fighters, especially to improve the safety features of fire trucks. The greatest tragedy in the Ash Wednesday disaster was the loss of the crews of two fire trucks in circumstances that were heartbreaking to everybody in the nation.

There is a need for more research, not necessarily into the construction of the trucks but into the way in which a protective blanket, or something of that nature, could be developed and made available to people caught in a dangerous fire situation.

The proposed legislation is most important for people in our rural communities. We are all appreciative of the work of the Country Fire Authority in training fire fighters and providing, developing and maintaining equipment. However, there is a need for increased public awareness, which could, perhaps, be spearheaded by the Country Fire Authority, to alert people to the dangers in surrounding their homes with particular plants and trees.

The proposed legislation is timely because the Country Fire Authority must begin its preparations now for the next fire season, and the National Party hopes that the proposed legislation has a speedy passage.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—This proposed legislation amends the Country Fire Authority Act and allows an increase of 25 per cent in its borrowings—from $30 million to $40 million. Although the borrowings of the Country Fire Authority have been increased, there should be recognition of the contributions made by the various brigades across the State, particularly in the area I represent.

The women's committees of these brigades do an enormous amount of work in raising financial contributions to match the contributions of the authority. Actually, the local fire brigades become the type of club within the community where men, women and children participate for the one common cause, which is to be ready for action in the case of fire threatening properties or homes in the communities in which they serve.

A substantial financial commitment and contribution is made by the local people in improving the equipment which is available to fire fighters in time of emergency and which to a large degree supplements the equipment made available to these brigades through the Country Fire Authority. I have been happy to note that in the electorate I represent nine new units will be placed with the various fire brigades. Six of these units are for 4-wheel drive vehicles which are advantageous in the terrain and three units

are for conventional-type vehicles which will be bought as a result of the ability of the Country Fire Authority to borrow money.

I commend the honourable member for Gippsland East for producing the map, which has been incorporated in *Hansard*, that refers to the two major fires in Victoria's history, the one of Ash Wednesday of last year and the one on Black Friday in 1939. The maps indicate that probably three or four times more country was burnt out in 1939 than there was burnt during the Ash Wednesday fire, yet the loss of life was more significant on Ash Wednesday. It is necessary to look at the planning permits that have been issued for people to build in the areas concerned. This matter needs to be watched closely because it brings a great deal of sadness to a community when a large loss of life occurs through bush fires.

The Country Fire Authority is testing a new concept of the supply to fire brigades of woollen overalls. At present, volunteer firemen wear a brightly coloured yellow overall, which in most cases is made of cotton, but there has been a move, especially from the Harrow Wool Promotion Group in the Western District, to have the woollen overalls adopted. These overalls would cost approximately $50 to $60 a pair. Much research has been done by the Country Fire Authority on the use of wool in overalls. I recommend that the course be followed through as quickly as the financial constraints will allow. Wool is a fibre which has a high degree of non-flammability and it safeguards the firemen in circumstances where the heat of fires is severe. On occasions, it could save them from serious burns, or even from death.

It is pleasing to note that the proposed legislation provides for the Country Fire Authority to increase its borrowings from $30 million to $40 million. I am sure that on taking up those borrowings, the authority will use that money to the advantage of all Victorians to alleviate the trauma that is associated with an outbreak of fire.

The motion was agreed to.

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

SUPPLY (1984–85, No. 1) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 4) on the motion of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—In the traditional manner, the Bill is seeking Supply for the Government for the first five months of the next financial year, from 1 July next, to enable it to continue with its general programmes of Government Supply until the next Budget is carried by this House.

On this occasion, the Supply Bill has two distinctive features compared with any Supply Bill preceding it in the history of Victoria. For the first time, the Bill has been presented in programme form and the House is being asked to consider a Supply Bill which contains provisions, both for the traditional recurrent expenditure of Government and the capital expenditure that, in the past, was incorporated in a separate Works and Services Supply Bill.

These two new features are matters that must be of concern and interest to the House. I indicate the general concurrence of the Opposition in these changes. One should congratulate the Government for continuing a programme that was commenced by the former Government and it is good to see the further development of programme budgeting.

It is important to comment about both aspects of the Supply Bill. As the Treasurer would acknowledge, programme budgeting is still in its infancy as far as the total programme is concerned and a number of areas still exist where a good deal more work needs to be done.

The House can readily accept the idea of the public expenditure of the State being set out in programme form with the objectives of the different programmes outlined in broad and then, as the programmes develop, broken down into more detail for the consideration, not only by Parliament, but also by the community as a whole. The problem still remains that, in considering these objectives and programmes, difficulty still exists in comprehending the total scene.

The way in which the Government is proceeding is, firstly, to break up the total area of public administration into broad policy areas and, secondly, under these broad policy areas, to identify appropriate departments and, within the appropriate departments, to identify programmes and within those programmes to identify sub-programmes. The sub-programmes are made up of various components and, within

the components, a range of specific activities can be found.

As the Treasurer pointed out, on this first attempt to have the whole of the public sector presented in programme form, the Government has identified 148 separate programmes. Within those programmes are 5000 activities. When one starts to consider this number of separate areas, one appreciates the difficulty in reaching a comprehensive view of the total activity of the public sector. It is particularly difficult in these early stages because there was no similar programme last year with which to compare this year's figures. In some ways, Parliament and the community will be placed in a difficult situation during the changeover period.

The Opposition is prepared to live with that for the next twelve months, recognizing the intention of programme budgeting to provide a clearer picture and acknowledging that, in the early stages, comparisons will be difficult to make.

It is of particular concern in the larger departments such as education, health and transport which, together, make up the bulk of expenditure in the areas of State responsibility. The devising of suitable activities in each of these departments is a particularly complicated matter. I accept that considerably more work still needs to be done in each of these areas.

When one examines some of the figures presented in the Supply Bill, one realizes the types of difficulties that the Government is facing. Having established the programmes and having divided them into subprogrammes and their various components, decisions must be made on how best the performance of that section of the programme is to be evaluated. The development of proper monitoring and evaluation procedures is an important follow-up step to the introduction of programme budgeting.

As the Treasurer said, it is important to develop meaningful indicators if the new figures are to be of any help. Even at this early stage, one would have hoped that one would have had some meaningful indicators in the Supply Bill.

Last year's Budget was presented in programme form in what one might call a special supplementary edition of the Budget. In December last year, a post-Budget publication was made available to the community. One would like to be able to examine the Supply Bill in the context of those programme budgeting documents and ascertain the success and direction of the specific programmes.

It is something of a disappointment to the note that as yet it is not being developed in a meaningful way. One example is the health programme that appears on page 4. There are ten separate programmes or components, depending on how tight an analysis is being presented. This year, under the heading of "Health", the money that has been requested by way of Supply is divided up largely on the basis of the different areas of the State. Item 364 refers to health services in the Barwon–South Western Region for recurrent expenditure. The following items include different regions, including the Loddon Campaspe–Mallee Region, the Goulburn–North Eastern Region and the Gippsland Region.

The final item is Hospitals and Charities Fund contribution for recurrent expenditure. One is told that the health programme is on a regional basis with an extra two items of recurrent expenditure, namely head office and central services and Hospitals and Charities Fund contribution for recurrent expenditure.

It is not unreasonable to examine the health programme in previous Supply Bills when the health element was divided up into health administration, salaries, general expenses and other services, public health, hospitals, mental retardation services and mental health services. It becomes a fairly academic point to say which of the two Supply Bills has provided the most helpful information. I suggest to the Treasurer that there is really not much difference.

Is it of greater interest to the community to know how much money is being spent on the conglomerate of health services in the different regions of Victoria or is it of interest to ascertain what outlays are being made in the different functional areas in the Health Commission so far as mental retardation, mental health and other health services are concerned? Neither provision gives a very clear picture and that provides an indication to the Treasurer that a great deal more work needs to be done on refining the identification of individual programmes

under programme budgeting, if it is to be helpful in the future determination of public expenditure in this State.

I am not suggesting that programme budgeting is, in itself, a bad idea. I believe it is a good idea. I hope the Government will develop programme budgeting further and that constructive criticism from the Opposition will be of some assistance in that aspect of public administration in Victoria.

I turn briefly to another aspect of the new Supply Bill—the fact that works and services expenditure has been incorporated in the Supply Bill—although not fully in programme form yet, it has been included as a separate clause but, nevertheless, it forms an integral part of the Supply Bill.

When drawing the attention of the House to this fact, the Treasurer reiterated the concern of the Government and its intention of keeping capital expenditure distinct from Current Account expenditure, maintaining that there is an important distinction if one is going to keep an eye on where public expenditure is going.

I am grateful that the Treasurer made that comment. I am sorry that the line between these two expenditures has become blurred in a number of areas. I remind the Treasurer that this was pointed out in the course of the Budget debate in the Spring sessional period of the current Parliament when the Opposition strongly asserted that a number of items that appeared in the Current Account were recurrent expenditure items.

I refer to the interest and leasing charges that this Government has brought upon itself as a result of the methods it has adopted to finance capital expenditure in the area of transport. The Government has taken the step of selling the assets of the railways and leasing them back and those leasing charges become recurrent expenditure. The practice of the Government is to list them as capital expenditure in the Budget Papers. That practice has blurred the area.

I am encouraged that the Treasurer stated when presenting the Supply Bill that the Government is concerned about keeping recurrent items and capital items separate. I encourage the Treasurer to ensure that in his next Budget he takes a fresh look at the practice he adopted last year to ensure that it does not occur again because then Parliament can obtain a real indication of where the expenditure is lying and where it is moving so far as capital and recurrent expenditure is concerned.

It is a little disappointing that a broad brush approach has been adopted with respect to items under works and services expenditure despite the assertion by the Treasurer that he was going to give the House a good deal more information. If one looks at the information that is available under the heading of works and services expenditure, for example a number of items are listed under item 76—there must be about twenty items which have one huge bracket around them and $27·5 million has been made available for works and services expenditure. Some of the projects included under item 76—programme 765—are the Mitchell River project, the Lance Creek reservoir project, other storages and headworks, water supply recreation areas and maintenance and minor improvements. If one is looking for information, no information is provided. It is apparently "catch as catch can" for the next five months as to which of those items will or will not proceed because a total amount of $27·5 million is to be spent in the area of water supply.

That may be the best that the Government can do at this stage in its development of programme budgeting so far as expenditure in the works and services area is concerned, but one cannot pretend that that item is very informative.

Finally, I direct the attention of the House to another feature of the Supply Bill which is more a curiosity than anything else. In the normal chain of events it is necessary, because one is looking for Supply for a five-month period that lies in the future, to have some provision to cover movement in award rates of pay that may flow from the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. Provision must be made in any Supply Bill to enable the Treasurer to meet those extra wage and salary demands that might be put on the Supply Bill.

One clause in this year's Bill indicates that any movement in award wages and salaries that takes place after 18 March 1984 will be subject to special determination by the Treasurer. This is standard practice. What makes it a particular curiosity on this

occasion is that the Government knew perfectly well at the time of drawing up the Supply Bill that a national wage case was due for determination within a few weeks of 18 March.

In fact, the national wage case was determined before the Supply Bill was introduced. In effect, honourable members knew on the day the Treasurer introduced the Supply Bill that the figure asked for in the Bill would not be enough, recognizing that wages and salaries make up about 60 per cent under this or any other Supply Bill, and recognizing that a 4·1 per cent increase on 60 per cent of the amount being requested would mean that the Treasurer would need an extra $60 million.

It may simply be a freak of timing that this year the Government chose 18 March for the cut-off date and last year it chose 20 April. The month's difference has meant that the amount of Supply that has been asked for will be $60 million short of the actual amount so it becomes a meaningless comparison to try to compare the amount of money required under last year's Supply Bill with the present situation.

The Treasurer interjected that there was a wage pause which affected the situation as well, but the fact is that the increase in the amount requested by this Bill needs to be inflated by $60 million to get a genuine comparison with last year's situation and this year's situation.

The Opposition does not oppose the Supply Bill. Members of the Opposition are prepared to support the Bill, but are interested to note the change to programme budgeting. There is a need for a great deal of work to be done on it if meaningful information is to be available to the House, and the Opposition will be watching the situation closely to see how that develops.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—The National Party supports the Supply (1984–85, No. 1) Bill. It is the appropriate time to state that in my time in the Victorian Parliament, covering almost seventeen years, there has never been any question of the National Party not granting Supply to the democratically elected Government of the day, and such is the case on this occasion. I could not help but smile at some of the nervousness expressed by Ministers in the Cain Government during the early days about their fears of being defeated on Supply at some stage. The Labor Party has been the greatest offender in this respect over the years. The National Party has a long history of granting Supply. We guarantee that we will give Supply to the democratically elected Government while it has the confidence of the people, and it is only right and proper that it be given that right to govern.

The Supply legislation is provided in a programme formed with an initiative instituted by the previous Government and developed further by the Treasurer. The Supply Bill on this occasion provides for both the recurrent and works and services expenditure of the various departments from the beginning of the financial year on 1 July 1984 until the end of November or a period of five months. This enables the Government to carry on its normal activities until the passing of the 1984–85 Budget.

The two features of the Supply legislation that have been pointed out by the Treasurer are that recurrent expenditure has been presented on a programme basis rather than on a divisional basis as in the past. With regard to works and services, Supply provisions have been made on an agency basis. Supply for recurrent purposes is $2 463 234 000, and that has been calculated, as has been pointed out by the honourable member for Balwyn, on existing operating costs as at 18 March this year. Of course, increases in awards, particularly in regard to wages on that date, will be additional to the set amount and the Treasurer has the power to make the necessary adjustments. I do not suppose it matters very much what the set date is, whether it be in March or April, but a date has to be fixed, and there will always be increases in awards at some stage during the year.

It is interesting to note that the Treasurer has the power to transfer a surplus from one programme to another in the same department. That is only common sense and that applies, as I said, where there is a surplus. The total amount to each department cannot be altered once it is set.

The Supply in respect to the works programme is $765·838 million and the details of this amount are set out in the Budget Papers. As occurred last year, the amount of $25 million has been calculated as an

Advance to the Treasurer, and that enables him to have a further degree of flexibility to cover particular situations as they arise.

Supply legislation, because of its very nature, cannot be specific, and a detailed debate achieves very little. There has been a fundamental change in the legislation dealing with the presentation of Supply—that is, one Appropriation Act which covers both recurrent and works and services in the one piece of legislation.

I believe programme budgeting is here to stay. There is no doubt that the procedures will be refined in the coming year. The proper time to debate the Government's financial policies is when the Government's Budget is presented early in the new financial year, traditionally in the month of September for the 1984–85 year. What opposition parties are doing now is giving formal authority to the Government to carry on its present programme, with its new initiatives, into the financial year.

I want to say to the Treasurer very clearly and to the Government as a whole that I put them on notice that they will answer to Parliament and the people of Victoria in their third Budget more than they have in their first and second Budgets. By that time, the Labor Party will have been in government for nearly two and a half years and the time will then be past when it can blame previous Governments for their shortcomings and misdoings.

Mr Spyker—We will do that for many years to come.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I suppose when one has a stupid Minister like the Minister of Consumer Affairs one can expect that negative attitude, as it is typical of the Minister. At least the Treasurer was positive, intelligent and good to deal with, but I have had enough from the Minister of Consumer Affairs. This Government, if it is going to have any credibility, will have to stand on its own record and get away from blaming things that have occurred in the past. The Government has had two years to make its plans and start its own initiatives.

I want to make it quite clear that the National Party's financial policies are very different from the Government's. I do not want to get into the details of it now, but I and members of my party will have a lot to say in the September Budget about what we think of some of the changes that have been made in recent days. Those changes are disastrous to the future of Victoria, particularly country Victoria. I will save those matters for September, but I give the Government a word of warning that the people of Victoria will pass judgment on what it does in the September Budget. The Government is committed to wiping out of decentralization allowances. We know that; the Government has given notice that that will not be changed in the Budget, but it will mean that the comparatively small number of country Victorians who have supported the Government will give the Government away. I hope the people of Victoria generally will realize the problems the Government is causing to the people of Victoria.

The National Party is acting in a democratic and responsible manner. It supports the passing of Supply to the Government, as does the Liberal Opposition, but the Government should not get any false sense of security over that; it is in no way approval of what the Government is doing. It is a machinery measure and when September arrives it will be a very different story.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I am far from satisfied with the Supply Bill. When the Cain Government was elected to office in April 1982, I thought that there would be a millenium: Education, transport and health services would all be improved by the Labor Government. I have examined the documents *Program Budget* 1983–84 and wherever I have looked I have seen cuts and reduced services.

In the electorate of Doncaster that I represent, the condition of roads is absolutely appalling. Tens of millions of dollars need to be spent on roads that are already past their effective life. As a former local government representative, Mr Acting Speaker, you would know than an efficient and effective Government should reconstruct roads when they are at approximately 75 per cent of their life cycle. If one does not reconstruct the roads at that point, it costs about $5 for every $1 one would have spent on maintenance and repairs up to that 75 per cent point.

In education there is woe, chaos and disaster wherever one looks. The Government succumbed to the demands of the teacher unions and increased the salaries of teachers by 30 per cent. Who is bearing the brunt

of that? The children! No longer can the Government employ emergency teachers. No longer can staff or resources be spared to send the children on camps and other trips in Victoria. A crisis has almost been caused in the travel industry which, in many respects, was dependent on tours by school children to various centres in Victoria.

What has the Government done in the health field? It cannot even provide kindergartens for three-year-old children. It cannot provide for people who need nursing home care. My electorate office has been inundated with the most tragic stories from people who can no longer keep their parents in nursing homes because they are no longer insured under Medicare. The Government has increased the death rate among the elderly because it now takes up to six months for people to obtain specialist types of surgery. Many elderly people have heart problems and cannot obtain the surgery required to prolong their lives.

However, the greatest disaster is in the field of law and order. According to the *Program Budget* documents, the Government has the audacity to increase expenditure on community safety and security by a miserable $800 000. In real terms, the protection for the Victorian community has declined by 10 per cent this year. The increase in funds for crime investigation amounts to a miserable $300 000, which again is a reduction in crime detection of at least 10 per cent. Is it any wonder that Victoria is becoming a wild west State?

More than 200 000 crimes were recorded in Victoria in 1983—a crime every 2·5 minutes. The most dramatic and alarming increase was in house burglary which increased by an incredible 26 per cent in one year. In Melbourne a house is broken into every 10 minutes. Only one house burglary in ten is solved. The Police Force does not have the resources to solve these crimes.

Streets in the electorates of Doncaster and Balwyn have been reduced to such a state that police have told people not to live in some streets, to sell their houses and to move to other suburbs. I do not know to which suburbs they are referring. It certainly does not pay to live in a suburb of so-called affluence, because one is a target for housebreakers. I understand that 60 per cent to 80 per cent of burglaries are committed by drug-addicted persons. The most appalling situation in Australia has been revealed in the Costigan report where one has multi-millionaire financiers at the top of a terrible crime pyramid, with the enforcers and painters and dockers and these characters growing illicit marijuana a stage below them. Then comes the foot soldiers, the street pushers and the rest. Drug pushing in Australia is now running at something like $5000 million a year. However, the combined Police Forces of Australia are probably spending far less than $1000 million between them in trying to solve that appalling incidence of organized crime.

House burglaries in Victoria cost the State over $50 million a year—approximately one-third of the money being spent on police protection in Victoria. Armed robbery has become a terrible crime in the metropolitan area. In the *Sunday Observer* of 4 March 1984, an article states:

> At least three Victorians a day find themselves looking down the wrong end of a gun. Usually it is accompanied by a demand for money, but sometimes there's a flash followed by an explosion, and a lethal blast of lead. In 1982 there were 575 armed robberies and in 1983 there were 800—an increase of 72 per cent.

This year the armed robbery rate is probably 1200 to 1500.

Mr Reynolds—Absolutely scandalous!

Mr WILLIAMS—It is scandalous and disgraceful. The Labor Government is trying to delude the people of Victoria into believing it is a wonderful Government. Why does it not get down to bread and butter issues and stop conning the people about a ten-year-plan? I know about ten-year plans they produce in Moscow, Bucharest and East Berlin. Is that the sort of State Victoria is turning into? In Communist countries Governments delude the people by producing these ten-year plans and asking the people to look to the future, thereby covering up the real problems that are close to home.

I have tremendous admiration for the Chief Commissioner of Police, Mick Miller, the Assistant Commissioner (Administration), Rod Hall, and especially for the Assistant Commissioner (Crime), Paul Delianis, with his grossly overworked staff of 1150. Those police officers are seriously overburdened and are unable to cope with this epidemic of crime. As a result they are

only able to solve one crime in five. Regretfully, this so-called Garden State, Nuclear-free State, or whatever else the Government is trying to call it, is a crime State. Over the past five years, per 100 000 of population, the breaking and entering rate in Victoria was 951. The so-called crime State of Australia, New South Wales, had a rate of 716. The much derided State of Queensland had a rate of 623. Victoria has much to be ashamed of in its inability to cope with this crime of breaking and entering.

Car thefts in this State numbered 319 per 100 000 of the population as compared with 426 in New South Wales, 200 in Queensland and 280 in South Australia.

Victoria again tops the list in the crime of fraud with 198 fraud crimes per 100 000 of the population as compared with 184 in New South Wales. Violent theft crimes numbered 22 per 100 000 of the population, just slightly behind New South Wales.

This is not good enough and I appeal to the Government to put far more resources into our Police Force. Our police are almost at breaking point. The Victoria Police Force is several thousand below the required strength and far too heavy a burden is being imposed on those wonderful men and women who protect and safeguard the community. I do not want to see in Melbourne the situation I have seen in the streets of New York and some other large cities, where it is no longer safe to walk the streets. It is barely safe to walk the streets of Melbourne and, unless the Government provides far more funds for the overburdened and understaffed Police Force, Melbourne will become like Chicago, New York and other large crime cities.

It worries me that much of this crime is organized by persons who, in my opinion, are businessmen. They are not mere petty criminals; they are big time businessmen who organize deals such as the theft of video recorders. Recently, statistics were published concerning the enormous number of video sets being stolen in Melbourne and, as I understand it, these sets are now the currency for the purchase of heroin. It used to be colour television sets. The method is now to steal a video set and hand it over to the heroin pushers who, in turn, feed those sets back into the distribution market. I do not believe these sets are being sold in hotels. That used to be the old story of "hot" merchandise. I believe these goods are being returned to the legitimate distribution system. Any store in any suburban street may well be a fence for stolen video sets and other equipment that is being handed over in drug dealings in St Kilda and other areas.

As Mr Douglas Meagher, QC, senior counsel assisting the Royal Commission into the activities of the Painters and Dockers Union, pointed out, a great deal of highly organized theft is occurring in Australia and considerable planning is done in anticipation of the crime by persons other than the thief himself.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! The honourable member for Doncaster is moving into the major crime area rather than dealing with the matter contained in the Bill. I suggest that he return to the Bill.

Mr WILLIAMS—Mr Acting Speaker, I submit that the Bill is worthless unless we have law and order in this State. Without law and order, the "pie in the sky" promises that are contained in the Bill will be worthless. I am prepared to sit here until 6 a.m., if necessary, to debate the measure.

Mr Reynolds—You are the only one!

Mr WILLIAMS—I am ashamed of members of the Opposition who would say that. The duty of the Opposition is to fight in the trenches until the last breath. I do not understand why, at almost midnight, the Government should introduce the Supply Bill that honourable members are expected to debate for the rest of this day and into the morning that is shortly to come. Why can the Government not arrange the business of the House to better advantage than to expect shadow Ministers to work these hours? Apart from three or four of us, all the members of the Liberal Party are shadow Ministers. If every one of them does his duty and speaks for his allotted twenty minutes, this House will not be ready for its official opening with prayers at 11 a.m. tomorrow because this sitting will still be continuing. I will go through the Bill item by item until my allotted twenty-minute period is exhausted.

I will deal firstly with Parliament. You, Mr Acting Speaker, as a good worker and a good workers' representative, would agree with the proposition that the labourer is

worthy of his hire. Recently, I have looked at my bank statement and I am horrified to find that I am overspending my income. As one of my colleagues reminded me a moment ago, it is preselection year, and it has been a memorable preselection year for me! For the first time, I will probably have to submit a return to the Commissioner of Taxation showing that I have overspent my allowance. I have never had to do so before. I criticize the amount that has been allocated to Parliament. We are using slave labour in this place. No responsible private enterprise business would expect its employees to spend more than their allowance on doing their duties.

I am intrigued that, in his responsibilities for the Police Force, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services cannot persuade Cabinet to grant a worth-while increase in police expenditure, whereas the allocation for the Ministry for the Arts has been increased considerably this year.

The Attorney-General does not have enough resources to devote to the administration of justice, so that cases are waiting up to three and four years to be heard, and there is not sufficient funding to assist low income earners who need legal aid. The Government cannot look after those people who need help. The only people who can afford to be sick or to have legal trouble are the wealthy. What sort of a society is that?

The situation concerning the Department of Community Welfare Services is a shameful scandal. In the City of Doncaster and Templestowe, the local council is forced to largely fund the Doncare organization which is a remarkable family care organization. It is now part of the FACS programme. The council, together with myself and others, has been trying to obtain an answer from the Minister about the future funding of Doncare and still has not succeeded in doing so.

As one of my colleagues said by way of interjection, there is no glimmer of light at a time when serious unemployment, family crises, all sorts of breakdowns including marriage, wife-bashing and so on are rife. Far more expenditure should be available in this field. One can see nothing but disaster in the field of education.

Bandaid measures provide jobs for a few youngsters who are badly in need of work. Approximately 50 000 teenagers are unemployed, yet those bandaid measures provide employment for approximately 1000. Victoria has a poor record in the area of health. It has a record of under-care for those who have had the misfortune to have suffered an accident or some illness.

Local governments concern me, especially with scandal after scandal in metropolitan municipalities that do not have the staff to come down on the councillors. I shall start with the City of Doncaster and Templestowe. It is shameful that the city recently awarded a contract to a multi-million dollar enterprise to provide the garbage service. Through some means or other, which greatly annoys me, this multi-million dollar enterprise has been given an illegal permit to install its garbage depot at a factory outlet in Kim Street, Bulleen. It is a nuisance, and over recent months I have been in touch with the Minister for Local Government, yet nothing has been done. The Minister has not yet explained how and why that permit was given to the multi-million dollar outfit. If nothing is done about this matter during the next few weeks, I shall certainly be raising merry hell during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the House.

There is a scandal going on in the Oakleigh City Council. I am intrigued by the staff shuffling in the Ministries. I used to talk about the O'Connell family being the big bosses of the Richmond City Council. Finally, my pleas were heard and the Richmond City Council was dismissed. The Perryman family is connected with the Oakleigh City Council. The son has been shifted away from the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services and is now working for the Ministry of Transport. What is going on? Maybe the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has realized that he must cut adrift from the Perryman family, which is the big boss of the Oakleigh City Council.

I refer honourable members to the situation at Broadmeadows where jobs are provided for the boys. All sorts of allegations are being made about the people who are really in charge of the City of Broadmeadows. I shall return to my story about the appalling crime rate in Broadmeadows, which reflects poorly on the Government. I draw the attention of the Minister for Police

and Emergency Services, who has interjected sarcastically, to an article in the *Sun* of 22 March 1984, which states that "louts and hooligans are terrorizing residents in the eastern suburbs".

I have news for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. If the Police Force does not attend to the needs of the people in the eastern suburbs, the honourable gentleman will be sitting on the front bench on the Opposition side of the House. The honourable member for Bennettswood, my revered friend on the Social Development Committee, temporarily represents the City of Nunawading whose police say they are especially concerned about youths driving cars recklessly in the Blackburn South area. My colleague, the honourable member for Forest Hill, recently said that residents in the outer eastern suburbs are being terrorized by louts and increasingly harassed by burglaries and car thefts.

The head of the Maroondah Police District, Chief Superintendent Don Plant, said that he agrees with my colleague about the incidence of hooliganism and vandalism in the eastern suburbs. He said police were often powerless to move groups of youths who were not committing offences. All the good that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services could tell the reporter in answer to this problem was that there was a shortfall of 3000 police. Again, I shall return to the Supply Bill which reflects major weaknesses in this area. Victoria suffers a shortfall of 3000 police.

There are only six 24-hour police stations in the eastern suburbs: In Mitcham, which will become a Liberal electorate; in Box Hill, which will become a Liberal electorate; in Ringwood, which will become a Liberal electorate and in Ferntree Gully, which is in the Knox electorate. It will take all the Scottish ingenuity of the Minister of Transport to hold that electorate!

The City of Doncaster and Templestowe is deficient in its number of well staffed and equipped schools. It has disgraceful roads and lacks places for three-year-old children at kindergartens. Admittedly the city has a 24-hour police station, but again some areas of the electorate I represent house some of the most affluent people in Australia. Because of their affluence, the city suffers the highest burglary rate in Australia.

The Supply Bill is also a Budget document, because a budget is a statement of estimated expenditure. That is what the Bill is. The Bill gives me no solace whatsoever. How Ministers can fool the people of Victoria into believing that the State has better standards than other States defies my imagination.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—When in opposition the Premier stated:

> When elected to Government, we will run a tight ship and see this State is operated efficiently.

Of course, many people believed that, along with the many other promises the then Leader of the Opposition was giving out to the Victorian community. He was pleading with them and saying, "Give us a go. Give us a chance". Indeed, the Victorian community did exactly that; it gave the Labor Party the chance he asked for on his claim of "We can do it better. All we need is the opportunity." However, what do honourable members now find, relative to a start to the broken promises?

Undoubtedly, tens of thousands of people voted for John Cain and his team on the basis of his comment, "We will give specific undertakings in specific areas". The Labor Party then covered every portfolio. There is not one portfolio in relation to which uncommitted voters did not vote on specific promises; uncommitted voters are what some people would call the thinking minority, people who do not just vote Labor or Liberal every time an election is held, but people who have the capacity to see that Governments rise and fall. One can pick any portfolio and find that tens of thousands of people voted on specific promises. None other than the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in this House said that he would give a cast iron guarantee that 1000 extra police officers would be employed within the first term of the Government. The Minister has no more than twelve months to go.

As I understand it, there has been an effective increase of 191 in the number of new police and police in uniform employed as police officers. If honourable members accept the claim of the Minister that 334 officers have been employed, they must realize that the Minister is really saying, "We have employed some office staff, which has

effectively put police officers out on the beat. Therefore, we will claim that as part of our promise". Even if honourable members give the Minister the benefit of the doubt—and the Opposition is being extremely kind in saying it will consider that—he has still some 700 persons to recruit in the next twelve months. The Minister should honour his promise because he won a large number of votes on that promise, not only in the electorate he represents but also in every electorate in this State.

The Opposition finds that the Government has introduced some schemes along the lines of job creation. I note that some youths in the Latrobe Valley were given the opportunity of finding something to do with $85 000—and this matter was highlighted in the *Age*—which was supposed to go towards apprenticeships and training but, in fact, they wasted the money in the purchase of a minibus so that they could attend an Adelaide arts festival. If that is competent, efficient management, I point out that the judgment will be made in twelve months' time.

What does the Auditor-General of this State say? No one in this House would criticize that gentleman in his capacity as the Auditor-General, because his comments and his reports are based on undeniable fact and are true. In 1983, the Auditor-General said that he had found widespread cases of waste and lack of spending control in areas of Government. Despite warnings of abuse, in his last report the Auditor-General said that spending that should have been approved by the State Tender Board was not approved. Tender Board regulations were imposed by the Department of Management and Budget, which is another department which ignored the need to obtain approval for some spending.

This is the present Government, which claimed, when in opposition, "All we want is a chance and we will show you how to do it properly". The Auditor-General also recommended stronger action to be taken to stop departments concealing staff increases, This is against the background—as I have already said and as I should repeat several times tonight—of the promises of the Labor Party, when in opposition, "We can control this State and we can do it better". Another reason why the Labor Party won many votes is that it stressed where the former Liberal Government used taxpayers' funds to highlight what it called its achievements. I remember many members of the Labor Party at that time, and particularly the present Treasurer, saying how it was a gross extravagance, mismanagement, and waste of taxpayers' funds to introduce documents which were nothing but a public sell of the Government's own policies.

However, last week the most expensive document ever produced in the history of Victoria through the use of taxpayers' funds was released. It is the most extravagant and expensive document ever produced in this State to promote a political party. On the cover, it is known as "Victoria. State of Achievement". When one opens the cover one finds an order form, which has the effect of saying, "If you want more copies, simply write in and we will provide them". A photograph of the Premier, a very geriatric looking gentleman, appears on the first page, following which is a list of what the Government has achieved in the past two years.

It is a comprehensive document; it runs for some 89 pages. On the last page of the document is the caption, "By Authority F. D. Atkinson, Government Printer, Melbourne". There has never been a more gross or extravagant waste of taxpayers' funds than the production of that document.

Tomorrow, a question will be placed on notice asking what was the cost of the production of the document. I know, even before the answer is provided and I shall state it publicly because honourable members will be lucky if the answer is forthcoming before the next election, that this is the most expensive document produced in the history of Victoria with the funds of Victorian taxpayers. The Government states what it considers to be its achievable objectives for Victoria over the next ten years. It involves the total scrapping of every incentive that exists for approved decentralized industries! That is no surprise to members of the Opposition because they know that the Government is interested only in those who live up to 80 kilometres from the General Post Office, and its interest finishes at that point. As far as the Government is concerned, Victoria ceases to exist beyond the 80-kilometre mark. I have said that many times, and repeat it in this debate, that, in the eyes of this Government, Victoria ceases to exist beyond that point because it knows

that electorate support for the Government is necessary only in the Melbourne and metropolitan area. My heart bleeds for the poor members on the Government side of the House who have to represent Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo because they know, as surely as does the Opposition, that when the election takes place they are finished as members of Parliament in Victoria, primarily as a result of the actions of the present Government.

There is no question about what the Government is doing. As I understand it, the Government examined the almost $50 million which rural Victoria received—from that 80 kilometre zone to the borders or to the coast, but certainly from 80 kilometres outside the metropolitan area—and said, "Let us scrap the grants and let us bring it into Melbourne." That is the plain, hard, cold truth of what the Government has done. It has sold country Victoria down the drain and, although the Government will never admit it, that is it in a nutshell. It could not care less because it knows that votes in the country are irrelevant to what happens to the Government's survival in this State. This State will be reverted from decentralization to centralism that is controlled by the bureaucracy, and within the reach of the central bureaucracy, which is Melbourne. One can pick any Minister one wishes and one will see that Minister has a list of broken promises 2 miles long.

Education is one example—so much was promised and so much was paid off in getting the support of the teachers in this State. However, the Government has closed down the accommodation that was available to country students. That is an onslaught on the residents of country Victoria. The Government has sold off the hostels to bring money into Melbourne. The Premier claims that the teachers are playing with plasticine and asks why an increased budget for emergency teachers is required when the teachers are at their wits' end to get adequate staff numbers to provide a good curriculum at schools as per the agreement with this Government.

The Government made an agreement with the unions on the basis of how schools would be staffed, how curriculums would be worked out and how the needs of the State's education system would be advanced. In the past 30 years, the student population in Victoria has doubled—twice as many children are now being taught in Victorian schools. The teacher population has more than quadrupled. There are twice as many pupils at school and four times as many teachers but, even with expending tens of millions of dollars to get a viable working agreement in education, the Government still does not have the capacity to adequately staff schools, and it stands condemned for that.

A scandalous situation exists in transport. The Government wastes money by renovating junk that should be in museums and calls it good rolling-stock. That is the stock for which the Government is no longer in hock after having sold it to overseas interests. The Government has introduced great schemes such as the Fairway system. There is no better way to muck up traffic in the metropolitan area than by introducing the system.

As to health, there is no better man for the Liberal cause in Victoria than the Minister of Health. Politically, I believe that is fantastic, but the Opposition must be concerned with not only being the Government in twelve months' time—as it will be—but it must ensure that the health system handed over to the Minister, and acknowledged by the Minister when in opposition as the best in Australia, remains that way when the honourable member for Benambra takes over as the Minister of Health in twelve months' time or less. He will be inheriting the worst health system in Australia, and that degradation will have taken place in only three years.

Many people in the health sphere and those outside the health sphere—those who have the capacity to put Governments in and out of office—voted on specific promises. Any health board or committee of management of a hospital will tell honourable members that it could not get rid of the Minister of Health when he was in opposition, but now it cannot get near him. They will be able to get near him in twelve months' time because he will again be the shadow Minister. People in the health sphere believe the quicker the Minister is back in opposition the better.

As for the Treasurer, I can only assume by the way in which he has increased taxes and charges in this State that, when he is finally laid to rest, he will be buried with

one hand stretched out to fleece the sheep as they go past; that is the only thing he has not thought of. Taxes and charges under the regime of the Treasurer have increased in Victoria at twice the rate of inflation—they increased by more than 40 per cent when the inflation rate was only 20 per cent. However, when in opposition, the Treasurer claimed that he could do it better.

If, to try to survive politically, the Treasurer takes the scandalous approach of keeping taxes down this year to win the election, knowing that the following year, if he happens to scrape back into Government, he will find an horrific deficit situation that will not become known until next year, he is to be condemned. Even if the Government keeps taxes and charges in line with inflation this year, it will have increased them by an average of 50 per cent over three years.

The Government has half as much money again as the Opposition had to spend when in government. The Liberal Party, when in government, had $5·3 billion to spend under the last State Budget of the Honourable Lindsay Thompson. With the present State Budget, the Government has $7·8 billion to spend. That is $2·5 billion more a year to spend that the Opposition had when in government, and this Government is still broke. How the Treasurer can manage that and still claim that he is competent is beyond me. He is a theorist; I heard a fire occurred in his library at his home and, regretfully, he lost both of his books. However, I understand it was not such a great loss as he had coloured in only one of them.

I could go on at some considerable length about all the areas in which the Government has broken promises and has grossly wasted public money. However, I am particularly concerned with housing as I will have that responsibility in twelve months' time. Prior to the announcement of the Budget late last year, the Government got the best headline I have ever seen by stating that there would be massive increases by the Government in the amounts expended on housing.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! I am certain that *Hansard* cannot hear the honourable member for Westernport as I can hear interjections from all sides of the House. I ask honourable members to co-operate and to give the honourable member a fair go.

Mr BROWN—I placed a question on notice to find out a simple but specific fact—how much the State Government put into housing last year from its own coffers and how much it put into housing this year from its own coffers, and I received the answer two weeks ago. The Government put in $27 million less this year than it did last year. The Government misled the community about that. An increase in over-all expenditure occurred, but that was due to the Federal Government. In 1982–83, the State Government committed $113 million to housing, while this year it has committed $86 million. The increase came from the Federal Government, which, in 1982–83, committed $76 million and increased that expenditure this year to $139 million. So much for this Government's claim that it considers housing as a high priority—so high that it cut back its expenditure in that area by $27 million.

I will refer to other areas where the Government claimed it would do much better than the previous Government. This Government was not going to let housing resources lie idle. Time and again the Opposition has been able to identify housing stock that has been sitting idle. Shortly, the Opposition will release a comprehensive list of such houses. In some cases, housing stock has been sitting empty for up to three years. The Opposition is aware of cases where Ministry of Housing residences, formerly known as Housing Commission homes, were purchased by the Government and left to sit empty for six months. When in opposition, the Government claimed, "Give us a go, we can do better".

Mr Jolly—We have!

Mr BROWN—If members of the Government have done it better, heaven help the taxpayers of Victoria!

Mr Jolly—Victoria is leading the recovery rate.

Mr BROWN—Unemployment has increased by 50 per cent under the regime of the Treasurer and he claims that Victoria is leading the nation. I do not know the statistics he quotes.

I now refer to violence at high-rise estates. That is a continuing problem, and I indicate

without reservation that, whatever the Government wants to implement to counter the violence at high-rise estates, it will have the support of the Opposition. If it is fair and reasonable and is not a waste of taxpayer's funds—and I cannot consider how it could in any way, shape or form be a waste of taxpayer's funds—the Government will have the total support of the Opposition. However, the Government says, "There is no need to worry; things are not getting worse, they are getting better".

Recent newspaper headlines include the following:

Flat residents fear for lives
Shots fired to stun people
Girl, 2, shot in face
Tenants demand safety
Air rifle shot hits woman, 46
Girl shot in safety dash
High-rise terror in Carlton
Cathie to hear tenants' fears
Tenants: It's not safe in estates
Residents rap 'reign of terror'

The headlines of this type go on and on. Two weeks ago, I organized a meeting at a high-rise development in North Melbourne. That is an extremely large estate and it is known that it has a continuing escalation of dramatic violence-related problems. I wanted to meet the residents to hear what they had to say. I was elated to discover that, instead of the twenty or so residents whom I expected to attend, 160 people were in attendance. The reason for the increase in attendance at the meeting was that a couple of days earlier the residents were tipped off that the Minister of Housing had heard about the meeting and was not prepared to let the Opposition take the wind out of the Government's sails.

The Minister and I jointly confronted a public meeting on the estate. Did the Minister go away with his tail between his legs! The residents of that high-rise estate, like the rest of the Victorian community, had been misled. They were fooled into voting Labor because Labor said that it could "do it better". During the one and a half hour meeting, the residents outlined the problems they faced as residents on the estate. We heard about a woman who had had a knife held to her throat; we heard about rapes and the bashings that frequently occur. I point out that this is only one estate out of approximately 44 such estates in Melbourne. We also heard about drunken, loutish behaviour of youths roaming the estate in packs and of bulky items being thrown over the balconies to frighten the people below.

The Opposition put up some constructive comments and told the Government it would have its co-operation in implementing them. In the near future, the Opposition will release its housing policy, which will be the most comprehensive housing policy ever announced in Australia. However, violence on the high-rise estates has reached such a proportion that any action cannot wait the twelve months which it will take for the Liberal Party to assume Government. Urgent action needs to be taken now.

I suggested that a permanent police presence be established on the estate. The meeting voted on the matter and only two residents out of a total of 160 residents were against the idea. The residents said that it was a good idea and they would support it. This is a practical suggestion on which the Government can home in, research and consider implementing. The Minister has the support of the Opposition, as he would have for any other worth-while programme he wishes to implement.

Home ownership is an important issue and has been a major achievement for most married couples and those contemplating marriage in the past 30 years. It is not only a worth-while achievement that was continually sought after during the 27 years of Liberal Government in this State; it is also a worth-while objective for any State or Federal Government. I commend Bob Hawke, as Prime Minister, for embracing and encouraging home ownership as a purposeful policy as opposed to the policies of the State Labor Government. One should examine the policies of the State Government. The co-operative housing society has been the main vehicle of achievement of home ownership over the past twenty years. However, there has been a further cut in real terms in the funds allocated by the State Government for this purpose.

The State Government speaks about public rental housing. In typical Socialist fashion, the State Government says, "We can do it better; we will own the houses and

rent them to you for the rest of your life". The statistics are there and, if any honourable member wishes to debate that single issue, I will be prepared to do so. The policy of the State Labor Government is to keep the poor poor by placing people into commission houses, which are now known as public rental houses.

Whatever rent those tenants are now paying will escalate over the next 20, 30 and, in some cases, 50 years. For example, if a tenant is now paying $20 a week for a house, in 20 years' time he will be paying $200 a week. A person who pays off a home, regardless of how difficult the repayments may be in the first instance, is eventually better off. I commend the action of the Government of Bob Hawke which provides a non-repayable cash grant of up to $7000 in an endeavour to help people to purchase a home of their own. If a person makes a repayment of $80 a week now, in 20 years' time, he will still be paying $80 a week. However, a housing commission tenant who is now paying $20 a week could be paying as much as, say, $200 a week in 20 years' time because the rental figure increases as time goes on.

Does that worry the Socialists? It does not. Some Socialists might find that objectionable, but the policy of the State Government seems to be to keep the poor poor. The State Labor Government wants people to think that Labor is doing them a favour by providing houses at low rentals over a long period.

Recently, at a conference in Echuca the Minister said that the Government was examining changes to the housing policy. I understand the Minister used words along the lines that the Government would "claw back" money from people who were able to obtain Government assistance for paying off their homes if their financial status improved. Simply put, this means that one can obtain Government assistance through the co-operative housing movement on a known basis. In other words, one can pay off a house on a known basis of the amount of money. For example, $80 a week could be the amount of the house repayment. I am glad the Minister of Housing has entered the Chamber because he might like to confirm or deny my statements.

The Government is examining the implementation of a policy which provides that, if the income of a person improves, the Government will claw back the money. I should like to think that I have been unreliably informed on this matter. I would not like to think that the Minister would use words like that.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has two minutes.

Mr BROWN—I regret that that is not a long enough time in which to continue my remarks, but I understand the time limit. If the statements of the Minister are true, it would be a gross understatement to say that that policy is repugnant. I find it grossly offensive that the Government might even be prepared to consider such suggestions. Many tens of thousands of people who voted Labor this time will have done so on a once-only basis for the future. It appears that the Government will give prospective home owners a start by providing low interest finance but will later claw back the benefits if the position of that person improves.

If the Minister of Housing is contemplating that policy as a future change in direction it will be a downward change in direction for his Ministry and the Government he represents. There is no way the Opposition would countenance supporting such a policy where funds are clawed back from people who enter an arrangement and discover that the Government will claw back funds as soon as their situation improves. I realize I have run out of time but there is much that needs to be said to make the community aware of the Government's mismanagement of funds.

On the motion of Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education), the debate was adjourned.

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

STATUS OF CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr CAIN (Premier), was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT

Swimming pool industry—Safe boat handling—Attwood Veterinary Research Station—Land owned by Neil Muldoon—St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped—Goulburn region foster

care programme—Geelong Cancer After-Care Group

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I direct a matter relating to the swimming pool industry to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. The matter, from my reading of the annual report of the Director of Consumer Affairs which was ordered to be printed by the House today, received scant attention in that report, yet the matter of swimming pool construction contracts and unsatisfactory constructions associated with that industry is something which is bedevilling the community and causing an immense deal of concern to consumers. It is a matter of grave regret that the Government is not taking any action in this regard.

I intend to provide the Minister with some information which will enable the honourable gentleman to take some action in the interests of consumers. The company to which I refer is known as UFI of 412 Canterbury Road, Ringwood, which trades using the brand name of "Pool FAB".

I have received correspondence from a number of constituents in relation to this firm. The complaints relate not to the brand of pool but to the construction that is being carried out by the firm, UFI, a firm of which the principal is Mr W. Bloch.

The letters I have refer to faulty chlorinators, to leaks occurring in the pool, and to continual complaints being made and being unsatisfactorily answered. For example, firstly, there was no main drain as required by Government regulations and by the Doncaster City Council; secondly, the hydrostatic valve did not comply with council regulations and plans submitted; thirdly, edges of bricks overlapping the pool edge had not been rounded off as agreed; fourthly, the slate was cracked in the pool step-out; and fifthly, the filtration unit was not working properly and it was pumping sand into the pool.

A number of complaints were made to the firm which were unsatisfactorily answered. A quotation was then received for the repair of the pool which amounted to $3500. The constituent concerned decided to take the matter to the Magistrates Court and therefore reduced the amount to be claimed by $500 to come within the $3000 limit of the Magistrates Court.

A pool-side meeting was requested by UFI on 17 August last year and the outcome of that meeting was that Mr Bloch said he would construct the main drain and hydrostatic valve assembly to council specifications; he would replace the filtration system; he would fix the salt chlorinator as it had failed in early January 1983 and he would rectify the other faults in the pool.

These corrections were not made. There then occurred an exchange of letters between solicitors and I now quote from a letter I have received:

> I eventually tracked down Mr Bill Bloch and after much discussion he agreed to change the pump and filter as specified. He also said if we pushed him that his company would go into liquidation and we would get nothing. In view of the evidence we had decided to stop legal action as it had already cost us $600.00.

A number of other complaints have been made about this firm and the latest information I have received is that the same Mr Bloch is now operating as Puffin Pools from an address opposite the Manhattan Hotel in Canterbury Road.

The Minister ought to take note of the complaints that have been made. I have advised the people who have contacted me to refer the matters to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. I raise this matter publicily with the Minister and inform him that I have advised people to take the matter to him.

Mr POPE (Monbulk)—I raise a matter of concern with the Minister of Education relating to the possibility of introducing a TAFE course for safe boat handling, especially within the Port Phillip Bay area. I raise the issue with a knowledge of the problems that have occurred in recent years, specifically within the Port Phillip Bay area, and the fact that the Police Search and Rescue Squad spends a number of manhours unnecessarily on searches within this area which perhaps by some educational process would not occur to the same extent.

Apparently last year the Search and Rescue Squad effected 200 rescues within the Port Phillip Bay area. That does not include

the minor tows of boats and getting people out of trouble in the bay.

A number of volunteer rescue squads exist around the bay area. As I understand it, those squads have effected some 1000 rescues within Port Phillip Bay in addition to minor tows.

It is estimated by the various volunteer organizations that approximately 6000 manhours is spent in bringing people in from unsafe situations in Port Phillip Bay. That number does not include the Police Search and Rescue Squad.

A constituent of mine has raised the possibility of introducing a TAFE course on safe boat handling. It appears to me that perhaps such a course might minimize the number of dangerous situations that occur when people, who do not understand the problems, go out on to the Port Phillip Bay area in boats from dinghies to large motor boats.

At the moment the only course that exists is conducted by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and it is a ship-oriented boat handling course, unfortunately run by former mariners. When I say unfortunately, I mean unfortunately for small boat owners, becuse it obviously is of assistance to those who are involved with larger ships but it does little for the small boat handler within Port Phillip Bay. Other courses are conducted by the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association. That association attempts to provide education for boat owners when using Port Phillip Bay.

The feedback indicates that there is an authoritarian attitude by the Coast Guard in conducting its courses which is rejected by most boat handlers.

A person who came to my electorate office raised the possibility of having a technical and further education course of some 40 hours with a 4-hour practical session in boat handling and boat safety. I believe this idea should receive co-operation and funding from the Government and that the Minister should look upon the course favourably. It is my belief that it would alleviate a number of the problems that are presently confronted by the Search and Rescue Squad and the various organizations that exist around the bay.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—I raise a matter with the Minister of Health concerning the establishment of a radioactive waste dump in Victoria. Currently, an environment effects statement is being undertaken about the Attwood Veterinary Research Station at Westmeadows. I asked the Minister a question about this matter on 28 March and sought advice from the Health Commission on whether the environment effects statement had been completed and, if so, when it would be made available for public comment.

The Minister did not answer the question adequately at that time and I now ask him if the statement has been completed and, if so, when will it be available? I have obtained, under the Freedom of Information Act, a letter from the Chairman of the Health Commission to the Director-General of Public Works. It states in part:

> As the Health commission is responsible for the store it is considered that it would be appropriate for it to undertake the preparation of the environment effects statement in respect of the proposed relocation.

That was written by Dr Trevaks on 18 August 1983.

On 23 September 1983, a Mr Kevin Fish, the design manager of the health section of the Public Works Department, wrote to Mr Little, the Director-General, stating that the Health Commission has advised that it is preparing the statement and that the Public Works Department was awaiting advice from the commission as to when it would be completed.

A memorandum was received from Mr Lindsay Thomas of the Public Works Department addressed to Mr Kevin Fish indicating that more information was required because the statement was nearly completed.

I have done some investigation, and it appears that a shed has been erected at the Attwood Veterinary Research Station at Westmeadows which is approximately 70 feet by 30 feet with a 12-foot high wall surrounding it. The local community and councillors of that area are very interested in the erection of the shed, they want to know what is in it and, if there is nothing in it, what the shed is intended to hold.

I ask the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology to ask the Minister of Health to provide the answers to these

specific questions: Is the environment effects statement finished and, if so, when will it be available for public comment? Is there anything in the shed that has been erected at the Attwood Veterinary Research Station and if so, what, and if it does not contain anything, why was it erected?

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Premier who made a response this morning to a similar matter which the honourable member for Gippsland East raised in relation to acquiring of land. The Premier indicated that the Government did not acquire the land, but that an agreement was reached.

Mr Neil Muldoon spoke to me recently and advised me that last Friday week a Mr John Walding from the Crown Lands Department rang him and made an appointment to see him to discuss the purchase of some freehold land that his family has owned since 1924. On the following Tuesday, Mr Walding and another officer from the Crown Lands Department arrived at his property and informed him they were acting on behalf of the National Parks Service and that the purpose of the visit was to convince Mr Muldoon to sell 1800 acres of his land. They also wanted to acquire 800 acres of leasehold land that he had controlled for a long time. He will probably let that land go because the rental of it has increased from $80 to $800 a year. However, he does not want to sell the 1800 acres of land that he owns. He was told that the Government wanted to link up the land purchased recently from the Fields family at Condah near Heywood with land controlled by the National Parks Service at Mount Eccles. This 1800 acres is the land standing in between. Mr Muldoon was advised by the Crown Lands Department officers to obtain a good solicitor and a valuation and that they would be back to see him later.

The 1800 acres has been sown with clover and is running approximately 1000 fine wool merino sheep and is very important to the over-all viability of the Muldoon farm. Mr Muldoon believes he has to take a stand on the matter. He will not be accepting any offer from the Government. I come back to the question raised by the honourable member for Gippsland East: Is the Government about to compulsorily acquire the land, and, if so, under what Act will it acquire the land? The Fields indicated that the Government had said it would serve a notice to treat if no agreement was obtained. Will the Government do that in this case? Mr Muldoon believes a local valuer was on the property about a month ago. He believes he may have been asked to obtain a valuation and to furnish the Government with those figures. The Government must provide a satisfactory answer to the matter, particularly because a Bill on Aboriginal land rights is before Parliament.

Mrs SIBREE (Kew)—I raise with the Minister of Education the issue of funding for St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped in Kew, which is under the auspices of the Villa Maria Society for the Blind. The Minister will be aware that in 1982 funding of approximately $200 000 was made to the school. The funding was instigated by myself and occurred as a result of representation to the then Minister of Educational Services, the Honourable Norman Lacy. The funding was set up ultimately by the Government in 1982. However, at present, the school basically is without any funding from the present Government.

During 1983, because of changes brought about by the State Board of Education, St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped was allocated moneys under non-Government school funding. As a result of the change in funding arrangements, the State Board of Education recommended to the Minister that the school, which also caters for multiple handicapped children, as the Minister will be aware, should be included under table 3 of its recommendations, but the Minister rejected the submission to include the school under table 3 and adopted the table 1 and table 2 recommendations for it.

The State Board of Education, pursuant to Ministerial directions, set up a working party to examine funding for the Villa Maria Society for the Blind to run St Paul's School for the Blind. The working party concluded that if the Government were providing the educational facilities which the Villa Maria Society for the Blind now provides to these children, the cost to the Government would be approximately $900 000 to $1 million. If one considers the Commonwealth Government grant of approximately 50 per cent, the State Government's subsidy to St Paul's

School for the Blind should be approximately $400 000 to $450 000.

Last night at a meeting of the parents' council which the Minister attended, certain questions were raised about funding of the school. I am informed that it would appear the Government, despite the working party's submission to the Minister that the cost to the Government of running the school would be approximately $1 million, is now prepared to offer the school approximately $70 000. I understand that last night the Minister made that response to the parents who were concerned about the issue.

I believe the Minister has a very real responsibility to ensure that the children at the school receive the education to which they are entitled. However, they have been manipulated through the Ministerial guidelines and directions given to the working party. The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind apparently has received approximately $800 000, which was the amount that the State Board of Education told the Minister would be required by the institute.

The school has the same number of children as the institute, approximately 60 to 65 pupils, yet it is being funded by the Government by only $70 000 in an area where the Government is not able to give these children an alternative education.

I want to know from the Minister: What steps have been taken; what submissions have been made to him; and what recommendations have been made to him by the working party to ensure the viability of this school? Unless the Government meets its responsibilities, the Villa Maria Society for the Blind will be in debt by approximately $500 000 in this financial year—not the school year—to continue the St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I refer the Minister for Community Welfare Services to the crisis facing the Goulburn region foster care programme. Last week, representations were made to me by people who are involved in the foster care programme and are concerned about its future. They believe the programme in the Goulburn region is in danger because of lack of staff, as a result of which the programme is not a viable service.

At present the staff of the region numbers one principal officer and one social worker. According to a letter I received from Mrs Margaret Brown, under the criteria for a specific programme in an area, a principal officer and two workers are considered to be the basic requirement for the foster care programme. When one considers the number of cases that the Goulburn region is handling—and that it is a large area—one can understand that this staff cannot handle the number of referrals and cases brought to their attention.

Last year, the Federal Government provided funds for the provision of home finders. The idea is that these people will determine whether potential foster parents are available for the programme. When the home finders locate parents who are prepared to undertake these responsibilities, a social worker of the Department of Community Welfare Services then assesses those people and their suitability as foster parents. The social worker then matches foster parents with foster children.

Because of the lack of staff in the Goulburn region, the programme is not working properly. A full investigation of the programme is needed remembering, firstly, that there is a minimum requirement of staff for a foster care programme of one principal officer and two workers and, secondly, the size of the area. I reiterate that at present the area is staffed by one principal officer and one worker. Mrs Margaret Brown and another person who attended an interview with her, Mrs Wilma Kay, have indicated that an additional two social workers are needed for the programme to be operated effectively.

Foster families in the Goulburn region live 160 kilometres apart and the foster family which is the farthest distance from the Shepparton office is 130 kilometres away. Travelling time must be considered. The Minister will understand that additional staff needs to be available to service the region. She is aware of the excellent foster care programme that has been established and has indicated in correspondence that additional staff will be allocated to the region. I request that she ensures that the Department of Community Welfare Services provides additional staff to the region so that the foster care programme will operate effectively.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—I raise a matter with the Minister of Housing

for the attention of the Minister of Health relating to representations made to the Minister by the Cancer After-Care Group at Geelong on 23 January 1984 requesting the establishment of proper modern radio therapy facilities in Geelong. This community group over the years has raised $150 000. It has also contributed $20 000 in salaries towards research in oncology. The Minister of Health would be aware that those living in the Geelong district are 75 kilometres from Melbourne and it is an ordeal for patients to continually travel to the Peter MacCallum Hospital. The Peter MacCallum Hospital currently has a lack of adequate car parking spaces and, despite the Minister's offer to examine the matter, patients still suffer by having to travel long distances to and from Melbourne. If they travel by train, the side effects can be traumatic.

I urge the Minister to consider the submission of 23 January, especially as the north wing of the Geelong Hospital is being commissioned. The Cancer After-Care Group wants to have up-to-date facilities included in the Geelong Hospital, not only for the benefit of those who live in Geelong but also for patients from Colac, Warrnambool and Portland. It is important that this facility should not be centralized in Melbourne. In times of defence, one bomb on a hospital in the centre of Melbourne would wipe out this tremendous clinic. It is important that the Government examines the regionalization of facilities for the treatment of cancer and I urge the Minister of Health to seriously consider the matter.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The honourable member for Gisborne raised the matter of an environment effects statement for the possible relocation from Westmeadows of a radioactive waste disposal area and he asked a number of questions, including when the environment effects statement would be completed. I will refer those matters to the Premier, as his department is considering the issue.

The honourable member for South Barwon referred to the work of a community group in raising significant funds for the treatment of cancer patients, the difficulty that they face in travelling long distances to the Peter MacCallum Hospital and the need to provide a regionalization of services and facilities in the Geelong Hospital. I will refer that matter to the Minister of Health for reply to the honourable member.

The honourable member for Lowan raised a matter with the Premier concerning a connecting area of land involving the Lake Condah reserve and a further request for additional land of 1800 hectares for that purpose. An approach for that land has already been made because it is an area of national environmental significance. An area of land has already been purchased, which was a satisfactory deal.

Mr Richardson—For whom?

Mr CATHIE—For both parties. The honourable member for Forest Hill should make inquiries before making silly interjections. I will refer the matter to the Premier for response.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The honourable member for Monbulk raised a matter concerning safe boat handling and the desirability of appropriate TAFE courses being developed to meet an obvious community need in that area. I commend the honourable member and the lecturer concerned for bringing the matter to my attention and to the attention of Parliament. The honourable member for Monbulk raised the matter with me earlier today, but I agreed with him, in view of its obvious significance and importance to the community at large, that it should be raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

This is a matter of significant concern to the Victorian community as the number of boats being purchased and used in Victoria has grown significantly in recent years. Regrettably, the number of accidents has also increased in that time. Appropriate steps should be taken by the Government relating to boat handling. I will be pleased to take up the matter with the TAFE authorities in Victoria as it is an appropriate area for them to examine. I will make further contact with the honourable member for Monbulk on this important issue.

The honourable member for Kew raised a matter regarding funding for St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. It is interesting to note that a member of the Liberal Party would have the gall to raise the funding of this organization in Parliament. For many years, this school has been functioning under the auspices of the

Villa Maria Society for the Blind. Year after year the society applied to the then Liberal Government for financial assistance to run that school, but it received no response to its applications. Not a cent was provided by way of any substantive grant for this school. When I became Minister of Education, I inherited a file which contained submissions from the school outlining ways the Government could assist it.

Last year the Labor Government provided $200 000 to meet, in some way, the backlog of deficit that had been inherited in the administration of the school. In addition, last year a sum of $140 000 was provided by the Government for the ongoing recurrent costs of maintaining this very important school. Since that time, two matters have to be taken into consideration: The State Board of Education report, which was mentioned by the honourable member for Kew, and the fact that we have moved into another year. The State Board of Education report recommended that the Government should provide $600 000 to meet the needs of two schools for the blind, the St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, and the Royal Victorian Insitute for the Blind school operating in Victoria.

The difficulty is that the amount of money provided to the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind school is already more than the $600 000 that was recommended by the State Board of Education report. The reason why the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind school has been funded in such a way is because the Commonwealth Government has not been brought to account or required to assist in the ongoing costs of that school. The intent of the State Board of Education was for the Commonwealth Government to share that load and responsibility. I have had discussions with representatives of the school and it has been proposed that a submission be forwarded to the Federal Government to address that need.

In the meantime, St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped continues to be left with an important responsibility to meet the needs of disabled students. As has been mentioned by the honourable member, some students have multiple handicaps. My immediate response last year was to offer $140 000 for the operation of the school this year.

Mrs Sibree—$70 000.

Mr FORDHAM—I repeat, $140 000. The honourable member for Kew is misinformed on yet another figure and fact.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable members for Kew and Forest Hill will cease interjecting.

Mr FORDHAM—The St Paul's School for the Blind and Visually Handicapped and the Villa Maria Society for the Blind operate under the auspices of the Catholic Church and I have taken up this matter with the Catholic Education Office, which is currently studying how it can assist the school. I have arranged a meeting tomorrow——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Forest Hill will cease interjecting.

Mr FORDHAM—It concerns me, as it does you, Mr Speaker, that the honourable member for Forest Hill treats this matter so lightly and has no concern for these disabled children. He is obviously affected by other factors.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the Deputy Premier that I will deal with the honourable member for Forest Hill, even at this hour, if he does not cease to interject.

Mr FORDHAM—Tomorrow, I will be meeting with representatives of the St Paul's School and I am hopeful that this matter can be set on an appropriate path so that the Government and the society, together with the Catholic Education Office, can appropriately address what is a crying community need.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The honourable member for Forest Hill raised a matter of a constituent who experienced unsatisfactory work with a swimming pool construction. He outlined the unfortunate history of the case at length. The industry needs to come to grips with this issue as some areas of pool construction are quite unsatisfactory.

I suggest that before consumers consider entering into swimming pool construction, they consider carefully the track records of particular companies and ask where they

have constructed pools previously and check on the type of construction. Many complaints have been made through the Ministry of Consumer Affairs about the length of delays and other factors. I suggest that people consider the history and previous constructions of swimming pool companies and receive a number of quotations. Large variations in quotations have been brought to the attention of the department. Although some companies have an excellent record in construction and delivery, other companies leave much to be desired. I will take up the issue with the Ministry tomorrow and ask it to examine the reference as a matter of urgency.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The honourable member for Murray Valley raised the issue of foster care in the Goulburn region. I assure him of the Cain Government's commitment to foster care. The difficulties that he raised may be in respect of the incapacity to reach the staffing establishment, although the Goulburn region is so delightful it seems surprising to me that it has not been able to attract people to the appropriate positions. I will take up the issue to ensure that every endeavour is made so that staffing establishments are met and foster care programmes in that region are realized because the Cain Government believes foster care is a significant component of welfare services.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.2 *a.m.* (*Wednesday*).

Wednesday, 18 April 1984

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 11.5 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE AGREEMENT

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—I ask the Minister for Industrial Affairs: On what grounds did the Government reach its decision that building workers on the Victorian Arts Centre should be given benefits totalling $200 000 of taxpayers' money to settle a dispute in which the private employers had declined to meet such union demands? Does the Government appreciate the precedent this decision has created?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Industrial Affairs)—The question is founded on the wrong premise in that the Government did not take part in any way in what occurred yesterday in the settlement of that dispute. I am advised that yesterday a compulsory conference was called by a commissioner of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission at which this somewhat creative agreement was arrived at.

Neither myself nor my colleague, the Minister for the Arts, was consulted on the settlement that was reached. We shall be carrying out investigations during the course of this day to determine how this lack of information and lack of consultation occurred and we shall be taking appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.

In the meantime, an agreement has been reached, and whatever one's view of that agreement might be, it should be noted that the Government stands by agreements that are reached. The Government will not abrogate the agreement any more than it would abrogate some of the stupid agreements that were entered into by the former Liberal Government. I could give the House a lengthy speech on some of those agreements, but I shall not do so.

As I understand what has occurred in regard to the settlement of the dispute, a number of extensive points were contained in the agreement produced at the compulsory conference between the builders and the unions in the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission yesterday under the chairmanship of an arbitration commissioner. The agreement involved each of the workers on the site at present being given tickets for their families to one production at the Victorian Arts Centre during the next twelve months. Under the agreement, a free concert will be held indefinitely into the future on or around Labour Day each year for the people of Victoria.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Can the Minister for the Arts inform the House how much it will cost to provide the use of the Victorian Arts Centre to the union movement once a year in perpetuity? Can the Minister explain whether the Victorian Arts Centre will be used in that fashion in perpetuity or for only a limited number of years?

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the honourable member address the Chair?

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Mr Speaker, what other organizations will receive similar privileges? Will these privileges apply also to the Red Cross, ex-servicemen's organizations and other worth-while groups that provide a service to the State?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The agreement to which the Leader of the National Party refers was reached before an arbitration commissioner in the course of a compulsory conference yesterday. It covers only a single situation.

Mr Ross-Edwards—For one year?

Mr MATHEWS—A number of points are covered in the agreement reached before Commissioner Merriman yesterday. The two points to which the Leader of the National Party refers are, as the Minister for Industrial Affairs has already said, that each of the workers on the site will be able to have his family attend one trust entrepreneured production in the course of the coming twelve months.

Further, the facilities of the centre will be made available for the purpose of a concert on or about Labour Day once each year and that concert will be arranged by the trade union movement of Victoria. I shall make

available to the honourable member information on the cost involved when it is made available to me.

PRE-RELEASE PROGRAMME

Mr McCUTCHEON (St Kilda)—Would the Premier indicate whether, after further investigation, he is now in a position to further advise the House regarding the eligibility for pre-release of the prisoner referred to by the honourable member for Wantirna on 5 April?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The matter raised by the honourable member for Wantirna created a wrong and misleading impression that was compounded by the Leader of the Opposition later on the same day. On 5 April, the honourable member for Wantirna put to me a question asserting that a prisoner released under the pre-release scheme, who had served only seven months' imprisonment, had been involved in a shooting in a milk bar. The honourable member repeated those assertions in a press release. He referred to a prisoner called Mr Falleti and that was the name used in the press release.

I am advised that Mr Falleti had nothing to do with the shooting, it had nothing to do with the milk bar and he had served 21 months' imprisonment, not seven months. The honourable member for Wantirna chose to ignore the fact that the man had served fourteen months in remand prior to his being convicted. As the honourable member ought to know, those days or months form part of the sentence calculations made in these matters. This man served 21 months, not seven months as asserted. There is a further five months when he is on pre-release, so he will have served a total of 26 months under supervision.

If this man had been released under the normal parole plan, he would have been released after 24 months and he would have spent less time under supervision. These same assertions were picked up and paraphrased by the Leader of the Opposition on the same day in the grievance debate or in some other inane contribution.

I know that the Opposition is setting out on a campaign to denigrate the system and at the same time denigrate the Adult Parole Board and the job it does. I understand that, but I take strong exception when alleged facts that are put in this place are not correct. If the honourable member for Wantirna or any other honourable member can indicate in this place or outside a situation where the parole board is not complying with the law as passed by Parliament, I want to know about it and the Minister wants to know about it because the matter will be investigated. If assertions are made, let them be accurate.

This place should not be used in that way. A great disservice was done to the Adult Parole Board by those assertions, not to say the disservice that was done to the prisoner concerned. I believe the pre-release scheme was supported in principle and in fact by all parties in this House. It was certainly supported outside the House by persons who are interested in the corrections area. The Opposition is undermining what I believe the Liberal Party in government started—a more humane and understanding correction system.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE AGREEMENT

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I refer the Premier to the answer given by the Minister for Industrial Relations and ask the Premier whether the Government regards itself as being now committed to making the concert hall at the Victorian Arts Centre available in perpetuity or for a limited period of time on one day of the year for a concert for the trade union movement or any union specifically. If so, who committed the Government to that and who represented the Government at the conference in the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—As the Minister for Industrial Affairs indicated, a compulsory conference took place yesterday. On the advice I have received, it involved the building construction firm and a number of unions. I am told that the Builders Labourers Federation was not involved, but I make no point about that. An agreement was reached, and it appears that the Victorian Arts Centre Trust met at about the same time. Apparently, the trust agreed to make provision in respect of the matters to which some reference has been made. Neither the Minister for the Arts, the Minister for Industrial Affairs nor I were aware of what had taken place. The first I knew about it was when I read a report in the newspaper

this morning. The Minister knew of it late last night. An agreement has been reached between the parties, and the Government is not in the business of welshing on agreements. I acknowledge, if I need to, the relaxed attitude that is prevalent in the arts to giving "freebies", and the honourable member for Forest Hill is the first to grab any. I am well aware of the way in which "freebies" are handed out all around in the belief that they are currency, but that does not justify what was done on this occasion. The Government will make clear to those responsible that they have no right to behave in that way. An agreement has been made, and the Government will not welsh on that agreement.

PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I ask the Minister of Health whether, in relation to the central payment of kindergarten teachers, the Health Commission has requested municipalities and/or committees of management of pre-schools to continue to handle the administrative arrangements related to the payments, apart from the actual distribution of cheques to the teachers—I refer, in particular, to the withdrawal of taxation contributions and other associated administrative arrangements; if so, will the Minister advise the House why the Health Commission is proposing that action, and is it not illegal under the Commonwealth tax laws for another body apart from the central payment body to deduct tax?

The SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Leader of the National Party seeks a legal opinion in the latter part of the question, therefore, it is out of order. I advise the honourable member that his question was particularly lengthy.

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The proposal of central payments for pre-school teachers has been a major issue for the Kindergarten Teachers Association of Victoria for almost a decade. Prior to the 1979 State election, and again prior to the 1982 election, the Labor Party made a commitment that it would introduce a system of central payments for kindergarten staff.

Over the past twelve months, continuous discussions have occurred between officers of the Health Commission and the people concerned, such as the Municipal Association of Victoria and various kindergarten organizations and unions. Those discussions have culminated in an arrangement that comes into effect this month. It is not a system of central employment; it is a system of central payment of staff, which has been much sought after by the teachers concerned.

If the Deputy Leader of the National Party does not understand the difference between central employment and central payment, I am sure there are many honourable members in this Chamber who could advise him about that. The Government is not proposing to select the teachers. Moreover, the hiring and firing and the ordinary running of the pre-schools will remain in the hands of the pre-schools' committees. This is an arrangement about payment which will have the side effect of ensuring that a number of defalcations that have occurred in the past will not occur in future.

REPORT ON SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—Will the Minister of Education advise the House what processes have been decided on for the consideration of the Blackburn report and the implications of that report on Victoria?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I thank the honourable member for his question and for his long-standing interest in this area of secondary education. Those honourable members who have been here for some time will be aware that the honourable member for Broadmeadows has been to the forefront of Parliamentary discussion on this matter.

The Government is delighted with the response it has received on the tabling of this discussion paper from the review team that I appointed last year. It was clear to the Government that we need a better educated and skilled society if the State and the nation are to be able to cope with the obvious challenges that lie ahead with our clearly emerging changing pattern of employment and leisure as well as to empower young people of this and future generations to cope with a different world than that in which we have grown up.

The review team has done an excellent job in bringing together the threads of the challenge that needs to be met by the Government, Parliament and the community.

The agenda is laid out on the table. The difficulties and problems of the past are there together with signposts for the future. I look forward to community discussion within schools, universities and colleges and, indeed, the community.

The review process now follows, as I say, a community discussion phase in which all of those individuals and groups that are concerned will be involved. The Education Department was pleased to facilitate such a process through its regional offices and I know that the schools will anxiously await the opportunity for such discussions.

The focus will be on three working parties that are being appointed: One group to look at the area of curriculum change, one group to look at the issue of future credentialling and a third group to look at new possible organization arrangements.

I am pleased that Professor Scott, the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University, is to chair the working party dealing with the vexed and difficult matter of credentialling. I am pleased that Professor Fensham, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Monash University, has agreed to chair the group looking at curriculum change and that Mrs Blackburn, who has given such outstanding leadership on this matter since her appointment, is to chair the group dealing with possible organizational change.

I think there will be exciting and lively debate on these matters over the months ahead, and I look forward to the contributions from the community.

BOMB THREATS

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—Can the Minister of Education confirm that the John Dixon Jenkins, who is sought by police for questioning about bomb threats and terrorism in schools and other places this week, is one and the same person as the Dr John Jenkins who carried out a survey of 2035 Victorian school children on behalf of the movement against uranium mining? If so, can the Minister explain how such a person claiming bogus academic credentials was able to gain access to school children under his control for such purposes?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I am not aware of the claim now made by the honourable member for Hawthorn. I am certainly not the Minister in charge of the movement against uranium mining and any surveys that they may or may not have undertaken in the past.

If that is all the information the honourable member for Hawthorn has, I will work on that information, but if he has additional information I should like him to bring it to my attention, and that of the Victoria Police Force and the Education Department to assist in bringing to ground those who are responsible for the dastardly acts over recent days.

It is a disgrace that Victorian schools, teachers and parents should be disrupted in this way by this element that has foolishly embarked on this course. The Education Department and the Government are co-operating with the police in every way possible. I hope and I am confident that members of the Opposition will also co-operate. I will follow up the information that has been drawn to my attention.

SANDOWN MOTOR RACEWAY

Mr MICALLEF (Springvale)—Can the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation inform the House of the present position of the upgrading of the Sandown Motor Raceway into an international Formula 1 racing track?

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—Tenders for the major part of the works on the course, which are civil engineering works, closed on 5 April. I expect the successful tender will be announced this week or, at the latest, next week. I anticipate that the track and the new pit facilities will be operating for the meeting of the light car clubs in September. Sandown will have a 3·9 kilometre circuit and it will become the premier motor racing facility in Australia. It will justify the Government's intention of making Victoria and Melbourne the major State and city for sport and tourism in Australia.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE AGREEMENT

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—Has the Minister for the Arts this morning received a report from the Victorian Arts Centre Trust

on the extraordinary agreement entered into with the trade union movement? If so, will he make a copy of that report and other relevant papers available to members of the House and to the Parliamentary Library this afternoon?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I have received such a report.

LAND ACQUISITION

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I refer the Premier to the answer he gave to my question yesterday on the Condah project in western Victoria. Is it his intention to acquire further land for this project and, if so, are powers of compulsory acquisition to be used and under what Act of Parliament would he propose to use more powers of compulsory acquisition of land for this purpose?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I made it clear yesterday that it is intended to obtain additional land to link the mission site with the lake. The Government will endeavour to obtain that land to promote the whole project by whatever means are required for the acquisition of freehold land or easement.

BUILDING APPROVALS

Mr HASSETT (Dromana)—Will the Treasurer inform the House of the details of the most recent building approval figures and their effect on the Victorian economy?

Mr Cain—Victoria is leading the way again.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I endorse the Premier's comment that Victoria is leading the way again. The Leader of the Opposition, who is interjecting, does not want to hear it. All he wants to do is to open his mouth. It is about time that he listened. In the private sector of the State, the increase is above the national average.

In the twelve months to February 1984, the increase in private sector approvals in Victoria is 42·7 per cent compared with 40·1 per cent for Australia. It is even more significant when one examines the increase in total dwelling approvals since the Government came to office in April 1982. The increase in Victoria had been 50·2 per cent, which is more than twice the increase across Australia, which was 24·1 per cent.

Just in case the Leader of the Opposition is not listening, I reiterate: From April 1982 to February 1984, the increase in approvals in this State was 50·2 per cent and for the rest of Australia it was 24·1 per cent. This indicates the significant economic recovery that has occurred in the home building industry in the State which is now feeding into the retail sales centre and into employment. That is why the recovery in employment in the State over the past twelve months has been stronger that in any other part of Australia.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Further to the last question, on the basis used by the Treasurer at question time yesterday to analyse employment figures, is the Treasurer aware that during the twelve months to February total new dwelling approvals rose by only 19·9 per cent in Victoria compared with an increase of 38·6 per cent in the rest of Australia? How does the Treasurer justify his claim that Victoria is leading the nation's housing recovery when both the latest housing figures and the Treasurer's own basis of analysis clearly prove otherwise?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The honourable member for Westernport obviously does not look beyond one day. I just presented the House information indicating that, since the Labor Party has been in government, total housing approvals have increased by 50·2 per cent, whereas in the rest of Australia the increase was only 24·1 per cent. In two years, Victoria has completely outstripped the rest of Australia in this area. The increase has been enormous and it is about time that the Leader of the Opposition recognized that increase. There has been some catching up in public dwellings, but in the private sector Victoria is well ahead.

Taking the total position, the growth in the past twelve months is similar in this State to other parts of Australia. The relevant figures are 29·8 per cent for Australia and 29·1 per cent for Victoria. Therefore, there is little difference in total approvals. The Opposition has been saying it is time to ensure that the private sector recovers. It is the policies of this Government, in conjunction with the policies of the Hawke Government, that are creating that recovery. The increase in approvals in the private sector in the past twelve months is higher

in Victoria than in any other part of Australia. Since April 1982, the increase has been 50·2 per cent in Victoria, compared with 24·1 per cent in the rest of Australia. That is an enormous achievment and once again demonstrates that Victoria is the State of achievement.

FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Mr NORRIS (Noble Park)—I ask the Minister for the Arts: What action is being taken by the Government to assist the film and television industry in Victoria?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—Spectacularly successful action. In the last Budget, the funds made available to Film Victoria were doubled. A year ago, Film Victoria had invested in only a single film with a total production value of approximately $750 000. Today, Film Victoria has invested in films under production to a value of $9 million. Further investments have been made in films that are expected to be produced in the coming financial year at a cost of about $18 million. That represents an immense expansion in film and television making activities in Victoria. It proves also the effectiveness of the Government's policy of targeting for special support and encouragement areas of economic activity that have been identified as having high growth potential.

Film Victoria does not function only as a source of direct investment in the film and television industry of this State. It functions also as a conduit through which investment capital from the private sector can be placed behind Victoria's film and television production. On 4 April Film Victoria held a function that was attended by more than 40 senior representatives of the investment community in Victoria, together with representatives of film making interests. Advertisements are being placed widely to solicit registration of interests in investment in television and film production so that the capital at the disposal of the Victorian film and television industry can be maximized.

Very great success indeed has been achieved already over the past twelve months and I am confident that we will build successfully on those foundations.

PETITIONS

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

Reintroduction of milk bottles

TO 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 which relates to the abolition of the milk bottle.

Your petitioners request that the House take action to ensure that the use of the milk bottle be restored in Geelong so that environment and conservation costs, jobs and convenience to the consumer be restored, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By **Mr Shell** (638 signatures)

Container deposit legislation

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth our opposition to any law making compulsory the payment of a deposit on drink containers sold within the State, on the grounds that such a law:

(A) will increase the price of drinks sold;

(B) will cause a loss of skilled jobs in the drink manufacturing and packaging industries;

(C) will prevent charitable organizations and community groups and others from operating voluntary buy-back centres for returnable drink containers like aluminium cans, and thus deny these groups a valuable fund-raising activity.

Your petitioners therefore pray that no container deposit legislation be introduced for the State of Victoria.

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

By **Dr Vaughan** (515 signatures)

Student hostels

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria respectfully showeth that we register our strongest protest at the closure of Education Department hostels in Melbourne at the end of the 1983 academic year. We are gravely concerned at the loss of accommodation in a supervised, safe and secure environment previously available to country tertiary

students who are, in the first instance, already disadvantaged because of the need to leave their home to pursue their education and would be further disadvantaged since they are at a time of life when they lack the experience to compete on the open market for accommodation. Parents of children who had been accommodated in Education Department hostels prior to 1984 had peace of mind knowing that this hostel accommodation was conducive to study and that in their first experience of living away from home, their children had the company, support and example of others pursuing similar studies. Private accommodation shortages are severe in Melbourne and hundreds of tertiary students need the restoration of this most suitable housing facility previously provided by Education Department hostels.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Victorian Government will reconsider the decision to close Education Department hostels in Melbourne and act to reopen and maintain these hostels for the 1984 academic year, for the use of hundreds of tertiary students from the country.

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

By **Mr McKellar** (1338 signatures)

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

ECONOMIC AND BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

Victorian public sector superannuation

Mr ROWE (Essendon) presented reports from the Ecomomic and Budget Review Committee upon:

A review of superannuation in the Victorian public sector together with appendices, consultants' reports and minutes of evidence;

a summary of Victorian public sector superannuation schemes, together with an appendix.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the reports and appendices be printed.

PUBLICATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS

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

That, in respect of any documents laid before the House more than seventy-five years ago and not ordered to be printed, Mr Speaker be empowered to authorize —(*a*) access; and (*b*) under such conditions as may be set down by Mr Speaker on the instrument of authorization, reproduction and/or publication of such documents for educational or historical purposes.

This proposal has emanated, Mr Speaker, from your own detailed research in endeavouring to provide alternative arrangements for storage and future access to Parliamentary documents. I appreciate, on behalf of the House, the efforts that you and the officers at the table have put into this matter. It has been considered by each of the Parliamentary parties and the wisdom of your proposal is understood. The Government supports the scheme.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Opposition supports the concept of documents not ordered to be printed being made available for research, historical purposes and for educational purposes. However, I believe there could be some difficulties which might lead you, Mr Speaker, to seek a further review of this, and the operation of this, in respect of the Printing Committee of the House.

I think there needs to be a review of the decisions earlier made and the decision to be made on this motion. My concern is, Mr Speaker, and it is a personal concern, that it seems inappropriate that you, Mr Speaker, should be placed in a position by a motion of the House—and this relates to earlier motions and also to this one—where you are seen to be in some way approving of the document; in other words, it seems inappropriate that some imprimatur is given to the use of a document when you do not have the opportunity of examining its use in publication or in the way it is used.

The motion suggests that some acknowledgement will be given to the use and authority of the motion in its application to any documents. That is useful and good. It may be appropriate to pass the motion. I make it clear that the Opposition supports it but raises with you, Mr Speaker, for your consideration and perhaps for the consideration of the Printing Committee, whether it is appropriate for people to use Parliamentary documents and say they are using them, perhaps, to give themselves greater status in the public arena.

Therefore, if I were to achieve access to a document that was made available to me pursuant to a resolution of the House and so on, and with the authority of the Speaker, it seems that I would have greater authority for what I say than perhaps you, Mr Speaker, might intend because you have no control

over the way in which I use the documents. That is a problem. I instance the situation that could arise in about 45 years.

At that time, the unpublished, that is unprinted, documents associated with the inquiry into scientology will become available pursuant to this motion, if it is passed. Those documents are in the Parliamentary Library and available to members at present but not available to anyone else. One might assume or hope that all the people named in or concerned with those documents would be dead or perhaps of such an age that they may not be embarrassed by what happened 45 years ago, but the documents contain names and refer to embarrassing situations which led the then Parliament not to allow that document to be printed.

If those documents become available in future, or if a similarly embarrassing document were to become available—I am not talking about actionable material, which is excluded; I am talking about embarrassing material—the family names that may be mentioned in those documents in connection with embarrassing situations could continue to embarrass the next generation of that family.

The Parliament and the Speaker should not appear to endorse in any way the use of those documents. I raise this matter for your consideration, Mr Speaker, and leave it entirely to you. I do not expect a response immediately because I have sprung this matter on you. The Printing Committee might well reconsider the matter in order to ascertain how this situation could be avoided. By all means, the documents should be made available. That is appropriate.

However, Parliament should avoid any suggestion or implication that the Parliament or the Speaker are in any way approving the way in which some documents may be interpreted, published or used. That is the difficulty being faced as the result of an earlier resolution passed by the Parliament.

The motion is appropriate for documents not ordered to be printed. The Speaker and his fellow Presiding Officers throughout Australia should perhaps take up the matter with all Parliaments and adopt a standard approach so that again no Parliament is seen to be giving its imprimatur and approval to the use and interpretation of documents which may become available, if the motion is agreed to.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the House that I gave the matter careful consideration before I sought the assistance of the Leader of the House on the motion. My responsibility under the terms of the motion is appreciated, and particularly the matters raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is not my intention, and I am sure it is not the intention of future Presiding Officers, to in any way limit or censure the material that in my opinion should be made available to the public on request.

Obviously, where legal opinion is needed, as has been raised, about sensitive issues involving family names, it will be sought. I have already considered that matter as part of my responsibility under the terms of the motion.

Certainly discretion would be exercised by the Presiding Officer in granting permission for the use of any material, for whatever purpose permission is sought to use it.

The motion was agreed to.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER 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 Psychologists Bill.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that a further appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Transport (Victorian Ports Authority) Bill.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION (REVOCATION) BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to revoke certain classes of subordinate legislation made prior to 1 August 1962 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CO-OPERATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to empower the Registrar of Co-operatives to

vary common bond requirements of credit societies and to make provision for annual appropriation of profits by credit societies to a reserve fund, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SALE (LAND DEVELOPMENT) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to the relocation of Sale railway station and the development of the land in and in the vicinity of the former railway station and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MOTOR CAR (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Motor Car Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MONASH UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend generally the Monash University Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend generally the Deakin University Act 1974.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

TEACHING SERVICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Teaching Service Act 1981, the Education Service (Amendment) Act 1982 and the Teaching Service Act 1983, to provide for interim Teaching Service Appeals Boards for the purposes of the Teaching Service Act 1981, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

DAIRY INDUSTRY BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—On behalf of the Minister for Local Government, who represents the Minister of Agriculture in this place, I move:

> That I have leave to bring in a Bill to re-enact with amendments the law relating to the Victorian dairy industry, to repeal the Filled Milk Act 1958, the Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1958, the Milk Board Act 1958, the Milk Pasteurization Act 1958, the Imitation Milk Act 1969, the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority Act 1977, the Dairy Products (Repeal) Act 1978 and for other purposes.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Speaker, yesterday, you announced that the Minister for Local Government would not be in attendance in the House this week. I see from the Notice Paper that the notice of motion is in the name of Mr Wilkes as the Minister for Local Government. It appears either that the Notice Paper is wrong, that the notice was given by somebody else or, if not, that the notice was not given this week. I wish to understand whether, in fact, the Notice Paper is incorrect in naming the Minister for Local Government or whether another Minister undertook the responsibility for bringing in this Bill.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I gave notice yesterday that I would seek leave today to bring in this Bill. At that time, I indicated that I was doing so on behalf of the Minister for Local Government. I understand, and I assume, that the ordinary arrangement is that a Minister can do that on behalf of another Minister, and the Standing Orders provide for another Minister to do so on behalf of a Minister who is absent, even if the notice of motion is attributed to the absent Minister.

The SPEAKER—I do not find anything unusual in this procedure. It has been the practice in the past for a Minister, in the absence of another Minister, on his or her behalf, to have a Notice of Motion put on the Notice Paper in the order that it appears on today's Notice Paper.

Mr Maclellan—But is it the practice to do so in the name of the absent Minister?

The SPEAKER—It has been the practice in the past. The record shows that the Minister for Local Government will not be present in the House this week, and that the Leader of the House moved on his behalf the procedural motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LAND TAX (LANDATA PROJECT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make further provision with respect to the use of information in the possession of the Commissioner of Land Tax in connection with the project known as Landata.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for superannuation for part-time officers, to provide further for superannuation for officers on leave, to amend the Superannuation Act 1958 and the Superannuation (Lump Sum Benefits) Act 1981, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STATE BANK (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the State Bank Act 1958 with respect to the capital of the Commissioners of the State Bank of Victoria and the promotion and formation by the commissioners of corporations and other bodies and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PIPELINES (PERMITS) BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Pipelines Act 1967 with respect to the procedures to be followed in applications for permits under Part II of that Act and the manner in which such applications are to be determined and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Medical Practitioners Act 1970, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

WATER (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Water Act 1958 to make provision for an alternative system of charging for water supplied to rural districts and to reduce the interest-free period for payment of charges for water and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1982.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (YOUTH ATTENDANCE PROJECTS) BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to empower courts to order attendance at youth attendance projects as a non-custodial alternative to detention in a youth training centre for young offenders, to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act

1981, the Community Welfare Services Act 1970 and other Acts and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ADOPTION BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend and re-enact the law relating to adoption, to repeal the Adoption of Children Act 1964, to make consequential amendments to certain Acts and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CHILDREN (GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY) BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision for certain guardianship and custody orders relating to children and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PROFESSIONAL BOXING CONTROL (SUSPENSION OF REGISTRATION) BILL

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Professional Boxing Control Act 1975 to make the provision for suspension of a boxer's registration in certain situations and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EXHIBITION (BORROWING POWER) BILL

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I move:

> That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to increase the borrowing power of the Exhibition Trust from $5 million to $10 million. Historically, the trust has not been the recipient of Government funding, so it has been necessary for it over the years to borrow funds to supplement accumulated moneys resulting from the profitable operation of the Royal Exhibition Building and carpark facilities.

The Exhibition Act permits the trust to undertake such borrowings for the purpose of carrying out its functions effectively. These borrowings shall have the consent of the Governor in Council and the Treasurer is authorized to guarantee the loans under conditions he thinks fit.

Since the early 1960s, borrowings taken out by the trust have allowed considerable and profitable expansion of the Royal Exhibition Building resulting in a high standard of facilities which have been to the advantage of the various trades and industries displaying and promoting their products therein.

Building programmes undertaken by the trust have included the construction of the western and eastern annexes, as well as the planning for the building's centenary in 1980, which saw further extension of halls and convention facilities resulting in the Centennial Hall. For the trust to carry out each of these programmes, additional borrowings had to be taken out, necessitating the need for increases to the statutory borrowing limit.

This year, the trust is to embark on a major refurbishment of the Great Hall. In 1980, the trust's architects reported that the flooring in the Great Hall was critical with wear, had reached the end of its economic life and should be replaced by 1984. In addition, essential electrical and lighting works should be carried out in the interests of public safety. I should stress that, in the planning of this programme, the trust has considered both the historic significance of the hall and the practical requirements of today.

The estimated cost of this major works programme is $3·7 million. However, the final project cost could be closer to $4 million after rise and fall and contingency provisions are calculated. Together with the current loan liability of $2·4 million held by the trust, the aggregate loan liability will then exceed the current statutory borrowing limit of $5 million set in 1979.

It goes without saying that, unless the current statutory limit is raised, the trust

will be unable to enter into an additional loan agreement to fund the 1984 programme of urgent and essential work in the Great Hall. Although a borrowing limit of $6·4 million would cater for the immediate short-term requirements, it is considered that a borrowing limit of $10 million, subject, of course, to the Treasurer's approval, will be more realistic and permit greater flexibility for future works.

Finally, maintenance and expansion of the Royal Exhibition Building, as contained in the trust's master plan, has permitted this complex to be the largest exhibition site under one roof in the southern hemisphere, and increased areas and usage have made it one of the few financially profitable centres in the world. 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, May 1.

PENSIONER CONCESSIONS (REHABILITATION ALLOWANCE) BILL

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton) 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 Pensioner Concessions (Rehabilitation Allowance) Bill.

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to grant concessions to persons receiving the Commonwealth rehabilitation allowance, to amend the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973, the Motor Car Act 1958 and the Land Tax Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STAMPS BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill introduces a number of amendments to the Stamps Act and also amends the Cattle Compensation Act. In respect of the Stamps Act, its purposes are fourfold: First, to protect Victorian revenue following the decision of the Queensland Government to abolish stamp duty on share transactions in Brisbane; second, to correct a technical deficiency in respect of stamp duty on the sale of real property; third, to ensure that certain first-home buyers receive the stamp duty concession; and, finally, to alter the rates of stamp duty paid by vendors of cattle. The amendment to the Cattle Compensation Act increases the maximum amount of compensation payable from $350 to $550 an animal.

It is necessary to legislate to ensure that transfers of shares in Victorian corporations executed on-market in Queensland remain subject to duty in Victoria. The revenue under threat could be as much as $30 million per annum. Also the Bill seeks to protect the relative position of the Melbourne financial market against tax-induced distortions.

Section 63 of the Stamps Act appears to make second-hand stock dutiable when sold with a business along with real property. The result is an anomaly with potential difficulties for small businesses. This was not the intention of the legislation. The Bill proposes to rectify that situation.

Persons who have had an interest in real estate are not entitled to receive a stamp duty concession under the first home purchase benefits scheme. However, it was not intended that legislation have that effect where there had been an interest held in land provided that there was no dwelling on the land which was used as a principal residence. I have already announced the Government's intention to propose removal of the anomaly, and the Bill gives effect to that announcement.

Heading XVII of the Third Schedule of the Stamps Act will be amended to alter the rate of stamp duty payable from the current 2 cents in $5 or part thereof with a maximum of 40 cents to 3 cents in $20 or part thereof with a maximum of 60 cents an animal.

These amendments will provide for more equitable contributions to the Cattle Compensation Fund. Under the current arrangements, the 40 cents maximum is reached on an animal valued at $100. Under the new arrangement, the maximum will not be

reached until the animal is sold for $400. The levy for a $100 animal will be 15 cents, which is considerably lower than the 40 cents that is paid at present.

The purpose of cattle compensation is to provide for payment to owners who have stock compulsory destroyed for disease control purposes and where carcasses are condemned at meat inspection.

The Act provides that the amount of compensation payable will be the market value provided the statutory limit is not exceeded. The current limit of $350 was established when the Act was last amended in the spring session of 1980. Since that time, and particularly since the end of the drought, cattle prices have increased substantially. A limit of $550 is now considered to be more in line with the normal range of market values for commercial cattle.

Both measures aim to bring the legislation into line with the conditions currently prevailing in the cattle industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

I suggest that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday week.

I would like an assurance from the Treasurer that officers from the Stamp Duties Office will be available for discussion of the details of the proposed legislation with any interested members.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—In accordance with normal arrangements, the officers concerned will be available to the honourable member for Balwyn, and a similar service will apply to members of the National Party, if they desire to make use of it.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 1.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (RENEWAL OF LEASES AND LICENSES) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The amending legislation is a machinery amendment to correct an anomaly in the Extractive Industries Act. The Bill is short and adds only one section to the Act but it is nevertheless an important and urgent amendment.

Recent legal advice to the Department of Minerals and Energy has indicated that a number of extractive industries may be currently operating in Victoria without a valid licence. This has occurred because the department has been unable to complete the processing of applications for the renewal of extractive industry licences prior to the expiry of the relevant licences.

It appears that the same situation applies with respect to extractive industry leases, with the result that up to 85 extractive industry operations—commonly referred to as quarrying operations—may be presently operating without valid authorities.

The procedures prior to licence renewal have been very time-consuming because of the need to consult extensively with responsible authorities per medium of the Extractive Industries Advisory Committee to upgrade conditions under which quarries operate. As a consequence, renewal applications are usually not granted until several months, or even years, after the expiry date of the original leases or licences.

It has been the practice over a number of years to permit extractive industries to continue operating until applications for renewal are finally determined. The recent legal advice indicates that this practice may not be consistent with the provisions of the Extractive Industries Act 1966, and furthermore that quarrying operations carried out during the period between the expiry of the lease or licence and the determination of the renewal application may be unlawful.

There is a need for urgent action to be taken to provide legislative machinery which will enable extractive industry leases and licences to remain in full force and effect while all future renewal applications are being processed. Moreover, there is a need to apply the proposed new measures to renewal applications which have already been lodged and which have been dealt with or which are still awaiting determination.

The amendment will bring the Extractive Industries Act into line with the pendency provisions of the Mines Act 1958 and the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982.

If the proposed Bill were not to proceed, the implications in respect of extractive industry oeprations in Victoria would be most serious. Indeed, somewhere between 10 and 15 per cent of quarries in Victoria may have to be closed, particularly if a case of illegal operation was successfully challenged in court.

The closure of a substantial number of quarrying operations in the State would, amongst other things, cause a shortage of extractive materials in certain areas, and would result in immediate retrenchment of the employees concerned.

On assuming office, this Government inherited a legacy of the previous Administration of an under-resourced Mining Division in terms of manpower and technology. A huge backlog of both mining and extractive industry tenement applications was the obvious result of this lack of resources.

A systematic approach has been undertaken to improve both the resources and the administration of the mining division. The amended Mines Act has improved the processing of mining tenement applications and additional staff have been allocated to the Mining Titles Section. Computer facilities have recently been installed which will assist dramatically in improved systems for title processing. The Department of Minerals and Energy will, also through the community employment programme, be able to provide an additional seventeen employees in order to reduce the backlog of titles.

The Government is committed to improving the resources and the administrative efficiency of the Mining Titles Section and the steps which have been taken will ensure that the backlog of titles will be reduced.

This amendment corrects one urgent problem in the Act but does not deal with a number of other inadequacies. Following discussions with the Extractive Industries Advisory Committee, the Minister for Minerals and Energy has undertaken that a thorough review of the Extractive Industries Act will occur and that amending legislation will be presented to Parliament in the spring sessional period.

The Bill protects the operation of a significant proportion of an industry vital to Victoria. It brings the Extractive Industries Act into line with other legislation administered by the Department of Minerals and Energy. 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, May 1.

STATUS OF CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As foreshadowed by the Attorney-General when introducing the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Bill 1984 in another place, the Status of Children (Amendment) Bill 1984 also forms part of the Government's response to the Waller Committee report.

For about fifteen years, the practice of artificial insemination by donor has been used as a means of overcoming infertility. The law has failed to respond to this development and continued to treat the genetic or biological father as the father, for the purposes of the law, of any child which resulted from the use of this procedure. It is plain that the social husband within a couple which takes advantage of this procedure should be treated for all purposes by the law as the father of the child.

The problem created by the failure of the law to keep pace with developments in medical science was first addressed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in November 1977. The matter was first drawn to public attention by a leading King's Counsel in 1948, who suggested that Parliament would not be rushing into action in relation to the matter, and that has been a reasonable prediction. Indeed, the first time Parliament addressed the matter was with one of my private member's Bills.

By November 1977, there had been a number of children conceived and born as a result of artificial insemination by donor. At the very practical level of registering the birth, social fathers faced the difficulty that, as the law stood, it was an offence for them to be registered as the father. This problem graphically drew attention to the inadequacy which existed in the law.

The deliberations of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in respect of

the status question had almost been finalized, when the practice of *in vitro* fertilization developed to the extent that successful pregnancies were beginning to be achieved.

As the Attorney-General indicated when introducing the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Bill, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General considered it appropriate to incorporate within any model legislation provisions which dealt with the status of children resulting from the procedure of *in vitro* fertilization.

Some indication of the dimension of the problem addressed by this Bill can be obtained from statistics which show that several hundred children have been born in Victoria as a result of artificial insemination by donor, and in the case of *in vitro* fertilization in 1982, about 70 successful pregnancies occurred in Melbourne.

The Status of Children (Amendment) Bill deals with the status of children born either as a result of the use of artificial insemination by donor or as a result of the use of *in vitro* fertilization procedures. It provides that such children will be treated, for all legal purposes, as the children of the social father or the social mother as appropriate.

A feature of the proposed legislation is that it confers legitimacy, for the purposes of State law, on children who are the product of the donation of ova. In this respect, the proposed legislation is in advance of the Artificial Conception Act 1984 passed by the New South Wales Parliament which deals only with children born as a result of donor semen, whether the semen is used as part of an artificial insemination procedure or as part of an *in vitro* fertilization procedure.

There have also been developments recently at Commonwealth level in respect of these issues. The Family Law (Amendment) Act 1983, which came into force in November 1983, added section 5A to the Family Law Act. That section deems children born of donor semen to be the children of the husband and wife who have achieved pregnancy by use of the donated semen. That provision is, like the New South Wales provision, in contradistinction to the Bill, silent as to the status of children who result from the use of donor ova. In addition, as honourable members will appreciate, the Commonwealth provision, because of limitations in respect of Commonwealth power, does not cover children conceived as a result of donated semen who are born into a *de facto* relationship. The Bill confers protection on children born within an established *de facto* relationship.

The Commonwealth Family Law Act does not deal generally with the subject of legitimation of children of a marriage. That subject is dealt with by the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961, Part VI. The Commonwealth, I am pleased to inform the House, has undertaken to amend Part VI to make children, born as a result of the use of donor semen or donor ova, children of the marriage for all purposes.

The main provision of the Bill is clause 5 which inserts a new Part—sections 10A to 10F—into the Status of Children Act 1974. Of these provisions, proposed sections 10C to 10F are the key ones. Proposed section 10C deals with children born as a rseult of artificial insemination by donor. Proposed section 10D deals with children born as a result of *in vitro* fertilization of an ovum produced by the mother and fertilized by donated semen. Proposed section 10E deals with the situation where the ovum is also donated.

In each case the provisions make it clear that the donor of the genetic material shall not have legal relationship with the child. In addition, honourable members will observe that proposed section 10F protects from legal liability the donor of semen where that semen is used in an AID procedure involving a single woman—that is, one who does not have an established legal or *de facto* relationship—or in an AID procedure where a married woman does not have the consent of her husband. Both of these procedures will be rendered unlawful by the Infertility (Medical Procedures) Bill.

The Government does not condone the practice of artificial insemination of single women by donor. Nonetheless, it recognizes that artificial insemination by donor can be effected by very simple means and away from approved hospitals. Donors who may have unwittingly provided semen used unlawfully in these ways should not be placed at risk of being regarded as the legal father of any child born as a result of such procedures. For that reason section 10F is proposed to be included. 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, May 1.

PUBLIC ACCOUNT (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Bill makes only a few technical amendments to the Public Account Act rather than amending it in any substantial manner. These amendments have been introduced by the Treasurer to meet the requirements of the changed procedures that are coming into the Parliament with regard to Appropriation Bills, as a result of the continuing development of programme budgeting in the public sector in Victoria. Programme budgeting was discussed in this Chamber more fully in recent debate on the current Supply Bill, so I shall not take up the time of the house to raise those matters again.

Clearly, future Appropriation Bills are to be couched in terms of programmes and references to divisions and sub-divisions of the Budget Papers should become references to items and programmes in accordance with the requirements of programme budgeting. It is evident that this is a major undertaking for the Department of Management and Budget and, indeed, for the entire Public Service of Victoria whose estimates will have to be prepared in a new way. Further, they will be required to state the declared objectives of the different programmes within any one department. According to the papers that have been issued, there are some 128 programmes and some 5000 identified activities, and the changed thinking that will be necessary within the public sector to deal with the new terminology in an effective way will be of great significance.

It is acknowledged that the amendments to the Public Account Act need to be made in order for the programme to go ahead, and the Opposition supports the passage of the Bill. At the same time, I remind the Treasurer, if he needs reminding, that much work needs to be done on the development of programme budgeting if it is to become an effective tool of management in the public sector.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The National Party does not oppose the Bill. It appreciates the Government's motives in endeavouring to clarify the Budget procedures and to make the reporting of Government financial activities more intelligible to the average citizen. One major problem confronting a new member in this House is to comprehend the intricacy of financial statements and involved procedures in this House that were in place when both you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I first came to this House.

It must be appreciated that considerable advances have been made in bringing financial matters into a more clearly stated form. However, it is impossible to get away from the basic principle that one cannot spend more money than one collects if one is to remain viable. No matter what terms and procedures are adopted, that is a basic question that all Treasurers should keep firmly in mind. It will be interesting to see how the changed procedures of programme budgeting are achieved. I confess that it still holds some mystery for me as I am not trained in financial management.

I hope the Bill will lead to more clarity in the presentation of Budget documents and will help with the general appreciation of the thrust of the Government's policy in the future. The National Party does not oppose the Bill and hopes it will have the desired effect.

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster)—I support the Bill, but I make no apology for speaking at length on this most important subject. I have some personal sympathy with the Minister of Education and the Treasurer who are over-worked. However, it is my function as a member of the Opposition to make comments in this House, and I remind honourable members that programme budgeting is not something that has recently been dreamed up by Dr Sheehan and the other itelligentsia in the Department of Management and Budget. It was thought of when I was a member of the former Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. We had a brilliant officer, Dr David Shand, who is now Chief Director of Audit in the Audit Office.

The Bill concerns information to the public of Victoria and to taxpayers. That is the

first priority of the Government. It is easy for any political leader just before an election to make all sorts of grandiose promises, but once he is elected he does a complete turnaround when he cannot fund his promises. It is about time we had honesty in government and people were told frankly in advance where the money was to be raised and spent. That is why programme budgeting is important.

I wish the Treasurer well in his endeavours, but neither he nor his staff should take credit from the previous Government for starting this process.

While a member of the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee, I was delighted to see the pioneering work that was occurring in the Department of Agriculture and other departments. The system will not reach fruition until well into the latter portion of the 1980s. I probably will not be in this Parliament in the 1990s, but I hope the Treasurer of the day, whether he be Labor, Liberal or National Party, will take advantage of the pioneering efforts now taking place in the field of programme budgeting.

The Audit Office is essential to all programme budgeting and I am disappointed that that office is still seriously understaffed. It is unable to cope with the routine nuts and bolts of the running of Government departments, let alone matters such as internal auditing.

I am bitterly disappointed in the admissions made in answers to questions on notice about the inadequacies of internal auditing. Nothing has been done to alleviate the situation in the short term. As the Auditor-General points out in his second report, all departments are in the throes of developing their own programme structures and endeavouring to measure performance with advice and assistance from the experts in the Department of Management and Budget, but this imposes a tremendous strain on the department. Attention should be given to the central accounting system. Fortunately, in this day and age of computerization, we are able to handle classification problems more expeditiously than could have been done under the old-fashioned accounting systems.

Nevertheless, the introduction of programme budgeting will place a tremendous strain on the Audit Office.

There will be complex problems of allocating inputs and tasks between different programmes. The basis of establishing measurement will have to be carefully examined to determine validity and reliability.

That is why I have been most disappointed at the answer I received recently to a question on notice that I addressed to the Premier. I asked what were the forward planning estimates of the total establishment and actual numbers employed in the Auditor-General's office in 1983–84 and future years. The Premier was good enough to tell me that the staffing level of the office at November 1983 was 149 positions responsible for a Budget expenditure of $10 000 million. According to the information that has been given to me in the answer, it appears that the present staffing level of the Audit Office is well below the approved establishment ceiling of 164.

Last night during debate in the House, I said that the present staff ceiling for the Police Department was 3000 below its authorized level. Here one has a key department of financial management, the Audit Office, which has a staff ceiling well below its authorized level. In his reply to my question on notice, the Premier informed me that the salary budget for the Audit Office in 1983–84 provides for an additional increase in the staff ceiling to 160. I have noticed with pleasure advertisements in the newspapers for 27 new positions to be filled in the Audit Office before the end of June this year. That has my highest approval. However, if these extra responsibilities are to be placed on the staff of the Audit Office through complex new pathways of programme budgeting, the Government will have to substantially increase the number of staff employed in the Audit Office. I was pleased to note that the Premier indicated that these responsibilities are being seriously considered by the Government.

I stress to the House the importance of recruiting specialist support staff for the Audit Office. Victoria needs the best minds and most competent people to manage the financial affairs of the State. It does not matter whether the Government has to prise these people from private enterprise or the

universities. There is no doubt that in the higher echelons of the Audit Office the Government must vigorously scrutinize the qualification requirements for staff.

I am the proud possessor of an auditing qualification. I am a member of the Australian Society of Accountants and a registered company auditor. However, even with my broad general accounting knowledge, I would not pretend to be able to master all of the auditing responsibilities that are now placed on auditors in this day and age of computers, where one reads almost daily in the newpapers of massive fraud and defalcation by some of the computer wizards who are able to transfer——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—Order! The honourable member for Doncaster is starting to stray from the Bill. I remind the honourable member that this is a fairly simple Bill. The honourable member has been given a fair amount of latitude.

Mr WILLIAMS—It may be a simple Bill, but it is one of the most important to be introduced into the State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I am pointing out that the debate on the Bill is fairly restrictive. The Bill, when passed, will make definite and specific changes. I am not attempting to indicate to the honourable member that the Bill is not important. However, I want to convey to the honourable member the fact that the scope of the debate is very limited. The honourable member is now straying outside the parameters of the debate and I ask him to return to the Bill before the House.

Mr WILLIAMS—I am endeavouring to persuade you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the House that, no matter how laudable this little Bill may be, the Government must learn to walk before it can run.

The Government is not fulfilling the rudimentary requirements of audit practice in the State. That is evident in the explanation I have in front of me. I refer to the second report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1983 and the unsatisfactory answers that have been provided to my questions on notice. I take strong objection to the supremo in the Department of the Premier instructing practically all of the officers in Government departments on how they shall answer my questions on notice. What is the matter with the Ministers? I shall give the House a classic example. I addressed a question on notice to the Minister of Agriculture, asking what he proposes to do about complaints against his department in the report of the Auditor-General.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I am not prepared to allow the honourable member for Doncaster to proceed with his present line of argument. The Bill does not give sufficient scope for the honourable member to develop the points he wishes to develop. The honourable member will have to wait for a more appropriate debate to do that. I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill, which allows a fairly restricted debate on the operations of the Audit Office. The debate must be related to programme budgeting and not a general discussion on the operations of the Auditor-General.

Mr WILLIAMS—It is all very well for the Government to introduce legislation and con the people of Victoria with a great public fanfare of what it will do. However, if the Government does not provide the skilled manpower, the financial resources and the equipment for the Public Service to carry out the dictates of Government, the whole exercise is a sham and a fraud. So far as I am concerned, the second and third reports of the Audtor-General for 1982–83 reveal a state of affairs that no Government could be proud of.

The reason for the deficiencies in the accounting and auditing procedures and the internal audits of practically every arm of Government in the State is that the Auditor-General does not have an adequate number of trained staff. However, the Government is now seeking in this Bill to load the Audit Office with the most difficult procedures involving programme budgeting, which would tax the ingenuity and the intelligence of the most experienced and competent auditors.

Either during a grievance debate or some other occasion, I shall find the occasion to put the Government to shame. The Government has been in office for two years and all the Treasurer has done is posture with documentation provided by Dr Peter Sheehan and all of these other so-called experts in the Department of Management and Budget. It is not satisfactory and I repeat what I said earlier: The Government had

better learn to walk before it starts running in marathon races.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I thank honourable members for their support of the Bill. In implementing the new form of programme budgeting, the Bill will effect a dramatic change in the presentation of Budgets. There is a good deal more work to be done to ensure that programme budgeting can be fully implemented. The Bill is an important step in the introduction of programme budgeting.

The motion was agreed to.

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

VICTORIAN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES FINANCE BILL

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

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—The Opposition supports the establishment of the Victorian Public Authorities Finance Agency in the belief that the co-ordination of the borrowing activities of the many small public sector borrowers in the market will benefit the entire State. Borrowing in the public sector is very important to that sector and it is also important in the general finance markets of the city. Semi-Government borrowings include local government borrowings, an area of significant presence in the financial market. The fact that in the market-place there were some 350 active borrowers from the Victorian public sector indicates the advantages that will be available in co-ordinating the efforts of these units.

On the evidence that the Treasurer gave to the House in presenting the proposed legislation, there is the opportunity of saving something like 0·7 per cent of the current rate at any one time through a central borrowing agency. Its significance will depend upon the skill of the persons appointed to the agency. Some costs will be involved as, naturally, one cannot set up a four-member board that is properly staffed without incurring some costs. The amount of borrowings that the agency may be engaged in should give that agency room not only to reduce the costs of borrowings to the various participating authorities, but also to produce sufficient funds to meet the costs that the agency might incur. It is important to remember that centralizing the borrowing functions of these various authorities will not necessarily means that they will be doing business at a better total cost than they are at present. It will depend very largely on the timing of the activities of the borrowing agency in the market-place, whether it is able to choose the right moment to go to the market, whether it asks the right questions and seeks appropriate money at the right time.

Interest rates, as all honourable members know, have the ability to vary and this can happen quickly. If one picks the wrong moment to go to the market, even though one might be borrowing a significant amount and, as such, may be able to command a better price in the market than may a smaller borrower, the benefits that the large borrower may obtain will be lost, and they will not be lost to only one of the authorities using the agency but to many.

For this reason, the Opposition is encouraged to note that in the finance area the Government is proposing to make the use of the agency by any semi-Government or local government body entirely voluntary so that any borrowers who are at present engaging their best skills in the market-place can continue to do that work.

The agency will be put on trial and, if it manages the situation well, people will come to it. If it is found to be less than adequate in providing this centralized service to the various bodies, the authorities will go their own way as they have in the past. There will be a level of competition between the centralized agency and the various units which may be interested in using its services. If these authorities see that the centralized agency will give them a better access to funds at a better price, of course, they will make use of it.

The Treasurer should also concern himself about the imminent introduction into the finance markets in Victoria of a scheme known as Austraclear, which will operate as a clearing house for securities in a central location so that when they are exchanged in the finance market, there will not be a need for them to be physically moved from one owner to another they will be held in this central register. The owners of securities will hold receipts and, when securities are moved from one house to another, the records at

Austraclear will be adjusted accordingly. This development in the finance market is made with the deliberate intent of improving the market-ability of instruments in the financial market and, as such, it will increase the value of those securities to any lender.

I am certain that this development will be in the interests of the public sector borrowers who will have their securities given this extra flexibility in the market-place by making sure that they are available under the Austraclear scheme. There may not be an immediate benefit to the public sector, but anything that can be done to enhance the marketability of securities and the flexibility of those securities in the market-place makes them more attractive to the investing public. As this attraction to the public increases, for reasons other than high interest rates, the interest rate can be kept marginally lower.

There is no doubt that quite small movements in the interest rate can have a marked impact on the budgets of not only the State Government but also the various semi-Government authorities and local government authorities that are, of necessity, borrowers in the financial market of Victoria. The Opposition supports the establishment of the Victorian Public Authorities Finance Agency and it will watch its development with a great deal of interest.

The sitting was suspended at 12.59 *p.m. until* 2.5 *p.m.*

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—The Bill is designed to establish an agency to borrow money on behalf of the public authorities in this State. In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer pointed out that some 350 local authorities were currently in the market for borrowing money. That is considerably in excess of the number in most other States. The Bill establishes an agency that will be able to act on behalf of those authorities and borrow money under better conditions than the individual authorities would able to do in their own right.

The Bill states that it will be a voluntary arrangement. Analogies can be made with the arguments put forward in this debate to those advanced when the Australian Loan Council was being established. The virtue espoused in support of that proposition was the ability of the council to borrow at better rates on behalf of the Commonwealth and State Governments than could those Governments going into the market and competing with one another for available funds. The principle seems to be much the same in that respect. However, honourable members are aware that the Australian Loan Council has developed a strong influence on the financial policies of State Governments and that the Commonwealth Government is able to exercise control over the financial affairs of the States.

I have some apprehension that, in time, there may be disadvantages in the establishment of the Victorian Public Authorities Finance Agency being the sole agency and it becoming compulsory for local authorities to borrow through that agency. If that occurs, the Government will achieve greater control over the operations of local authorities. That is not a good thing for local authorities, which need to retain a large degree of autonomy so that they can exercise the functions for which they have been established. If the exercise of those functions is to be inhibitied by their ability to borrow the necessary finance, the organizations will not have the independence that they should have.

In its present form, the National Party has no objection to the Bill. I sound a note of warning about it being extended to the point of the agency being the sole authority that can borrow on behalf of local authorities. Members of the National Party hope the Bill will prove to be effective and to the advantage of bodies that are responsible for many forms of development in the public sector, particularly in rural Victoria.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I thank honourable members for their support of the Bill. The honourable member for Balwyn indicated that a centralized finance agency along the lines proposed in the Bill could save up to 0·7 per cent on borrowing rates, and that would be of significant benefit to those organizations participating in the Victorian Public Authorities Finance Agency. The honourable member also noted the need for skilled personnel to ensure that expertise is available so that borrowings take place under the best terms and conditions. I give an undertaking that it is the intention of the Government to ensure that that

expertise will be available so that the best rates in Australia can be achieved.

The honourable member for Balwyn also raised the issue of Austraclear—a new system that is being developed by the financial market to improve financial operations. I am aware of the advantages of such a scheme. The Victorian Development Fund has already made an assessment of that system of clearance.

The honourable member for Gippsland East raised the point that the finance agency is a voluntary organization that the various smaller authorities will not be compelled to participate in but in which they could participate on a voluntary basis if they perceive that the benefits of being enrolled in such an agency are better in relation to terms and conditions. I have no doubt that organizations that are relatively small borrowers in the financial market in Australia will participate in the scheme.

It is also important to note that the pressure to establish a central finance agency for smaller authorities has come from a widening of the financial market in Australia. There is no doubt that there will be increasing competitive financial pressures, so it is even more imperative for such an organization to borrow on behalf of the smaller authorities in future. I strongly commend the Bill to the House and thank honourable members for their support.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

Clause 2, line 13, after "Victorian" insert "Public Authorities".

This amendment corrects an omission in the Bill.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a verbal amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were the remaining clauses.

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

WATER INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURING

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Council of the following resolution with which they desired the concurrence of the Assembly:

That, notwithstanding the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee contained in its Final Report presented to this House on 24 May 1983, pursuant to section 4P (5) (*b*) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1968 this House resolves that the bodies listed hereunder shall continue to exist:

1. State Rivers and Water Supply Commission
2. Ministry of Water Resources and Water Supply
3. Latrobe River Improvement Trust
4. Macalister River Improvement Trust
5. Dandenong Valley Authority
6. Longwarry Drainage Trust
7. Shire of Korumburra River Improvement Trust
8. West Moorabool Water Board
9. Bendigo Creek Improvement Trust
10. Shire of Alberton River Improvement Trust
11. Shire of Alexandra River Improvement Trust
12. King Parrot Creek Improvement Trust
13. Seymour Shire River Improvement Trust
14. Shire of Yea River Improvement Trust
15. Avoca River Improvement Trust
16. Bullock Creek Improvement Trust
17. Pental Island Improvement Trust
18. Fifteen Mile Creek Improvement Trust
19. Ovens and King River Trust
20. Broken River Improvement Trust
21. Cann River Improvement Trust
22. Glenelg River Improvement Trust
23. Strathdownie Drainage Trust
24. Kiewa River Improvement Trust
25. Mitchell River Improvement Trust
26. Mitta Mitta River Improvement Trust
27. Snowy River Improvement Trust
28. Tambo River Improvement Trust
29. Tarwin River Improvement Trust
30. Shire of Upper Murray River Improvement Trust
31. Lough Calvert Drainage Trust
32. Avon River Improvement Trust
33. Thomson River Improvement Trust
34. Yatchaw Drainage Trust
35. Black Dog Creek Improvement Trust

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

GAS AND FUEL CORPORATION (BORROWING POWERS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 5) on the motion of Mr Cathie (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—The Opposition does not oppose the Bill because it increases the scope and ability of the Gas and Fuel Corporation to continue its programme of providing for the continuing demand for gas in both the metropolitan and country areas of the State.

The purpose of the measure is to increase the permissible limit of the corporation's borrowing powers by 20 per cent, from $500 million to $600 million which is, of course, a very substantial sum.

In speaking to the Bill and indicating the support of the Opposition, I take the opportunity of commenting on some matters raised by the Minister in his second-reading speech. The Minister gave, as is correct, an outline of the type of capital works that are envisaged or anticipated and which, of course, would be the type of capital works that this expenditure would be designed to cover under the new borrowing limits.

The Minister spoke about $35·8 million for further looping of the Longford–Dandenong pipeline to satisfy anticipated demand and to secure the main natural gas supply line. The other works proposed include a $3·3 million project to expand the Brooklyn compressor station and Longford meter installation for the regulation and supply of natural gas, $13·2 million to extend and reinforce the supply of natural gas to further country communities—the Minister did not give details of the towns and districts that are to benefit from such expenditure and I ask the honourable gentleman to request his colleague, the Minister for Minerals and Energy in another place, to make an early announcement about which country towns will be included in the works programmes because many country communities which have been on the waiting list are anxious to know how they stand. The arrival of natural gas is welcomed by any community that does not have it now.

Also, $5·4 million is to be expended for the supply of mains in the metropolitan area to ensure an adequate supply of natural gas where there is an increase in demand and population in particular areas of the Melbourne catchment area and $18·6 million is proposed to be expended for other capital expenditure associated with the provision of mains and services in the metropolitan area.

Again, I request the Minister to arrange with the Minister for Minerals and Energy for an early announcement giving more details of the capital works expenditure and the places where this work is to be extended and the beneficiaries of those works.

A further $11·6 million is proposed to be spent on expanding and upgrading service centres to meet the needs of customers in the metropolitan area. I ask the Minister whether this will include the provision of new jobs and employment and whereabouts in the metropolitan area the expansion of service centres that exist will be undertaken. Another $30 million in round figures is proposed to cover the ongoing commitment of new projects for gas exploration.

The amount to be expended is substantial. The projects I have outlined are important and the Opposition is pleased that the Government is continuing to provide them. Over the past twenty years or so, Victoria has led the rest of Australia in the provision of gas services to customers and I am very proud that it was the former Liberal Party Government of which I was a member that led the way for this work by supporting and encouraging the Gas and Fuel Corporation to plan and develop the expansion of gas supplies to Victorian people.

When the Liberal Party Government went out of office in April 1982, it had a very proud record because of the number of people who were being supplied with gas, many with natural gas. I do not recall the exact figure but I believe it was more than 80 per cent of all Victorians who, under Liberal Party Governments, were able to receive reticulated natural gas as part of their community infrastructure. That includes most, if not all, of metropolitan Melbourne and outer Melbourne metropolitan areas and many parts of country Victoria.

I take the opportunity of reminding the House that the former Liberal Party Government insisted that the supply of reticulated natural gas in the outer areas of Victoria, the rural areas, should be at a tariff

that was equal to the price being paid by receivers and beneficiaries of natural gas in metropolitan Melbourne. As honourable members know, the policy of the Liberal Party of providing power, gas and electricity at a uniform tariff has been a platform of the Liberal Party in its management of the energy supply services for Victorians.

The Liberal Party has taken the view that people should be treated equally and that people who reside in the State should be given every opportunity to improve their standard of living and to have available to them as far as possible gas, electricity, water and sewerage at uniform tariffs.

The Liberal Party stuck to its guns on the question of cost despite many academic economists who argued that tariffs should be more commensurate with the over-all investment and the over-all cost of delivery. They argued that there should be a discriminatory pricing policy for gas and electricity. The Liberal Party resisted that and, as a result of the Liberal Party's resolute resistance, much of Victoria's development and success as a State and a community, where the quality of life of its people is second to none in Australia, came about.

In the course of the policy that the Liberal Party actively pursued, and which as an alternative Government it would reinforce, the Liberal Party ensured that throughout country Victoria industry would be assisted in the supply of energy, whether gas or electricity.

Mr Maclellan—At the same price as metropolitan Melbourne, too.

Mr LIEBERMAN—Yes, the price available to country industry was the same price as in metropolitan Melbourne. The Liberal Party ensured that tariffs were published. For example, the Loy Yang project commenced and the Alcoa of Australia Ltd smelter at Portland came about as a result of the Liberal Party Government being able to provide adequate power for that industry and for new industry. The rate of tariff that was to be charged to the Portland smelter was schedule "M" and that was published and available to all people throughout the State who wished to establish that form of heavy industry.

It is of concern and regret that now, almost at the end of April, in the beginning of the third year of office of the Cain Labor Party Government, the world's largest smelter project in Portland, the Alcoa project, is still at a standstill and is, in fact, in mothballs. Every day that goes by, because of the turn around in the price of aluminium and the way in which other countries in the world have moved in the past two years, the failure of the government to take advantage of the economic recovery, will make it increasingly difficult for Victoria to save the Alcoa project at Portland.

I wonder when the Premier will change his tactic and inform this House of the truth of the present position so that Victorians will know whether an important opportunity has been lost to have a major industry of world standard.

The Bill proposes capital works to extend natural gas throughout further communities in country Victoria. I have referred to the achievements of the former Government and I have affirmed that, as the alternative Government, the Liberal Party will ensure that natural gas continues to be provided to all Victorians at a uniform tariff both to the residential consumer and to the industrial and commercial consumer.

I ask the Minister to state what his Government intends to do about tariffs on these matters. The Minister should also tell Parliament what the Government intends to do about the new economic policy of his Government on decentralization, because I assure the honourable gentleman that I have spoken to many people who have substantial investment in country Victoria and employ hundreds of people throughout the State. These people are very concerned at the future tariff policies of the Cain Labor Party Government on energy.

In considering the economic statements of the Premier and the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology in recent times, there is every reason to believe that a change will be made with a withdrawal of some of the incentives and subsidies built into the tariff price for natural gas to industry in country Victoria. I am not being speculative or overly alarmist in raising this spectre. The Government has announced that it will withdraw the pay-roll tax incentives to decentralized industries in three years. Industries across Victoria currently

receive those incentives as part of the Liberal Government's ten-point decentralization plan.

The ten-point decentralization plan has been copied and emulated by most States of Australia since it was introduced by the Liberal Government. The New South Wales, Queensland and South Australian Governments have picked up those incentives and are attracting industries to their respective States based on those policy ideas. Under the Cain Labor Government's new decentralization announcements, there is no value in people continuing to invest in country Victoria because they will not receive the ten-point decentralization benefits they had been receiving. However, they will not lose those benefits because the other State Governments have reaffirmed the continuation of those decentralization policies. They will welcome industry with open arms. Victoria will be the major loser of industry and jobs as a result of that disadvantage.

Gas is an integral energy component for the future and present operations of industry throughout Victoria, especially country Victoria. The Government must state categorically during the debate whether it intends to tamper in any way with the tariffs and charges for natural gas and gas to industry, commerce and residences throughout country Victoria. I throw down a challenge in asking the Government to emulate the policy of the alternative Government, the next Victorian Liberal Government, and state that it will continue to provide a uniform tariff for natural gas to industry so that there will be no disadvantage in some locations. I hope the Government will not delay and will give an affirmation indicating that in no way will the uniform policy be interfered with.

The Government will gain considerable credibility in giving that response, which I hope it gives. Its performance over the past two years with energy pricing has led most people in industry and commerce to believe that they are not secure. In deciding where to locate industry in Victoria, they cannot believe that their cost component, such as for energy, can be correctly evaluated and built in with certainty into a pricing-marketing policy that will not be changed willy-nilly. That is because of the Government's actions. The Government has mucked up the Portland Alcoa of Australia Ltd project because of pressure from the left wing Labor Party and economists and academics seeking to impose a higher tariff in that area.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! I accept the fact that the honourable member is trying to relate capital funding to the changes in country Victoria, but it seems to the Chair that he should confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr McNamara—Mr Acting Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr LIEBERMAN—I accept your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker, and will try to abide by it. It is important that people know the Government's policy on future tariffs for the supply of gas. Unfortunately, the Government's credibility is shot to pieces in relation to any assurances given to industry. Parliament should ponder that problem in debating the Bill, which deals with the further expansion of the infrastructure and the means of delivering gas to industry, commerce and residents.

The proposals cannot be accepted by any responsible industry that is considering investing in Victoria because of the Government's track record on what it has done to industry, commerce, investment and investment potential. In my opinion, Victoria is the laughing stock of the world. If one asks any industrial or commercial representative in Europe or America whether it is wise to invest in Victoria, one is told about a number of real factors that are directly related to the way in which the Government is handling the economy and turning our energy resources into a means of earning more income by way of surreptitious taxation. The Government has introduced new taxes and charges under the guise of levies on the statutory authority, namely the Gas and Fuel Corporation.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I direct your attention, Mr Acting Speaker, to the fact that the honourable member is defying your ruling on the matter of relevance and, in addition, is boring the pants off the rest of the House.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—On the point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, I consider that what the honourable member

has canvassed is relevant to the Bill because part of the reason for the corporation being empowered to borrow more money is to help it pay the public authority dividend tax.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—On the point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, it is obvious that I was correct in what I was saying. I am covering matters in the proposed legislation. The matter of review and the need for the corporation to borrow further moneys to meet certain overhead expenses, including a Government taxation, is relevant to the measure.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! I cannot uphold the point of order because, although the relevance of the remarks of the honourable member is dim and distant at times, the proper intent is there. I seek assistance from the honourable member in trying to keep within relevant bounds.

Mr LIEBERMAN—The Government's policy of imposing new taxes and charges on statutory authorities such as the Gas and Fuel Corporation is relevant. In this case, the statutory dividend applicable will involve many millions of dollars.

Mr Maclellan—Everybody calls it the "Cain tax".

Mr LIEBERMAN—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has reminded me that outside in the real world it is called the "Cain tax". It is an interesting concept because, ironically, it must be recovered by way of revenue in the long term by statutory authorities such as the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission. It will equal about one-third of the corporation's total revenue requirements a year. That sum of money is vast so statutory authorities will face the dilemma of how to meet this burden.

The Cain Government says it is not a tax. It is remarkable to hear the Treasurer and Ministers of the Crown explaining to people that the measure is not really a tax and that it is designed to achieve a real rate of return on investments and infrastructure. The reality is that it must be paid for by the statutory authorities. How will they do that? They will increase tariffs and the consumers will pay through increased bills each quarter or each month for their power or energy supplies. Industry will suffer additional overheads which will be reflected in the cost of living because the cost of all the goods which will finally be produced will be increased.

Victoria is the leading manufacturing State but the costs of all goods will have the Cain tax built into them. The consumer who buys these goods will pay the Cain tax. The only way in which statutory authorities can balance their books, apart from increasing their tariffs, is to borrow over a period of years. Eventually the income the authorities will earn will service the debt. That is what the Bill is about.

The statutory authorities must increase their borrowings regularly to meet their objectives in providing new infrastructure. Also the statutory authorities will have less money available through their traditional revenue sources to pay off the capital debts.

Consequently, the overheads will increase because the interest commitments will also increase. The cat will be chasing its tail. As each year goes by, the consumer, whether he be the family man, the man in industry, the man in commerce or the man in the hospital field, will eventually pay more and more because of the Cain Government's taxation policies.

Those policies are being reflected in the consumer price index. In the December quarter last year, Victoria was ahead of any other State on the cost of living index. The cost of living for the average Victorian family man is the highest of any Australian State. It is not hard to understand why that is so. The frightening thing is that it is happening so quickly. Within two years, the Labor Government has been able to turn the lot of Victorian families into one of the most diabolical struggles. It is hard enough to cope with running a family and all the costs associated with that things without additional burdens being imposed.

In two years, the Cain Government has succeeded in making the lot of the average family man harder and worse than that of any other family man in Australia.

The Bill is an example of why that is the case. The Gas and Fuel Corporation, which has been nurtured, fostered and encouraged by former Liberal Governments to produce its magnificent achievements for Victorians, has now been turned into a revenue collector for the Treasurer and the Premier.

Not only are the tariffs of the corporation now not related to the costs of its operations, delivery, servicing of capital expansion and providing a dividend to the consolidated revenue, which was part of the policy of the former Government, but the corporation is also required to cope with this new approach to accountancy and management. This approach is that of giving a real rate of return to the people of Victoria.

In its simplistic argument, the Government says it is important that statutory authorities provide a real rate of return to the people of Victoria. Who is getting the benefit of that? In two years, the cost of living for the family man has increased ahead of that of any other State. The Government should ask the average family man if he is happy with the real rate of return approach of the Cain Government. He will tell the Government that he is not happy. He is more than $1000 a year worse off than he was two years ago. That is the first answer to the real rate of return nonsense.

The second question one asks oneself is whether more jobs and opportunities in industry and commerce are being provided in Victoria through a real rate of return approach. The answer is, "No". Statutory authorities like the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission now have to say to people who want to invest and create new jobs in Victoria, "You will have to pay us a tariff related to a real rate of return". That is the philosophy of the Cain Government. Therefore, energy costs will be increasing year after year. The Cain Government says the real rate of return must be achieved step by step over a number of years. Each year we are locked into an inevitable increase in costs for business and commerce, which will be passed on to everyone else. It goes on and on.

All honourable members and Victorians are interested in the assets of Victoria, but who actually says that the people of Victoria support the concept of a real rate of return? Victorians really want the Government to use Victoria's magnificent natural resources such as brown coal, the deposits of which are the greatest in the world, and natural gas, which is one of the most exciting deposits off-shore and now on-shore. Probably with the proper incentives to encourage exploration, more on-shore deposits of natural gas will be found.

Victorians want the Government to say that those natural resources must be used judiciously to complement growth and investment in the manufacturing industries and the resource sectors as well as other related service industries. In my view, Victorians do not want companies and industries to be told that they must follow an academic model of a real rate of return. The Government should be able to use resources of natural gas and brown coal in the most judicious way and impose tariffs which encourage growth and recover costs, not tariffs which turn the situation into a taxing situation on revenue, turnover and sales. A form of taxation is included in the cost of bricks, tiles and everything else that is now being produced in Victoria.

The Government introduced a form of value-added tax without being truthful about how it is doing it. Victoria is falling further behind other States with coal and energy resources. Those States are using their resources and asking people to come to their States to set up industries because their tariffs are based on a cost recovery structure. The costs of the production will meet the tariffs. That system used to be followed in Victoria.

The Minister for the Arts says that that is economic nonsense. I ask him how the brown coal resources in Victoria will be used. They should be used to increase industry and commerce or to create jobs. What else should brown coal be used for? There is no other market for our brown coal except through the liquefaction process which is in the pilot stage.

Victoria's natural gas deposits are more abundant than was imagined by any Government. They are more abundant and more exciting than anyone had expected. Natural gas should be used by the Government as part of its rationale and economic policy to attract industry to this State. The Government should be saying that its tariffs are the lowest and will remain the lowest of any State. No one will knock Victoria. Offers should be made to sell the energy to other States if people come to Victoria to invest their dollars and create new jobs. Victoria used to have tremendous advantages competing on the market to attract industry. It is now losing its competitive advantage.

Victoria has lost its edge, which has been blunted in less than two years by the Labor Government. The real rate of return philosophy is one of the reasons for that.

This Government's academic, economic nonsense and madness is raping this State and turning it into a State of disadvantage, a second-rate State; no longer a State that is innovative, no longer a State where there can be great opportunity. It is certainly a State about which everybody in commerce and industry around the world says, "If you invest in Victoria, watch out".

Honourable members should take the example of Alcoa of Australia Ltd at Portland and ask what happens with the money that is raised by Governments. The Government should tell the people in the New York stock exchange what has happened. In less than two years, the Government has employed 10 000 new public servants, or thereabouts. What has happened in the other States and the Commonwealth? In those areas, several hundred new Public Service jobs have been created. However, in Victoria, the Government excelled itself. This new money was being expended to create 10 000 new Public Service jobs. Unfortunately, it was not used to provide the 1000 extra police that were promised by either the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, or by his Leader.

Victoria is at a critical stage and, in my view, this important proposed legislation enables all members of Parliament to pose questions to this Government and to insist on being given firm assurances that the real rate of return, which is the cancer that is eating out Victoria's economic strength, will be abandoned. If the Government is not prepared to do that, let the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is at the table, confirm that it will not do that, so that, at the next election, people will be able to make a choice between Victoria's real future and Victoria's second-rate future under a Labor Government.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I have not checked out the actual date, but I suggest it is nearly the twentieth anniversary of the date of the discovery of the important gas and oil resources off the coast of Victoria. Therefore, it is good that honourable members have the opportunity of reviewing what has taken place during that period in a debate on the borrowing powers of the Gas and Fuel Corporation.

At the outset, it is worthy of note that the corporation was established by a Country Party Government, the predecessor of the National Party, when it was in office, and it was supported by the Labor Party. The corporation is one of the real success stories of this State. There was a combination of free enterprise and, to a certain degree, Socialist philosophy in the establishment of the organization, which I believe has been very much a success and has operated to the great advantage of Victorians.

However, when examining this question and considering what has been said in the past 45 minutes or so by the honourable member for Benambra, I can only suggest that his speech was an exercise in hypocrisy. During his entire contribution to the debate, the honourable member for Benambra was busy issuing challenges to the Government, and I now challenge him to come up to Lakes Entrance and tell the people who live within sight of the off-shore oil and gas rigs, the people who can sit in their lounge rooms and see the rigs on the horizon, that they were treated fairly and equitably while the Liberal Government was in office. Those people might as well live at Lindsay Point, on the other side of Mildura, for all the benefits they receive. Although these important resources are just outside their homes, they can still obtain no concession and no natural gas reticulation. They are required to pay the same amount for bottled gas supplies as people living in the most distant corners of the State.

Therefore, how can anyone claim that all citizens in this State are being treated equitably? When these oil and gas resources were discovered some twenty years ago, those of us who were members of this place at that time had a new ball game to deal with. Here was a great resource which had been discovered, and yet honourable members at that time knew virtually nothing about the problems that would arise with its development, the sorts of issues that would arise, and so on. People were travelling around the State, some of whom were former colleagues of the honourable member for Benambra, talking about the great bonanza that was in store for Victorians.

One former member of the Liberal Party went to Sale and talked about it being

another Calgary. Sometimes I thought he was mispronouncing the name and that it should have been "Calvary", because the Liberal Party was prepared to sacrifice the people of Gippsland and their interests in and rights to the resources of the area in order to feather their own nests in the metropolitan area.

I was one of the persons responsible for the policy of the Country Party at that time which was established in the light of these new circumstances. I proposed, and the proposal was accepted by the party, that we should come down on the side of uniform tariffs, which is what the honourable member for Benambra was talking about earlier, no matter whether the gas supply was reticulated, bulk or bottled, and no matter where in Victoria people lived. I believed people should be treated equally by the State and that the cost to consumers should be the same so that all the citizens of the State would enjoy the resources of the State.

We were challenged by the Government at that time and, because I represented Gippsland, the Premier of the day said to the people of Gippsland that I was selling them out and that there would be cheaper gas in Gippsland if he were to have his way. He was trying to turn the tables on me because my philosophy and argument was that these great resources should be shared by everyone in this State.

The honourable member for Benambra is representing an attitude typical of that of the Liberal Party that has existed for many years. If he can feather his own nest at the expense of someone else in the country, he will do it. He would never want the parties to stick together to uphold the interests of the country. If the honourable member can get his sixpenny's-worth out of the city dominated Government for his particular corner of the State, it does not matter what happens to the people who live in country areas. That is the philosophy that has been pursued for many years by the Liberal Party.

It is wrong for the honourable member for Benambra to say that everybody who uses gas resources from Bass Strait is charged on a uniform tariff because, if one does not happen to be in a reticulated area, one does not receive any benefits. The policy of uniform tariffs for gas supply is just as legitimate a policy as that which applies to electricity supply. I wonder whether the former Liberal Government would have adopted that policy if the National Party and earlier the Country Party had not been pressing the issue for many years.

The honourable member for Benambra made great play about the public authority dividend tax. He was not in this place to sit through the infamy of how that legislation was introduced in 1966. When the Treasurer of the day introduced the Bill, he put the guillotine on it and the House debated it forthwith. It had taken 5 hours from the time the Bill was introduced into the House to the time it had gone through all the stages. I do not know of any other Bill that has been put through Parliament in such a short time and in such infamous circumstances. That was the way the measure relating to the public authority dividend tax was introduced into this House in 1966.

The point raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition by interjection is a good one. He is recalling that, in the Upper House, the Country Party held the balance of power at the time. However, there is an important consideration. At that time, there just happened to be a dissident member of the Country Party who did not get the job of President of the Legislative Council, and that was why the Bill got through that House.

The history of the development of the natural gas reserves in this State is interesting. I make a plea to the Government that, in the light of the increased borrowing powers applying to the Gas and Fuel Corporation under the provisions of the Bill, it examines sympathetically the rights of people in East Gippsland in particular to derive some benefit from these resources.

Only one town in the whole of East Gippsland, namely Maffra, receives the benefit of natural gas. It is a matter of justice and equity that some consideration should be given to places such as Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Orbost to enable those towns to share in that resource. There is no question that the availability of natural gas supplies is important, particularly in many forms of food processing.

The town of Lakes Entrance has important fishing resources, many of which come

from the same immediate area as the natural gas resources. East Gippsland has potential for vegetable production and, wherever vegetables are produced, one ought to have the facilities for processing them. Tremendous opportunities for development and progress are available in East Gippsland.

I consider the argument I am pursuing to be reasonable. For geographical reasons and the fact that these resources exist within the State of Victoria or immediately adjacent to it, the residents of Victoria expect some benefit which residents of New South Wales and other States do not obtain. Surely the same principle must be valid so far as regions are concerned. Because the resources emanate from the Gippsland region, surely there could be some element of royalty or some other form of acknowledgement that Gippsland is the source of marvellous resources. It is apparent, if one extends that argument to other fields, that Gippsland has many claims for more valuable consideration than it currently receives from the Government.

I can state with authority that, during the life of a Country Party Government, acknowledgement was made of the contribution made by the brown coal resources to the wealth of this State by the establishment of a fund specifically designed to provide amenities and facilities in the Latrobe Valley over and above those that were normally expected to be received in the normal provision of Government services. The Bill is important, not only to the State, but also in its relevancy to the points of view I have just expressed.

As I said at the outset, the Gas and Fuel Corporation has been an excellent illustration of an amalgamation of private enterprise and a public authority. Since it was established, it has become the sole gas supply authority for the whole State. I hope, with the additional borrowing powers, the corporation will extend those services to all parts of the State that can justify reticulation services. Perhaps I should qualify the use of the word "justify". I am speaking not just about economic justification. If the policy the National Party has adopted and pursued for the past twenty years were followed, gas should be supplied to consumers all over the State at a uniform tariff. The supply authority could determine the most economic means of providing gas to the consumers, namely, by reticulation, bulk or bottled means.

How the gas is transported to the individual consumer would be purely for the distribution authority to establish and no one else. That would be a sensible policy to pursue and I invite the Minister to ask his colleague, the Minister for Minerals and Energy in another place, whether he could carry out an exercise to ascertain what that would mean in total price to the metropolitan consumer, if one wishes to put it in that light.

It would perhaps be more appropriate to use some of the funds which are derived from the public authority dividend which the Government says is designed to enable the whole community to share in the benefit of this important asset. Surely one of the ways in which this could be done is to use some of the money raised from the public authority dividend to balance the additional cost involved in supplying gas to all Victorians at a uniform tariff. That is an important principle, and I hope the Government will take it up in the near future.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Bill increases by $100 million the authorized borrowings of the Gas and Fuel Corporation. The House is debating a $100 million Bill. I raise that point at the beginning of my remarks because the Bill is designed to authorize the Gas and Fuel Corporation to raise an additional $100 million by borrowing and, during the debate, honourable members have the right to examine for what that $100 million might be used or for what it is intended to be used.

The second-reading speech attempts to characterize it as being for improvements to the network and activities of the Gas and Fuel Corporation. There is another argument on which I do not want to dwell at length. However, one could say that if the Government were not taxing one-third of the revenue of the Gas and Fuel Corporation it would not need to raise the borrowing power by $100 million but by a substantially lesser amount.

That is a simple mathematical matter which is constantly denied by the Government and the Treasurer. The Treasurer refuses to believe that there is any connection between the need to borrow additional funds or the need to increase tariffs and the

Government's taxing of the authorities concerned. The Government characterizes it as a public authority dividend; it could legitimately be called a Labor Party tax on statutory authorities that are necessarily involved in either borrowing or increasing their income by way of Gas and Fuel Corporation tariffs, the rates charged by the Port of Melbourne Authority or the costs to farmers of the Grain Elevators Board. In the end, the cost is passed on to the prices of biscuits and bricks. I apply that principle to projects that are particularly susceptible to natural gas tariff increases.

A modern factory which uses a large amount of natural gas was established in the electorate I represent. The factory manufactures aluminium castings. It seems to be particularly appropriate that Victoria, with its electricity generated from its brown coal reserves and natural gas to a lesser extent, should have as much competitive advantage as is possible to achieve to provide employment. The factory intended to operate on three shifts, that is on a continuous process. However, with the tariff policy of the Gas and Fuel Corporation imposed by the Labor Government, the cost of the castings—most of them are to be exported to overseas markets, primarily Germany—rose by $17 a tonne. That was the price increase of the gas as a result of the last tariff increase imposed by the Gas and Fuel Corporation under the policies of the Labor Government.

The extra shift that was intended to be put on at that factory was never created. It was never created because the export market was knocked off by a competitor in the international field.

In Mexico, one can establish a casting plant. One can build exactly the same plant in Mexico and obtain natural gas at giveaway prices which would enable one to export these products to the same international market and knock off the Victorian industry which was going to provide jobs for the young unemployed that the honourable member for Noble Park has spoken about in this House. They would have been the people who worked in the Dandenong factories and they would have had the opportunity of working had not the Government carelessly and foolishly raised the tariff, particularly the industrial and fuel tariffs, to an unrealistically high rate.

Industry after industry was signalling to the Government that if its intended policy of tariff increases continued there would be a closure of industry. The Government backed off. It had to back off under the combined representations of the major natural gas users in the industrial area as they put a very convincing case to the Government that no competitive advantage would be left to them if the Government pursued its high tariff policy in the Gas and Fuel Corporation area.

Events continue and opportunities arise from time to time. Victoria discovered gas and that gave the Government the opportunity of following up the nibble of the Liberal Government in applying a tax on the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission with a massive bite which has wiped out the competitive advantage of Victorian industry. Therefore we do not see the growth of industries that are based on natural gas. There is no growth of industry which uses electricity for industrial purposes. There is no Alcoa roaring around to provide thousands of jobs for Victorians, because the Government is a big-spending Socialist Government which has decided that, rather than having a frank and honest taxing policy, it will convert the Gas and Fuel Corporation and a dozen other statutory authorities—including, ironically, the Board of Works, the Grain Elevators Board and the Port of Melbourne Authority—into tax-collecting agencies for the Government.

So advantage after advantage is eroded and industry is placed under greater and greater pressure. Occasionally, even as a result of pressures, opportunities arise. I suppose in farming terms it is the clearing sale or forced sale of property under stress circumstances. In industry, it is the takeover position. The old management gets a little neglectful in running a company rich in assets, and opportunities arise for a new management to take over. The BP Refinery (Westernport) Pty Ltd is to be closed. I do not know of any action taken by the Government to prevent that from happening, but it raises an opportunity for the Government to recover some of the ground that it lost through its tariff and taxing policies. There are assets in association with that BP refinery which ought to be taken over by the Gas and Fuel Corporation.

If the Bill is necessary because of the taxing policies of the Government, the Parliament's passing of the Bill may give the corporation the opportunity of acquiring from BP Australia Ltd, in conjunction with that refinery, some of the storage tanks and pipeline facilities, which would be a necessary adjunct if the Government is really going to be serious in the future about industrial development, jobs and job creation in Victoria.

I have raised the matter with Mr Neil Smith, who has been an outstanding Chairman of the Gas and Fuel Corporation and an outstanding administrator in Victoria. Of course, his very success in building the corporation into a major utility within Victoria was the reason why the Government decided he had created a utility which gave it the opportunity of taxing it. So the benefit of all the work he did in trying to build in advantages for the industrial users and provide reasonably priced gas for domestic users—the sharing of the bonanza which the honourable member for Gippsland East spoke of—has now been transferred to the Department of Management and Budget. The BP refinery closure needs careful consideration, and the Government has been completely neglectful in failing to examine whether the company would be willing to sell to the Gas and Fuel Corporation some of the assets associated with the refinery, which might be used to back up Melbourne's and Victoria's natural gas supplies.

It is not just Melbourne; it is industry across Victoria which is based so heavily on the use of natural gas. Previously, natural gas had a major pricing edge over electricity and there were good reasons why one would encourage the use of natural gas in industry, especially in those industries which could be converted to it rather than using electric heating or electric furnacing. Of course, those conversions are now rarer than ever before because the tariffs have been the subject of such massive increases that there are industries that are even contemplating going back to an older technology of fuel rather than converting to natural gas. There are brickworks today which perhaps regret having transferred to a natural gas fuel stock rather than remaining with the fuel stock that they had previously. That is not because of some Arab oil sheikh manipulating international markets; it is because Mr Cain, Mr Jolly and the "sheikhs" of Victoria have been manipulating Victoria and manipulating the tariffs. Honourable members cannot blame the Arabs; they need to blame our own Arabs who have fiddled with and distorted the tariffs and the tariff comparisons on which industry was making its decisions.

I ask the Minister what reaction the Government has had to the proposal I put to Mr Smith regarding the acquisition of assets from the BP refinery. I expect to be joined in my request by the honourable member for Dromana, who must be concerned to provide employment in the area. There are people from Mornington who work at Hastings. I have discussed it with my colleague, the honourable member for Westernport, and he supports the proposal. If the Government is not prepared to do anything to keep the refinery open, let it at least take advantage of what remains of the situation to back up the natural gas supplies of Victoria by acquiring the pipelines and storages on that site, or at least try to create employment in the area by maintaining a Gas and Fuel Corporation presence if the BP refinery is to leave the site.

That is an important matter and one which directly relates to the Bill and the $100 million which the Bill seeks to authorize as additional borrowing for the Gas and Fuel Corporation and additional borrowing which one hopes will be backed up with an additional $100 million worth of equity assets in the Gas and Fuel Corporation. If the borrowing is intended only to replace the money lost to the State Government through the public authority dividend, or money which is to be available to the Gas and Fuel Corporation to grease the industrial wheels of the Government, that would be in order. I would not want to talk about recent Health Commission decisions in relation to who can put a sheet of iron on a roof, but all I can say is that, if ever there was a pay-off to the plumbers and gasfitters, it has to be that regulation which now states that it is illegal for any citizen in Victoria, in a water supply area, to put a sheet of iron on his own tin roof. That is the sort of pay-out situation to which I am referring, where the Government will descend to any depth to buy people off, with its cheque-book diplomacy, for industrial peace.

If it took $2 million to keep the plumbers and gasfitters of the Gas and Fuel Corporation quiet and if it needed some borrowing

to do that, honourable members can be assured the Government will do it irrespective of what it does to tariffs and irrespective of what it does to industry.

I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to give a quick assurance that an examination has been or will be made of my suggestion concerning the assets of the BP refinery at Westernport, which may no longer be needed with the imminent closure of the refinery and whether the assets should be acquired by the Gas and Fuel Corporation to back up the natural gas supply system of Victoria.

The Government should make a clear statement on the natural gas tariff for the future. There is no need for the Gas and Fuel Corporation to borrow $100 million if there will be no growth in Victorian jobs in industry and commerce because the Government has snuffed jobs in industry and commerce by imposing savage increases in industrial gas tariffs which has prevented an opportunity for the castings factory in Dandenong to operate a second shift thus denying it the opportunity of exporting products made by workmen and workwomen in Victoria. The Victorian workers are the ones who pay the penalty of meeting the increased costs of the biscuits, bricks and everything else made and sold in the Victorian marketplace because of the use of natural gas with its high tariffs. The workers are paying the double penalty by not having increased job opportunities that would have arisen if the Victorian industry had not lost its cost advantage on overseas markets and had it been able to export engines, castings and other products that Victoria should be able to export to world markets. With a strong base of brown coal and further discoveries of natural gas in Victoria, industry should have an advantage over overseas markets, an advantage which would provide for growth of Victorian industry and for employment for Victorians.

The honourable member for Gippsland East referred to communities in the electorate that he represents that are using bottled gas. I have sympathy for communities that do not have natural gas. However, the Government must apply a rigorous priority order and it has to be a fair and equitable priority order. I do not like political fiddling with the priority of towns being connected to natural gas. I do not like offerings at election time when one party states that it will build a pipeline here or a pipeline there. There should be a priority order for extending natural gas to communities, but I do not know whether I can agree with the honourable member for Gippsland East when he states that those communities using bottled gas should also be on the same tariff as those using natural gas. I have not done my personal homework on what the cost of production would be. Perhaps there would be no advantage in extending natural gas to a rural community if the rural community could obtain bottled gas for the same price. Perhaps there has to be a differential, but I do not know—I am ignorant on that subject.

It was the Liberal Party that introduced State standard pricing for natural gas. If the National Party came up with the idea, I congratulate it because it was a sensible and wise policy. It was sensible and wise to have a standard natural gas price throughout Victoria. If country towns are using bottled gas rather than natural gas—I should not say "bottled" as it is in reality a bulk gas facility—perhaps that is the solution for those towns. It is Liberal Party policy to have the same tariff for natural gas in commercial and industrial situations. However, it is not always the case for domestic consumers and there may be a good argument for accepting that it should be the case.

If the Government is unwilling to honestly examine the situation into which it has got itself, when it is spending in advance the bonanza that it is storing up by borrowings to be repaid in the future and with no assurance that Victoria will be in a better position to repay those borrowings in the future, all I can state is that the Government has the attitude that it will spend today and the devil will take care of it tomorrow. That seems to be the policy of the Government. The honourable member for Benambra referred to an additional 10 000 employees on the public pay-roll. What a scandal that is when one-third of the revenue of the Gas and Fuel Corporation is appropriated by the Government and spent on some of the salaries of those 10 000 additional employees. At the same time, a factory in the electorate that I represent has been trying to expand into the overseas market, to make Victoria a richer place by taking its aluminium ore, its refining capacity, its casting

capacity and exporting the end product to overseas markets; an industry which would produce new wealth for the Victorian community. However, the factory remains empty during a second shift and job opportunities for people in the Noble Park, Dandenong and Berwick electorates are depreciating.

Mr Ross-Edwards—And the electorate of Dromana.

Mr MACLELLAN—I asked the honourable member for Dromana to support me in my call to the Government to examine the BP refinery at Hastings. I raised the matter with Mr Neil Smith of the Gas and Fuel Corporation and I expect an answer shortly. I ask the honourable member for Dromana to support the proposal of the honourable member for Westernport concerning these assets that will no longer be used as a result of the proposed closure of the refinery because the Government has done nothing to try to retain the refinery. The Government has done nothing to try to secure jobs for those people who will be stood down at Hastings. I have submitted a positive suggestion concerning how the Gas and Fuel Corporation could take over those assets so that the jobs of members of that community who wish to work in that community will be secure and they will have the benefit and opportunity of doing this if the Government accepts the suggestion.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and, by leave, the House proceeded to the third reading.

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—After having waited patiently for the Minister for the Arts to respond to the calls that the Opposition made during the second-reading debate, it is disappointing that there has been no response from the Government—from any members of the back bench or Ministers of the Crown—on the vital questions that were raised by the Opposition and by the honourable member for Gippsland East on behalf of the National Party.

What is the position of the Government regarding future tariff policies? What is the real rate of return of the "Cain tax bite" that is the Government's policy of exporting Victorian jobs? The Opposition expresses strong disappointment and regret that the Government has left a vacuum where jobs previously existed in Victoria.

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

MARKET COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the motion for the second reading of this Bill was read.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

The debate (adjourned from April 5) on the motion of Mr Spyker (Minister of Consumer Affairs) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The Bill that amends the Market Court Act is a curious piece of proposed legislation just as the Market Court itself is a rather curious entity. The court was established in 1978 and it was not intended at that time that it should sit in judgment on alleged breaches of consumer affairs legislation, but rather that it would provide a judicial process to restrain people from continuing undesirable trade practices. The court was set up under the Hamer Government in 1978 and the Act to establish it was one of a series of consumer-related actions by that Government, which in fact led the way in consumer affairs legislation in Australia.

The Market Court was the first such institution established in Australia but other actions instigated by the Hamer Government in relation to consumer affairs were the prohibition of undesirable practices such as pyramid selling, mock auctions and false or misleading advertising. A requirement was introduced for the listing of information and warning labels on consumer products such as textiles, footwear, furniture and children's night clothes. Another action was the settlement of differences between traders and consumers through the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, including the Small Claims Tribunals, and the establishment of the Motor Car Traders Committee. That

Government introduced legislation to regulate certain trading activities such as door-to-door sales, used car trading and the method of handling deposits in connection with building contracts.

In spite of the legislative actions of the Government at that time, there remained the rare occurrence of a totally unsatisfactory trader whose main concern was to take from the consumer without giving value in return. Although it was acknowledged in the speech of the Minister at that time that the number of individuals acting in that way would be relatively small, those who did act in that way were sufficiently numerous and their activities were sufficiently noticeable as to create hardship for consumers whose means to redress was either ineffective or too costly to be exercised.

The establishment of the Market Court was an attempt to stop those unsatisfactory traders from operating and, if they were allowed to operate, the court would set standards of conduct to regulate their activities.

The Market Court is presided over by a president who is a judge of the County Court, with two advisory members—one representing traders and the other representating consumers. The Director of Consumer Affairs must apply to the court for an order against a trader who repeatedly engages in unfair conduct towards consumers.

Two major courses of action may be taken: Firstly, court orders are issued by the Market Court and these can be prohibitions for unfair conduct or prohibition from entering into contracts other than those that comply with the order of the court. Secondly, the Director of Consumer Affairs may act under the auspices of the Market Court Act without direct reference of a matter to the Market Court for adjudication. The process by which the director may act in that situation is that he enters into a deed of assurance with a trader to restrain that trader from unfair practices. By that method he bypasses the court, but copies of such deeds of assurance must be lodged with the Registrar of the Market Court and may be inspected by the public at any time. A breach of such a deed of assurance can be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court with the consent of the Market Court.

The Act, as it stands, covers individuals, bodies corporate, and directors of such bodies corporate and servants and agents of traders who are associated with unfair practices. The Bill seeks to vary some of those provisions. The first variation relates to deeds of assurance. The proposal will enable the Director of Consumer Affairs to join in a deed a person other than a trader who has contributed to or instigated the unfair conduct in question.

The Act provides for the directors of bodies corporate and servants and agents of traders to be covered by such deeds of assurance and the Bill widens the terms of the Act to cover any other person associated with an unfair practice.

The Opposition does not object to the broadening of the power of the Director of Consumer Affairs under the provisions of the Act relating to deeds of assurance. If it is considered by the Government that a need exists to extend the capacity of the Act in the interests of the community, the Opposition will not stand in its way, but I ask: How far does this go? It could, for example, involve a storeman or a despatch clerk, a delivery van driver or more directly a telephonist who took a telephone order in response to a newspaper advertisement for a product or service in an unfair or unsatisfactory way.

One could have the situation of the employee, the servant of the company or perhaps even the servant of another company which was performing a service for the trading company in question, being associated with an unsatisfactory business practice. Such people would be unwilling accomplices to an unfair trading situation.

I imagine it is not the intention of the Government to prosecute the telephonist who takes the order, the delivery van driver who delivers the product or the storeman who despatches the item.

One must ask how far the Bill will extend to ensnare unwitting accomplices. The Minister of Consumer Affairs should carefully examine the way in which the Bill is worded and he should read carefully his explanatory second-reading speech because there is a lack of clarity and definition in respect of the matter that I have raised.

Such people as I have described would not be instigating an unfair practice, but

they would be contributing to an unfair practice by following a procedure that was established either by their superiors or by the organization which employed them as agents of the primary trading organization. They could be implicated simply by despatching or delivering an article which was subject to a sale by an unfair practice.

The amending Bill is deficient because it does not provide safeguards for people who unknowingly contribute to the process of unfair conduct by a trader in the way I have described.

The second matter to which the amendments address themselves is an order of the Market Court. The Bill enables the Director of Consumer Affairs to apply to the court for an order against a person other than a trader, thus a person involved in the management of a company which has engaged in unfair conduct.

Again, no reasonable person could object to the intention of the Bill if it is discerned by the Government and the officers of the department that some people are taking advantage of a legislative situation. Any reasonable person would agree that it is in the interests of consumers that the Government should exercise its responsibility and take action to cover those areas of deficiency.

However, I put it to the House that this provision could involve a totally innocent person who, by virtue of being involved in the management of a business, could be deemed to be an "instigator" or a "contributor". I particularly draw to the attention of the Minister an example whereby a person could be involved in the management of a company, which was in business in Victoria but the ownership and ultimate direction of which might rest in another State, as is often the case. A Melbourne organization could have a Sydney head office. Often a business in Victoria is controlled by a company whose headquarters is in London, New York, Brussels, Rome or any other overseas capital city. The person involved in the management of the Victorian operation of that trading company could be following a set of sales targets and procedures devised by the head office management of that company.

One could have a situation where, in the pursuit of those sales targets, which were established by the external superior management of that company, the local managing director of that company in Victoria might well be aware of some unsavoury aspects in the procedures being adopted by his company. In such a situation, he would be liable under the provisions of the Act as it stands because the Act covers the directors of bodies corporate.

The amendments to the Act, however, will cover those involved in the management of the organization, and one could have the situation of an individual who held what could be described as a management position within the firm having no real say in the operations and procedures of that firm. However, by virtue of his involvement in management, that person could be deemed to come within the provisions of the amendments to the Act, no matter how unknowingly and how unwittingly that individual found himself to be involved in practices which could be later described, defined, or determined to be unfair, unsatisfactory trading practices.

Again, I accept that it is not the intention of the Minister to ensnare within these new provisions somebody who unknowingly becomes involved in unsatisfactory practices. However, I put it to the Minister that, because of the way in which the amendments are presented to the House, it is inevitable that such a person, by his involvement in the management of an organization, would be deemed to be liable under the expanded provisions of the Act and such a person could, quite unjustly, be subjected to the prosecutions which are part of the responsibilities of the Market Court and the Director of Consumer Affairs under the Act. I turn now to the third aspect of the Bill.

The third provision is the matter of prosecutions. The amending Bill removes the requirement that the Director of Consumer Affairs must gain the approval of the Market Court before prosecuting in a Magistrates Court. The reason for the requirement that a prosecution should receive the approval of the Market Court before proceeding is to provide a cautionary mechanism, an authority which will examine the matter, the method and the means by which prosecution is pursued.

It is not unusual for decisions to prosecute by the police to be referred to a senior police officer. It is not unusual for decisions

relating to prosecutions by the Government to be referred to a higher authority in the Government if it is a serious matter and that matter is usually referred to the chief law officer of the State, the Attorney-General, before a decision to proceed is made.

It was in line with that sort of tradition that the Government in 1978 decided that there should be a similar practice in the prosecution of matters relating to breaches of the orders of the Market Court or breaches of a deed of assurance. If the Government has decided that there is no longer a need for that cautionary practice to be observed, that is for the Government to decide. One must presume that the Government has examined the matter with thoroughness and that its decision is soundly based. No justification for the decision was given by the Minister in his second-reading speech and one would hope some explanation will be provided by the Minister either at the end of the second-reading stage or during the Committee stage of the Bill.

The Opposition accepts the decision of the Government subject to the explanation which I have requested because it takes the view that the Government was elected to govern. It is its job to administer the State and this is an administrative matter. It is for the Government to make its decision. It has made a decision and the Opposition does not wish to obstruct that decision, but it would be helpful if the Minister were able to provide an explanation for the decision to abandon that provision in the Act.

It would also be most helpful if, in responding, the Minister were able to provide the Opposition with a more detailed explanation about the operations of the Market Court as a whole. As I said at the outset, the court is an elusive beast; just how elusive it is becomes apparent when one decides to exercise one's rights as a citizen and asks to inspect the Register of Deeds of Assurance in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Act states that any person may inspect the register at any reasonable time.

Like any other citizen, I went to the telephone book and I found the Market Court. It was under State Government Departments, Market Court, 500 Bourke Street. So, like any other citizen, I took a tram to 500 Bourke Street and I had the great misfortune to arrive at the Department of Consumer Affairs at 4.35 p.m. That was my first blunder, because the place was a wasteland. One could have fired a cannon through it. It was in darkness. However, the Small Claims Tribunal sign was illuminated because people needed the light so they could see their way as they hurried out. One lady was most helpful when I asked where the Market Court and the register were located. She looked puzzled and she said that she was sure it was not in her section. I agreed that I understood that it would not be in her section. She went to find out where the Market Court might be located.

Quite some time later, this kind lady returned and she said that it was located in Nauru House but that she did not know what floor it was on. I thanked her and I then went to Nauru House. By the time I arrived at Nauru House it was 4.55 p.m. and it was impossible to find anyone there. I did note that the Market Court was located on the eighteenth floor.

At 10.30 a.m. this morning, I reported to the eighteenth floor, where I followed a sign directing me to the Registrar of the Market Court. I was met by a receptionist whom I asked whether I could inspect the Register of Deeds of Assurance. I was told to take a seat and the lady went to inform the Registrar of the Market Court of my request. After 10 minutes of sitting, I asked whether it was possible for the register to be brought to me or, alternatively, for me to be taken to the register so that I might speed up the process. She then contacted the registrar and informed him that I was becoming a little anxious. I was asked to be patient, and I was. I was patient for 35 minutes this morning.

Finally, the Registrar of the Market Court came out to meet me and he was most helpful. He took me to his room and courteously asked me to take a seat and then asked what my business was. I simply repeated the request that I had made that I would like to see the Register of Deeds of Assurance. The gentleman asked what specific incident I was interested in. I said, "No specific incident." He asked which page or folio number I wished to inspect and I told him, "No particular number." He asked, "What is it that you want?" I said, "I am exercising my right as a citizen; I wish to

inspect the Register of Deeds of Assurance. I would like to know how many deeds of assurance have been entered into by the Director of Consumer Affairs." I was asked, "Do you mean current deeds of assurance?" I said, "Why don't we go the whole hog and go back to 1978." The gentleman replied that for that information he would need to go through a compacter file, and so I waited a little longer. He came back with a folder and then I prepared myself for the information on how many deeds of assurance had been entered into since 1978. There were two. There was one on 29 October 1978, and that deed of assurance involved McGrath Enterprises Pty Ltd trading as Chapel Bulk Stores. Then on 9 March 1983, the present Government involved itself in the affairs of the Market Court and a deed of assurance was entered into with Mr Peter Bobar, trading as The Acting Machine.

I conclude that episode by adding that the Registrar of the Market Court was most helpful to me and extremely courteous, and I am not implying any criticism of that gentleman.

I pass from deeds of assurance in practice to deeds of assurance as they are to be affected by the legislative actions of the Government. The proposition before the House is that the Bill is vitally necessary in the interests of consumers of the State because it will streamline the operation of the Market Court and will make that court so much more effective; that it will enable the Director of Consumer Affairs to be far more effective in his attack on unfair traders and his ability to use deeds of assurance as a weapon in that fight. What nonsense!

In all this time, only two deeds of assurance have been used; one by the previous Government and one by this Government. All this marvellous, reforming Government which is going to change the world has done is to use that provision on one occasion.

I now refer to the activities of the Market Court, the court that needs to be revitalized and needs so many amendments made for it to become more effective. Not one matter has been referred to that court by this Government since it came into office.

Mr Spyker—It is not the Government's role.

Mr RICHARDSON—The Government is responsible for the administration of the State. It is the Government that came into power with reforming zeal; it is the Government which has been riding on the backs of promises that it never intended to keep; it is the Government that cannot shirk responsibility for failing to take action. The Government has not acted since it has been in power because not one matter has been referred to the Market Court.

The Minister of Consumer Affairs is so far removed from the Market Court that, when I have directed questions to him on a number of occasions during question time about how many matters have been referred to the court since April 1982, he has not provided an answer because he does not know. The answer is now before him—not one matter has been referred by the Director of Consumer Affairs to the Market Court. The Minister did not know that.

It is not surprising that the court has not been terribly active because, for some time, it has not even had a president, and it still does not have a president. This morning, I probably asked an unfair question of the Registrar of the Market Court when I asked him who is the president of the court. He had to say that he did not know because there is not one. He had an idea that some action was being taken to appoint one, but he did not know the name of the judge being proposed and regretted that he was unable to help me. He then added that the Market Court has not very much to do and that he has not been overworked in his capacity as the registrar. That gentleman has had a multitude of other duties to perform, and it is not surprising that he is not spending every waking moment thinking about the onerous responsibilities that are thrust upon him as the registrar of this ineffective, inoperative court, which has been allowed to degenerate and become laughable under the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the overall administration of the Government.

The Government has made a mockery of the Market Court, which it now intends to make more effective by the passing of the Bill. The Government has never used the provisions of the court; it has not even bothered to appoint a president. The Government has done nothing to utilize the existing facilities of the court. How would the Government know whether the Act needs to be broadened in its scope when it has never tried to utilize the provisions that

already reside in the court through the existing Act? By its lack of activity and lack of interest, the Government has made the Market Court inoperative and ridiculous.

The Government has created a situation in which it brings itself into ridicule and, by its actions in this House and its lack of action in the administration of the State, that ridicule has flowed on to a court of this State. It is a disgraceful situation when the actions of a Government and the incompetence of a Minister lead to the disrepute and ridicule of a court established by an Act of Parliament designed to serve the interests of the community.

The Opposition is dismayed at the performance—or lack of it—of the Government. The Opposition has long since ceased to hope for anything from the Minister, but it is conscious that there are other Ministers within the Government who have some capacity. It is time for the Premier and those wiser heads within the Government to take note of the way in which the Government and its institutions are being discredited by the incompetence and actions of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. The Minister is a laughing stock wherever he goes.

The Opposition does not oppose the measure. If it is believed the proposed action will improve the fair trading environment, the Opposition wishes the Bill well. Members of the Opposition also hope that, in giving the proposed legislation its blessing as it weaves its way through the shadowy recesses of the Labor Party procedures, there will be some evidence of a will on the part of the Minister and his department to utilize the capacities of the court, particularly with the new-found and expanded provisions that the Bill will provide. Members of the Opposition are intensely critical of the Government's performance in matters relating to the Market Court.

The Minister has shown himself to be inept in his handling of questions in the House regarding the court; he has shown himself to be totally inept by the interjections he made earlier during my speech; and he has shown himself to be inept when he had to send out a runner to bring in some information so that he would know how to respond. Another of the Minister's helpers has just arrived and is sitting beside the Minister now. The Minister of Consumer Affairs has no knowledge of the Market Court, he has no interest in it, nor does he have the capacity to utilize the existing capacities of the court.

The Opposition has grave concern at the catch-all clauses which could involve innocent people, through association. The tragic reality is that the Market Court has lain dormant through two years of the Labor Government because the Government had no understanding of the court's usefulness. The Minister has been so preoccupied with chasing factional political hares within the Labor Party and its pseudo-consumerist appendages that he has had no time to devote to the fundamental task of encouraging and developing a fair and open market-place.

It is the hope of the Opposition that, with the support it proposes to give to the proposed legislation, the Minister will take heart and become a "born-again" Minister and from here on show some of the capacity one would expect from a Minister of the Crown and use the additional powers granted to the court under the measure to much better effect in future than he has used the existing powers in the past.

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—As the honourable member for Forest Hill advised the House, the Market Court is a strange creature. I took the opportunity of learning about the Market Court before discussing this measure. I had the opportunity of speaking with the Registrar of the Market Court, Mr Alf Dowling, who, after some discussion, advised me that only two deeds of assurance have been registered with the court since it was established in 1978.

Since 1978, only five cases have been dealt with by the court. It is probably a matter of some frustration to the registrar that the court is not operating more efficiently, but Mr Dowling has many other areas of Government responsibility in which he is an acting registrar. He certainly does not have to worry about spending too much of his time dealing with the operation of the Market Court.

It is regrettable that the position of President of the Market Court has not been filled.

Mr Spyker—Yes, it has.

Mr McNAMARA—The position is vacant at the moment.

Mr Spyker—No, it was filled in December 1983.

Mr McNAMARA—There seems to be a communication problem between the registrar, the officers of the Market Court and the so-called president, because they know nothing at the registrar's office about the position being filled.

If the Minister is correct and the position has been filled since December 1983, perhaps there is a longer delay in communication between the Minister and his department than one would have thought possible! Perhaps the Minister of Consumer Affairs could advise the House when he made the appointment. Perhaps it might be more worth while if the Minister advised the Registrar of the Market Court and those involved in the day-to-day operations of the court that they have a president and, if matters are referred to them, they can operate.

It is a disgrace that the Minister has held his position for two years and the Market Court has remained in limbo. The principle upon which the court was established was very good but, in practice, it has operated very poorly.

The court was established to look after matters that involved ethical breaches rather than legal breaches. Legal breaches can be dealt with by the courts but, in this area, the Director of Consumer Affairs could intervene in a trading matter in which he felt an unethical practice was operating and he could refer those matters to the Market Court. The Director of Consumer Affairs could also enable a deed of assurance to be signed by a trader and that deed of assurance would then be required to be registered. That is why the position of registrar was created.

It is interesting to note that in the six years or so since the court was established, only two items are recorded on the register. Section 31 of the Market Court Act defines the procedure by which a deed of assurance must be registered. I direct the attention of the Minister to that provision because the matter should be taken up with the Director of Consumer Affairs regarding whether the Ministry of Consumer Affairs should continue to enter into deeds of assurance with traders and not proceed to register them as required under the Act. That matter should be tidied up because a deed of assurance is a worth-while method of formalizing an agreement with traders; that they will revert to a practice that is ethical and acceptable to the community.

Section 31 of the principal Act states:

> (1) Where a trader has given such a deed of assurance as is mentioned in section 30 the Director shall—
>
> (*a*) cause the original deed of assurance to be given to the registrar;
>
> (*b*) cause a copy thereof to be given to the trader; and
>
> (*c*) himself retain a copy thereof.

Sub-section (2) refers to the registrar filing all original deeds of assurance received by him and keeping a repository for such things. Sub-section (3) refers to deeds of assurance and how they may be inspected. Sub-section (4) refers to how the deeds of assurance registered under sub-section (2) shall be presumed, until the contrary is shown, to have been executed by the trader by whom it was purportedly given.

It seems strange that, in the six years in which the Market Court has operated, only two deeds of assurance are on record. It is my understanding that a common practice adopted by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, through the Director of Consumer Affairs, is to require a deed of assurance to be entered into by a trader. If deeds of assurance have been entered into over that period and they have not been registered, those deeds of assurance are not legal, and one can assume that the director has not been following the provisions of the Act.

I shall deal with a number of matters referred to by the Minister in his second-reading speech. I have dealt with the details of the register. I now refer to the widening of responsibility that will not only include the trader but also other people involved in business. Proposed section 38A, contained in clause 14, states:

> For the purposes of this Act, any conduct engaged in by a trader who is a body corporate shall be presumed (until the contrary is shown) to have been engaged in with the consent and connivance of any person who was, at any time of the conduct, concerned or taking part in the management of the trader.

This is a very wide provision. How wide will be a matter of interpretation by the courts. It could lead to the ridiculous situation of shop assistants, delivery boys and others being included in the provision. The terminology of the proposed amendment to the Act should be clearer.

The Minister stated in the second-reading speech that clause 5 of the Bill inserts a new sub-section in section 15 of the principal Act to enable the director to apply to the Market Court for an order against a person other than a trader. I direct to the attention of the Minister that this includes those who are at present excluded under the Act.

The Act defines a trader as a person who carries on a business of supplying goods to or providing services for any person. It is a wide definition and appears to cover virtually every person who is involved in business. Section 3 of the Act provides that certain people will be exempt from the provisions of the Act and states that the provisions shall not apply to the provision of services by any trader if:

(*a*) he is entitled to provide those services by virtue of any registration licence or other authority granted or issued to him under or pursuant to any Act by any court authority board committee tribunal or other body; and

(*b*) a court authority board committee tribunal or other body has power in respect of him under or pursuant to any Act to cancel suspend or withdraw that registration licence or other authority for any reason affecting the conduct of that trader in relation to the provision of such services.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr McNAMARA—It is quite clear from the definition in the Act that people involved in occupations which have registration, licence or other authority and who can have licences cancelled, suspended or withdrawn are exempt from the provisions of the Act, but with his amendments to the Act the Minister is saying that the Act will apply to any trader. I am concerned that the proposed amendments will affect occupations such as plumbers, gasfitters, solicitors, estate agents, doctors, electricians, and others who are already included under various licensing authorities and that those occupations could lose the exemption that the Act provides at present.

I urge the Minister to re-examine this issue because, if a broad-brush approach is taken and the exemption that exists in the Act is removed, people in those professions will be doubly threatened. They will have their activities controlled by their own licensing authorities and, in addition, the provisions of the Bill may well apply to them.

For example, in the real estate profession, with which I am familiar, there are stringent guidelines to deal with any breach of trust accounts and with any complaints that are made to the registrar. Offending real estate agents may lose their licences for these practices. Similarly, solicitors can be disbarred from practice as can plumbers, gasfitters and members of other occupations by their own licensing authorities. For that reason, those occupations were excluded specifically under the Act.

The Minister is now suggesting that the amendments he proposes to the Act will apply to any person who is a trader and his proposed amendments to the Act would widen the Act to suggest that the Market Court would become the licensing authority for those people to whom I have referred who at present are exempt under the Act. The Market Court will become their licensing authority, not the individual professional groups—not the Pharmaceutical Board of Victoria, in which the honourable member for Narracan would be interested, and not the Law Institute of Victoria, that the Leader of the National Party and the honourable members for Warrnambool and Prahran would be interested in.

For Parliament to allow the Bill to be passed containing this provision would be a backward step. I should like the assurance of the Minister that he will guard the independence and integrity of the licensing authorities to which I have referred because the second-reading speech he was not clear on that subject.

The Bill repeals the requirement that the director must apply to the Market Court for permission to prosecute in the Magistrates Court. As a previous speaker stated, this provision has been a handy brake on the operations of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs because officers of the Ministry have had to go to a higher authority to double check whether to proceed with a prosecution. Although everyone wants to ensure that all shonky traders and operators in all areas of the State are removed from business and the public is therefore protected, everyone will want to ensure that no hasty judgments are made that will lead to precipitate action being taken. A little less haste in

these areas will ultimately lead to a better judicial result.

Although the National Party has minor reservations about the Bill, it will support it. However, members of the National Party in another place would like an opportunity of studying the Bill more closely. I urge the Minister to ensure that the Market Court functions more effectively than it has since its inception in 1978. The operations of the court have been a farce.

I do not put the blame solely on the shoulders of the present Minister of Consumer Affairs because the Market Court Act goes back to 1978 and, for the four years prior to the present Minister taking responsibility for it, the Act has operated in the same fashion. Now the Minister has the opportunity of revitalizing what can be an important factor in protecting consumers. I am critical that it has taken him two years to wind himself into taking this action.

Mr Spyker—I have had a lot to do.

Mr McNAMARA—This matter should have been one of the Minister's first priorities, and ignoring that responsibility for two years is not good enough.

Prompt action should be taken so that the Market Court will operate in the manner in which it was promised it would operate in 1978. I wish the Minister of Consumer Affairs every success in that area. I share the disbelief of the honourable member for Forest Hill as I had a similar experience when I made inquiries on the Bill. Even the address of the court has changed. It seems to be a mobile animal, flitting and shifting from office to office. Perhaps the Minister will advise whether the Market Court has found a permanent home or whether it intends to move in another direction. Even the telephone number in the *Victorian Government Directory* is now out of date. It is important to assure those who have an interest in the Bill that the Market Court will operate in the manner in which it is supposed to operate.

I criticize the Minister for not acting more quickly in appointing a president to the court. He said he has made the appointment now. That is news to everyone, including the registrar of the court who did not know that a president had been appointed. The Minister said that it was last year. Obviously, the communication between the court and the Minister needs to be improved. Is the Minister himself taking over the position as president of the court? The National Party has reservations about the Bill, and should like the Minister to answer some of the concerns I have outlined.

Mr Richardson—Mr Acting Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr KEMPTON (Warrnambool)—It gives me pleasure to speak in the debate on the Bill. The proposition that there ought to be a Market Court in Victoria was one of the commendable activities of the former Liberal Government. That was an important step forward for all Victorian consumers, particularly those who were subjected to improper practices by traders. It allowed proper trials to be undertaken and action to be taken to ensure that traders were adequately restrained from carrying on any unsavoury activities.

The thrust of the proposed legislation is to broaden the scope of all those people against whom orders can be made as a result of action taken in the Market Court. That is a proposition that all those who are concerned with consumer affairs and with the protection of consumers will greet with some satisfaction. It seems that the expanding of the extent of the orders that can be made under the Market Court Act is a real step forward. The Opposition commends the proposed legislation in that respect.

The total scope of the legal definition of the application of orders made by the Market Court will have to be decided because the phraseology used in the measure is somewhat broad and may lead to litigation by traders, or by those against whom orders are made. The concept of the Market Court, which the Bill reinforces, is to act against traders and others who are party to "unfair conduct" in trade. The concept has had various definitional appraisals and there is a need for this type of legislation to be further refined. The unfair conduct is an interesting concept, but the broadness of the definition is a commendable aspect, which was brought into play by the former Liberal Government to allow the broadest possible scope in pursuing traders who acted improperly in the market-place.

A number of honourable members from the Opposition and the National Party have added their views on the operation of the Market Court since the Government came to power. The Market Court has not operated in the broadest possible scope because, although the Government may give it verbal support——

Mr Leigh—I direct your attention, Mr Acting Speaker, to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr KEMPTON—It is extraordinary that Government Party members could give lip service to the rights of consumers, but be absent during a debate on a crucial matter affecting consumers' rights. It is a sad reflection on the party forming the Government that it is unable to form a quorum. Government members should not need to be told that it is their responsibility to provide a quorum in debates on measures that are introduced by the Government.

It is extremely sad that quorums must be constantly called to draw attention to the state of the House so that an adequate audience can be provided for the extremely valuable comments being made by members of the Opposition, and particularly the honourable member for Forest Hill.

I was saying that it is important that any party that supports the rights of consumers against the unfair conduct of traders ought to give its assistance to and put its whole weight behind the operations of the Market Court, which was a novel initiative of the former Liberal Government for providing restraints on traders who acted improperly. It is very much to be regretted that the Government, since it has been in power, has given only lip service—hot air—to the concept of consumer protection.

Mr Leigh—Hot lines!

Mr KEMPTON—I take up the interjection of my colleague. The Government has given only "hot lines" to consumer protection. It has been frivolous in its support for consumers in Victoria, which is to be regretted. I emphasize to the Minister of Consumer Affairs that consumers and traders in the electorate I represent have been extremely concerned about his activities in not protecting the rights of consumers and unnecessarily infringing on the rights of traders.

It has been brought to my attention that the Market Court has been totally inoperative since the Labor Government has been in power. That is to be regretted. If that is an example of the sort of support that Victorian consumers can expect from the Government, it is extremely sad. That attitude shows the hollowness and shallowness of the commitment of the Government to the rights of consumers.

Earlier it was mentioned that some doubt existed as to who is the President of the Market Court. During the later stages of the debate, I hope the Minister of Consumer Affairs will name the president. Since the past President of the Market Court met his demise, the belief is that there has been no replacement. What a farce that Victoria has a court which is not only inoperative but also does not have a presiding officer! What lip service is the Government paying?

If the Minister is not prepared to give an undertaking that, if there is no president at present in control of the Market Court, he will appoint one immediately, it will prove what a farce the commitment of the Government is to consumer affairs. It will also indicate the unnecessary nature of this type of measure.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr KEMPTON—What an extraordinary debate this is. Since I have been speaking, three quorums have been called because members of the Government are not prepared to back their proposed legislation. Is this a reflection of the support of members of the Government for the Minister of Consumer Affairs? The situation is most unfortunate. It clearly reflects the sad state of this dilapidated Government. It is so dilapidated that it cannot provide a quorum in the House for such a significant debate. What a farce!

The SPEAKER—Order! I hope the honourable member for Warrnambool is speaking to the Bill.

Mr KEMPTON—Indeed, Mr Speaker. Before you, Mr Speaker, returned to the chair, I was commenting on the inactivity of the Market Court and the frustration felt by consumers throughout Victoria at the inactivity of the Government in protecting

their interests, particularly against the unfair conduct of traders.

The Government has been inactive in promoting the operations of the court; inactive in appointing adequate officers to that court; and inactive in providing a president for that court. Since the Government has been in power that court has not met. One questions the future of the proposed legislation and why it is necessary if the court will not meet.

The Opposition supports the continuation of the Market Court. It supports the concept because it was an initiative which it believes will protect consumers against the unfair trading practices of some people in the market-place and others associated with them.

However, why have the Market Court? Why introduce Bills of this type if this court will not be operative? Why have the Market Court when it has no president and it does not provide adequate facilities to serve the interests of the community? I hope the Minister of Consumer Affairs will respond to those allegations. Those questions are extremely important.

The Government should clearly state here and now that it is firmly committed to the operations of the Market Court and that it has regretted allowing that court to fall into a state of misuse.

Let us be frank about the matter. It is about time the Government was open and apologized to the Victorian consumers about the operations of the Market Court. Anything less than an apology would be most unsatisfactory and not good enough.

If the Government is serious about protecting the rights of consumers against unfair conduct of traders, it should be promoting the Market Court and not merely passing measures of this nature. It should be committing itself to a meaningful operation of the court.

Indeed, comments that have been made earlier in the debate by the Minister of Consumer Affairs on the operation of the Market Court have been only shallow words.

I hope the Minister will take on board the comments I have made and that he will give members of the Opposition and, more importantly, the consumers of Victoria, the assurances that have been requested. If the assurances are not forthcoming, a dark cloud will continue to hang over the relationship between consumers—and that means all Victorians—and the present Government.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate, which have indicated that the legislation setting up the Market Court, which was established in this State in 1978, is good in theory. However, in practice it has been extremely difficult to make it work. I take up the interjection of the Leader of the National Party and point out to him that it is not my responsibility, as a Minister, to refer matters to the Market Court; it is the responsibility of the director to take up the issue. It is unfortunate that former Ministers of Consumer Affairs are not in the House, because they also would be able to explain that the existing legislation makes it extremely difficult to bring a matter before the Market Court.

A number of matters were raised during the debate. Accusations were made by the honourable member for Warrnambool that there was not a President of the Market Court and that, therefore, nothing could be done. The honourable member obviously did not do his homework properly. I should like to refer honourable members to the *Government Gazette* of 7 December 1983, which listed the names of persons reappointed to the Market Court. The President of the Market Court is His Honour Judge Gilbert Dyett, who is a judge of the Victorian County Court. The consumer panel, includes Mr Dick Gross, Co-ordinator of the Consumer Credit Legal Service; Mr Graeme Harris, the Chairman of the Consumers Association of Victoria; and Mrs Cathy McCallum, the President of the Knox Prices Action Group, so there is a President of the Market Court.

Mr Richardson—Are you quoting from the *Government Gazette*?

Mr SPYKER—I am not using the *Government Gazette*, I am using my notes. I also advise the House that the following persons are members of the industry panel: Mr John Collins, Executive Director of the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce; Mr David Murden, Executive Director of the Master Builders Association of Victoria; and Mr Case Muskens, Managing Director of Muskens Bourke Travel Pty Ltd.

Those people were appointed on 7 December 1983. I am not sure where members opposite get their information, but again, it is clear that a Market Court exists and that there is a president of the court. Therefore, whenever the services of the court are required, they are there to be used.

The issue has been discussed with a number of directors, and Mr King who is the Acting Director of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, took a personal interest in the Market Court. He took action against Peter Bobar of The Acting Machine. However, it soon became evident that the existing legislation was deficient, particularly in relation to the definition of a trader. As a result, Mr Bobar was quite openly able to flout the intent of the legislation. Action was brought against this person because he adopted the practice of appointing different people from time to time to be his acting managers, partners and so on. All sorts of titles were used. However, the deed of assurance, which was registered with the Market Court, could not be enforced because of the limitations of the legislation.

There is no question that Mr Peter Bobar, who conducted courses in acting and modelling, ran a shonky operation. The Acting Machine, the Talent House and the Director of Act Agency Pty Ltd induced consumers to pay for their courses by implying in advertisements that they would find employment. So far as I could ascertain, although they were promised employment, in recent years no person coming from those agencies was employed.

Mr Leigh—Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr SPYKER—Peter Bobar's activities have taken place for some time. In February last year, the Acting Director of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Mr John King, entered into a deed of assurance as a result of the number of consumer complaints that had been received, and Mr Bobar again came to the attention of the Ministry in July 1983 when complaints were made which indicated he had resumed his activities under another name and with a different partner.

The legal advice received by the Ministry and by the Acting Director of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs was that, although it appeared there were breaches of the deed of assurance, there were a number of difficulties under the existing Act in obtaining consent from the Market Court to institute prosecutions for those breaches. Such action appears impractical at present.

The advice of the Ministry is that, although it is examining the possibility of having some tentative hearings set down in the Magistrates Court, it is not likely that the case will be a success because of the limitations of the Act. That is one of the reasons why the Bill is before the House.

The honourable member for Warrnambool indicated that the Government should have acted earlier. Again, I remind him and other members of the Opposition that the Market Court Act operated for four years under the former Government and that this Government has introduced an array of proposed legislation relating to consumer affairs, including amendments to the Motor Car Traders Act, the Consumer Affairs (Item Pricing) Bill, and the Beer Prices Regulation Bill. Therefore, the Government cannot be accused of not acting on consumer affairs issues, as it indicated it would act during the election campaign.

The honourable member for Benalla referred to other registration boards such as those governing doctors, agents and lawyers. The advice I have received indicated that they would not come under this sort of measure because they would be governed by their own registration boards. A valid point was made by the honourable member for Forest Hill, who asked how far the definitions go regarding a trader, and he mentioned employees of companies, drivers and telephonists who could be caught up in the measure.

Lengthy discussions and consultations took place with Parliamentary Counsel and the Government was advised that this type of legislation did not provide cover. The legislation had to be broadened because some of the unethical traders operating in the market-place—who are in a minority—have clever lawyers and are able to obtain excellent legal advice. They seem to operate at a level on which they know they can exist. The current legislation prohibits the Government from pinning them down, making an example of them and saying that it means business. That is one of the reasons for the broader definition of the Market Court.

I assure honourable members that I am anxious for the Market Court to operate properly. The comments made about the lack of action by the court are valid. The current legislation prohibits the director from entering into a deed of assurance; the Bill will enable him to do so. The main thrust of the proposed legislation is that the Government wishes to take speedy action in these issues because the current process is too slow.

I pay tribute to the enforcement section of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs which works actively and speedily in this area. However, a shonky operator in the marketplace does not wait for the director to send that trader to the Market Court or the Magistrates Court to obtain a prosecution. Shonky operators soon disappear out of town or change their operations and the names of the companies under which they operate so that the process must be started all over again. It is critical that the procedures be speeded up.

The Government is not out to pin down ethical traders or cause difficulties for them. The Government wishes to use the weapons and proposed legislation for the protection of consumers. Ethical traders, particularly those conducting employment agencies, have supported the proposed legislation because they are concerned that shonky operators give their industry a bad name. I am sure all ethical traders would welcome this type of proposed legislation.

The honourable member for Forest Hill said that matters should be taken directly to the Magistrates Court. That does not contradict the spirit of the Market Court, so we can obtain a quick prosecution. That possibility has been examined and that is why the Market Court has not been used in the way that it should have been.

The previous Government and previous Directors of Consumer Affairs have had problems with the existing legislation.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 4 were agreed to.

Clause 5

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The clause deals with the applications to the court by the Director of Consumer Affairs. It is significant that, by the admission of the Minister, no applications have been made to the court by the Director of Consumer Affairs since 1982—since the time the Labor Party assumed office.

Honourable members need to know why that is the case. It is simply not sufficient for the Minister to hope he can get off the hook as he has tried to do by suggesting that things were too hard. Things were not too hard for the previous Government. Prior to 1982, the Director of Consumer Affairs brought matters to the attention of the court. This was not found to be too difficult for the director at that time.

I should have thought that one of the major difficulties that a Director of Consumer Affairs would have had would have been the absence of a President of the court for some time. The Minister referred to the appointment of a president of the Market Court in December 1983. It must be recorded that this is an appointment which was kept secret from the Registrar of the Market Court. When I was speaking to the registrar this morning, that gentleman was not able to confirm that there was, in fact, a president of the court.

During the second-reading debate, I mention that the gentleman had a recollection that something was in process and, indeed, he mentioned the name of a judge of the County Court which was confirmed by the Minister in his closing remarks on the second-reading debate. The Committee needs to know for how long the office of president was vacant. One knows there was a president in 1982 and one knows that there was not a president for a considerable time. A president was appointed in 1983.

I ask the Minister to respond when I cease my remarks by informing the Committee how long the presidency of the Market Court was vacant before the appointment was made in December 1983.

The clause also refers to persons who take part in the management of bodies corporate and persons who have consented to or connived at any conduct. The clause relates to the need for the proposed legislation to reach out and embrace persons other than those who are the principals in a firm suspected of engaging in unfair practice. I raise a matter of considerable importance—as did the honourable member for Benalla, who was supported by the honourable member for

Warrnambool—concerning the need to have assurances that innocent people will be protected. In his closing remarks, the Minister acknowledged the need for protecting people who, by association with an unfair trading practice, could be brought within the ambit of the Bill.

What the Minister has done is to acknowledge his concern and that of his Government, and I do not doubt that concern for one moment. I accept the genuineness of the Minister's remarks and for that reason I am concerned that, although he may be able to express his understanding of the point I have made and to agree with the point I have made, he has not, in fact, provided the Committee with an explanation in detail of how innocent people who may be associated with an order or an individual who is involved in the unfair practice can be protected.

It is an important point and I accept that it may be a difficult point for the Minister to answer. He may need to consult his officers when the Bill is in transit between this Chamber and another place to enable his representative in the other place to provide a more detailed explanation of the manner in which an innocent person will be protected from the consequences of an unknowing association.

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—I can only reiterate the comment I made during the second-reading debate, that the advice I received from three directors, Mr John Miller, Mr John King, an acting director, and Mr David Hall, the current director—who I think the Committee would agree are competent people—was that the current Act made it difficult to obtain prosecutions. It was important to ensure that when one lodged a prosecution one succeeded. All the advice the Government received, including legal advice, was that prosecutions were not succeeding.

The Government has been fortunate, as was the previous Government, in being able to use the enforcement section to negotiate a settlement for the claim. That is the whole thrust of consumer affairs; the Market Court and other Tribunals are areas of last resort. The Small Claims Tribunal, the enforcement section and the conciliation section are used extensively to have matters resolved. About 99 per cent of matters are resolved in the enforcement section and the conciliation section, and I believe all honourable members welcome that because it satisfies both parties. More tension exists with the Small Claims Tribunal and the Market Court.

The Government will not rush into things and unnecessarily prosecute innocent people. The Director of Consumer Affairs and members of the Market Court are responsible people who can make sensible judgments. I have no intention, nor does my director, of unnecessarily harassing people who are innocent parties.

Parliamentary Counsel has indicated that this is the way to overcome the matter. No innocent people will be involved. The Act has had to be broadened to include the sorts of people who call themselves consultants, sub-contractors or management consultants and not just traders. A number of titles are being used to get around the Act.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The Minister disappoints me again, as he has so often in the past. I am disturbed that the Minister has not addressed himself to the two points that I raised. He has not provided detailed information as to how the innocent will be spared the ignominy of entrapment, but I shall leave pursuit of that point to another clause because there will be ample opportunity for me to pursue that point in debate on other clauses.

The Minister has not answered the first question I raised, which was to provide the Committee with the information on how long the presidency of the Market Court remained vacant prior to the appointment in December 1983. I challenge the Minister to provide the information or admit that he does not know.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 6

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—There are two ways in which the Government can handle the matter. One is the easy way and the other is the hard way. If the Minister wants to handle it the hard way, I am prepared to accommodate him. I refer the Committee to the note beside the clause which states "Parties to unfair conduct by trader".

The Minister failed to answer my question when I requested information on clause 5. My request remains just as valid in terms of clause 6 as it was in terms of clause 5.

Indeed, one can go to clause 7 and continue to ask the same question. How does the Minister propose, in practice, to prevent the involvement of innocent people in legal actions simply by virtue of their association with somebody who is involved in an unfair practice?

As the Committee is still discussing the Market Court, I again ask the Minister how long the Market Court was without a president. If the Minister does not know, will he simply tell the Committee he does not know and let the matter rest there.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—The question is that clause 6 stand part of the Bill.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—Mr Chairman, I exercise my right for a second opportunity to speak. It should now go on record that on the last two occasions when I have asked the Minister to respond to a specific question, particularly the question of how long the Market Court was without a president he has failed to respond.

It is quite clear that the Minister of Consumer Affairs does not know because he has failed to respond and provide what I should have thought was a simple piece of information for a Minister who is in touch with his Ministry and who is competently in charge of its operations.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 7

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—Clause 7 deals with parties subjected to unfair conduct by corporate traders and that may involve people occupying a management role in a company, particularly a company which is registered in Victoria but has its principals operating in another State or even in another country. The principal management of the company may issue instructions to its Victorian manager or director to engage in practices which, under the Act, would be regarded as unfair. However, other employees in the management structure of that corporation may be simply following instructions that they have been given or following some procedural manual which they had been assured was perfectly legal and may believe the practices they were pursuing were completely proper. Those persons could find themselves in breach of the provisions of the Market Court Act and a number of other Acts relating to unfair or improper trading.

I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs to advise the Committee whether there has been any discussion in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs on interstate or international ownership or principal management of a body corporate which operates in the Victorian market-place. If there has been such discussion in the preparation of the proposed legislation, what procedure is to be followed by the Market Court and by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs in addressing the matters that I have brought to the attention of the Minister?

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—Lengthy discussions have taken place in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs about the matter because a case did occur where the chief operator of a company was based in New Zealand and he had his puppets—and one cannot call them anything else—operating in the Victorian market-place. The principals give themselves all types of titles. They are management consultants, on a weekly hire basis, or they are not really involved: They come over to Australia only to operate the business on a temporary basis. It is difficult for one to nab these people to ensure protection of the consumer in the market-place. A fairly lengthy discussion has occurred within the Ministry to safeguard consumers. I have the utmost confidence in the Director of Consumer Affairs, the staff of the Ministry and the Market Court system to ensure that no innocent people are caught up in the provisions.

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

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

TRANSPORT (TRAFFIC INFRINGEMENT NOTICES) BILL

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

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—This is a revenue-raising measure and, instead of the Minister of Transport handling the Bill, it would have been more appropriate for the Treasurer to have handled the measure.

There is no question that the provisions in the Bill represent another tax grab and are intended to increase revenue for the Government.

Whenever a Government has the opportunity, it tries to increase its revenue by raising it from motorists. It is not only the Transport (Traffic Infringement Notices) Bill, which increases from 20 to 90 the number of offences to which on-the-spot fines apply, but also when that principle is extended to the income generated from road users and the motor car industry, there is no question that the amount of revenue is enormous.

One of the matters to which I object in principle is that when the Minister of Transport introduced a Bill to increase fines under the Motor Car Act, he indicated that the penalties imposed on people who use the roads would be a deterrent and that the costs of briefs and summonses in processing claims through the courts should be comparable to the fines imposed. One could probably correctly argue that these proposed taxes are either a deterrent or a revenue earner. I maintain quite vigorously that they should not be a revenue earner, but a deterrent. The Bill is certainly a revenue earner. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport stated:

> In summary, it may be said that the proposal for the extension of the TIN procedure has been made primarily because of the economic and safety benefits which are expected to accrue.

I do not understand that type of terminology because there is no question in my mind that such a penalty should be a deterrent. It does not matter what crime or what penalty has been incurred, if one infringes on society there should be a deterrent to ensure that the next time a person considers taking certain action, that person will reconsider his or her position to ensure that he or she will not, because of that penalty, take that action. The Bill mainly is a revenue earner, but it is fair to claim that it will increase the work of the Police Force. The Government has not increased the size of the Police Force to a satisfactory point and there is no question that the police will be required to ensure that infringements by road users are noted and that on-the-spot fines will be imposed. The Police Force will have trouble with its public relations because of the Bill. When one increases the number of on-the-spot fines from 20 to 90, that action will certainly not help the police in carrying out their difficult responsibilities.

The police have a difficult task and the enforcement of the Bill will create a stigma that should not exist. Drivers who abuse their position on the roads may criticize the police for taking action against them and the police are often looked on as second-rate citizens in that situation. Nevertheless, people who have problems always go first to the police. However, I stress that the enforcement of the Bill will not improve the public image of the police within the community, and that is an important aspect of the role of the Police Force. The Bill increases from 20 to 90 the number of offences in respect of which on-the-spot fines can be imposed, and that will render it more difficult for the police to carry out their important functions.

I understand that a working party has been convened by the Road Traffic Authority to report on offences in respect of which demerit points may be awarded. I believe it is unnecessary to proceed to a stage where demerit points would be incurred in these additional 70 types of misdemeanour which carry varying degrees of risk to other road users. It would be difficult to justify the application of the demerit points system to a number of the matters referred to in the schedule. I refer to infringements such as failing to have a clear view, entering a choked intersection, reversing for an extended distance and using a horn unnecessarily. I question whether offences of that type should incur demerit points. It is important to recognize also that the inclusion of low-risk offences in the demerit system could further aggravate the relationship between motorists and the police. A high-risk driver should certainly be subject to severe fines to ensure that other road users can use the roads safely, but the biggest problem is to identify the high-risk driver. To include minor offence drivers could bring the system into disrepute.

The Opposition regards the Bill totally as a revenue earner. A person who receives an on-the-spot infringement notice and does not pay the fine within 28 days has the opportunity of going to court. Because of the high cost of court actions, people often take the easy way and pay the fine, and the opportunity should still be available for

people to have some simple method of expiating an infringement notice in respect of minor offences.

Car owners are an easy target for the Treasurer and it is up to the Government to ensure that sufficent police are trained to cope with the demands of the road system. It is an indictment of the Government that no police cadets will be trained in April, May and June of this year, particularly when the penalties that are incurred by motorists bring millions of dollars of revenue to the State. It should therefore have sufficient resources to ensure that there are sufficient police on the road to ensure public safety on our roadways.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The second-reading notes prepared by the Minister outline exactly what the Bill entails. Although the Bill is small, much detail is devoted to the inclusion of the various increases in the offences and the penalties for those offences that are proposed in new Schedule 9. As the honourable member for Midlands pointed out, the Bill increases from twenty to 90 the number of traffic offences that come within the ambit of the Act. If one were to be fined in respect of each of the offences included, one would pay fines of approximately $6000.

The Minister's second-reading speech contained one remarkable piece of information. He pointed out that the Bill clarifies the position in relation to the incurring of demerit points under section 27A of the Motor Car Act. Currently, a driver who fails to expiate a traffic infringement notice and is subsequently convicted by a court does not incur demerit points, whereas the person who pays his on-the-spot fine does incur demerit points. It is pleasing that that situation has been brought into line and that the demerit points will be incurred irrespective of whether one expiates the infringement notice or goes to court.

I have been concerned for some time about the demerit points system. Under the Fifth Schedule of the Motor Car Act, a driver incurs the maximum of four demerit points for failing to stop at a railway crossing when transporting more than 2500 litres of inflammable liquid. Various other offences are set out which attract penalty points ranging from the maximum of four down to one.

A speeding offence incurs a penalty of two demerit points. However, demerit points should be applied on a *pro rata* basis in the same way that fines are. If a motorist exceeds the speed limit by 5 to 10 kilometres an hour, the motorist should not attract the same number of demerit points as would apply if that motorist were convicted of exceeding the speed limit by 25 to 30 kilometres an hour. If a motorist is convicted of exceeding the speed limit by 5 to 10 kilometres an hour, the motorist should receive only one demerit point. However, if the motorist exceeds the speed limit by 25 to 30 kilometres an hour, the motorist should receive three demerit points. I ask the Minister of Transport to give that matter further consideration during the Parliamentary recess.

Unfortunately, many motorists do not adopt a serious attitude towards traffic fines. Many are prepared to be fined and suffer demerit points, even if those demerit points result in the loss of licences. A minority view themselves as heroes for earning enough demerit points to lose their licences. I urge the Minister to consider adopting the system whereby, if a motorist attracts three traffic infringement notices in twelve months, that motorist should be required to display "P" plates on his or her car for the following twelve months. A motorist might feel quite small if he or she, having held a licence for five, ten or twenty years, incurred three traffic infringement notices in twelve months and was required to display a "P" plate on his or her car for twelve months. The honourable member for Rodney interjects by saying that I would look rather silly if I had to drive with a "P" plate on my car. The honourable member is correct. However, if I attracted three infringement notices, it would demonstrate that I was unaware of the road law and that I should smarten up my driving capabilities. That suggestion could be an effective means of dealing with traffic infringement notices and thus lowering the road toll.

The explanatory second-reading notes have been well thought out. The Bill will have a beneficial effect in getting more members of the Police Force out of the courts and on to the roads. The Bill will, when passed, add an additional 70 traffic offences for which infringement notices may be served under the Transport Act. However, motorists can dispute on-the-spot fines by taking the matters to court. The Bill will provide police with more opportunities to

issue on-the-spot fines for traffic infringements and thus reduce the time spent preparing briefs and summonses and attending court hearings.

Police can spend an inordinate time in courts waiting for cases to come on for hearing. Unfortunately, the Government has decided to close various country court houses and police in country districts now have to attend court hearings at central courts. The Bill, when passed, will provide country police with more opportunity to remain in their areas rather than attend a central court which, in many instances, could be many kilometres away from their station.

However, I take up the point made by the honourable member for Midlands that the number of traffic fines being imposed on motorists represents a type of revenue raising mechanism. Many police are concerned that at times they get many people off side when they pull up motorists for breaches of the road law and impose an on-the-spot fine of either $90 or $120. The motorist faced with an on-the-spot fine develops a hostile feeling towards the police officer issuing the fine and does not realize that the Government is responsible for setting the level of the fine.

The National Party supports the Bill because it will give police more opportunity of exercising the role for which they were trained, that is, to safeguard the community.

Mr McNAMARA (Benalla)—The Bill appears to be a revenue raising measure, but the National Party supports it as a road safety measure.

It has been brought to my attention by numerous members of the Victoria Police Force that traffic fines are now reaching such a level that many police feel uncomfortable when they have to book motorists with on-the-spot fines of either $90 or $120. Under the Bill, traffic fines will taper down to $40 for minor traffic infringements such as the unnecessary use of a horn or $55 for failing to turn off an indicator light.

The present economic climate is not as healthy as it was a few years ago, but the level of traffic fines has continued to escalate. The Police Force is trying to build a good relationship with the public but members of the Police Force have to inflict severe financial burdens on motorists for traffic offences. The Government could have acted far more effectivly by keeping its election promise and providing additional numbers of police to ensure that the road regulations were maintained through a greater police presence on the roads. However, the Government has resorted to increasing traffic fines to an astronomic level.

A suggestion has been made that radar guns and tapes should be provided with a time clock digital print-out to ensure that the reading that is taken is for the person who is driving the vehicle at the time.

I have personal reservations about the fact that the level of good relations between the Victoria Police Force and the public is being strained. This avaricious Government wants to obtain revenue from every source, but there is a point beyond which the public will not accept the situation.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Road safety is a matter of concern and the imposition of fines will not necessarily solve the problem. The change in the mechanism from the fines being made through the courts to on-the-spot fines is basically different from the previous procedure.

One major dilemma that must be faced is that this week-end many thousands of people will leave Melbourne to travel throughout country Victoria. Many people pass on the roads when it is dangerous to do so and it is impossible for the police to supervise that activity. As a country motorist who has driven hundreds of thousands of miles on country roads, I cannot believe the risks that people take. They become impatient, they become tired and they take incredible risks. They get away with it sometimes and at other times they do not and tragic head-on collisions occur.

The Road Construction Authority has a responsibility to ensure that all danger areas are marked with double lines. There are significant instances of roads which require double white lines but which do not have them. That lulls people into a false sense of security, as they assume it is safe to pass, when it is not. The Road Construction Authority should give emphasis to that aspect.

The introduction of roundabouts is another method of improving road safety. In Echuca, where the Northern Highway

meets the Murray Valley Highway, a roundabout has been installed and that has dramatically increased the safety of that section. The roundabout was costly to construct but it will be there for ever and a day. Until recently, we have been trying to build speedways; we are now trying to slow them down. In many country areas major roads cross. Recently a five-year-old boy was killed at a crossroad. The simplest way to improve safety is to offset crossroads so that they become two "T" intersections rather than one crossroad.

The big challenge ahead is to eliminate as many crossroads as possible because they are dangerous, and to provide additional funds to allow municipalities to introduce roundabouts wherever practicable. It is tragic that a child should lose his life simply because two major bitumen roads cross one another and people are unfamiliar with them, even though they have give-way signs. People take it for granted that there is no-one else around. It is the old situation: Where it is more open, it is more dangerous.

I know the Government is providing funds and I hope it will be able to increase the funds needed for eliminating crossroads, particularly in the northern municipalities, where there have been a number of accidents. People must be forced to stop. The Road Construction Authority should look at the future planning of intersections.

Where the Northern Highway meets the Midlands Highway just out of Elmore, a curved bend has replaced a speed bend, but there is still a bend. The logical answer is to force the traffic to stop and then have to move on to the other major highway. The National Party's policy was to make it as easy as possible for traffic to flow at highway speed and it has had to change that policy. That is something that both the former Government and this Government have accepted in an attempt to improve road safety. More police are needed on the roads to be more obvious to the public so that the public will slow down. There is still a tragic road toll and a need to eliminate it. It is an impossible task, but one should aim to do that because the tragic loss of life, maiming and injury cannot be tolerated.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I thank honourable members for their contributions. Firstly, I assure the honourable member for Midlands that the reason for the introduction of the Bill is not to raise revenue for the Government. Indeed for the offences listed in the schedule there has been no increase in the on-the-spot fines. For those that have been newly introduced, the on-the-spot fines have been set with a view to the fines presently imposed by the court. All these offences exist under present regulations; none are new. They have been handled as traffic infringement notices rather than requiring attendance at court. The existing regulations give the court discretion to fine people up to $500. The sums have not been increased from what they are now. The real benefit in the passing of the Bill will not be in terms of Government revenue but rather it will allow a more efficient distribution of resourses and it will be better for the police as they will be able to be out on the roads doing the job they are supposed to do. It will be better for the courts because they will not be clogged up and it will be better for the people because they will not have to take time off work to attend the court to pay a $50 fine, especially if they are caught at Swan Hill and live in Melbourne.

The honourable member for Lowan raised the matter of demerit points and how a person's licence might be taken away and he would be put back on "P" plates. The honourable member considered there could be a review to try to improve services. There are procedures to endeavour to improve the effect of these measures. I would prefer to leave that issue to the Social Development Committee, which will be reporting on it in the future. The committee has been working on the matter for some time and it will be important to review those issues in that context.

In passing, it is well for the House to recall that the Social Development Committee reported on freeway speed limits in 1982 and it recommended that the Government should consider extending the number of traffic infringement notices. The Bill addresses that very issue.

The honourable member for Benalla raised the matter of revenue. I suggest that he was inaccurate when he suggested that the number of offences has been increased and that the number of fines has been increased. They have not. The Government

is changing procedures to make life better for everyone concerned.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party raised two matters which are of concern to me, firstly, double lines on country roads not being as extensive as they ought to be with regard to safety. I shall pursue that matter with the Road Construction Authority.

Secondly, the Deputy Leader of the National Party raised the effectiveness of roundabouts and the lack of roundabouts in some country areas. That is particularly noticeable in Mildura where the streets were originally planned a long time before motor cars were used. An extensive number of right-angle intersections exist and I know that some ghastly accidents occur because of them. Roundabouts deal with those issues effectively, but it is an expensive business to construct them on roads that are not used very often. Some of the roads are not even bitumen, and it is difficult to construct roundabouts in those cases. However, I will ensure that the Road Construction Authority examines that issue, and I thank honourable members for their support.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

Clause 4

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 4, line 4 omit "inserted" and insert "substituted".

Clause 4, line 6, omit "paragraphs" and insert "sub-paragraphs".

The word "substituted" is more appropriate than the word "inserted", and the word "sub-paragraphs" is more appropriate than the word "paragraphs". The amendments correct drafting errors.

The amendments were agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 5.

Clause 6

Mr CRABB—I move:

Clause 6, line 43, omit ", in appropriate cases,".

Clause 6, line 44, after "Motor Car Act 1958" insert "for the offences referred to in the Fifth Schedule to that Act".

The amendments make a necessary clarification. The clause will now read:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, a person to whom sub-section (1) or (4) applies in respect of a traffic infringement notice shall incur demerit points under section 27A of the Motor Car Act 1958 for the offences referred to in the Fifth Schedule to that Act.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The amendment refers to the Motor Car Act and to the offences under the Fifth Schedule of that Act. Some 22 offences are contained in that schedule. I notice there is a significant shift to the use of traffic infringement notices and I ask the Minister whether that shift will include more offences that will earn demerit points.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—Does the deletion of the expression "in appropriate cases" make it mandatory that demerit points shall be incurred?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—No other offences have become penalized by demerit points by virtue of the amendment. This is a measure to which the honourable member for Lowan referred during the second-reading debate. The Government has removed the anomaly that if somebody went to court they did not receive a demerit point, whereas someone who expiated a traffic infringement notice did.

The expression "in appropriate cases" was considered to be too loose. It would bring about legal cases as to what was appropriate and what was not appropriate. The new wording is much clearer and magistrates and the Police Force will know the precise situation. Demerit points will apply to those people who expiate the traffic infringement notices by payment of the required amount, notwithstanding whether they go to court.

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

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

PUBLIC LANDS AND WORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr Cain (Premier), for Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS (APPOINTMENT OF MAGISTRATES) BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to reinforce the independence and impartiality of stipendiary magistrates by removing them from the Public Service. It is intended to allow the Bill to lie over until the spring sessional period to enable comments to be made by all interested parties.

At present, magistrates are subject to the Public Service Act 1958. Their appointment is made by the permanent head of the Law Department and they are subject to the same terms and conditions, including the rules of discipline, as other members of the Public Service. The present position in this State is the same as that which existed for a long time in other Australian jurisdictions. However, most of those jurisdictions have now removed magistrates from the scope of their equivalents to the Public Service Act 1958 and have given them independent status analogous to that enjoyed by the other branches of the judiciary.

The reasons for this development are largely concerned with the need to ensure public confidence in the magistracy. The Government is not for a moment questioning the actual integrity and impartiality of magistrates. However, although magistrates are members of the Public Service, they may appear to be subject to the direction of the permanent head and the Minister in discharging their judicial functions. Moreover, there may be a suspicion of bias when a member of the Public Service sits in judgment on a case in which the Government or a fellow member of the Public Service is involved.

In 1976, the Supreme Court of South Australia held that a magistrate had properly disqualified himself from hearing and determining proceedings commenced by a member of the same department of the Public Service as himself. Two of the judges said—

> . . . there are strong grounds for maintaining that a person holding judicial office should not be in the Public Service, more especially if he or she has to hear and determine prosecutions or civil causes in which the Crown or some instrumentality thereof is a party. (*Fingleton's case* (1976) 14 SASR 530).

Similar sentiments have been expressed by judges in other jurisdictions, including the Chief Justice of New South Wales in his report as Royal Commissioner in relation to the Humphreys affair.

Magistrates have now been legislatively removed from the Public Service in the Australian Capital Territory in 1977, New South Wales in 1982—yet to be proclaimed—Western Australia in 1979, South Australia in 1983 and Tasmania in 1969. Only Queensland and Victoria have failed to act on the widely-accepted view that it is in the interests of the sound administration of justice for magistrates to be removed from the Public Service.

In removing magistrates from the Public Service, certain consequential alterations to existing law are made necessary. Firstly, under existing law, some preference for public servants in relation to appointment to vacant offices is envisaged by the Public Service Act 1958. Moreover, section 7 (1A) of the Magistrates Courts Act 1971 and the regulations made under that Act provide for a special route to appointment as Magistrates for clerks of court, themselves also members of the Public Service. It would not be appropriate for any form of preference to public servants to be retained in legislation removing magistrates from the Public Service. Consequently, the Bill prescribes admission to practice as the sole criterion for eligibility for appointment. Special administration arrangements will be made by the Law Department to ensure that clerks of court who obtain law degrees are given the opportunity of being admitted to practice by complying with the relevant admission rules.

Secondly, under existing law, appointments are made by the Secretary to the Law Department. That would be clearly inappropriate. In future, appointment will be made by the Governor in Council. It is the Government's intention to advertise for applicants when an appointment is considered necessary.

Thirdly, the removal of magistrates from the Public Service also removes the existing methods of discipline. In fact, discipline of magistrates is largely a theoretical exercise, not one of immediate practical moment. Nonetheless, procedures for discipline must

be adopted. Those set out in the Bill result from a careful balancing of the need to ensure independence from political control and the need to ensure that appropriate action may be taken in the unlikely occurrence of an extreme case. Removal from office is contemplated only where the magistrate has committed an indictable offence, is mentally or physically incapable of carrying out his duties, is incompetent or guilty of neglect of duty or is guilty of unlawful or improper conduct in the performance of his duties. Removal can be effected only by the Governor in Council and then only when the Supreme Court had determined that proper cause exists for removing the magistrate from office. A magistrate's position is, in this way, protected from the possibility of prejudice by political action.

Finally, there is the procedure for subsequent modifications to salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of appointment. The Bill again adopts a procedure under which the changes will be made by the Governor in Council. It will do so after considering recommendations made by the Public Service Board.

In removing magistrates from the Public Service, care has been taken to ensure that no prejudice is suffered by existing magistrates. All existing stipendiary magistrates will continue as magistrates under the new Act. They will continue to be regarded as officers within the meaning of the Superannuation Act 1958; and will be entitled to emoluments and conditions of service not less than those to which they were entitled immediately before the commencement of the Act.

This Bill compliments the Magistrates' Courts (Jurisdiction) Bill which has been introduced in another place and which increases the monetary limit on the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court and removes justices of the peace from sitting on criminal matters. It is also part of a number of measures taken by the Government to improve the administration of justice in this State.

The Magistrates' Courts (Appointment of Magistrates) Bill is the result of a careful study of the developments in this area around Australia in recent years. It will improve the public image of the magistracy, a most important branch of the Victorian judiciary. It will remove the appearance of bias and lack of impartiality to which the present system gives rise. Consultations have been held with all affected parties, including the judiciary, the legal profession, the Public Service Board and the Victorian Public Service Association.

The general principle that magistrates should be removed from the Public Service is not questioned. Different views might be held on some of the technical details contained in the Bill. It is for that reason that the Government intends that the Bill should lie on the table until the spring sessional period. Comments from interested parties will be welcome. Changes to the Bill will be introduced if, upon analysis, criticisms made of the Bill appear well founded. 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 Tuesday, September 4.

LANDS (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to facilitate four land dealings. First, the Bill provides for the revocation of the permanent reservation for health purposes in respect of an area of 5329 square metres of Crown land at Napier Street, South Melbourne.

The site which contains a collection of single and two-storey buildings erected at various times over the past 115 years or so was, prior to 1969, portion of the land which was reserved for orphanage purposes and used by the St Vincent de Paul's Orphanage for Girls.

In 1969, by means of legislation, the site was re-reserved for health purposes as it was proposed that a rehabilitation centre for alcoholics be established thereon. This did not eventuate and the site is no longer required for health purposes.

Revocation of the reserve will enable the property to be disposed of under the provision of the Land Act in the over-all best interests of the public. The proceeds are to be shared between health and the general works programme.

The second area of land dealt with in the Bill is the Geelong Sailors' Rest Reserve comprising 910 square metres of Crown land at the corner of Moorabool Street and Eastern Beach Road, Geelong. The land is permanently reserved for the purpose of the Geelong Sailors' Rest by way of two reservations made in 1913, each reservation being in respect of an area of 455 square metres.

The site, which contains improvements consisting of a two-storey solid brick amenity building, a brick veneer residence and ancillary facilities, is controlled by the Missions to Seamen Victoria. The mission has desired for some time to relocate the Sailors' Rest, as the site is a considerable distance from the seamen's points of arrival in Geelong. The site is included in the "City by the Bay" redevelopment project. It has potential for tourist-orientated or restaurant facilities based on an historical atmosphere.

The Geelong Regional Commission has purchased an area of 1137 square metres of land at North Shore at the corner of The Esplanade and Seabright Street and has entered into an agreement with the mission to make that land available to the mission in exchange for the Eastern Road property. A two-storey office and amenity building of modern design, sealed car parking areas and ancillary facilities are erected on the commission's land.

The commission has agreed, at its expense, to upgrade its property to provide a caretaker's residence and adequate facilities for the mission and to meet all legal and other expenses incurred by the mission in effecting the proposed exchange of sites. Apart from the commission's undertaking to effect those works and to meet those expenses, no money is to be paid by either party in respect of the exchange. The commission's property is suitable for the requirements of the mission and is closer to the seamen's points of arrival in Geelong.

To enable the reserved land to be transferred to the commission, it is first necessary to revoke the permanent reservation in respect of the mission's site and the Bill makes provision accordingly. It is proposed that on the date of operation of the legislation the land owned by the commission be transferred and surrendered to the Crown for permanent reservation for Geelong Sailors' Rest purposes whence the present reserved land be granted to the Geelong Regional Commission pursuant to the provisions of the Geelong Regional Commission Act.

The third area of land which the Bill deals with is the Port Melbourne General Market site at Bay, Liardet and Nott streets, Port Melbourne. The land was granted to the City of Port Melbourne in 1862 without payment of purchase money as a site for a public market for general purposes. The site was used for a public market for about 50 years from the time of the grant but use contrary to the purpose of the grant commenced on part of the land just before the turn of the century.

The present development comprises thirteen two-storey shops with attached dwellings facing Bay Street, two terraces each of seven brick dwellings facing Nott Street, a former fire station used partly as a dwelling and partly for vehicle parking and document storage and a two-storey brick library, both facing Liardet Street. All the buildings are the property of the council. The terraces of houses have a National Trust classification.

The Port Melbourne City Council has stated that it is confronted with a long-term retail planning policy problem. Its shopping centre has languished badly for the want of a major retailer and suffers from an acute lack of off-street parking.

The council states that the market site has the ability to provide for both a major retail supermarket and considerable off-street parking. The site is possibly the only single holding in the city of sufficient area to facilitate a modern development.

Over the years, a number of sites which have been restricted to use for market purposes have by means of legislation been freed from that restriction and either sold to the relevant municipality or power has been given to the municipality to grant leases for purposes other than for a market. In recent times, legislation which enables leasing by the municipality has provided for a return of money or benefit to the Crown.

The council prefers to purchase the land in this instance and the Bill provides for revocation of the Crown grant in respect of

the site and empowers the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands to sell the unrestricted freehold of the land to the Corporation of the City of Port Melbourne at a price and on terms and conditions which he thinks fit.

It is proposed that the land be sold at current unimproved value of the site. A modern survey of the land has been effected for the purpose of issuing a freehold title. The terraces of houses are to be retained on the land.

The final parcel of land dealt with in the Bill is an area of 1845 square metres in the Parish of Frankston. The land is portion of the permanent reservation for public purposes to the Kananook Creek and is situated in McCulloch Avenue, Seaford, near the intersection of that road with the Nepean Highway. The City of Frankston has been appointed as the committee of management of the reserved land.

By what appears to be an inadvertent act some 40 or more years ago, the land has been used in conjunction with the Seaford Caravan Park. The caravan park has been operated by the owners of the adjoining freehold, the current owners having been proprietors of the park for the past ten years. Three buildings owned by the proprietors of the caravan park are either wholly or in part erected on the reserved land. Thirteen caravan sites are also located on the reserved land.

The proprietors of the caravan park wish to improve and extend the services provided to visitors by extending and modernizing toilet and laundry facilities, improving water drainage systems from caravan sites and beautifying the grounds of the park. The provisions of the Bill will enable a lease to be granted to the proprietors of the caravan park, thus placing the matter on a proper business footing. The City of Frankston and the Dandenong Valley Authority are agreeable to the proposal. I 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 Tuesday, May 1.

The sitting was suspended at 6.28 *p.m. until* 8.5 *p.m.*

GROUNDWATER (RESERVES) BILL

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill amends the Groundwater Act by providing a mechanism to make reservation of groundwater for future public and private use. The amendment of the Act is required because the Act in its present form requires that an application for a licence to extract groundwater must be issued unless the issue of the licence would adversely affect an existing bore. The Act in its current form provides no method whereby this valuable resource can be used for future public use such as the supplementation of provincial or metropolitan water supplies.

Groundwater is an extensive, but not unlimited resource. In order that it be allocated in a manner which promotes the more efficient, economic and effective allocation and utilization of the State's water resources, it is necessary that the Government, through its agencies, be able to "reserve" allocations of groundwater for future use rather than continue the present system whereby water is allocated, in effect, on a "first come first served" basis irrespective of the over-all community benefit.

I now turn to the Bill. Clause 6 inserts a section 49A in the Act. This section provides that on the joint recommendations of the Minister for Minerals and Energy and the Minister of Water Supply, the Governor in Council, shall, by order, specify areas or particular acquifers in that area to be reserved as an annual volume of groundwater for extraction and use of public authorities. This order must be published in the *Government Gazette* and a local newspaper.

Section 49B provides that before the order of the Governor in Council can be made, the Ministers must seek reports which estimate the amount of groundwater contained in the area to be reserved, estimates of current use and future demands on that particular reserve. This section also requires that the proposed recommendation is published in the *Government Gazette* and a local newspaper and invites submissions and public comment within a 90 day period.

These comments are then evaluated before any order is made. If no recommendation is made, a notice to this effect is also published.

I now turn to other important features of the Bill. Any proposed order to reserve groundwater shall not affect extraction of groundwater for domestic use or the watering of stock.

The Bill also provides that where a notice of a proposed recommendation to reserve groundwater is published, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will defer licence applications to extract groundwater until the order is made or the publication of a notice that no recommendation to reserve groundwater is to be made in that area.

Clause 7 amends section 51 of the principal Act by requiring the commission to consider the effect of any application for a groundwater licence on the annual reserve volume of groundwater. If the commission considers this application would materially interfere with the volume to which any other person is entitled, it may refuse to issue the licence. This amendment also provides that occupiers of exploration bores must apply for a groundwater extraction licence within six months of completion of that bore.

Clause 8 provides additional grounds for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to revoke any groundwater licences. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday week.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—No arrangements have been made between the parties about an adjournment of the debate on the Bill until Tuesday week. In view of the need to consult people who have groundwater installations and the fact that that consultation will be extensive and necessary, it may not be possible to have a useful resumption of the debate on Tuesday week. It is necessary for the consultation to be completed before the Bill goes through the House.

The Opposition will agree to the adjournment of the debate until the date specified if the Minister is willing to give an undertaking that additional time will be agreed to if a group has not had the opportunity of discussing the import of the measure. I will agree to the motion if the Minister will accept the condition. The Opposition will co-operate with the Government to try to resume the debate on the Bill on Tuesday week.

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I am happy to give that undertaking, if additional time is required.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 1.

TRANSPORT (VICTORIAN PORTS AUTHORITY) BILL

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

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Opposition opposes the Bill. I thank the Minister of Transport for his co-operation in arranging a meeting with interested parties in which discussions took place to see if the Bill could be suitably improved. It was a decision of the Opposition to oppose the Bill.

The Bill purports to achieve co-ordination between ports. The Opposition does not oppose co-operation between the ports. If the Minister wants to administratively set up a working group between the various ports to achieve better co-ordination, that proposal will have the full support of the Opposition. The Bill, however, represents a much deeper proposal than simply co-operation between existing ports; it is a barefaced grab for the assets of the Port of Geelong Authority.

Mr Ernst—That is not true, and you know it.

Mr MACLELLAN—All honourable members will be interested to hear the remarks of those honourable members who represent Geelong electorates because, as the honourable member for Geelong East would know, provision has been included in the Bill for the taxes that are applied through the public authority dividend to the Port of Melbourne Authority to be extended immediately to the Port of Geelong Authority. The provision also has the potential for that tax to be further extended.

Mr Simpson—You are backing off already!

Mr MACLELLAN—I am not backing off.

Mr Simpson—Yes, you are; you have already changed your terminology.

Mr MACLELLAN—I am not backing off but I am speaking in anticipation of amendments by the Government to alter this provision in the Bill. Honourable members would know that that is how the Bill was presented to the House.

Mr Ernst—That was not the intention.

Mr MACLELLAN—The provision was certainly mentioned during the second-reading speech when the Minister of Transport plainly stated that, through the Bill, the Port of Geelong Authority would be liable for those taxes. I know the Minister has changed his mind on that provision.

Mr Crabb—I have not.

Mr MACLELLAN—The Minister of Transport says that he has not changed his mind. The Minister can explain whether that will be put back into the Budget. The Government is making a temporary retreat to save the members of the Government who represent Geelong electorates from embarrassment over the Bill which intends to tax the Port of Geelong Authority. On the face of the Bill, it appears there will be a tax on the Port of Geelong Authority and the Minister's second-reading speech also explains that that will happen.

The Port of Geelong Authority has been well managed and has had substantial reserves and plans for the future. Its independence and ability to service the needs of primary and secondary industries in that area as well as exporters and importers are important. If there is need for this desirable co-operation between that port and the Port of Melbourne Authority, that can be achieved administratively by simply calling the respective chairmen and executive officers of the ports' authorities together under the aegis of the Ministry of Transport.

The Bill goes much further. In effect it is not so much about co-operation as dictatorship. The policies and the decisions will be made by the proposed Victorian Ports Authority and the local boards would be reduced to being merely advisory boards on policy matters and management boards in the day-to-day operations.

Mr Walsh—They are all Victorian ports.

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

Mr MACLELLAN—Mr Acting Speaker, I am tempted to ignore interjections but you can understand that occasionally one is intrigued by them, as I am now. I suppose the interjection by the honourable member for Albert Park was an attempt at suggesting that because the ports are Victorian it is appropriate for the Government to tax them. Apparently, if an authority has been successful in running its affairs, that is even more reason for taxing it than for taxing an authority which has not been successful. That is in accordance with the philosophy of the Government.

The Government considers that if a statutory authority is successfully administered, is doing its job, and has become profitable by building up reserves or undertaking new capital works, it should slap a tax on it. That is the first reaction of the Government. The Bill was presented to Parliament and the Government got caught with it.

Shortly after the Bill was introduced, the people of Portland and Geelong became aware of what the Government was up to. All the major decisions were to be made by a Victorian Ports Authority and the individual port authorities would be reduced to mere siphons that would administer a policy that was made elsewhere. The membership of the authority is to be dominated by persons selected by the Minister of Transport and those representing various trade union interests. I have not been able to find any substantial organization that supports the Bill.

The Bill is not supported by importers, exporters, the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association or the people of Portland and Geelong. The Opposition cannot find a reputable organization that is prepared to throw its weight behind the measure and say it is in favour of it.

Mr Walsh—What about ship owners?

Mr MACLELLAN—Ship owners are not in favour of the Bill. The honourable member for Albert Park does not seem to understand that.

What the honourable member for Albert Park cannot seem to understand is that none of these organizations has signalled its support for the Bill. They have been asked to work with a working party in the furtherance of Government policy. It is the Government's policy to have this Victorian Ports Authority; it is not the policy of the importers, the exporters, the farmers, or the Portland or Geelong ports.

Honourable members are left to speculate on whether it is not just a grab for additional responsibilities and power by the Minister, and the Labor Party wishing to have the trade union representatives and the executive officers appointed by the Government dominating the authority and dictating the policy of the Government and its investment policy. This Government wants them to be directing the State Government's taxing policies that will be applied to a wider range of ports in Victoria.

Earlier tonight, honourable members were discussing the fact that Victorian industry had lost its competitive advantages, and that the competitive edge of industry in Victoria had been eroded by various Government decisions. Here again, honourable members are about to face the same situation, where the Government is seeking to extend its taxing into a further area of port operations so that they, in turn, will become more expensive and, because of that expense, the opportunity of exporters sending their products overseas will be eroded and their opportunities for marketing their products will be at a lesser advantage on international markets.

Therefore, the Opposition is persuaded to oppose the Bill. It does so seriously because it cannot see the merits of the Bill. As I have said, thanks to the Minister, members of the Opposition were present during discussions in which every organization sought to have a different type of representation on the proposed Victorian Ports Authority.

As the Minister would know, at the meeting at which I was present, there was a consistent number of applications to the Minister for variations in the representation on the authority. Of course, the meeting represented only one spectrum of interest in regard to that. It represented the importers, the exporters, commerce, traders, farmers, graziers and producers. It did not represent the work force. I will concede that the work force might be in favour of the Bill, and that the Trades Hall Council and the various unions may all be red hot in favour of it. However, I cannot find even one of those organizations which represent the payers of the wharf charges and port charges that wants the Bill.

I must say to the Minister that, since the discussions, the Port Phillip pilots have contacted me and expressed their concern that they may be required to submit a panel of names, even though they have only one executive officer. As they pointed out, they are at different locations, supervising the movement of various ships. If a meeting is called, how can they be represented if one of the persons who has been chosen from a panel of three happens to be elsewhere?

Apparently, the Port Phillip pilots have approached the Minister to discuss with him the possibility of having a deputy or a further representative who could step in in the event of the first representative being absent, but that was apparently rejected as being too novel to allow. That proposal to allow the pilots to ensure that they were represented on the authority was rejected. Therefore, the Port Phillip pilots are added to the problems, and I add them to my list of importers, exporters, farmers, graziers and commercial organizations of the metropolitan and Geelong areas.

Members of the Opposition cannot find the supportive elements that say there ought to be a Victorian Ports Authority on which the executive officers, chosen by the Minister, the trade union representatives and a number of different mechanisms, might always be in a majority.

The new and concerning approach is to build yet another bureaucracy, on top of that of the existing ports, to retain local boards as a sort of husk of local representation, without power to make real policy decisions, and to do this all in the name of a sort of policy of dictatorship rather than of real co-ordination and co-operation. This could easily be achieved administratively

by the Minister simply calling those executive officers, the chairman and representatives of the ports, to work together on policies and take them back to their boards, thereby enabling the Geelong port to have representation.

There have been arguments about whether the local boards could choose their own chairman or their own representative on the Victorian Ports Authority, a concept that was put strongly by Portland and Geelong representatives and which was rejected by the Government. The Government's view is that the Minister should choose the representatives for the Geelong and Portland ports. Local boards would not then be entrusted with choosing their own chairman, executive officer or person who would represent them on this supposedly co-ordinating authority.

All the cards are stacked against those people who will be paying the bills. They will be paying the bills for the new bureaucracy that will be created around this Bill. The Minister has jumped the gun, so to speak, by already appointing the senior executive of the Victorian Ports Authority and, having done that, he has committed himself so firmly to the Bill in advance of any Parliamentary discussion that he now faces the difficulty that, in anticipation of it, he has an executive officer appointed to an authority which does not yet exist.

Mr Crabb interjected.

Mr MACLELLAN—I hope I have not overstated the position but, if I am wrong, I shall apologize to the Minister. If the appointment has not yet been made, perhaps I have misread the announcements that have been made in respect of it. I imagine that Mr Stoney thought he was appointed, but perhaps the Minister has a different view about that.

The Bill was introduced into the House proposing to take over all of the basic decision making of three of the major export and import ports of Victoria, to take that into the Ministry and into the control of the Minister, to stack it in a way which would leave those who pay the costs of the ports in a perpetual minority on the authority, so that they would never have the opportunity of carrying a vote. The local boards were not to be entrusted with the choice of their own executive officers, their own chairman or their own representative on the Victorian Ports Authority, and that situation now exists.

I make a request of the Minister, and I understand that he is again willing to give undertakings in respect of this, that if the Bill were to proceed—and, at that stage, we were discussing it on the basis that it would proceed—that the accounts of the World Trade Centre should be isolated because concern has been quite properly expressed by port users that they might be required to subsidize the World Trade Centre in its early years.

The Government has had a change of heart about that centre and now regards it as being an extremely important project in Victoria, whereas, when in opposition, it regarded it to be somewhat of a white elephant. It has now had a total conversion on this subject, but it can hardly be surprised if those who listened to the Labor Party, when in opposition, decrying the World Trade Centre, are now a little anxious, in view of this Bill, that they may be required to support the centre with additional charges on the ports.

The people of Portland and those who use the port of Portland have legitimate concern that they may be asked to pay higher port charges to support the World Trade Centre in Melbourne. They ask quite reasonably—as do people from Geelong and, indeed, users of the port of Melbourne—that those elements of accounting that relate to the World Trade Centre should be isolated. I understand that the Minister—as he puts it—will ensure that accounts are kept separate so that any cross-subsidization will be disclosed.

What the Minister has not said, and needs to say to reassure people, is that there will not be a subsidy and that the port users will not be required to pay additional charges, borrow money or incur additional liabilities to pay for the World Trade Centre or to subsidize the World Trade Centre during its initial years. These are the broad principal reasons on which the Opposition will oppose the Bill. The Opposition is not satisfied with the representation on the proposed Victorian Ports Authority.

The Opposition is not satisfied that the proper interests are represented and that a

proper balance has been struck. The Opposition recognizes the threat that the Bill represents to the port of Geelong, to the independence of Portland and to the other fishing ports which can—at the stroke of a pen—be brought within the proposed Victorian Ports Authority as presented and proposed in the Bill. At the stroke of a pen, Lakes Entrance, San Remo and Newhaven and any one of the fourteen ports, including Westernport, could be brought within the scope of the Bill. They would have no representation at all; they would have no voice and no opportunity of being heard.

As I said, useful discussions took place between the Minister, the honourable member for Ripon and me about the Bill. I thank the Minister for those discussions, which were without prejudice as to what the Opposition party might decide on the final balance after having heard the result of those discussions. Because the Bill was introduced only last week, this week's party meeting was the first opportunity that the Opposition had of discussing the Bill.

It is one of the penalties the Government must pay for introducing a Bill late in the sensional period and not providing a sufficient period of adjournment for proper consultation. The Government is trying to do things on the run instead of trying to do things in a sensible Parliamentary way to ensure that the other parties are able to consult widely enough with the interested groups with whom they have to consult as they see the need to test the opinion of those who are concerned with the Bill.

I am staggered that the Government party, including members representing Geelong, could ever have agreed to a Bill like this. It will be to their discomfort that they have agreed to a Bill of this type.

We also must remind the Minister that the memorandum that became available some time ago, which indicated the reluctance of the members from Geelong to go along with the Bill, was also a document that led to some controversy in the *Geelong Advertiser* and led to some awareness in Geelong as to what might be in the Bill. The Geelong members had reservations about the Bill, and I can understand their reservations. Perhaps the document stated their reservations to try to help them electorally. Maybe at that stage they were for the Bill but, if they were, there does not seem to be the slightest reason for it.

Geelong was about to lose control of its port; Geelong was about to be taxed under the Bill as presented to the House, and will be taxed unless the Bill is amended or defeated. The Opposition has opted for defeating the Bill to get rid of it altogether rather than waiting for the Government to make a tactical retreat and take something out of the Bill, only to reintroduce it later. Unless the Minister gives a commitment that the public authority dividend will not be applied to the port of Geelong, the Opposition will be left with the unanswered question about whether it is a tactical retreat or a real decision by the Minister that Geelong will not be taxed.

We will possibly know later in the year when the Budget is brought down, although the opportunity will be there for the Geelong members and the Geelong community to campaign for a few months before the Budget is introduced to ensure that that port is not taxed $4 million, which is more than its annual profit and represents more than four years' capital works on the Geelong port. This could be its annual charge to the State Government; its dividend, or its requirement to go into a situation where it borrows to pay money to a big spending Melbourne Government, which is a Socialist Government dedicated to spending as much money as it possibly can, irrespective of the damage and danger that poses to exporters and importers who are the lifeblood in providing employment opportunities for the Victorian community.

The Opposition signals to the Government that it will oppose the Bill; the Opposition finds no merit in it and cannot find the reason why the co-ordination of ports cannot be achieved by—as it suggested—a meeting of the executive officers and the chairmen of the relevant port authorities working together under the aegis of the Ministry rather than being put in this position where the Minister becomes the dictator of the ports at the expense of the port users and those who have to pay the charges.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The Bill establishes the Victorian Ports Authority and represents the second major piece of legislation concerned with the restructure of the transport industry introduced by the Minister of Transport. The first piece of

legislation concerned the restructure of the former Country Roads Board, VicRail, the Transport Regulation Board and so on. At that time, the National Party supported the restructure because VicRail was facing an annual loss of between $350 million and $360 million a year. The National Party considered justification existed for the restructure of the transport industry and it was prepared to go along with that concept.

I thank the Minister for the notes, draft Bill and the invitations to attend various seminars and meetings. The National Party appreciated that this type of information was provided earlier than would normally have been the case. However, honourable members have been handed numerous amendments to the Bill which seem to indicate that the Bill was not ready to be introduced when it was. Honourable members have not seen any evidence of the cost benefit to be achieved by rolling together into one the three major ports.

I served on the Public Bodies Review Committee in its early days, along with the current Minister of Transport, the Treasurer and the Minister for Minerals and Energy in another place. In the early days of that committee, those three members were powerful figures on the committee and at every public hearing they were always anxious to inquire about the cost-benefit analysis of various organizations.

However, the Bill proposes to amalgamate, without any cost-benefit analysis, three ports that are doing extremely well under their own managements. That in itself should be evidence enough to reject the proposed legislation. If the Minister were to provide a cost-benefit analysis which demonstrated that the proposal provided financial benefits to importers, exporters and unions, perhaps honourable members could consider supporting the proposed legislation.

Under its present form, there is no indication of any cost benefit to those authorities, to the ports, to the exporters and importers and to all other users. All the Bill is doing is centralizing power so that a policy can be formulated whereby the ports of Portland, Geelong and even Melbourne will have to take direction from a supreme body.

History has shown that the port of Portland has battled like hell for a number of years to make its mark as a major port in Victoria. The port of Geelong has battled under the present system for 80 years under its own local control and autonomy and in recent times it has been quite successful.

No cost-benefit analysis has been shown with the introduction of the proposed legislation. The Minister of Transport, when in opposition, was on the Public Bodies Review Committee, as I indicated earlier, and he urged then that there should be a cost-benefit analysis with the various projects that were ongoing at that time, particularly with the water industry.

While I respect the Minister's right to have a task force or project team to formulate the legislation, I believe honourable members should look at the membership of the task force. There are sixteen union representatives, eleven operator representatives and ten user representatives. The task force is very heavily loaded in favour of union organizations and, although the representatives may work very hard, there is an imbalance.

The Chairman of the Port of Melbourne Authority, Mr A. S. Mayne, in the chairman's review of 1982–83, spoke of the World Trade Centre. He stated that it would be some time before a reasonable cash flow resulted from the World Trade Centre, but that it was expected the complex would be fully paid off in approximately twenty years. That means that for the next twenty years the port of Portland and the port of Geelong will be assisting in paying off the World Trade Centre. There are plans for a convention centre to be established on land owned and controlled by the Port of Melbourne Authority. It is unfair that the outlying country ports should be responsible for a significant financial contribution to projects such as that.

The Geelong Harbor Trust was established in 1905 and later was renamed the Port of Geelong Authority. In the last three calendar years, the Port of Geelong Authority made operating profits of $2·7 million, $4·1 million and $3·9 million. Do those figures indicate inefficiencies in the Port of Geelong Authority? I suggest they do not. I ask again, what cost benefit will accrue to the Port of Geelong Authority through the introduction of the proposed legislation?

The authority has installed a container terminal costing approximately $8 million

and a container crane costing $3 million. It has also built dolphins capable of supporting bigger vessels at a cost of $1·5 million. It has purchased a new auger-type unloading facility to unload the phosphorous rock, which obviates the dust problems associated with such unloading, and that must be in the interests of the workers at Geelong. One cannot say that the commissioners at Geelong do not have the workers' interests at heart. That conveyor system will cost a total of $5·1 million.

The honourable member for Berwick stated that the legislation was designed so that the Government could get its hands on the $10 million fluid reserves that the authority has. It has been demonstrated in the House and in other ways that the authority is quite capable of continuing under its present administrative arrangement.

I ask the Minister of Transport whether he has ever been to Geelong for the specific purpose of inspecting the port facilities.

Mr Walsh—I worked there and told him about it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Stirling)—I ask the honourable member to address the Chair and not the Minister at the table.

Mr McGRATH—I pay a compliment to the Assistant Minister of Transport because he does get a mention in the report by the chairman Mr Gordon Murray, where it stated that the Minister of Public Works, Mr J. Simpson, adopted a policy of holding regular meetings between himself, his officers and the administrators in each Victorian port. The then Minister of Public Works showed an interest in the port of Portland. Can the Minister of Transport say that he has been down at Geelong and Portland specifically to look at the operations of those ports and their facilities?

Has the Minister of Transport sat down with the commissioners from the Port of Portland Authority and the Port of Geelong Authority and discussed these matters? Those people, who are highly regarded in the community, have shown that they have a high degree of managerial ability and the Minister should have discussed what their feelings would be on the establishment of the proposed Victorian Ports Authority.

I have statistics and tonnage rates for the port of Portland for various periods since 1978–79. One of the significant factors included has been the shipment of live sheep. The figures are from the 1983 annual report of the Port of Portland Authority. In 1978–79, 17 473 live sheep were exported; in 1979–80, 28 624; in 1980–81, 21 314; in 1981–82, 26 211, and in 1982–83, 75 193.

Bulk wheat and bulk barley exports also significantly increased in tonnages passing through the port of Portland. The port is the best deep water port available to service Victoria. The commissioners from the Port of Portland Authority, through its administrative section, have worked hard and tirelessly. The retired chairman, Mr Sweetland, Mr Borbiro and Mr Clayton have worked to put the port of Portland on a sound financial basis for the convenience and economic benefit of the exporters and importers who use the port. However, now those gentleman are to be discarded. They are not to be given any say in the running of the Victorian Ports Authority. There is not even a place for them on the local board, if one examines who can be nominated to the Minister for appointment. The expertise of these three men will be lost. These men have the knowledge and the know-how to operate a port.

If one examines the measure and considers the composition of the board, one would realize that the Government is trying to establish an authority similar to those that have been established overseas. England, before 1964, had a similar authority to what the Minister of Transport is attempting to provide in the Bill. In 1964, the Rochdale report was delivered. That report stated that a decentralized port authority was of little value, and its recommendations were discarded. The administrative autonomy was passed back to the individual ports.

A similar system was established in Canada in 1936. The central Canadian authority was later dissolved and administration was handed back to the individual port authorities with their own administration at the local level, and that was done because it was a better system. The Minister of Transport must be sympathetic to the Canadian transport system because the Government enlisted consultants from Canada to examine Victoria's grain freight transport system. Perhaps the Government should examine how Canada operates its ports!

In Queensland, the ports of Gladstone, Townsville, Cairns and Mackay have their own local port authorities. They do not have a centralized Queensland port authority and the ports in Queensland export many more tonnes of commodities than does Victoria, especially coal and other minerals.

If one examines the board that is to be established by the measure, one will note that under clause 8, which will insert sections 35A, 35B, 35C, 35D and 35E, proposed section 35C (2) (*c*) states:

a person included in a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the South Western Trades and Labour Council; and

I have received a letter from the Port of Portland Authority Advisory Committee which undertook a survey on the question, "Do you believe that the panel of three names nominating user representation on the local board should be submitted to the Minister by (*a*) the South Western Trades and Labour Council or (*b*) the Victorian Trades Hall Council?" It should be remembered that the Minister of Transport proposes in the Bill to have a panel of three names submitted to him by the South Western Trades and Labour Council. The response to the survey carried out by the Port of Portland Authority Advisory Committee revealed that one person wanted the South Western Trades and Labour Council to have the right to submit the panel and 83 people wanted the Victorian Trades Hall Council to nominate the panel to the Minister. It appears that the Minister of Transport has not carried out sufficient research. As the honourable member for Portland interjects, the honourable gentleman has not listened to the local people.

Mr Simpson—The Port of Portland Authority Advisory Committee was involved in the last discussions.

Mr McGRATH—Here are the statistics. It is an astounding statistic that was produced by the employees of the Port of Portland Authority.

The port of Geelong and the port of Portland serve the rural community of Victoria and have served it well. Mr Ian Stoney is the Acting Chairman of the Port of Portland Authority and I pay a tribute to Mr Stoney, who has moved from his former job as general manager of the Grain Elevators Board. Mr Stoney did a very good job, but he is now stepping into the position of executive officer of the Victorian Ports Authority. At least that is what the proposed legislation intends. There was some contradiction by the Minister of Transport when that matter was raised in the past 30 minutes by the honourable member for Berwick. There was some confusion whether Mr Stoney was in that position. He certainly is the Acting Chairman of the Port of Portland Authority and that is one point that the Bill has going for it! Unfortunately, it has very little else going for it.

I have no hesitation in saying that the Bill is not in the best interests of the importers or the exporters. The National Party has heard from those people. From talking with people at Geelong and Portland, I understand that they do not want a centralized ports authority in Melbourne which directs the policy that they can undertake. The proposal is not favoured by the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association; that association is strongly opposed to the Bill.

The statistics indicate that approximately 60 per cent of the shipping that is handled through the port of Melbourne is comprised of commodities that are either used or exported by rural industry; that approximately 40 per cent of the shipping handled through the port of Geelong is either used or exported by the rural community, and the figure in relation to Portland is approximately 99 per cent. That indicates that the rural communities have a significant interest in the Bill.

Currently, a public authority dividend tax of $6 million is paid annually by the Port of Melbourne Authority. The Bill, as drafted, gives no indication that a similar charge will not be applied to the ports of Geelong and Portland. Charges of $4 million and $2 million respectively could be faced by those ports. It is a good money-raising exercise if a Government can increase its Budget revenue by some $6 million by way of a Bill that will benefit no one.

The proposal has not been shown to be cost efficient. The Government often explains that the measures it is introducing and the directions it is taking will be cost efficient, but there is no mention of cost efficiency in the explanatory notes on the Bill, nor any indication of cost efficiency in the Bill itself. The National Party cannot support the Bill.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—I thought a member from the Geelong area may make a contribution to demonstrate support for the Bill which will affect that area.

The Bill amalgamates the authorities of the ports of Mclbourne, Geelong and Portland. As was pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, at the stroke of a pen many other ports along the Victorian coast could be brought within the ambit of the Bill and under the same sort of control. The Opposition would have had every reason for amazement at the introduction of a measure of this nature if similar examples of centralized policy had not occurred so frequently during the two years since the Government came to office. The Bill is another example of the Government's desire not only to centralize control but to bring the responsibility for and the administration and control of rural people into the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Having listened to some of the interjections during the debate, I gained the impression that there was an assumption that the members of the project team were completely in support of the Bill. I do not believe that is the truth of the matter. Many members of that project team believed the die was cast and that it was a certainty that there would be a Victorian Ports Authority, so they were working in the best interests of what they believed to be a *fait accompli*. They did not necessarily support the Bill; they were trying to achieve the best deal possible under the Bill, as originally drafted.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister admitted that the ports of Geelong and Portland were operating efficiently and well, and he went on to say that there were problems in the duplication of facilities, conflicting forward planning, over-supply and rationalization of services and inconsistent pricing and investment policies. That is a lot of words but those words do not mean much. Unless they are qualified or quantified, they mean nothing. If shortcomings exist in the administration of some Victorian ports, surely it is better to examine ways of rectifying those shortcomings within the existing structure rather than to make radical and drastic changes.

Under the Bill, the Minister will appoint boards to operate those ports. Each board will have a chief executive officer and a chairman.

The existing system of part-time commissioners at both Geelong and Portland has worked efficiently. There is no doubt that those commissioners have in fact been much more than part-time commissioners: They have worked effectively and conscientiously—far in excess of what might be expected of them by any Government. They deserve a special compliment on the excellent work that they have done at both Geelong and Portland.

The Geelong Harbor Trust was established in 1905 and has played an important part in the industrial development of Geelong. On many occasions, negotiations have taken place between the Geelong Harbor Trust in the early days—the Port of Geelong Authority in more recent times—and businesses that were considering establishing themselves in Geelong or being users of the port. The port authority has played an important part in those negotiations and there has always been a strong degree of confidentiality that has instilled confidence in people who wished to take part in those negotiations.

For a while, I was privileged to be Minister of Public Works and was responsible for port authorities. During that period, I came to know the then Chairman of the Geelong Harbor Trust, Mr Peter Blakiston, who was a vital, volatile and skilful operator. He did a tremendous job for that port. I do not think there was a better operator in that team than Mr Blakiston at any time. The Minister is obviously critical of Mr Blackiston and his operations but one would need to go a long way to find a better chairman for the authority. Mr Blakiston transformed the port of Geelong and established management and administration on sound commercial lines. The Government has now rewarded him by giving him the big push.

Mr Gordon Murray was the assistant commissioner during that period and he is now in charge. He also recognizes the skills and abilities of Peter Blakiston and has learned a lot and is now most successful himself.

The honourable member for Lowan highlighted some of the activities of the Port of Geelong Authority. In the past three calendar years, the operating profits of the port have been $2·7 million, $4·1 million and $3·9 million. Those are consistent figures. During that period, the authority has spent

$8 million on the container terminal; it has purchased a $3 million crane; built dolphins at a cost of $1·5 million and spent $5·1 million on an auger-type unloader for phosphate rock. I should not have to explain to the House the importance of Geelong in the supply of superphosphate not only for Victoria but also for interstate. In addition, the authority has $10 million in fluid reserves and it has not had to borrow any money in the past 25 years.

There has always been some jealousy between the Port of Geelong Authority and the Port of Melbourne Authority. It has been healthy jealousy. Geelong should never be viewed as pinching trade from Melbourne. The port of Geelong provides a service and an alternative port for companies which wish to use either the port of Melbourne or the port of Geelong.

When the Bill is passed, the Port of Geelong Authority will lose its autonomy and, before any decision of importance can be made, the local board of the port of Geelong will have to obtain the permission of big brother, the Victorian Ports Authority situated in Melbourne.

The unions will play an important role in the decision-making process. I shall be most surprised if the consultations required under the Bill lead to efficiency at ports such as Geelong and Portland. In the explanatory second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport claimed that the Government had had considerable consultation with all sorts of people. I know the Minister had a project team working for a long period and no doubt there has been much consultation through that team.

However, the honourable member for Lowan posed the question of whether the Minister had ever visited the port of Geelong. I have been informed that the Minister has never visited the port. I have also been informed that the Minister has had no discussions with the Port of Geelong Authority commissioners.

Mr Crabb—That is not true.

Mr AUSTIN—It is interesting to note the interjection of the Minister claiming that he has had discussions with the commissioners of the Port of Geelong Authority. I hope that when the Minister makes his contribution to the debate he will contradict the information I have been provided with. I shall be interested to hear the explanation by the Minister of his visit to the port and his consultation with the commissioners.

The port of Portland has constantly played an important role in the development of Portland and the surrounding district. The port has played an important role in the export of rural products, especially grain and live sheep and the import of phosphate rock. It would be ridiculous to place the Port of Portland Authority under a centralized Victorian Ports Authority in Melbourne, where all of the decisions will be made.

Mr Crabb—You have no idea what you are talking about; you had no idea when you were a Minister, and you have no idea now.

Mr AUSTIN—I shall be interested to hear what the Minister of Transport has to say. The Victorian Ports Authority will not make its decisions in Portland. Another extraordinary fact is that people who play a really important role in the port system do not want the Bill. Indeed, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a similar statement along those lines and there were considerable interjections from Government members.

The people of Geelong do not want the Bill and the municipalities in the Geelong area do not want the Bill.

Mr Crabb—The municipalities do.

Mr AUSTIN—The Minister of Transport has obtained information contrary to that obtained by the Opposition and from different sources.

Mr Simpson—Who have you been getting your information from?

Mr AUSTIN—The Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association does not want the Bill.

Mr Crabb—They want to be on the board.

Mr AUSTIN—The Minister of Transport is completely out of touch.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hockley)—Order! The honourable member for Ripon will address the Chair and ignore the interjections of Ministers.

Mr AUSTIN—It is hard to ignore interjections if one has two Ministers constantly interjecting and making certain claims. I have just said that the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association is absolutely

opposed to the Bill. It feels most strongly about it. It is extraordinary that the Minister of Transport appears to have a completely different idea about the attitude and the view of the association.

The Bill is a result of the arrogant approach of the Government, which has no regard for rural Victoria and has a strong interest in centralizing everything it possibly can in metropolitan Melbourne. The Opposition strongly opposes the Bill.

Mr WALSH (Albert Park)—I support the Bill. I wish members of the Opposition had read the Bill and understood its aims. The aim of the Government is to co-ordinate port planning. If the Opposition does not understand that, it does not understand what Victorian ports have been doing for the past 80 years.

The aim of the Bill is the development and operation of an integrated port system on a State-wide basis to ensure that Victorian ports operate properly. If the Government does not plan for the future of Victorian ports, Victoria will be left behind the rest of Australia in terms of economic development.

Sydney used to be the major port in Australia, but that is no longer the case. The Opposition does not understand why that is so. Melbourne should be the major port in Australia. I understand the operation of Victorian ports. As a union official for waterside workers, I worked at two Victorian ports. I did not work at Portland and Westernport. However, when I was an official of an organization which has employees in the waterside industry, I visited those ports on numerous occasions and I understand the problems.

Honourable members should visit some of the ports. The Minister was castigated because he had not visited the ports. I can assure honourable members that he has, because while he was visiting some of the ports I represented him as chairman at various meetings. Honourable members do not understand the conflicting plans of ports in Victoria. They do not understand the competition and the cost factors. Who pays for the increases? The people of Victoria pay.

I have heard honourable members speak about the ports that will be squeezed by the Victorian Ports Authority, and claims that they will have no autonomy because of the project team that has been set up. I have heard the honourable member for Ripon suggesting that the large project team——

Mr Leigh—I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr WALSH—The project team is a very small team, not a large team as the honourable member for Ripon suggested. It consists of nine people. He said that it was a very large team with over-representation by unionists. That is not true because, of the 9 persons on the project team, 2 are union members, 1 is a user and there are 6 people from the three major ports in Victoria.

The ports of Geelong, Portland and Melbourne are well represented and have had a large say in the proposed legislation. With reference to the task force, I do not disagree that six union people are involved. Anyone who wanted to be involved was invited to do so, so there is viability for people in the industry who have an interest in it or the proposed legislation. That opportunity was available to them. Credit should be paid to the Minister for the way in which he handled the proposed legislation in co-operation and consultation with people throughout Victoria to ensure that it was put together properly.

The autonomy of the acting board is important. I stress that because of the comments made by the previous speakers from the Opposition. The reserves held by the local board will be available for use in the port where that local board is set up. The autonomy to use those reserves and decisions on capital expenditure will be made at the appropriate level of those boards. This was spelt out at the seminar which I attended and which the honourable member for Lowan and the honourable member for Ripon attended. Material was available on this matter. Everybody had the opportunity of raising objection at that seminar regarding representation. These matters were taken on board by the Minister and no doubt the results of that will be obvious at another stage of the debate.

The decision on capital works expenditure will be made at the appropriate level. The decisions that affect one port will be made in that port. The decisions that have a wider implication will be made at the Victorian Ports Authority level. What is wrong

with that? What is wrong with there being a separate body where there may be problems if one port makes a decision that may affect the others? These matters must be dealt with at a central level and the only area in which that can be done is the Victorian Ports Authority.

The Government aims to impose common charges at each port. However, the Victorian Ports Authority will establish a pricing policy and guidelines to be followed. If one understands the price wars that have occurred in different ports, one will appreciate why it is necessary that a central authority be established in Victoria.

There has never been any co-ordination of the ports. Never in my history in the maritime industry has there been any co-ordination. In my view, ships that should be going to the port of Portland are being loaded in Melbourne. The cost factor should be considered in transporting the commodities from the Portland area to Melbourne to be loaded. There is a quicker turnaround in the port of Portland and the commodities ought to be loaded there.

Goods are being loaded in Melbourne to ensure that Victoria has the largest port in the Commonwealth. The productivity increase in the port of Melbourne is about 44 per cent. That has not happened in the port of Portland. Many of the commodities which have flowed from Portland have been loaded in Melbourne with high costs because those commodities have been shipped by road to the vessels.

Honourable members should try to make proper decisions in the interests of people throughout Victoria. Is it proper for Geelong to have ships in, using all the cranes, when a container crane is not being used in the port of Melbourne and a ship is waiting in the bay to go into Geelong for loading or discharge? Surely, a central body like the Victorian Ports Authority can decide what is best for that vessel. Surely that can happen at a central area.

I commend the Minister for bringing this Bill before the House. It is an excellent measure and if one understands the industry, one realizes what the Bill is about. I suggest that many members on the Opposition benches ought to study the ports, not by riding through on bicycles and seeing the water ripple. They should see what sort of money is spent in upgrading the ports. Honourable members should not just read about it, they should have a look at what happens in the ports in Victoria.

Significant improvement has been made, but the Government is not taking away the economy from the local areas. It is a matter of trying to make decisions at a central point in the best interests of the State. I commend the Bill to the House and I hope members of the Opposition realize what it is about.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated:

> Although ports are operating well at present, there are existing problems in duplication of facilities, conflicting forward plans, over-supply and rationalization of services, and inconsistent pricing and investment policies.

Some consultation has occurred with the interest groups, especially in Geelong. However, I express grave concern that the Government has not heeded the advice given to it.

On 14 March, the Geelong Local Government Committee sent a deputation to the Minister and documented its feelings. The deputation expressed concern indicating that it did not support the introduction of the Victorian Ports Authority. It also stated that the port of Geelong presently has approximately $10 million in reserve. It asked the Minister to seek advice from the ports and municipal bodies. Since then, a host of letters have been received, some of them from the Bellarine Shire, from where the honourable member for Geelong East comes. The president of that shire is known to have sympathies with the Government, and the Minister has quietened him down about the takeover of statutory reserves.

Other municipalities have documented their feelings and requested that advice be sought on the future of funds held by the port authority because they believe the funds will disappear, like a lot of other money, into the Government coffers when the ports authority is established. The Minister of Transport reminds me of Neville Chamberlain who went to Germany and got assurances from Adolf Hitler and then kidded the people of England. The Minister has done the same thing with local councils in Geelong: He has tried to allay the fears of the people of Geelong by saying "Do not

worry, the Government will look after you, sit quietly and all will be well".

When I had the audacity to suggest that the Minister of Transport might remove the rebel flag flying from the Flinders Street railway station, the Minister said that I should have better taste and that it was a matter of our tradition and heritage. The Minister is somewhat confused, no doubt because of his Scottish ties. He has his crosses mixed up and he believed he was defending the cross of St Andrew of Scotland.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Hockley)—Order! I am having difficulty in relating the remarks of the honourable member for South Barwon to the Bill, and ask him to return to it.

Mr DICKINSON—I was endeavouring to indicate to the House that the Minister is quite capable of making flippant remarks that are not in good taste about the running of V/Line, and his remarks about the Port of Geelong Authority are also not in good taste.

As late as 16 April, I was advised by the chairman and commissioners of the Port of Geelong Authority of their concerns for the future of the port. I hope the honourable members for Geelong East and Geelong West, and the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, who is the honourable member for Geelong North, will voice their concern about this matter.

The Geelong Harbor Trust was established in 1905, and it has had a good record of attracting major business to the area. Over a period of years, it has made excellent profits and additional equipment has been incorporated for offloading phosphate rock and for the loading of wheat onto ships. The port still has $10 million in fluid reserves. The cash-flow programme indicates that the maintenance of funds is at a good level.

The system envisaged by the Victorian Ports Authority is basically the same as that adopted in Canada in 1936. A number of the provisions of the Bill concern the Port of Geelong Authority, one of which is the appointment of a chief executive chairman as a full-time officer of the authority. In the past, Geelong has had experiences with public servants, such as the Chairman of the Geelong Regional Commission. When one examines the port at Geelong and the plans that have been shelved for the development of the port, the "City by the Bay", and the Bill that was recently passed to develop the city square, one discovers that the initiative has been taken from the local councils and given to a fully-paid public servant.

Public servants do not always have a good track record. I refer to public servants co-ordinating a major building project such as the Institute of Education at Geelong, of which the Minister of Education would be aware. That has floundered through lack of proper skill and organization. Members of the Opposition do not want the same thing to happen to the port at Geelong. The funds accrued by the Port of Geelong Authority are funds earned by the port from its services to ships.

The Minister's second-reading speech indicates that port authorities operating as commercial enterprises will be subject to State taxes, including an equity dividend. It is easy to appreciate that officers striving strenuously to develop a commercial-type port will have little enthusiasm for a system that will deprive them of the benefits of or development from funds they have generated.

In 1983, the profits for the Port of Geelong Authority were $4 156 090. In 1982, the authority had serviced 366 vessels, the smallest number it had had for five years. The export tonnage of grain from the port is 1·74 million tonnes. The imports, mainly of crude oil, amount to 811 648 tonnes.

The former chairman of the authority, Mr Peter Blakiston, stressed that access to any direct involvement in the trade enables comprehensive proposals to be placed before prospective users with mutual benefits as to efficiency, co-ordination and costs. Late in 1982, the port expended $500 000 on dredging, while the Rippleside ship repair yard accumulated $738 923 from fitting out naval vessels. That gives honourable members an idea of the diverse activities currently being conducted at the port.

The Geelong port has a reasonable spread of business because of its sound management and strong financial department. The controversial "City by the Bay" plan is in abeyance, because those matters are interlocked. In July 1982, Mr Blakiston was forced to resign as chairman of the authority. The then Minister of Public Works, Mr

Simpson, launched an investigation into pricing policies because the Government believed there was not a return on the $320 million investment in Geelong.

Honourable members can understand the concern of business people in Geelong who have given their time and knowledge to consider the Bill, which has been hastily brought before Parliament. I hope the feedback has been heeded. The Chamber of Manufactures, the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association, the Geelong Master Builders and ten local councils have directed matters to the attention of the Minister. Geelong has a distrust of chief executive officers becoming the chairmen of authorities for the reasons that I have stated. The Labor Party is trying the same ploy with the market complex at Geelong. That matter is in abeyance because there is disagreement with the Geelong council as to whether the council will run the project.

I understand that the Geelong City Council could not accept an assurance from the Honourable David Henshaw, the member for Geelong Province in another place, when he indicated that grain from New South Wales might go elsewhere. Honourable members know that Mr Henshaw has expertise in the field of the CSIRO and is an authority on nude bathing at Point Impossible. The previous speaker, the honourable member for Albert Park, would be the first to scream if nude bathing were allowed around the Albert Park Lake.

An article appeared in the *Geelong Advertiser* twelve months ago headed, "$250m 'super port' plan" which included a picture of a smiling then Minister of Public Works Mr Simpson. The article outlined ten planned projects, as follows: The floating breakwater experiment which has since sunk; the dust-free dry bulk cargoes discharging facility at Lascelles Wharf; Corio container terminal; Refinery Pier development of berthing and chemical storage facilities; Grain terminal expansion including the construction of a new wharf; Upgrading of Rippleside ship repair facilities and the construction of a synchro-lift or floating dock; Point Henry Pier expansion to accommodate larger bulk carriers; Point Wilson development to accommodate shipping of hazardous materials; a major dredging programme of main access channels and Point Lillias development of a general cargo port and a road-rail-sea-air freight centre at Avalon.

Large companies are waiting for the development of further facilities at Geelong. These projects have been in train and it would be sheer hypocrisy for any member of the Government to claim that the Government created all the developments that have taken place in Geelong with the flick of a switch. These developments have taken place because of the ongoing efforts of a responsible board of commissioners of the Port of Geelong Authority. They are doing an excellent job. I am sure the Minister has received the utmost co-operation when working with the commissioners.

Geelong is concerned about the real autonomy of the port and does not want to see money syphoned off to be used in the development of ports in Melbourne or elsewhere.

In February of this year, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce wanted to know would the port's financial reserves be taken over by the Ministry of Transport and was anxious about whether the authority would be allowed to retain future profits for use in the port; would the port be allowed to continue active and successful competition with other Victorian and Australian ports; or would this competition be stifled by price fixing and other controls?

Would there still be a board of commissioners setting operational and financial policy for the port's activities, or would this policy control be taken over by the Department of Transport?

The chamber believed that the active, competitive and successful operation of the port is a vital factor in the economic development and well-being of the Geelong region and any detrimental change to the fabric of these operations will have serious ramifications to the entire region.

An article appeared in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 10 February which stated that the Geelong City Council joined the growing number of local bodies worried about the threat to the independence of the Port of Geelong Authority.

As late as 3 February, the honourable member for Geelong East stated that the Labor members fully supported the restructuring of the ports which would benefit the

port of Geelong. He denied that local members were divided or not happy about the move.

A meeting was held in June of last year when the five local members met with the Premier, and two relevant Ministers, the Minister of Transport and the Assistant Minister of Transport. Mr Ernst said the restructure would give Geelong a voice in State-wide port issues and strengthen its position. Honourable members will hear from both Ministers tonight and I hope they will keep the interests of Geelong at heart.

Petty bickering and interjections do not add to the debate, I stand here tonight to assist in the onward development of the port of Geelong, which is important to the overall economy of Victoria and has major ramifications when we start tinkering with the finance and fine tuning of the port authority.

Mr SHELL (Geelong West)—It is with pleasure that I join with Government members in supporting this Bill, which will make the ports in Victoria prosperous. It will add to whatever exists now and all the doom and gloom presented from the other side of the House is a lot of rot. Victoria will get better and stronger as the Victorian economy gets stronger under a Labor Government, as distinct from the previous Administration.

I agree with the policy, the co-ordination and the forward planning of the proposed Victorian Ports Authority. No longer will port vie against port for the same product—there will be planned marketing and planned development.

The suggestion that the autonomy of the port of Geelong will be affected is wrong—it will be no different from what it is now. Before any major capital investment can be made in the port of Geelong, the current authority has to get the consent of the Minister. It is crazy to suggest otherwise.

I am disappointed in the remarks made by the honourable member for South Barwon. I am disappointed that he has not taken note of his local government committee which has asked for representation on the Geelong local board so that municipalities can be represented. He quoted the President of the Shire of Bellarine who just happens to be the president of the Geelong Local Government Committee and is, therefore, spokesman for that body.

The Geelong Local Government Committee has been represented on the task force, but no acknowledgment of that was made by the honourable member for South Barwon. The committee has been able to have a say, a fact which the honourable member for South Barwon chose to ignore. I am also disappointed that the honourable member denigrates the role of the Geelong Regional Commission in the development of Geelong and the port of Geelong.

If it were not for the efforts of the Geelong Regional Commission the Elders IXL project would have been lost. That project went ahead because of the co-operation between the Geelong Regional Commission and the Port of Geelong Authority. Neither body could have done it alone.

I applaud the Port of Geelong Authority which is currently operating efficiently and effectively. That has been done through the chairmanship of Mr Peter Blakiston and lately Mr Gordon Murray. That was not always so. There was a time in Geelong when no ship came into the port for four or six months.

In that year, there was no profit in the port of Geelong. No longer will there be a board in Geelong that has only three commissioners on it who are not representative of the Geelong area. Now there will be representatives from either the Chamber of Commerce or the Geelong Chamber of Manufactures, there will be representation from the Trades Hall Council, there will be representatives of employees, and there will be other representatives dictated by the Minister.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr SHELL—I should have said, "chosen", the same as the previous Administration chose the commissioners on the local board. Never before has Geelong had a wider representation on its local board than it will have under the Victorian Ports Authority. Geelong will also have a voice on the authority's board in Melbourne. If honourable members say that the Geelong representative on the board will not have a strong voice and not be listened to, they will be denigrating the people of Geelong.

One would think that the opposition parties would have some idea of business management. They know, even if they will not admit it, that if one is to expand and develop

one's own industry, one must retain one's own assets. The assets of Geelong will not be distributed throughout Victoria. They will be used in the development of Geelong, which has not occurred before.

The criticism has been made that some people have not been allowed on the board, and that is wrong. The task force has been open to anyone who wants to get on it and there have been representatives from the Geelong manufacturers association on the board.

Development of the Rippleside workshops will occur. They have been neglected and have not been used to their greatest capability. They are using obsolete machinery and equipment. Under the new authority, the Geelong workshop will expand and compete in the market-place for engineering works that it cannot do now. It will be able to be productive all the year round so that it can fill in the low spots when insufficient work occurs. That will increase the profits of the local Geelong board.

To suggest that the Geelong local members of Parliament are not in favour of the Victorian Ports Authority is false. We are backing it to the hilt. There have been meetings in Geelong where the Geelong Local Government Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the employees and the users of the port wanted to speak to the Minister to have matters clarified, and they have done so. The Minister has been in Geelong and he has spoken to the people. They are now saying that they want representation on the board, so there is general acceptance of the new authority in Geelong.

The port of Geelong will be prosperous, as will the Victorian Ports Authority. The people who say that the proposed authority will not succeed are only trying to white-ant the project because, once it has been proven, people will say that it was a great initiative of the Labor Party Government.

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—This is the most important Bill to be introduced to the House this sessional period. It will have enormous, far-reaching ramifications, particularly on the competitive spirit that has existed between the ports over many years. The House should be deciding now whether it is better to have competition or to have bureaucratic control of the delivery of services of the transport industry in Victoria.

I refer honourable members to the composition of the board of the Victorian Ports Authority. It is heavily loaded with representatives of sections of the community who have some input up to a point but it neglects the most important area of service to the ports, the primary producers who supply nearly all the commodities, particularly to the ports of Portland and Geelong.

The members of the authority shall be the Director-General of Transport and ten other members appointed by the Governor in Council of whom there shall be the managing director, a member of the local board of the port of Melbourne, a member of the local board of the port of Geelong, a member of the local board of the port of Portland, a person elected by the officers of the authority, a person nominated by the Minister from a panel of names submitted to him by the Victorian Trades Hall Council, two persons having knowledge of and experience in the use of port and maritime facilities, operations or services and two other persons. There is no representative of primary industry.

The authority needs an understanding of the seasonal conditions affecting the produce of primary producers. Last year, as a result of the drought, there was little throughput through the port of Portland. This year, the grain harvest has given the ports the opportunity of becoming viable propositions. Last year, with the drought the port of Portland had virtually no input from primary products in Victoria and the only grain it received came from the south-east of South Australia. It is clear that the seasonal conditions play a major part in the viability of the port of Portland. It must be understood also that the service the port provides is required for a large section of the eastern part of Australia. The board needs to have representatives from primary producers.

It is ludicrous for the Government to argue that there must be large representation on the board from unions and employees. It cannot be validly argued that the unions or representatives of employees will increase the viability of the ports. The ports are very strongly oriented towards exports and imports of primary products, machinery, and so on.

In those circumstances, there is a strong argument for considering the composition

of the Victorian Ports Authority Board. When one considers the overview that the authority will have over local boards, one realizes that the local boards will be only puppets of the bureaucracy. The Opposition considers that it is necessary to have competitive forces in operation between the Portland, Geelong and Melbourne port authorities. The competitive spirit would make them more cost effective. The Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members indicated that, without that competition, port authorities may become stagnant. However, there has not been any in-depth consideration of the cost effectiveness of the proposed legislation.

In considering the marketing and development of the ports, it is paramount that the boards remain competitive. Assistance has been given to the port of Portland over the years. The Port of Geelong Authority has been managed extremely well and the finances received from the operations of that port have been substantial. The proposed legislation will give the Government the opportunity of taxing those authorities, particularly Portland, where funds have been allocated to help them survive. Therefore, taxpayers will be paying taxes on their taxes. That principle is wrong. The whole philosophy of the Bill is wrong and, therefore, the Opposition is in no doubt about its position. Local boards will have little or no autonomy under the bureaucracy of the Victorian Ports Authority. The Opposition rejects the Bill.

Mr ERNST (Geelong East)—I support the proposed legislation as it sets out the integrating co-ordinating and planning of port facilities. The Government realizes that the Opposition does not agree with planning, as indicated by its 27 years in government. The Opposition has put forward the view that facilities should be provided in each port and that the Government should not worry about the utilization of those facilities. However, the Government believes the Victorian Ports Authority has an over-all co-ordinating role to ensure that those facilities are used in the interests of the Victorian taxpayer. I am sure that honourable members of the National and Liberal parties would be accusing the Government of mismanagement if that were not the case. They should look at the positive aspect of the Bill, which is the planning and co-ordination by a central authority.

One of the advantages of the Victorian Ports Authority will be increased employment in the different areas. Through co-ordination and planning it will increase and enhance employment opportunities in the Geelong, Portland and Melbourne areas. Members opposite have raised the matter of primary production. I should have thought that primary producers would support the Bill, as they would be concerned about co-ordinating modes of transport of grain from rail to sea to ensure a quick flow-on.

In the past, members of the Opposition have criticized the storage and grain handling facilities in country areas, and the Victorian Ports Authority will overcome some of the problems raised. I wish the honourable member for South Barwon would get his facts right. The President of the Shire of Bellarine is Councillor Gwen Maddison. The former shire president was Councillor Jones, and, as the honourable member for Geelong West pointed out, he is now the president of the local government committee. The Minister has received a deputation in Geelong.

The Minister of Transport has been to Geelong on a number of occasions and has spoken to the commissioners of the Port of Geelong Authority. I was present at one meeting in which they outlined their plans to him. Through inaccuracies spread by the Opposition in newspapers, confusion has been created in the minds of the community. The employees of the Port of Geelong Authority were also confused as a result of misunderstandings spread by the Liberal Party in that area. Whether it was the Liberal Party or the *de facto* Liberal Party which caused this does not matter. What does matter is the full utilization of the port's facilities and I point out that the Minister has the support of the unions and the employees of the Port of Geelong Authority, and he has given them assurances on the assets and reserves in the port.

He has informed the employees of the authority that they will not lose their jobs or be relocated, which was one of the allegations spread by certain people for obvious political purposes. He has also informed them that reserves will be kept in Geelong for utilization on the port. I should have thought that that would be self-evident to

Opposition members, who pride themselves on their supposed business acumen.

The criticism of the Geelong Regional Commission by the honourable member for South Barwon is unwarranted and demonstrates the lack of knowledge and involvement by the Opposition in the role of the commission in promoting Geelong. People or authorities who put up ideas are knocked down because the people who criticize them such as the honourable member for South Barwon and his supporters, cannot suggest those ideas or proposals which will benefit and enhance the Geelong community. It is a pity that he did not consider the constructive work of the Geelong Regional Commission in the Geelong area. It put forward projects, such as the IXL wool store and the Geelong Agrigultural Co. when International Harvester Australia Ltd stopped operations in that area. The commission was recently involved in the skills centre between Ford and the setting up of an industrial supply office in Geelong, which was announced by the Minister for Employment and Training in conjunction with Fords on Tuesday. It is extremely important that the value of the regional commission in the area is realized, as well as the importance of the local government committee. The local government committee made a deputation to the Minister and accepted his assurances. It was pleased with the consultation that took place with the Minister.

The concern expressed by the Opposition is also a denigration of the respresentatives from Geelong who are on the task force and project team. Obviously, Opposition members do not have faith in those people who have the capability of putting forward Geelong's point of view. I consider that the port of Portland representative has that capacity as well. If Opposition members believe those representatives do not have the capacity they should say so, so that the representatives can defend themselves. Instead, the Opposition has been putting forward innuendoes about the capability of these people.

The Bill will benefit Geelong. No indication has been given that the port management in Geelong, or the commissioners, have let the port or its facilities run down. I believe the commissioners have a responsibility to the whole of Victoria in putting forward their expertise to manage all the ports in Victoria. The Bill provides for the co-ordinating of port activities. If that is not done, Victoria will lose out in the face of world-wide competition. The Victorian Ports Authority, through negotiations with ship owners and so forth place pressure on interests to assist ports, particularly those outside Melbourne. The commissioners have done a good job. It is a time for change and a time for widening the area of expertise through two-way discussion between representatives from the Port of Geelong Authority. The Bill indicates that there will be ongoing discussions between the local ports and the Victorian Ports Authority to discuss the scope of their roles.

No doubt that will require the approval of the Minister. If any problems are encountered at short notice, deputations can be arranged with the Minister. It is important that all forms of transport are co-ordinated so that there is a free flow of traffic to overcome the problems that have existed in the past where the delay with trains and grain handling are avoided at the ports of Geelong and Portland. I am familiar with the problem of grain transport and believe the establishment of the Victorian Ports Authority will assist in the better utilization of the facilities that have been provided in grain growing areas when the Government is often criticized by the farming community on the transport and handling of their produce.

The Bill will have a major impact on the running of transport and the port facilities throughout Victoria and will benefit the whole community. This positive and constructive measure must be introduced. The measure should not be approached negatively, misunderstood or misconstrued for political purposes as it has been in the House and through the media. I support the Bill and the proposed amendments.

Mr McKELLAR (Portland)—I shall address my remarks to the way in which the Bill affects the port of Portland. I cannot see any useful purpose in raking over the ground covered by previous speakers, who have covered other topics adequately. The port of Portland caters for primary production, whether it be export or those commodities imported for primary production purposes, which would account for approximately 90 per cent of the trade enjoyed by the port.

The modern port of Portland was commenced to be constructed in 1952 and accepted its first shipping trade in 1960, which means that the modern port has been operative for 24 years. During that period, the trade through the port has grown considerably, mainly because of the extremely astute management of the commissioners of the port of Portland since its inception in 1952.

The port has had only three chairmen of the commissioners in that period, namely, the establishment chairman, Mr Keith Anderson, who is still living and is well past his 90th birthday; Mr Jarrett, who served the Port of Portland Authority for approximately 32 years, about half of which as chairman of the authority, and in recent times Mr Bill Sweetland, who served a three year term and whose term concluded only last week. The people of Portland appreciate the Assistant Minister of Transport attending the farewell function organized for Mr Sweetland.

The three chairmen of the Port of Portland Authority were capable and diligent businessmen who devoted their energies to the development of the port and endeavoured to get all trade offered in western Victoria and elsewhere channelled through that port. They did that with a fair measure of success because the port passed the million tonne mark of grain through the port in 1979–80. The major commodity handled by the port of Portland is, naturally, grain.

In 1979–80, 1·25 million tonnes of grain were exported through the port of Portland. It is anticipated that this season the port will top that tonnage and may possibly export in the vicinity of 1·5 million tonnes of grain. That is all the grains—oats, wheat and barley. The port of Portland also has a useful trade in fertilizer imports for the making of fertilizer products used in primary production in the hinterland to the port.

For a number of years, the port had a good import trade of petroleum products which were primarily put into the freight advantage areas of the port. Once again the big users were the primary producers. Regrettably, the port of Portland is losing some of that trade because of a change in Government policy which has shifted the movement of petroleum products on land from road to rail. The result is that some petroleum product producers are now bypassing the port of Portland and using the rail facilities from Geelong.

The port has also been fortunate to win trade from south-eastern South Australia in the form of wood chips that have come the port's way because of the disastrous fires on Ash Wednesday. The fires damaged a considerable portion of the softwood plantations in that area. The facilities to handle this trade are now being assembled at the port. It is hoped that the trade will be not only useful but also profitable and will continue after the wood chipping of the damaged pine forests has been completed.

Those are the major trades that passed through the port of Portland. Perhaps I should add one other at this juncture which has been in operation for the past four or five years. It is the export of livestock through the port. I do not mean live sheep exports alone, which is a considerable trade but as well the export of live cattle with which many people may not be familiar. One of the main countries to which the live cattle are exported is Indonesia.

Those trades have not been won easily by the port of Portland and have been won only because the commissioners who have served the port over the past quarter of a century have won the trade and brought it to the port. I labour this important point because the achievements of the port over the past 25 years have been made under the management which this Bill intends to change.

Those chairmen have been successful. I have yet to be convinced that the change proposed in the measure will be of any significant benefit to the port of Portland when one considers the track record of its management. If the present structure and the present management were permitted to continue in the future as they have in the past, the port of Portland would thrive along with the other ports which come within the ambit of the proposed legislation.

I make that point because ports win trade through competition in price and service, and they have won this trade because they are competitive and because they do give a service.

I was interested to hear the remarks of the honourable member for Albert Park, who spoke on behalf of the Government on

the Bill. I should like him to understand from me, from the people who are associated with the port of Portland and from the people of Portland and western Victoria, that we consider we have one of the best waterside labour forces in Australia. Their work compares most favourably with all other ports. I am not criticizing what the honourable member said in this regard, but I want it put on the record that their contribution to the development of the port, as well as the contributions of those other people whom I have already mentioned, have been appreciated.

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr McKELLAR—I take up the interjection of the Assistant Minister of Transport that there were no union representative commissioners on the trust.

At one stage the structure of the port, as I understand it, was coming up for review, and that would have been considered.

Mr Simpson—By this Government.

Mr McKELLAR—That is possible, but I am not happy with some provisions in the Bill and there are a number of them with which I do not necessarily concur. I do not object to commissioners having a place on the board under the structure proposed in the Bill, because they have much to contribute.

It is my understanding that the employees of the port of Portland were canvassed and asked to signify who they thought should put up the panel of names from which the union representatives would be appointed to the port of Portland. They overwhelmingly decided that that panel of names should be the responsibility of the Trades Hall Council, and not the South Western Trades and Labour Council. The vote was 83 to 1 in favour of it being undertaken by the Trades Hall Council, if my information is correct and I have every reason to believe it is.

I should like the Minister to take note of that demonstration of opinion by those who are associated in the work force of the port of Portland because it is significant. The vote was overwhelmingly in favour of the Trades Hall Council as against the local labour organization, and the Minister would be wise to take notice of that determination and incorporate it in the Bill, if it ever, at a future date, is discussed again in Parliament.

There is no one in this day and age who gives his best or looks after the interests of people whom he is endeavouring to serve unless he has competition. One of the things this proposed legislation will take away from the ports of Victoria is the competitive spirit, and by that I do not mean so much the competition in spending money and putting facilities at a port, but actually going out and getting business and competing on cost, efficiency and service. If one introduces a system which destroys that competitiveness among the people, one will not have very much left within a very short space of time, and there will be increased and escalating costs.

That brings me to another point relating to the port of Portland. The users of that port are mainly associated with primary production and, as a result, they are exporters. If one is in the export business in Australia—and, after all, Australia is an exporting nation—one is selling on world markets. When one is selling on world markets, one either competes or one fails. One cannot compete if one's internal costs are not competitive. If a system operates where someone shifts an export product from inland to the seaport and does not have any competition in the area, and the people providing that service do not have competition and, therefore, do not watch their costs or their service, it is not long before the person whose commodity is being sold on the world market is unable to compete and, therefore, he fails. That is why I say, with this proposed structure of ports, if there is no realistic competition, the exporters will be placed at a disadvantage.

I have heard much being said in many quarters about the economic recovery in this nation in the past twelve months. There has been an economic recovery, but it is my opinion that the majority of that economic recovery can be related to the economic recovery in the rural industries. In the past twelve months, because of drought in eastern Australia, rural industries went from no income—no production—to a good average season. The season that has just been experienced by rural industries is no more than a good average season when considering economic returns to the producers of those commodities. Some of them experienced record production, but prices and costs ate into their pockets.

Take the grain industry as an example: To the growers who produced a record grain harvest in Victoria in the last season, some 5·2 million tonnes, after paying their costs, the profits they received were not anywhere near what the average layman would imagine.

The wheat grower received $154 for each tonne of grain delivered to the Grain Elevators Board inland storage facilities. Of that, some $40 a tonne is expended on handling charges by the board and freight. A large proportion of that harvest was destroyed by seasonal conditions, namely, rain, and there was a loss of some $20 a tonne on all rain damaged grain. Therefore, of the $154 received by the growers, an amount of $60 a tonne has had to be expended. One also has to take into consideration the fact that it costs approximately $50 an acre to sow a crop. It would be an extremely bountiful year if the average acreage of grain haverst produced a tonne of grain to the acre. It would be a good year indeed. Therefore, it costs more than $100 a tonne to the grower, which brings back the amount he receives to less than $50 a tonne for the grain he has produced.

I say to every member of this House and every other person associated with the grain industry that not many grain growers will be able to continue to operate if all they receive is $50 a tonne after all the costs have been deducted. This has been an exceptionally good year for grain production, but, in the average year, such costs would be crippling for those producers.

It is in the nation's interests, and in the interests of the people whom every member of Parliament represents, that the cost structures and the services provided to exporters are competitive, and the people in those industries have to understand it because—and I repeat—in the export industry one either competes or one fails.

If one is not conscious of these costs, one should not be surprised if many of the export industries and associated industries die in the not-too-distant future.

The SPEAKER—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 McKELLAR (Portland)—A development that would be of tremendous advantage to the port of Portland, and which I hope will be brought to a successful conclusion, is the Alcoa of Australia Ltd smelter development. At present, the port of Portland relies entirely on the import and export of commodities directly associated with primary production. When it was proposed that Alcoa of Australia Ltd would build a smelter at Portland, the area considered itself extremely fortunate because it would receive additional trade that was not associated with primary production. This would mean that during a lean season the port would have further business on which to fall back and thus keep up the tonnage entering the port and the resulting income to the authority. In other words, it would represent a diversification of the operations of the port.

Any organization that is fortunate enough to be able to diversify its operation in this day and age is foolish if it does not do so. The residents of the Portland area hope, through the good offices of the Government and other people associated with the smelter development, a favourable decision will be made in the not-too-distant future and that the development will continue.

When questioned in this House about the stage the negotiations have reached with Alcoa of Australia Ltd, the Premier answers that the matter is confidential and will be treated as such because of the nature of the negotiations. I do not altogether quarrel with that because, when one deals in arenas such as these, the companies with which one deals expect confidentiality.

However, it is important to point out that the Bill increases the number of people who must be consulted and the number of people and departments through which information must be channelled concerning port developments. If one of the ports were negotiating for a future development in its area with a certain industry, at present, it has to deal with only the three commissioners of the port. Under the proposals in the Bill, the number of people with whom the port will have to deal will be increased to 20

or more. The risk to security and confidentiality increases accordingly. If one cannot guarantee confidentiality in negotiations, one will not have the confidence of the company and one will not have the business.

I cannot see that any useful purpose will be served by having more people at different echelons involved in such discussions. If a port is negotiating with a company for the establishment of a development adjacent to the port, somewhere along the line, discussions will have to take place with the proposed Victorian Ports Authority. There is no way the issue will be kept quiet once it reaches the proposed authority, because the authority is to be composed of representatives from all the other ports. As soon as other port representatives hear about a potential development, the lid will be off and the members will all want the development to take place in the port they represent. The result will be chaotic and companies will be reluctant to deal on that basis.

I wonder whether the project at Portland would have ever got off the ground if the structure proposed in the Bill were in existence. I think not. One of the reasons why the development was established at Portland was because it was dealt with in confidence and kept that way. The company respected the former Government for that and I am certain that the company respects the current Government for the confidentiality it maintains. That is an important factor and one of the reasons why I fear the consequences of the Bill. The decision-making process will be slowed down by the necessity to consult with an increasing number of authorities. It could reach the point where discussions bog down and nothing is achieved in the ultimate.

It is rather unfortunate that the Bill was introduced at the end of the sessional period and such a short time was allowed for the adjournment of the debate. I should have liked to have conducted more research into the implications of the Bill for the port of Portland. In conclusion, I have grave fears for the future of the port of Portland because of the proposed legislation and that is why I support the determination of the Opposition in this matter.

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—The honourable members for Ripon and Portland have missed the whole concept of the Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to avoid duplication. The honourable member for Ripon spoke about the competition between the ports of Geelong and Melbourne. The City of Williamstown, which I represent, was one of the original ports Victoria. During the 1930s, two grain areas were to be developed. However, Geelong ended up obtaining the grain development and the silos were built at Corio. At that time, I was a young boy living in the city of Geelong and I supported that development.

When one examines the services operating within the port authorities at Geelong and Melbourne, one realizes that duplication occurs in the areas of dredging, pilotage and containerization. The Bill deals with the rationalization of that duplication.

The honourable member for Portland spoke about local issues; local boards will still exist to look after those matters. Honourable members opposite should think along the lines that the Bill will improve the whole system for Victoria. The Bill does not address local issues; it addresses the rationalization of the ports to make the port of Melbourne the container port it is at present. Honourable members opposite seem to be missing the point; the purpose of the Bill is to rationalize the current duplication that exists. I fully support the aim of the Bill and hope honourable members opposite will also support that concept.

Mr HANN (Rodney)—The real question before the House on the establishment of a Victorian Ports Authority is whether that will bring about any improvement in the operation of our ports, whether it will achieve what the Minister is suggesting in his second-reading speech, the co-ordination of port planning development and the operation of ports on an integrated State-wide basis.

The structure in the past was on the basis of the Public Works Department and the authorities, all under the control of the Minister of Public Works. The Minister had to authorize most of the significant developments within those ports. I should have thought the various functions being promoted in the new public body, if I can use that term, or qango, is increasing duplication and setting up another public body in the State. I find it strange that a Minister who was a member of the Public Bodies Review Committee when in opposition, and

who was a strong advocate for reducing the number of public bodies in the State, is establishing a new public body.

One needs to look more closely at what the Government has been doing since it came to office in April 1982. I believe it has sinister connotations. What the Minister is doing by restructuring various ports is providing himself with an opportunity of replacing key officials at the top level of the port authorities, because he is establishing new local boards to replace the present commissioners. It is a simple and clean way for the Government to operate.

There are very few senior officials now holding public office who were there prior to the Labor Government coming into power. The Government has restructured, changed and amended the various Acts and has established new departments, but in the process that has given the Government an opportunity of changing the personnel, retaining some, removing others or sending them sideways or into retirement. By this method, they have managed to get rid of the people they did not wish to head their departments.

One wonders if this is not another exercise along similar lines, because it gives the Minister the same ability. It comes at a time when, as the honourable member for Lowan pointed out, the Canadian Government has done the reverse. It set up a similar structure in 1936, but this year it dismantled that structure and went back to a situation of granting its individual ports greater autonomy. The whole thrust of the argument before the House is the need to encourage local autonomy, to encourage the local port authorities to develop trade within their ports.

It was pointed out in the 1982 annual report of the Port of Geelong Authority:

> The total maritime industry is one of immense importance to an island continent dependent on waterborne transport for both exports and imports.
>
> The vital link between those who produce for export, those who import, and those who arrange the various facets of the movement of products, is the port.

As one who represents a primary producing area which is dependent to a large extent on the export of primary produce in the dairying industry, I appreciate that it is vital to have an efficient port structure. That is the same with the grain industry. What has happened in the past is that individual port authorities have worked actively to ensure that they have been able to maximize the facilities at their various ports, and they have encouraged both exporters and importers to use the port and to develop the trade.

The annual profits of the Port of Geelong Authority in the last three years was $2·7 million, $4·1 million and $3·9 million. Around the same period, the port built a container terminal at a cost of $8 million and installed a container crane at a cost of $3 million. These are major initiatives and I should like to know whether the Minister is suggesting, with his co-ordination argument, that he would not allow the port of Geelong to set up the container terminal.

The honourable member for Lowan made a valuable point when he drew the attention of the House to the fact that the Minister has not produced any cost-benefit analysis of the benefits to be gained by the establishment of a Victorian Ports Authority. One would have thought the very first thing the Minister would have done is to establish whether there was a financial benefit to be gained by establishing a new authority. Obviously the only financial benefit in the long term is another authority dividend tax or equity tax, which was suggested in the Minister's second-reading speech. That is a very real threat to the operation of the ports.

The major area of concern of the National Party is in the duplication of decision making in the port structure. So-called local authorities will still run the ports, but they will have a parent body over them which will have the final say and it is intended to eliminate much of the local autonomy that exists at present. The National Party is concerned that that will ultimately jeopardize the viability of both the Geelong port and the Portland port.

The National Party has always been anxious to see the development of ports in the State, which includes the port of Geelong because that is vital to the balanced development of those areas and of the State. My party will be alarmed by any action of the Government which might downgrade the operation of those ports. That is the thrust of the arguments that the National Party is putting to the House tonight.

The Minister has the option of delaying the proposed legislation until the spring sessional period to allow for a greater consideration of the implications contained in the proposal. The Minister may then be able to convince the other party that its fears are not justified. At this stage, there is no way that the National Party could let the proposed legislation proceed through Parliament. The National Party is concerned that it will take away the basic autonomy of the ports and will not be in the best interests of the people of Portland and the people of Geelong.

While I recognize that the bulk of the fishing industry operates from small ports, those ports will come under the power of the new authority and that industry will not have any direct representation on the authority. That is an area of concern and the fishing industry could well find itself out in the cold. The National Party will be supporting the Opposition in opposing the Bill.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I am disappointed with the contributions from both the National Party and the Opposition. Apart from indicating a lack of research and thought on their part, the remarks were generally characterized by parochial paranoia and ignorant conservatism.

In the 50 minutes that I have available, I shall try to address some of the matters raised by honourable members and put those matters to rest. Claims were made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that he could find no one who supported the Bill. He is either telling an untruth or is playing with words—I suspect the latter! All representatives on the task force, including employers, unions and departmental officers, agreed with the principle of establishing the Victorian Ports Authority and most provisions contained in the Bill.

The remaining matters on which consensus was not reached mainly concern the membership of various boards. At the last count, 27 applications had been made by employer organizations for positions on the Victorian Ports Authority and clearly one cannot accommodate all of those organizations. The Government has discussed the matter at length with those organizations and believes it will reach an acceptable compromise. Support for the principle of establishing the Victorian Ports Authority comes from the Australian Chamber of Shipping, the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce—as late as today—and the Geelong municipalities, which meet on a regular basis at their meeting last week carried a resolution supporting the new authority. These are some indications of wide spread support for the establishment of the authority as envisaged in the Bill.

The measure will not lead to the centralization of everything being in the one place, as has been characterized by members of the National Party. The authority will carry out its activities on a co-ordinated basis. The Government is not establishing an organization similar to the Marine Board of New South Wales or the old Canadian system. The Government is establishing the new system adopted in Canada where there is a central co-ordination of policy and strategy and therefore is establishing the operation of ports on a consensus basis. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted from a submission received from the Port Phillip Sea Pilots who wanted to nominate one person instead of three, but the honourable member did not indicate why. The reason is that the previous Government refused to accept the first of three nominations to the Port Phillip Pilot Sick and Superannuation Board in which the pilots were involved and instead selected the second nomination. The reason why the Port Phillip Sea Pilots indicated that they did not want a panel of three names is because it could not trust some hypothetical future Liberal Government.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated that the co-ordination of the three ports should be carried out under the control of a Minister of the Crown. Heaven forbid, that suggestion emanated from the former Minister of Transport who could not co-ordinate the trains with the trams. It is ludicrous to suggest that a Minister could co-ordinate the ports by himself and is a negation of any idea of what modern management is about.

The matter of whether the chairman of the local board should be appointed or elected by the board was raised and I was accused of some heinous crime by suggesting that the Governor in Council ought to appoint the chairman. I invite honourable members to examine the Port of Geelong

Authority Act, the Port of Portland Authority Act and the Port of Melbourne Authority Act and to note how the chairman and the commissioners are appointed. There is no provision for nominations from any body. There is no provision for the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association to be represented on the board. The commissioners and the chairman are appointed by the Governor in Council. That is what exists now and what has always existed in the Bill and the foreshadowed amendments and represents a far more representative board of management for the local boards and the Victorian Ports Authority than had previously existed in Victoria. It is churlish to cavil about how the chairman of the board is to be appointed, either by the Governor in Council—which is more appropriate—or by the people of Victoria.

I was requested to assure the House that the World Trade Centre would not be subsidized by the port of Portland and the port of Geelong and I give that undertaking. Further, that the World Trade Centre would be established as a separate organizational entity in the Victorian Ports Authority where its accounts can be identified and no subsidy can occur.

In relation to the public authority dividend tax, I made it clear to the task force, and on a day when both opposition parties were represented, that the public authoriy dividend tax would not apply to the port of Portland, the port of Geelong or the port of Westernport by virtue of this restructure.

I further foreshadow an amendment in the Committee stage that will make it incapable for the Government to do that without an amendment to the Act at some future time, if any future Government decides that is the way to go.

The honourable member for Lowan raised the cost-benefit issue. The honourable member should visit some of the installations of the ports. If one visits the various ports, the cost-benefit is manifest. At Williamstown there are two slipways, one run by the Ports and Harbors Division of the Public Works Department and the other by the Ministry of Transport. They are adjacent to each other and are separated by a corrugated iron fence. Each of them has an engine shop, a paint shop and metal workshops and perform the same functions. Yet there is a fence down the middle and no one can go from one to the other unless one obtains from the office the key for the padlock. There are manifest stupidities in the ports simply because of the persistence in the past for these outdated port structures.

The honourable member for Lowan accused the task force of being unrepresentative. That is certainly not true. All interested organizations concerned with Victorian ports were invited to attend task force meetings and did attend. There was no occasion when union representatives had anything like a majority. Indeed, the unions spoke through one representative on each occasion. If one examined the matters discussed by the task force, one would realize that its deliberations mainly concerned the port of Geelong, which has been discussed this evening. In regard to the concern of the ports of Geelong and Portland subsidizing the World Trade Centre, it is worth noting that Victoria subsidizes the port of Portland by $1·5 million.

I was asked whether I had visited the port of Geelong to discuss matters contained in the Bill. I have visited Geelong to meet the commissioners, employees and municipalities. Not only have I discussed those matters, but early this week in my office I chaired a meeting of users of the port of Geelong, together with the sea pilots, tugboat operators and port authority representatives to sort out some of the mess that was inherited from the former Liberal Government.

I am surprised that the honourable member for Ripon had the gall to make a contribution to the debate. When he was the Minister of Public Works and thus responsible for ports, he supervised the selling of the tugs in Geelong to the private tugboat operators, which has left Geelong with tug charges that are double those payable in any other port in Australia. The Australian Wheat Board, which is trying to export wheat to China, has met with a refusal to bring Chinese ships into Geelong in recent weeks because of tug charges. I have been able to resolve that matter, hopefully to the satisfaction of the Australian Wheat Board in the past few days. The fact that the honourable member for Ripon stated that he could not seek support from the task force, which I again state is untrue, might be because the honourable member left the meeting early, he was asleep during the

meeting or he could not understand what was going on.

The honourable member for Portland raised the matter of competition and stated that competition was a very important thing. How parochial can one get? The honourable member seems to define competition as that between Melbourne, Geelong and Portland, as if they were the only ports in Australia. The competition I am worried about is competition from Adelaide and Port Kembla and that is what honourable members should be debating. Honourable members spend their time arguing about parochial competition between Geelong, Portland and Melbourne, but all ports would be worse off if the business went somewhere else. Unless Victorian ports get their acts together in a modern, efficient way, that is what will occur.

I have already dealt with the issue raised by the Deputy Leader of the National Party concerning the Canadian system and local autonomy. It is fundamental to the propositions contained in the Bill that local autonomy remain in regard to matters that are local.

The decisions that are made on a port basis need to be made in that port, but they must be part of a co-ordinated whole. That is something that has never existed in the past because, under the old system, the Public Works Department did not have the capacity, the skill, the will or the direction to co-ordinate our ports and their development.

The Bill attempts to put in place the best way of doing that, and it is the best way. There have been six months of very hard work, not just by myself and officers of the Ministry of Transport, but also by officers of the authorities themselves, by representatives of the users who were not only on the part-time task force but who were also members of the project team—they were seconded—and people from the unoins. Across that whole spectrum of interest groups, we achieved consensus on the Bill.

I suggest that the Opposition and the National Party should rethink their position. Amendments will be introduced in the Committee stage to deal with the issues that have been raised. Those amendments should calm any fears that any honourable member may have about the public authority dividend tax.

I strongly suggest that the Opposition and the National Party should go to the people who were on the task force. I will organize another seminar if the last one failed to persuade the honourable members for Ripon and Lowan, if that is what they want. Much hard work has gone into consulting with a whole range of interested people to achieve consensus on the issue.

Mr Whiting—Did you put a gun at their heads?

Mr CRABB—That is a dreadful thing to say. How does one put a gun at the head of the shipping industry? The discussions involved some of the most significant organizations in the shipping industry, and the honourable member for Mildura—who presumably does not know much about shipping—asks whether the Government put a gun to their heads. What a pathetic contribution! A lot of people put their common sense, wisdom and nous into this exercise, canvassed all of the available options and achieved consensus on the best option in each case, and they have come up with the Bill. This House should support it not just because it is good for Portland, Geelong and Melbourne but because it is good for Victoria and the future development of our ports and the industries that relate to those ports are a fundemental part of the economic strategy and the increased economic activity of this State. The Bill deserves unanimous support.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	45
Noes	26
Majority for the motion	19

AYES

Mr Cain	Mr Hill
Miss Callister	Mr Hockley
Mr Cathie	Mr Ihlein
Dr Coghill	Mr Jolly
Mr Crabb	Mr Kennedy
Mr Culpin	Mr Kirkwood
Mr Ernst	Mr McCutcheon
Mr Fogarty	Mr McDonald
Mr Fordham	Mr Mathews
Mr Gavin	Mr Micallef
Mr Gray	Mr Miller
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Newton
Mrs Hill	Mr Norris

Mr Pope	Mr Simpson
Mrs Ray	Mr Spyker
Mr Remington	Mr Stirling
Mr Rowe	Mrs Toner
Mr Seitz	Mr Trezise
Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)	Dr Vaughan
	Mr Walsh
Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)	Mr Wilton
	Tellers:
Mr Sidiropoulos	Mr Hassett
Mr Simmonds	Mr Shell

NOES

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

PAIRS

Mr Roper	Mr Templeton
Mrs Setches	Mr Kennett

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 6 were agreed to.

Clause 7

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 7, line 16, omit "ten" and insert "eleven".

The aim of the amendment is to increase by one the number of members on the board of the Victorian Ports Authority.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—At 11.10 p.m. the Opposition does not intend to respond to each of the proposed 34 amendments, which will rewrite the Bill. I understand that the programme is to proceed to the Supply (1984–85, No. 1) Bill and then have ten explanatory second readings. The Opposition opposes the Bill but does not propose to comment on every proposed amendment other than to say that the amendment before the Committee is symbolic of the approach of the Government in that the Bill is so ill-prepared that it needs 34 amendments to achieve the consensus that the Minister claims he has already achieved with hard work over six months prior to the introduction of the Bill.

The Bill is symptomatic of what happens when Bills are introduced late in the sessional period, when there is inadequate adjournments for consideration of Bills, when proper consideration is not given in the preparation of proposed legislation and when a last-minute scramble is being made to rewrite the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Wilton)—Order! I remind the honourable member for Berwick that the Committee is dealing with a simple amendment moved by the Minister of Transport. This is not an appropriate time for the honourable member to go into detail on his opinion of the drafting of proposed legislation or the timing of its introduction. It would be more appropriate to do that once the Committee has dealt with the proposed amendment.

Mr MACLELLAN—I shall satisfy myself and you, Mr Chairman, by saying that the amendment moved by the Minister to omit "ten" and insert "eleven" is but a symbol of the shambles of the Bill.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—The National Party supports the comments made by the honourable member for Berwick. During the second-reading debate, I indicated that, owing to the number of amendments foreshadowed, the Bill should not have been introduced in its present form. The proposed 34 amendments, if agreed to, will mean a rewrite of the Bill. The National Party does not support the amendment before the Committee. The Minister has failed to outline the reason for increasing the number of members on the board of the Victorian Ports Authority. The National Party will not support any further amendments.

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN—If there are no objections, I invite the Minister to move the next three amendments as they are all directly related.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 7, line 20, after "Minister" insert "after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by that Local Board".

Clause 7, line 22, after "Minister" insert "after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by that Local Board".

Clause 7, line 24, after "Minister" insert "after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by that Local Board".

The amendments emanate from a discussion that was held on Monday this week at which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition represented his party, and a research officer represented the National Party. The proposed amendment represents an attempt to meet the desires of the various parties.

In this instance, concern was expressed, especially by the Geelong people, who have some deep suspicion of the chief executives representing boards. Therefore, it was felt that a better way of dealing with the matter would be to have the representative of the local board of Geelong on the Victorian Ports Authority chosen from a panel of three names submitted by the local board, in much the same way as other organizations submit panels of three names.

The amendments were agreed to.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 7, lines 29 to 32, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(vii) a person who is a member of or performs duties for a union or association primarily concerned with seagoing or waterfront activities;

(viii) a person nominated by the Minister after consideration of a panel of three names jointly submitted to the Minister by the bodies known as the Australian Chamber of Shipping and the Australasian Steamship Owners' Federation;

(ix) two persons associated with the Victorian Port Users Association, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association or any other body concerned with port users who are nominated by the Minister; and

(x) one other person.".

The amendment is an effort to meet the desires of all the people who wanted to be on the Victorian Ports Authority. At the last count, 27 people wanted to fill approximately three or four positions. It is hard to get everybody who has ever fancied himself as a member of the board to fit into it. It is difficult to get the organizations to agree with one another on who should be on the board. In an attempt to give me the capacity to exercise some judgment in the process, this was felt to be the best way of handling it.

The amendment was agreed to, as were consequential amendments, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 8

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 8, lines 15 and 16, omit "as Chairman".

This amendment results from consultations so that the Chairman is not automatically the chief executive and the chief executive does not automatically become the chairman, but rather the chairman is nominated by the Minister, as is the case at present.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 8, lines 17 to 25, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(*b*) the Managing Director of the Victorian Ports Authority or his nominee;

(*c*) one member elected by officers of the Victorian Ports Authority employed in the Port of Melbourne;

(*d*) a person included in a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Victorian Trades Hall Council;

(*e*) a person who is a member of or performs duties for a union or association primarily concerned with seagoing or waterfront activities;

(*f*) such other members (but not less than one or more than three) who in the opinion of the Minister have knowledge of and experience in the use of port and maritime facilities, operations or services; and

(*g*) a person nominated by the Minister after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Municipal Association of Victoria.".

Clause 8, lines 29 and 30, omit "as Chairman".

Clause 8, lines 31 to 39, omit all the words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(*b*) the Managing Director of the Victorian Ports Authority or his nominee;

(*c*) one member elected by officers of the Victorian Ports Authority employed in the Port of Geelong;

(*d*) a person included in a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Geelong Trades Hall Council;

(*e*) a person who is a member of or performs duties for a union or association primarily concerned with seagoing or waterfront activities;

(*f*) such other members (but not less than one or more than three) who in the opinion of the Minister

have knowledge of and experience in the use of port and maritime facilities, operations or services; and

(*g*) a person nominated by the Minister after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Municipal Association of Victoria.".

Clause 8, page 10, lines 3 and 4, omit "as Chairman".

Clause 8, page 10, lines 5 to 13, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(*b*) the Managing Director of the Victorian Ports Authority or his nominee;

(*c*) one member elected by officers of the Victorian Ports Authority employed in the Port of Portland;

(*d*) a person included in a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the South Western Trades and Labour Council;

(*e*) a person who is a member of or performs duties for a union or association primarily concerned with seagoing or waterfront activities;

(*f*) such other members (but not less than one or more than three) who in the opinion of the Minister have knowledge of and experience in the use of port and maritime facilities, operations or services; and

(*g*) a person nominated by the Minister after consideration of a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Municipal Association of Victoria.".

These amendments relate to the boards of the three local ports. There has been extensive discussion with the local boards. In regard to the other members that are included in the last item, it is the Government's intention to have in Melbourne the one user representative from the Association of Employers of Waterside Labour and two user representatives from nominations provided by the Victorian Port Users Association, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, the Australian Chamber of Shipping, the Australian Steamship Owners Federation and from any other bodies concerned with the port users. In discussions in Geelong, it seemed that there would be someone from the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, Geelong Branch, the Geelong Chamber of Commerce and one from the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association. In Portland, the representatives would be one from the Port of Portland Utilization Committee, one from the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association and one other who might be a secondary primary producer. In putting those positions together, the Government has endeavoured to have the best possible representation.

Mr McGRATH (Lowan)—I take up a point in the amendments to clause 8. Under the amendment to proposed section 35B (2), sub-section (*d*) proposes that one appointment shall be a person included in the panel of three submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Geelong Trades Hall Council. It seems extraordinary that the Minister has disregarded a letter to the Minister of Transport, that was sent by the Secretary of the Port of Portland Employees Advisory Council, Mr Ian Finlay, who, I understand, is one of the officers in the Ministry, which outlined a survey that had been taken. I referred to this matter during the second-reading debate. The letter sets out that in the survey the question asked was:

Do you believe that a panel of three names nominating a union representation on the local board should be submitted to the Minister by (*a*) the South Western Trades and Labour Council or (*b*) the Victorian Trades Hall Council?

The response to that was one for a nomination from the South Western Trades and Labour Council and 83 for the Victorian Trades Hall Council nominee. The Minister does not accept this. I bring the Minister back to the fact that at Portland, the South Western Trades and Labour Council seems to be in agreement with the meatworkers union, which seems to be intent on disrupting and preventing the live sheep trade. The rest of the members of the union movement at Portland are responsive to that trade as they see value in it. There are jobs for their union members and they are prepared to disassociate themselves from the South Western Trades and Labour Council. Despite this, the Minister continues along the path that he will accept three names as submitted to him by the South Western Trades and Labour Council.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I am aware of the lack of amity between the employees of the port authority, the waterside employees and their colleagues in the South Western Trades and Labour Council. That matter has been raised at task force meetings and I have received recommendations from all trade unions. One representative is involved in this exercise. That is the best that the Government can do. One should remember that not only is there that representative from a panel nominated by the South Western Trades and Labour Council but there is also a person elected by

the employees in the Port of Portland and another person representing the waterfront employees.

Part of the way that question was structured tends to mislead one into thinking that there is only one person representing employees. That is not the case, there are actually three, one of whom is a representative of the trades and labour council.

The amendments were agreed to, as were consequential amendments.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 8, page 11, after line 9 insert:

"(8) The Minister may from time to time appoint one of the members of a Local Board to be Chairman of the Local Board and may at any time remove or suspend the Chairman of a Local Board from the office of Chairman.".

This amendment which I foreshadowed earlier refers to members of the local board. It replaces what was in the original Bill which made the chief executive automatically the chairman.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 9 to 11.

Clause 12

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 12, page 12, line 3, after "notice" insert "in writing".

This amendment makes it clear that notices are to be in writing and it brings those words into line with other legislation. This matter was brought to the Government's attention during consultation.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as was clause 13.

Clause 14 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 15 to 32.

Clause 33 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 34 and 35.

Clause 36 was verbally and consequentially amended, and, as amended, was, adopted, as was clause 37.

Clause 38

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 38, page 41, lines 6 and 7, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert:

"(*d*) two shall be persons included in a panel of three names submitted to the Minister by the body known as the Victorian Port Users Association;".

The amendment is in response to representations and comes about because of the formation last week of the Victorian Port Users Association. The association represents merchants and traders and, therefore, it is an appropriate body to be included. It did not exist when the Bill was drafted.

The amendment was agreed to, as was a verbal amendment, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 39 to 60.

Clause 61

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Clause 61, line 27, after "all" insert "rules and".

Clause 61, line 28, after "under" insert "or continued in force by".

Clause 61, line 33, after "those" insert "rules or".

The amendments make it clear that the regulations will continue in operation until 1 July 1985. They are moved on the advice of the Parliamentary Counsel for reasons of clarity.

The amendments were agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were the remaining clauses.

Schedule

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Schedule, page 58, in the entry relating to the Public Authorities (Dividends) Act 1983 after the entry relating to section 4 (1) of that Act insert—

'After sub-section (4) of section 5 there shall be inserted the following sub-section:

"(5) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), in determining the dividend to be transferred by the Victorian Ports Authority to the Consolidated Fund in any financial year pursuant to that sub-section no account shall be taken of any part of the public equity of the Victorian Ports Authority that is not attributable to the Port of Melbourne.".'

I foreshadowed this amendment in my response during the second-reading debate. It changes that part of the schedule which

amends the Public Authorities (Dividends) Act so that the public authority dividend cannot be levied on assets of the Victorian Ports Authority other than those which were assets of the port of Melbourne. It maintains the current position, and I gave an undertaking about that. However, as there appears to be an assumed lack of faith in that undertaking, I give it legislative form.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I do not doubt the undertaking given by the Minister, nor the legislative form. However, it is a narrow undertaking. Honourable members representing Geelong deserve to know whether the undertaking is that it is not the policy of the Government to increase the dividend payable by the Victorian Ports Authority in respect of the assets of the port of Melbourne in such a way as to have an impact on other ports. If the Minister is making that undertaking, he is giving some comfort to honourable members representing Geelong. However, if he is merely stating that the Government reserves the right to increase the $6 million levy, which is currently paid by the Port of Melbourne Authority in a way which will have an impact on the other ports, the undertaking is not worth very much. The Minister needs to take it a step further and explain the Government's policy in regard to the amount payable attributable to the port of Melbourne and whether that amount is to be increased.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I hesitate to debate the finer points of the public authority dividend; that is a job for the Treasurer. However, I make the undertaking that the Bill will not be used to extend the scope of the public authority dividend to other parts of the port organization, nor will it be used to achieve that end by increasing the dividend of the port of Melbourne.

Neither I nor any other Minister can predict what the future may hold, but the Bill will not be used as a mechanism to apply the public authority dividend to the port at Geelong or Portland, either directly or by some subterfuge.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

Schedule, page 59, in the entry relating to the Transport Act 1983 after the entry relating to section 28 of that Act insert—

"In section 253 (*a*) after the word "under" there shall be inserted the words "or continued in force by".

The amendment clarifies the regulations to which it addresses itself. The amendment is made on the advice of Parliamentary Counsel for reasons of clarity.

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

The Bill was reported to the House with amendments, and the amendments were adopted.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill now read a third time.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	45
Noes	25
Majority for the motion	20

AYES

Miss Callister	Mr Pope
Mr Cathie	Mrs Ray
Dr Coghill	Mr Remington
Mr Crabb	Mr Roper
Mr Culpin	Mr Rowe
Mr Ernst	Mr Seitz
Mr Fogarty	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Gavin	Mr Shell
Mr Gray	Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simmonds
Mrs Hill	Mr Simpson
Mr Hill	Mr Spyker
Mr Hockley	Mr Stirling
Mr Jolly	Mrs Toner
Mr Kennedy	Mr Trezise
Mr Kirkwood	Dr Vaughan
Mr McCutcheon	Mr Walsh
Mr McDonald	Mr Wilton
Mr Mathews	*Tellers:*
Mr Micallef	Mr Hassett
Mr Miller	Mr Ihlein
Mr Newton	
Mr Norris	

NOES

Mr Austin	Mr Dickinson
Mr Brown	Mr Ebery
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)

Mr Hann	Mr Richardson
Mr Jasper	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Kempton	Mrs Sibree
Mr Lieberman	Mr Tanner
Mr McGrath	Mr Wallace
Mr McKellar	Mr Whiting
Mr McNamara	Mr Williams
Mr Maclellan	
Mr Ramsay	*Tellers:*
Mr Reynolds	Mr Leigh
	Mr Steggall

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mrs Setches	Mr Kennett
Mr Wilkes	Mr Templeton

The Bill was read a third time.

JUDGMENT DEBT RECOVERY BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr Cain (Premier), was read a first time.

The sitting was suspended at 11.49 *p.m. until* 12.23 *a.m.* (*Thursday*).

SUPPLY (1984–85, No. 1) BILL

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

Mr McCUTCHEON (St Kilda)—I congratulate the Treasurer on the many improvements which he has introduced since he has held office. The Supply Bill, which puts together both the works and services and the recurrent expenditure, will ensure that Parliament will work in a more efficient way than it has worked over the years.

I wish to address some of my remarks to the remarks made by the honourable member for Westernport. The honourable member is the Opposition's spokesman on housing. He stated that within twelve months he would be the Minister of Housing, a remark he probably regrets. If he had bothered to read the Morgan Gallup poll earlier in the evening, he would have seen that the Government's rating had gone up 3 per cent, so his chances of being the Minister of Housing within twelve months are pretty miserable.

One could assume that the remarks of the honourable member for Westernport represent a statement on the housing policy of the Opposition. If that is so, the people of Victoria would be warned off voting for the Liberal Party at the next election. People who require housing would regard some of the statements made by the honourable member very seriously, and it does not augur well for the future funding of housing by a Liberal Government. The honourable member set out to disparage the Government's commitment to housing. On any argument he must fail. The total amount of money the Government has spent in the two years in which it has been in office is considerably more than was spent in many years by the previous Administration. In 1981–82 the total housing expenditure was $166·9 million. In the two years of Labor Government, $231 million and $290 million respectively have been spent. That represents substantial increases in the allocation of funds and has had a remarkable impact on the economy of the State and has benefited people in desperate need of housing.

The Labor Party's contribution to the funding has varied over these two years, but compared with the performance of previous Liberal Administrations the Labor Party has proved to be many times better.

The honourable member for Westernport asserted that, because there had been a reduction in the State allocation for housing in the past year, the Government did not have a commitment to housing. This State has for many years had the lowest *per capita* contribution to housing from State funds of any State in the Commonwealth. In the last year of the Liberal Administration, $68 million was allocated for housing, which was the lowest *per capita* allocation of all States. In the first year of the Labor Government, the $68 million was more than doubled to $142·9 million. To talk of a $27 million reduction in the second year of a Labor Government does not indicate a diminishing commitment, because even that amount far exceeds the allocations of previous Liberal Administrations.

The Government is committed to housing, as is indicated in the Budget, and the figures support that commitment. The crisis in housing has come about directly from the policies of the previous Liberal Government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Warrnambool that Easter will commence early if he continues his defiance of the Chair.

Mr McCUTCHEON—The previous Liberal Governments had starved Victorians of funds for housing, and sold off more than 50 per cent of housing stocks built over the years and had also built a lot of unsuitable housing that everyone, including the honourable member for Westernport, now recognizes, is causing considerable social and management problems. The heritage from those days of Liberal administration is making the housing crisis worse at this time.

The honourable member for Westernport tried to explain his views on high-rise housing estates. These estates were created during the Liberal Party Government's responsibility for housing. They were built by draconian use of powers for slum clearance and compulsory acquisition of houses of low-income people in the inner suburbs and by block clearance and demolition of many good homes. The construction of high-rise flats, as most people recognize, has created severe difficulties for those living in them.

The honourable member for Westernport contributed to the understanding of high-rise estate conditions by joining the sensationalism of the mass media in citing crimes, violence and terror associated with high-rise Housing Commission estates. On many occasions, when I was working on a high-rise Housing Commission estate, I tried to get across to members of the press that this sort of reporting did not help those people living in high-rise housing estates and that, as members of the Police Force have stated, the incidence of crime and violence in high-rise Housing Commission estates is no higher than the incidence of crime and violence in the rest of the community. The same crimes and violence are occurring in other parts of urban society; it is simply that in high-rise buildings many people are living much closer together and that attracts the sensationalism of the press. The remarks of the honourable member for Westernport are demeaning for those who live in high-rise flats.

The problems of high-rise estates go back to the 1960s and 1970s when, despite public reaction and comments on the proposed estates and on the demolition of the existing housing stock in the inner suburbs, the plans of the Housing Commission were implemented by successive Governments. As late as 1981, the present Leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister of Housing, was examining some of the problems of those estates.

At the time, I was working on an estate where there were two murders in two months and the then Minister of Housing came to the estate and had proposals put to him by tenants, which, on the spot, he agreed to implement. The tragedy was, having walked off the estate and walked away from the problems, no money was allocated for the proposals the then Minister had agreed were necessary and the tenants were left lamenting.

That is not the case with the present Government and I shall refer to estate improvements and demonstrate how out-of-date the honourable member for Westernport was when he spoke on this issue. The honourable member needs to examine more closely the problems of the estates.

In the last three years of the Liberal Party Government, $2 million a year was allocated for estate improvement which totalled $6 million. In contrast, in the two Budgets this Government has brought down, $30 million has been allocated for estate improvement and has been directed to high-rise estates. That is five times the funding given in the last three years of the Liberal Party administration. The Labor Government has taken a far better approach in its commitment to improve the problems of high-rise estates.

The honourable member for Westernport referred to problems that he had discussed with tenants of a North Melbourne high-rise estate. He suggested to the tenants who attended the meeting that there should be a police presence on the estate. Does the honourable member really believe the problems of high-rise estates will be solved by having more members of the Police Force on those estates? The honourable member cannot really have studied the problem.

Has he discussed the merits of the present use of security guards and the fact that members of the Police Force patrol those areas regularly? Has he considered the

problems of changing the form of the buildings to reduce and control the access of people who do not live on those estates, particularly access at night?

Has he discussed the plans that have been examined at a number of estates, particularly at the Collingwood estate, for the use of modern communication systems and technology that will assist the people responsible for security on the estates? Has he talked with tenants about providing greater security and developing community guardian programmes and for the tenants themselves to take part in providing security in their communities? Those suggestions are being advanced now for high-rise estates.

The Government has financed a number of projects which are being evaluated before being implemented on a much wider basis. I refer also to the important factor of costs. To suggest adding more manpower 24 hours a day on each of these estates means millions of dollars of recurrent expenditure each year. The costs must be examined in an over-all programme to improve community life. All honourable members should be examining these complex problems.

Probably the most important single help is to get people on the estates to work with the tenants and to help them develop local contact to reduce anonymity, to reduce the access of strangers to flats and foyers and to develop the resources they have among themselves so that they are proud of their estates. The Government has allocated money in its Budgets for estate improvements which previous Administrations have not made available.

The honourable member for Westernport advocated home ownership as opposed to public rental housing. This is a line that Liberal Party Governments, both State and Federal, have espoused over the years. The arguments put for home ownership are that paying off a home is better than paying rent and that with paying off a home loan the amount stays the same over the years whereas rent goes up each year with the cost of living and inflation.

While this may be partly true, and I shall show it is only partly true, it ignores a great many important issues which I hope the honourable member for Westernport will consider. Firstly, if there is a cost rent system, the rent does not go up with the cost of living and inflation in the same way. It goes up in relation to the cost of the housing stock only and it can help to pass on to the tenants who pay a cost rent some of the same benefits that go to homeowners. This Government, through the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement, will be advocating a return to cost rents rather than market related rents.

The Government is not in the business, as is the housing spokesman for the Opposition, of playing off one housing tenure against the other. The Government advocates a balancing out policy that gives equity to the various tenures available to Victorians. That is an important part of the Government's housing programme. The Government certainly puts a high priority on increasing the public housing stock and is prepared to align itself to a target that would double the proportion of public housing stock over the next ten years. That target has been accepted by the Federal Government.

The Government is also establishing ways of providing direct assistance to people who want to purchase houses. It has considered assisting people with various methods of financing housing loans.

Mr Whiting—Is this your Government?

Mr McCUTCHEON—Yes, the Cain Government. The Government is advocating assistance to renters in the private rental sector because that is the sector which suffers the most of any of the three housing markets, and is the area that has been the most neglected by all Governments over the past 30 to 40 years.

I raise the matter of demand for assistance and refer the House to a paper by Dr Graeme Bethune, who is manager of corporate development of the South Australian Housing Trust. Dr Bethune made the following comments on demand for housing funds:

> An important criterion in allocating funds between home purchase and rental assistance is demand.
>
> . . . At 30 June 1982 there was a waiting list of almost 29 000 for home purchase across Australia (excluding WA) while the waiting list for public rental stood at 109 000.

There are far more people on the waiting list for public rental housing than for house

purchase assistance schemes. Further, he states:

> However, waiting lists for public housing contain many people who are eligible for home purchase assistance but are opting for public housing. If funds were allocated to home purchase assistance in line with demand, home purchase would only receive 20 per cent of funds.

Dr Bethune argues that if one allocates funds on demand, house purchase would only receive 20 per cent of those funds. I refer honourable members who are interjecting to one of the problems that has been ignored by the Opposition. If one examines who is assisted by house purchase assistance schemes and who is assisted by rental assistance schemes, one will note that house purchase assistance schemes miss the people who most need assistance. Figures published by the Ministry of Housing indicate that if one considers people assisted under house purchase schemes, those receiving under $150 a week have received 7·8 per cent of the house purchase assistance funds, whereas 92·2 per cent of those earning over $150 a week have received the balance. If one considers rental assistance schemes, 76 per cent of people earning less than $150 a week receive assistance whereas those earning over $150 a week comprise the remaining 24 per cent. The proportion of 76 per cent of that income level earning less than $150 a week indicates overwhelmingly that one cannot have a housing assistance policy that is based on house purchase assistance schemes alone.

I refer the House to information contained in the Governments submission to the Federal Government concerning negotiations for the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement. The Government is actively pursuing policies not only in Victoria but also in its relationship with the Commonwealth and other States. The Victorian Government requires a balanced housing policy, the major vehicle of which would be the funds flowing to the States through that agreement. The emphasis on the agreement should be to provide and support housing policies for the lower-income groups in Australia. The agreement should establish the framework, the principles and the bulk of the funding for the delivery of housing assistance for these groups.

The Victorian Government believes the new agreement should have the primary goal of alleviating housing-related poverty and equalizing the benefits to similar households in different tenures. It believes a broad strategy, which I earlier outlined, grows from that. The matter of housing-related poverty is a critical one and the levity of Opposition members demeans the problems that confront people in attempting to rent or acquire housing accommodation in the community. Housing-related poverty is a trap for people who are particularly vulnerable in particular phases of their life-style which tends to be cyclical. Housing problems can arise quickly from family breakdowns, the death of a spouse, eviction from private rental quarters or recent arrivals to the country in the case of refugees.

In many cases, people emerge from that housing conflict but there are others who are permanently caught. Not only do present budgets for housing reflect the stand taken by the Government, but also the Government has proceeded to undertake the best arrangement it can for the new agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—It would be remiss of me if I did not address a couple of points raised by the honourable member for St Kilda. Indeed, he read his speech remarkably well! It is disappointing that the honourable member did not personally research some of his information. The honourable member spoke about public housing and his comments should not go unanswered.

The problem with public housing in Victoria is that with the Government's attitude towards tenancy law reform, many owners of property will not rent those properties. In the electorate of the honourable member for St Kilda, an increasing number of units have become strata title and a number of his constituents have approached me for assistance. The problem is that because people feel insecure about the Government's attitude towards tenancy law reform, they are selling their private rental stock. This means more people on lower incomes have to apply for public housing. It stands to reason that the less private rental accommodation there is, the higher is the rental charged for that accommodation. As that rental increases, more people are not able

to afford to pay it. Therefore, the Government has to assist in solving their house accommodation problems, and the Victorian taxpayers will have to further foot the bill, as there will be an increase in taxes. I suggest to honourable members, such as the honourable member for St Kilda, that if the Government wants to provide a service to these people for housing, they should request the Government to put to rest the fears people have about the policy of the Government on tenancy law reform. I do not for a moment believe everything should be stacked in favour of the landlord. There is certainly a role for the landord to play concerning his tenants and the Opposition supports that concept. There are a number of other issues to which I shall address myself.

One of the most important and expensive areas of Government is the education budget. I shall mention a specific area of education relating to the building loan fund. Through that fund, the Government lends money from one area of Government to another area of Government. The election pamphlet called *Victoria. State of Achievement*, indicates that the State school development building programme allocation will increase from $128·4 million this year to $176 million. However, it fails to indicate that much of this money is being lent at a rate of about 15 per cent interest. The Education Department is being given a sum of money above what it normally receives for the building programme, but that money is borrowed from the State Development Fund, and must be paid back from one arm of Government to another.

The south central region has informed me that in about five years the entire budget that it would normally spend on cyclic maintenance, building programmes or whatever, will be used for the single purpose of paying interest to the Department of Management and Budget. This is a crazy system of management. One arm of Government is lending to another arm of Government and taxing it on the money borrowed. For the Treasurer to introduce concepts like that is staggering. It is a pity that more people are not aware of it. As people become aware of it, the Government may react to their views and change its policy. Substantial amounts of money are being wasted by a group called the Public Works Construction Group which does a lot of school construction, particularly in the south central region. I must admit that it operated under the former Government as well, so I am also criticizing the former Government in that regard. Instead of tendering on a particular school building programme, the Minister concerned allocates the school building programme to the group. It does not have to put in a tender; it puts in an estimate.

In the electorate I represent, there was a project at the Malvern Central Primary School worth about $550 000. The construction group was told that it would be given the job. A senior officer of the Public Works Department told me that the costs of the group, relative to normal building companies, are approximately 15 to 20 per cent higher.

The construction group puts in an estimate for a job. The estimate may be $600 000, or whatever; there is no set cost, and that is where the inequity exists. If the costs of the group are, say, $610 000 instead of $550 000, either part of the school building programme has to be cut back or the work is carried out by the construction group for $610 000, when a private company could have done the job for $550 000. The region's education budget is then correspondingly reduced.

It is an area of Government that is costing more money than it should. The Treasurer talks about his interest in private enterprise. Here is his opportunity to prove it! Thank goodness the Minister of Education had the good sense, after the Public Works Construction Group had played around for months, to decide that this project at the Malvern Central Primary School ought to go to public tender. The school building project has now gone to public tender, and the region and the school are pleased with the result. However, it does not remove the problem faced by the south central region, which is constantly dealing with the construction group. In the areas represented by the honourable members for St Kilda, Albert Park and myself, there are a large number of magnificent old school buildings that need constant upgrading to ensure that children have proper educational facilities. However, less value is being received for the dollars being spent.

Another area to which I address myself is employment and training. I have said before that the Ministry of Employment and Training is the wrong title; it ought to be called "Mickey Mouse Productions". Most of the jobs being created, particularly under the employment initiatives programme, are a waste of time and money. A person may be on the dole for six months and then take up a job for six months under a job creation scheme, such as the scheme reported in the *Age* under which a group of clowns in the Latrobe Valley ended up making masks. The Treasurer may interject, but it is no joke when $85 000 of taxpayers' funds are wasted. The Treasurer has the responsibility of ensuring that the money allocated to every area of Government that he helps to administer ought to be spent effectively. It is stupid of the Treasurer to make inane interjections.

A person given a job for six months will worry about what will happen after that period. Most of the young people involved in these employment initiative programmes become more embittered than they were before they participated in the programme. About 40 per cent go on to full-time jobs. The other 60 per cent are left on the dole and are forgotten. They are disenchanted with society and the people who represent them in this Chamber.

The Government has demonstrated its uncaring attitude by cutting back expenditure in the Budget on apprenticeship training. A sum of $3 million was allocated to what the Minister called a new scheme, and the actual decrease was about $250 000 on the previous year. The Minister said that his new scheme was marvellous. Apprentices suffered even more than previously. Apprenticeship training, through apprenticeship colleges and other systems, is one of the most important areas of employment training. It creates the opportunity for people to be trained in the building, metal trades, computer technology and other industries. Those tradesmen are essential to the community. The honourable member for Geelong East has asked, by interjection, how many apprentices I employed when I was a sub-contractor in the building industry.

I will tell him that I employed none and the reason for that is obvious. When one realizes that it now costs an employer a minimum of $4800 to cover a final year apprentice for workers compensation, one realizes that a small businessman cannot afford that expense. Workers compensation is only one factor and does not take into account matters such as holiday pay and other loadings. The inane comments of the honourable member for Geelong East demonstrate that he does not understand the problems of small business.

It is true that small businessmen are not taking on apprentices as they did in years past when employers, in the bricklaying and carpentry trades would have apprentices. Today, most of them cannot afford to take on an apprentice.

Admittedly it would be a bandaid measure, but it would cost the Government approximately $17·4 million to cover the workers compensation payments in respect of the entire apprenticeship scheme. This year it increased the allocation for workers compensation for first-year apprentices from $1·5 million to just over $1·6 million. That is a joke. In the booklet entitled *Victoria. State of Achievement,* the Government talks about what it has done for apprenticeships. The most significant matter I can find is that the Government has employed an extraordinary number of apprenticeship supervisors, but what good is that if the supervisors have no apprentices to supervise? It is another bureaucratic bungle by this mob opposite, and I call them a mob.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will use correct expressions in respect of honourable members.

Mr LEIGH—I relate that expression to the Government which is responsible for future employment and does not meet that responsibility. The Ministry of Employment and Training should be renamed "Mickey Mouse Productions" because that is what is occurring. Since Mickey Mouse was King of Moomba one year, why did we not have the Minister as King of Moomba the next year? The only difference would be that Mickey Mouse probably earned more than the Minister earned.

I move on to the Premier's Department, where a wonderful job scheme has been created, although it is difficult to determine just where, except for the media unit which has cost the taxpayer hundreds of thousands of dollars for feeding press releases to journalists giving misleading information

about what the Government is doing. It is little wonder that the last Budget in this State was titled by the Opposition "Jolly's folly". It is a wonder the Premier did not label the creation of the media unit as part of the employment initiatives programme.

It is extraordinary that the media unit was established within the Premier's Department when the Premier said that no Minister would have his own press officers. The Minister of Health has on his staff a number of people to publicize himself and to ensure that he surpasses the Minister of Transport as the most photographed Minister. The Minister of Transport also has similar people on his staff. These matters are all dealt with in the Supply Bill, and the Victorian taxpayer will foot the bill.

In the past two years, State taxes in Victoria have increased by approximately 40·2 per cent. That has not been in the interests of Victoria; it has been in the interests of promoting so-called open government. However, when one goes through the Budget, one cannot find details of the media unit. The Treasurer said that programme budgeting was being introduced to assist honourable members in obtaining information, but I cannot find information concerning the cost of establishing the media unit. If the Treasurer's computerized system is so good, why does it not give that information? It shows it under policy co-ordination or Ministerial advisers' salaries or some other area, but one cannot break it down, and the Government is reluctant to make that information available.

The Ministry of Transport is probably the leading bureaucratic organization in this State. At one time, the Chairman of VicRail, as it was then called, was one person removed from the Minister; if he wanted to discuss matters with the Minister, he could go directly to him. Today there is at least one person between the Minister and the Chairman of V/Line. It is a job creation scheme for those who earn more than $45 000 a year; nevertheless, it is a job creation scheme.

The Road Construction Authority is broken up into numerous little groups but, when it is all boiled down, there are more bureaucrats in that authority than ever before. I recently had the pleasure of inviting myself to the turning of the first sod of the arterial road between the South-Eastern and Mulgrave freeways. It demonstrated exactly what the Government is about. ALP members and bureaucrats were present. There were probably more bureaucrats than ALP members, and one should not be surprised at that because the bureaucrats are directing the Government in any case, so it is not surprising that the Government is reacting in this way.

The Minister is colour co-ordinating the trams, trains and buses. He is getting rid of a safe colour—the orange on the "Z" class trams—and painting them green and yellow, even though they do not need repainting. The Minister likes to see colour co-ordinated trams and trains running past his office, or wherever he happens to be. I should be surprised if his house is not also green and gold. The railways and tramways rolling-stock should be repainted when necessary, but it should not be repainted simply to please the eye. In these tough economic times, everything possible should be done to ensure that taxpayers do not suffer, but that is not the approach adopted by this mob. The attitude of the Minister is that trams, trains and buses must be pleasing to his eye.

The Minister has introduced the Fairway system, to which I constantly refer as the unfair system. It has been proved by one of the Government's own reports to be a waste of money. The Minister and I have battled for months over this scheme. When I initially pointed out that the concrete blocks that had been laid were already breaking up, the Minister said that the Government would put down synthetic blocks.

I set out to prove that the minimum cost for the replacement of those markers would be $100 000. The Minister of Transport replied that it was a trivial amount of money. The Minister should tell the needy sections of the community that $100 000 is a trivial amount!

The Government has spent $3 million on the Fairway system, which will be extended and more money spent. Under the Freedom of Information Act, I have tried to obtain a report commissioned by the Minister of Transport on the system. The Minister has not pursued the Labor Party policy of open government. The report indicates that the system has been a waste of time, effort and money. However, the Government will not table that report. Obviously, the Minister

has never been driven down Collins Street in his chauffeur driven limousine because if he had he would have pulled up the markers upon discovering the chaos that they are causing.

There has been major bureaucratic bungling in the area of transport. In a recent article in the *Age*, reference was made to a new $10 million railway computer, which is causing trains to stop. The drivers of the trains have to telephone through saying, "My train has been stopped; can you put me back on the computer?" The Minister has admitted that trains are now less reliable than they were ten years ago. A massive amount of money has been spent on a new computer, but to no avail.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has claimed that in the two years in which the Labor Party has been in government, the strength of the Victoria Police Force has been increased by 191. When the Minister was in opposition he said, "When I am the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Victoria will have 1000 extra police." The Minister has another twelve months in office in which to fulfil that promise.

The Police Training Academy is almost vacant. Indeed, these days the Police Force and the Minister do not appear to get on well, but that is not surprising when one considers some of the promises made by the Minister and not kept.

In the area I represent, the police are one police car short and yet the area has one of the highest burglary rates in Melbourne. It is to be hoped that the Government can rectify these matters.

The Government should be spending money more effectively than outlined in the Bill. The Labor Party assumed office because the community had decided on a change. Each member of the Opposition would accept that. The community had high expectations of what a Labor Government would do. The Government has failed miserably.

Mr Simpson—53 per cent to 36 per cent.

Mr LEIGH—The only opinion poll that counts is that held on election day. I shall be happy to face the electorate whenever an election is held. I shall be only too pleased to discuss the record of the Government, which is one of misleading the community and hiding the truth. The Government has broken its election promises. The only election promise the Government has kept has been to ban week-end retail trading. One of my constituents is tonight locked up at the Malvern police station waiting to be transferred to Pentridge Prison. He represents the only election promise the Government has kept.

I have no doubt that, after the next election, the Premier will be replaced by my Scottish friend, the Minister of Transport. The Government has failed to live up to the expectations it created in the community and it has failed to fulfil its promises. It is time the Government was removed.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I am disturbed at the trend towards the takeover of various activities by members of unions who from time to time work in Victoria, and who at other times receive a certain amount of publicity. On 26 March, a circular was issued by the Health Commission to all public hospitals, ambulance services and community health centres. The contents of that circular are alarming. The circular states, *inter alia:*

> In accordance with the wishes of the Government, the following administrative procedures should be implemented in respect of paid education leave for trade union courses.
>
> An employee who has been selected by his or her union to attend an approved trade union education course shall be entitled to a maximum of five days paid leave per calendar year for that purpose, providing that departmental operating requirements permit the granting of such leave.

It is interesting to note that under Item 26 the allocation for the Loddon Campaspe–Mallee region is $3·723 million. That is a comparatively small allocation compared with the allocation to the other health regions. I refer to the allocation for health services in the Central Highlands–Wimmera region of $13·919 million. That represents a far greater increase than the allocation for the Loddon Campaspe–Mallee region.

Hospitals in the Loddon Campaspe–Mallee region will have to provide fully paid five days leave each calendar year for trade union course attendance by

employees who are selected for that purpose by their union.

The additional costs will be felt particularly in the hospital and nursing fields. In some hospitals, it will be necessary to replace people if they are away for five days. I have been advised that the Mildura Base Hospital will have an effective full-time staff of 665. The cost of having employees attend the union training courses will be of the order of $1000 to $1500 a year with hidden replacement costs on top of that figure.

Honourable members will remember that in the last Budget brought down by the Cain Government the allocation for the health field suffered a 1·5 per cent cut. All those involved in the field had to reduce expenditure and cut back on services, particularly over the Christmas–New Year period when wards were closed down so that certain establishments could save that 1·5 per cent. The hospitals are now suffering from the additional expenditure on paid education leave resulting from staff attending the trade union training courses. Although I do not disagree with the view that staff should learn more about their trade through their union, particularly if the education is constructive, but that is not always the way.

Sometimes these union training courses teach the employees how to protest and strike, if necessary, against the hospital committee of management or whoever is employing them. That leads those employers right into the hands of the Socialist left. The only thing the circular from the Health Commission mentioned about expenses was:

> Expenses associated with trade union training courses, e.g. fares, accommodation and meal costs are not the responsibility of departments/instrumentalities.

The interesting aspect which applies to Mildura and other remote areas of Victoria that prior to an agreement on paid education leave for trade union courses coming into force, in the past the committees of management had agreed to sponsor members of the union to enable them to attend the training courses.

When the union was told it would have to pay the travel costs of the union members attending the training course, it said "Sorry, we are not interested." How sincere is the union? The honourable member for Springvale, who is interjecting, should be aware that that is a fact. If the honourable member had any brains he would know what is happening throughout the State. It is a reflection on the Socialist left that situations such as that which I have just described are forever increasing the costs to the taxpayers.

The same thing will happen with the training of occupational health and safety representatives. Those who must attend from remote parts of the State will cost the taxpayers more than the normal costs that would be incurred.

That situation is unreasonable and it will blow up in the face of the Government. The circular has a further attachment from the Health Commission which is dated 13 January 1984. It concerned me because it referred to union membership. The statement on the front of the memorandum indicated that the Commission has now received further information from the Ministry of Industrial Affairs about encouraging union membership.

The person concerned indicated that the attached circular from the Ministry of Industrial Affairs advised the wishes of the Government. It stated:

> Where doubts exist to which union is the relevant and appropriate union, please contact the Personnel Division of the Health Commission in the first instance.

It is signed by "S. M. Crabb, Minister for Industrial Affairs". In part it stated:

> Consistent with this policy,

That is the policy of supplying a list of employees' names and work locations to the various unions concerned. It continued:

> . . . the Government has now agreed that public sector employers release details of employee names and work locations to the relevant and appropriate union(s) and association(s) recognized as having coverage of the employees. Where doubts exist as to which union is the relevant and appropriate Union, Instrumentalities, Authorities and Departments are advised to discuss the issue with the MIA.

The MIA is the Ministry of Industrial Affairs. It continued:

> With this Circular, the Government has fully developed its "union encouragement" policy.

The Government was elected with the mandate that people would not be forced into joining unions if they did not desire to do

so. Now the State is faced with a direct Government policy termed the "union encouragement policy".

The public should be well aware of that when the next elections are held, which will be in the near future. Work at the Melbourne Concert Hall has stopped simply because various union members, particularly those with the Builders Labourers Federation, decided that they wanted some payola for work that had been or had not been done—I am not sure which. In an article in the *Age* dated 18 April under the heading "Concerts for the workers in $200 000 payout", it stated:

> The Victorian Government yesterday agreed to pay about $200 000—including free concert tickets to workers—to settle a building dispute which was disrupting the final stages of the Arts Centre.
>
> The settlement includes tickets for a family of four for each of the 300 workers, and provision of the concert hall free for the use of unions once a year, probably on Labour Day. This will cost $100 000.
>
> The other $100 000 is payment for three days during which the workers were on strike.

Who is paying for that? Obviously the taxpayers of Victoria. It was interesting to watch the Channel 10 television news when it was announced that the taxpayers generally were paying for the workers to complete that project. The workers were also paid from taxpayers' money for periods when they did not work. The taxpayers also paid for the free concert tickets for the families. On top of that, the workers were donated the use of the building for one day every year. Again, that comes out of the taxpayers' money.

The newsreader finished up by stating that everybody was very happy except for some of the taxpayers. Obviously, that will be a big item in the industrial relations programme of the Government when the election comes around. It raises some interesting questions because one might ask what the Builders Labourers Federation and the other unions concerned would demand if the State Bank building was still under construction. When one considers the new Mint at Craigieburn and a few other public buildings, one wonders what sort of payola would be used to finish those jobs. It is interesting to let one's imagination run and think about some of the buildings that have been recently completed or are being built at this time.

The cartoonists in various newspapers are a good guide to public opinion and it is interesting to note Tandberg in today's *Age* depicting the new concert hall area with three or four builders labourers sitting in the front row and the caption underneath, "Norm's Town House." That is an indication of the public's feelings and how they view these matters.

I refer to the statement made last week by the Premier and the Treasurer when they launched the new Victorian Government blueprint on future economic development in Victoria. Under Item 46, programme No. 464, an amount of $38·512 million is being provided for industry and regional development assistance recurrent expenditure. After the original ballyhoo of the Premier and the Treasurer about presenting a blueprint for the economic development in Victoria for the next ten years, on Friday the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology came out with a document with a little more detail.

The real truth hit home and now we find that, although the Bill before the Parliament provides $38·512 million for industry assistance, the amount being taken out of the assistance for industry throughout Victoria is $42·390 million. Admittedly this will not come out all at once, it will be gradually phased out and it will be of some help to businesses. The end result will be that $42 million will come out and for the first five months of the coming year $38 million will be put back. One may wonder who will miss out. It will be industries in towns such as Hamilton, Colac, Horsham, Swan Hill and all the other places that fail to be classified as Type A or Type B. Bairnsdale is in that group, as is Echuca.

People in business in those areas are very concerned about the trend that is taking place of the Government centralizing the assistance in areas that are obviously the bigger centres. These smaller centres still have some business. In fact to take away small business from Hamilton or Horsham would probably be an advantage for two or three big businesses that remain in those centres. The manufacturing businesses that are there are the only things that keep those places going.

I believe the Government just does not understand the problems of the country areas or it is totally disinterested. That is probably more the case. It is obvious that the Government is more interested in the metropolitan area and not what happens in the country areas. Last week the red hand of Socialism fell right across country Victoria. I do not know whether the general public is as yet aware of what is happening but, so far as I am concerned, it is the start of a similar system that applied in Nazi Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s when business that failed to comply with Government direction lost assistance and the Government became increasingly harsh as time went on until a stage was reached where businesses could no longer cope and they folded and were taken over by the State and nationalized under one big war machine, which we are well aware of from an historical point of view.

Of course, one has only to consider occupied countries in Europe such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where Soviet Russia is doing the same thing with them. I cannot believe the Government is taking the direction in which it is heading which is similar to what is occurring in those countries and similar to ideas which have been rejected by all free-minded people in the world.

It is my view that this is the beginning of, "galloping Socialism," in Victoria. It is unfortunate that the Government cannot see the way in which it is heading because the general public will surely rise up against that point of view in the near future. If the present Parliament runs its full course and there is an election around March or April next year, there will be sufficient people to throw many of the back-bench members of the Government out of office and there could easily be a change of Government. I believe the honourable member for Westernport when he said that he may well be the next Minister of Housing in Victoria.

The next item which concerns me is the education allocation. Again there is Ministerial interference in the appointment of the technical and further education college councils around Victoria. In most parts of the State, the membership of technical and further education college councils were due for replacement or review and a number of names had to be submitted by various councils to the Minister for his approval. Most of the council members, or all of them, were returned to the colleges.

Mr Leigh—I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr WHITING—I was indicating that the nomination of all the technical and further education college councils in Victoria that had been submitted to the Minister were returned to the colleges because there were not sufficient female nominees among the names that were put forward. In some cases, three names were to be put forward and in some cases no females were nominated. The lists were returned to the college councils with a request for female names to be included in the nominations that had been put forward.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kirkwood)—Order! If the honourable member for Malvern wishes to conduct a private conversation, would he please remove himself from the Chamber.

Mr WHITING—The TAFE college council to which I refer conducted some research and found a woman who had reasonable qualifications and who was happy to be nominated. The list of three names was sent back, including the name of the female nominee, and, to everyone's surprise, the female nominee was not accepted. In fact, another name was put forward which was, presumably, chosen from a list that was supplied by the local branch of the Technical Teachers Union of Victoria.

This is again a complete breach of faith by the Minister of Education regarding individual persons, and the people involved now have absolutely no confidence in the Government or in the administration of this aspect of technical and further education in Victoria. This will have severe ramifications. College councils were required to nominate a female—presumably, not on the basis that she had any qualifications, but purely because she was a female—and, when a female was nominated by that school council, her name was rejected and the name of another nominee was put in her place. For that to take place in the TAFE college system is a sorry state of affairs. It is big business, because the recurrent expenditure for technical and further education is

$75·915 million for the five months covered by the Bill.

I am concerned about the trend that is taking place with regard to union membership. Unions are putting forward nominations for representation on various boards and other operations throughout the State, purely on the basis that the nominees belong to a union, and not on their expertise in the area.

I support the measure, because it is obvious that provision has to be made for the period between now and the introduction of the Budget later this year, but I am most concerned about the trend taking place in various areas and the fact that the Government appears to be completely unaware of the damage it is causing to its own image in this State in the long term.

Mr KEMPTON (Warrnambool)—I should like to stress to the House the deep-felt concern that I have regarding the housing elements of the Supply Bill. Some honourable members mentioned the problems facing people who are seeking to obtain rental accommodation or seeking to purchase housing accommodation.

In the electorate of Warrnambool, there is an acute shortage of both rental housing and housing for home ownership. This problem has been of constant concern to me and to the municipalities in the electorate. However, there does not seem to be any action being taken by the Government, particularly in the electorate of Warrnambool and the City of Warrnambool. No action has been taken in other parts of country Victoria either. There is no evidence that the Government is taking action to rectify this extremely sorry state of affairs.

It has been brought to my attention recently that, in the year 1983–84, the Government contributed some $27 million less for housing than it did in 1982–83. Any increase in funds provided for the provision of housing in the State came directly from Federal funds. This is another example of the Government's shallow commitment to the less privileged in our community.

A Government that was firmly committed to providing a roof over the heads of Victorians who are less privileged should be adamant about maintaining its contribution of funds to housing, at least at the level of the inflation rate. However, the Government has seen fit to cut its contribution for the provision of public housing. That is the over-riding position of what is occurring in Victoria.

Further than that, since the Government has been in office, there has been an increase of the order of 10 000 in the number of people waiting for Government rental housing. These figures are reflected quite plainly and definitely in the position that exists at Warrnambool. The Bill is directed towards the residual part of the financial year, and I hope, when the Budget is being framed, that specific and direct contributions will flow from the Government to rectify the acute housing position that exists in Warrnambool.

I have had the pleasure of having the honourable member for Wantirna, who is the Liberal Party shadow spokesperson on community welfare services, and the honourable member for Westernport, who is the Liberal Party shadow spokesperson on housing, visit the electorate I represent and to speak with the people concerned with welfare and housing. Many charity groups and other persons concerned with community welfare have stressed most firmly to those future Ministers that the housing shortage in Warrnambool is significant and that immediate steps need to be taken to rectify the situation.

Much of the problem relating to the shortage of housing in Warrnambool has been caused by uncertainty and speculation surrounding a proposition put forward by the Government about changes in the tenancy law. Honourable members have yet to learn with precision, what those changes will be. Manipulation by speculation in any market-place, particularly in one as sensitive as the housing market-place, has a detrimental effect on the availability of rental housing to potential tenants. That is a totally unsatisfactory situation.

The Warrnambool *Standard* has been most active in providing adequate information regarding the need for additional funds to reduce the housing crisis in Warrnambool. The problem initially arose as a result of the tragic bush fires of Ash Wednesday, which resulted in a number of people seeking accommodation in the City of Warrnambool. As a consequence of that,

rents increased and the availability of rental accommodation was diminished.

Due to the popularity of the Warrnambool Institute of Advanced Education—I emphasize the most worthy popularity of that institute with tertiary students—there is an influx of students to Warrnambool to pursue the worth-while courses offered by that institute. That adds to the pressure put on housing in that area. Enrolments at the institute have grown year after year, and this year is a record year. The shortage of rental accommodation has not eased. It is a sorry fact, that, as a result of the inaction of the Government to the housing problem, students who attend the institute are forced, for at least a short time, to live in caravans and tents. That is a most unsatisfactory situation. However, what is worse is the large number of people in the electorate I represent who are permanent residents in caravans because they are unable to find alternative accommodation.

A recent report indicated that the south-west region has a higher proportion of people permanently living in caravans than Victoria has as a whole. The report indicated that, according to a State Government report on long-term residency in caravan parks, 440 people live permanently in caravans in the south-west region. Figures reveal that almost 11 700 people throughout the State reside permanently in caravan parks. The south-western region has 3·7 per cent of Victoria's permanent caravan dwellers while it has 2·6 per cent of the State population.

The Warrambool Shire has been concerned about that problem and has indicated that it is understated. The shire believes the main reason for such long-term caravan residency is related to the lack of suitable and affordable alternative accommodation and to financial considerations. The statistics also reveal that an above average proportion of divorced and separated men live in caravans. Single parents tend to use caravans as short-term emergency accommodation, which then becomes long-term accommodation, and that is unfortunate.

Recently, it was reported—and people who have any knowledge of Warrnambool are concerned about such reports—that Warrnambool accommodation is becoming worse, all available houses and flats have been let and most real estate agents report long waiting lists. The Ministry of Housing lists 230 people waiting for accommodation in the Warrnambool area. The waiting period for obtaining accommodation varies between 20 months and 40 months. What an unfortunate position!

Many of the charitable organizations in the electorate I represent have been active in seeking to rectify the situation. Through discussions with them, it has been made horrifically clear to me that the problem is acute. I have been active in trying to rectify the situation, but, sadly, to no avail to date. It is hoped that members of the Government, particularly the Ministers concerned, will take definite steps to rectify this extremely serious problem.

It may surprise honourable members to know that, in the electorate I represent, it is possible to pay between $40 and $80 a week for a rented flat and up to $120 for a rented house. That is believed to be an understatement. Although the Government is supposed to be concerned about the less privileged members of the community, no steps have been taken to rectify the problems in the electorate I represent.

Within the electorate I represent, the real estate agents are concerned about this matter. They have indicated that they cannot find sufficient housing for rental, despite their strenuous efforts, to reduce the long waiting lists. One real estate agent indicated that it was extremely difficult to place potential tenants and another one stated his firm has a long waiting list and that he saw no immediate answer to the problem. What a sad situation!

It is dismaying to hear comments by members of the Government about the steps the Government will take to rectify the housing shortage across the State. That would have a flow-on effect in rectifying the acute problem in the electorate I represent. Earlier, the honourable member for St Kilda suggested solutions to the problems. Earlier in my speech, I emphasized the inadequacies of the Government's action. The philosophy of backing up the suggested solutions to providing accommodation concern me. The solutions are: Greater controls on the rental market; the breaking of the nexus between supply and demand, and

other steps that would unnecessarily interfere with the operation of the housing rental markets.

The honourable member for St Kilda failed to be aware of some extremely important studies taken in areas where controls have been imposed on rentals. The honourable member failed to address the problem of potentiality of key money and other non-pecuniary forms of discrimination against tenants and others who may seek certain forms of accommodation. His comments lacked substance, and they certainly did not address those issues.

I am aware that in this final year the Government may have little chance to respond to the need for the provision of extra funds to address the housing problem within the electorate I represent. Members of the Opposition are fully aware of the problem. In a short time, when the Opposition is in a position to have a say where housing funds are to be directed, Warrnambool will be an important beneficiary because it is an area facing a housing crisis. Like so many areas of country Victoria, Warrnambool is not having its housing crisis addressed by the Government. The Government is not concerned about country people, even though many are less privileged members of the community than city residents. The Government directs concern solely to people in the metropolitan area. The Bill is a clear example of that.

A further issue concerns a matter which some honourable members may regard as being light in nature. It goes very much to the central core of the functioning of Government in providing a sense of State identity. It underlines an important function of local members of Parliament who should also participate in providing that sense of identity. The issue pertains to the State of Victoria flag which falls under the responsibility of the Department of Premier and Cabinet in the Supply Bill. I was most dismayed in November last year—perhaps after the time of other honourable members—to receive the following letter from the Chief of Protocol:

> I regret to advise that the 1983–84 budget for flags has been exhausted.
>
> It is expected that further funds will be made available in the 1984–85 budget. Any requests for flags should be submitted after July 1984.

I was concerned about that, particularly in the light of Victoria's 150th anniversary which is all too quickly approaching us. In March, I wrote to the Premier about the problem. I received an interim response in April and, on 10 April, I received the following full response from the Premier:

> In answering a question in the Legislative Assembly on 4 April, 1984, I explained that the funds available for the provision of flags for this financial year had been exhausted. However, I gave an assurance that adequate funds would be available for the provision of flags in the new financial year. This will allow five months for the provision of flags before the start of the sesquicentenary year.

This is yet another example of the slipshod approach of the Government to this significant approaching sesquicentenary. The Government is not prepared to give Parliamentarians the privilege of giving away State of Victoria flags in preparation for the celebration. The flags will be available only in time for the sesquicentenary. That is an unfortunate situation. Honourable members may rest assured that, since I have been in this place, many bowling and rifle clubs, as well as independent and State schools within the electorate I represent, have been delighted to receive State of Victoria flags. They believe the flag contributes significantly to a sense of identity that the Government seeking to erode this identity.

Mr Leigh—Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr KEMPTON—It is extraordinary that at 6 minutes past 2 in the morning the Government is not prepared to provide sufficient members—which is its responsibility—to see the proposed legislation through the House. If that is the sort of lack of confidence Government members have in their Minister and in the proposed legislation, perhaps the proceedings should stop here and now.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member that it is the responsibility of all honourable members to remain within the House.

Mr KEMPTON—I was addressing myself to an issue of significance to the people within the electorate I represent, namely, the State of Victoria flag. As evidenced by their lack of attendance in the

House, honourable members opposite seem to have difficulty in recognizing the significance afforded to the flags provided to members of Parliament.

Recently, I had the pleasure of addressing a number of Returned Services League sub-branches, all of which have shown considerable concern, not only about the State of Victoria flag, but also about the preservation of the Australian flag. Honourable members present will no doubt have recently received letters from the Returned Services League raising a question mark about the future of the State of Victoria flag. Indeed, one should be extremely concerned about the absence of flags which ought to be currently available to members of Parliament to present to groups within the electorates they represent. The shortage of flags adds further weight to the cloud hanging over the future of the State of Victoria flag.

It is extremely convenient for members of the Government party to suggest alterations or to undermine that fine institution by not making the flag available to members of Parliament to present to clubs or organizations within the electorates they represent. I had hoped that the Government would take immediate action to rectify that position in the Supply Bill. After all, the Bill provides funds for the remaining part of the financial year. Indeed, as there are not funds apparently available for the provision of State of Victoria flags, this would have been the appropriate time for the Government to show support for the flag by providing additional funds in the Bill before the House.

The Returned Services League has taken a commendable stand in supporting the preservation of the State flag. In a few weeks time, I will have the pleasure of presenting flags to the Koroit police station and the Koroit RSL sub-branch. The fact that I have been requested to present these flags indicates a commitment to the flag. The presentation of flags is one small but significant privilege of being a member of Parliament.

I hope the Government will be sufficiently committed to the identity and the current form of the State flag and to make it readily available to all members of Parliament.

Since concern about the flag was expressed by the very hard-working State President of the Returned Services League, the Government has taken no steps to reassure the public and the RSL of the position of the State flag. The State President of the Returned Services League is keen to ensure that his branches are made aware of the position adopted by the Government in relation to the State flag and has expressed to me—as have members of many sub-branches—a concern about the future of the State flag.

I hope members on the Government side will show the same type of commitment that members of the Liberal Opposition have shown about preserving this important aspect of Victorian identity and will be active in distributing flags throughout the electorates they represent.

Support exists in the electorate I represent for the provision of adequate funding for the appropriate distribution of flags by local members of Parliament.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—In speaking on the Supply Bill for the first five months of the coming financial year, and virtually the last Supply Bill that this Treasurer will have the opportunity of presenting to the Parliament, it is interesting to observe how the appropriations have been set out in such a way as to reflect the new programme budgeting technique, which is a good move. This technique is a progression of the policies that were being implemented by the last Liberal Government and I congratulate the Treasurer for the additional work undertaken in that area.

All honourable members look forward to the day when computer print-outs will be attached to the Supply Bill giving details of actual areas of expenditure rather than aggregate areas of expenditure which are, in a way, meaningless and require an enormous amount of research to obtain a clear picture of all the details. That is something to which I look forward to receiving in the future. There is nothing very difficult about providing print-outs in the Budget presentations, considering the new technology and computerization that is now available.

Item 16 provides an appropriation of the Attorney-General. That item attracts my attention because, in the past eighteen months or so, a tremendous amount of disquiet has been expressed by people throughout Victoria about the long delays in achieving hearings in the courts.

Honourable members will recall that when the Premier held the portfolio of Attorney-General, he announced the winding down and closure of some court houses in country areas. That decision was not well received and it was the beginning of what appears to be a deliberate plan by the Government to reduce the availability and proximity of court services and facilities in country areas.

I was amazed by the decision to cancel the circuit sittings of the Supreme Court in some cities in Victoria. For example, in Wangaratta, the circuit courts for last year were substantially curtailed, if not completely cancelled.

Sittings had been conducted in those areas for many years and provided the only opportunity for many litigants to have cases heard in the superior jurisdiction, short of having to join the long queue for hearings in the city. Honourable members will understand that if litigants have to come to the city to have a case heard in a superior court, an additional cost is involved, in addition to tremendous inconvenience for the witnesses, the parties and their representatives.

The cancellation of circuit sittings in the superior courts in the past few months has caused tremendous hardship for a number of people. As a member representing a country electorate, I have spoken with a number of families and individuals who are desperate to have cases disposed of.

A case was drawn to my attention the other day which concerned a man who was severely injured in a motor car accident about four years ago. The man has four children, two of whom are intellectually disabled and one of whom suffers from severe epilepsy. The man is unable to work and is living in a caravan on a farm property with his wife and family. Payments on the caravan were in arrears with the hire purchase company for many years because the amount of money received by way of sickness benefits was inadequate to provide for the total needs of the family.

The man's case claiming damages for the injuries he suffered in the motor car accident, and for the loss of income, was to be heard in the Wangaratta Supreme Court circuit but was put off at the last minute because, as a criminal trial was to be held in that court, the civil cases were adjourned. That has meant that the family has not received the judgment and justice it so anxiously seeks.

An arrangement that had been made with the hire purchase company to defer payments on the caravan—which it was confidently expected the family would be able to resolve because the case would have been disposed of—was not honoured. The hire purchase company indicated that it would have to proceed to repossess the caravan because of the breach of the agreement. I was able to persuade the hire purchase company to defer repossession until the end of the month.

I have been in touch with the solicitor handling the case and I am awaiting a written presentation from him. I intend to see the Attorney-General with that letter in the hope that the Attorney-General will be able to prevail on the court to make an early hearing available to this man and his family.

The family is suffering from extreme stress. I am concerned about the well-being of the wife because of her distress. The children have their own disabilities to carry through life but they are feeling the strain on the family, which is exacerbated by the fact that there is so much uncertainty about the future. No one is able to say when the case will be heard.

Frankly, no one is able to say when these cases will be heard in country Victoria because of the long waiting list and the doubt that exists even now whether, in the next six months, the sittings of superior courts in the circuit sittings will be reinstated. Nobody knows if that will be the case.

The Government deserves strong criticism for failing to allocate adequate resources in the Law Department to provide for, if necessary, additional judges to hear these cases and to tackle the backlog. I hope the Minister for Employment and Training will prevail on the Attorney-General, the Premier and the Treasurer to act quickly, as the distress that is being caused to individuals and families because of this situation is very substantial and is getting worse.

There is considerable and increasing disquiet in the volunteer arm in the community because of the difficulty in obtaining recognition, decisions and funding in certain areas of welfare support. I believe the

most effective form of welfare care and health delivery is that which maximizes and involves the volunteer arm to the utmost. If the community loses the enthusiasm, co-operation and participation of the volunteer arm in these areas, Heaven forbid! The quality of services will drop, the human side of the delivery of the services will be diminished substantially and, of course, the cost to the taxpayer will be increased enormously. That means inevitably that the recipient for the purpose of welfare, the one in need, will miss out. In my view, the Government has to do a lot better in supporting the volunteer arm in the welfare area.

The appropriation for conservation, forests and lands is almost a joke because the Government, in the two years and one month it has been in power, has almost destroyed the confidence in the future of the timber industry and the forest industry. At the moment an inquiry is being held into the forest industry. The fact that there is an inquiry does not worry me in the least. That is all right, but the whole mosaic that led to the setting up of the inquiry is a sad and sorry tale of how the Government, because of commitments it has made, which it is not prepared to make public at this stage, has decided deliberately to reduce the timber and forest industry in the State. There is no question of that being done, and there is enough evidence to establish that that is what the Government is on about.

It is now going through the pretence of establishing a network of committees and inquiries with a view to starving out a lot of people in the industry before the final reports are brought down and causing such economic uncertainty that future investment in the industry that should have been made by now and which could have created more jobs will not, in fact, be made.

On top of that, there is the Land Conservation Council study into the alpine area of north-eastern Victoria, which is a joke. It was a study that followed the completion of a study by the same group during the Hamer Government into the same area. Recommendations of the council had been implemented by the former Premier, Sir Rupert Hamer, following the delivery of the report. The Government has told the council to carry out another inquiry, but the terms of reference of that referral were, frankly, to order the Land Conservation Council to give a report on the ways in which the Government's policies in the area would be implemented, not as they should have been, to ask the council to report and investigate and make recommendations free of any dominant control or direction from the Government.

The interesting thing is that while the Land Conservation Council study and report into the alpine area is now on the Minister's desk, and the final decision has been announced by the Government, the lead recommendation in that report is to the effect that the recommendations as to the size of national parks and the increase in size of those areas should not be implemented unless and until the Government was prepared to commit itself to provide adequate funds for the development, maintenance and care of those new national parks. That is the way the council was trying to communicate to the people of Victoria its concern that the Government had bitten off more than it could chew; that the Government was proposing to do a lot of grand things in some people's view, with larger national parks, but was not providing enough money to adequately maintain, develop and support the existing national parks, let alone take on new areas. That is the significance of that recommendation.

It is interesting to note that the allocation for conservation, forests and lands in the Supply Bill is not really much different from the previous allocation and, therefore, it is obvious that there will be a shortfall in funding for staff, services and development in these areas. I will be apprehensive if the Government implements the recommendations of the Land Conservation Council which, in my view, should not be implemented. It should reject the recommendations because the earlier report had been completed and adopted and was being implemented. That was more than enough. If the Government chooses to ignore what has happened and implements the recommendations, it will mean the further erosion of industry and economic activity in that area, and the creation of larger national parks will lead to havoc because there will not be enough staff, support and finance to maintain them and protect them from all of the problems of weed control, of making roads available, of ensuring access and in fire prevention. That matter will become a major issue as the months roll by.

Mr McNamara—The first Land Conservation Council recommendation should never have been accepted.

Mr LIEBERMAN—It was accepted on balance. It was not a report that gave everybody everything they wanted. I remember well an editorial of the *Age* when Sir Rupert Hamer made his announcement and said on balance the recommendations and final decisions were appropriate because no one got everything they wanted; that it was a balanced decision and by and large it was accepted by people of goodwill from both sides of the fence.

Mr McNamara—We oppose that.

Mr LIEBERMAN—It is interesting to hear the honourable member for Benalla, who was not in Parliament at that time, say "We oppose that". I remember that the two honourable members for North Eastern Province were very much involved, as I was, in the representations on behalf of the community, councils, commerce and the conservation movement.

Mr Leigh—Mr Speaker I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr LIEBERMAN—I can well remember that the honourable member for the North Eastern Province representing the National Party in the other place did not totally reject all the aspects of the Land Conservation Council report, although members of the National Party had some misgivings about the recommendations, just as I did not agree entirely with all the recommendations but on balance realized that the decision had to be made and an end put to the long inquiry and controversy surrounding the study.

Everyone wanted a decision made to enable people to get on with the job and that is what has been happening since. Industries in that area, as a result of the final resolution of the Land Conservation Council study in north-eastern Victoria, have invested in the area and now, to their horror, discover that a new inquiry is being made by the Government into the same area which may change the viability of timber resources and reserves from that which they believed would be the case and that puts their investment in some doubt. Certainly, it places the jobs of many people in jeopardy.

It is a joke to hear members of the Government party talk of what may happen when people in the timber industry, for example, lose their jobs because the industry cannot continue. Members of the Government party say that new job opportunities will develop in the tourism that will be attracted to those areas. If one has ever seen some of the timber workers and truckies, one cannot imagine them being integrated into tourist employment as waiters, and so on.

Mr McNamara—And they are the ones who support the Government!

Mr LIEBERMAN—As the honourable member for Benalla interjects, those workers are probably Government party supporters but the way in which they were treated by the Government led to a strong demonstration by members of timber workers unions the other day. If the Government does heed the significance of that demonstration, it will be making a grave miscalculation.

The education allocation is another issue of concern. It is strange how the Government trumpets throughout the State how well it is doing in education, how generous it has been and how many changes it has made yet, when talking to the people involved in the teaching profession, to school principals and school councils, one learns that with ever-increasing intensity they are dissatisfied with many of the aspects of the Government's policy on education.

Mr Kempton—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr LIEBERMAN—The way in which the Government has treated country students who are trying to pursue further studies in Melbourne and the Government's closure of country student hostels is a disgraceful story of an unsympathetic Government having to sell off valuable assets to pay bills which it had incurred and which it should not have incurred. As a result, country student hostels were placed on the market for sale and some have been sold.

The Minister of Education said that the matter of country student hostels is a Commonwealth Government responsibility. That may be so but the State Government closed down those hostels before it had arranged for the Commonwealth Government to provide the funds for the continuance of those facilities for country students who wished to pursue higher education in Melbourne. The Government simply pulled the rug from under the feet of country students who were and who would normally have been accommodated in those facilities with the explanation only that it is some other Government's responsibility to provide those facilities.

No responsible Government can be excused for that behaviour and the Government stands condemned for its behaviour on that issue. The subject was discussed at length by many people in both the city and country areas and newspapers received many letters to the editors about the callous manner in which the Government withdrew those services simply because it needed to sell real estate—it needed the money—and without even making arrangements with the Commonwealth Government to take over the financial and administrative responsibilities of those facilities.

The Government behaved miserably in the health area also when it decided that, because it had to cut hospital budgets, again because the Government had run into financial trouble, it would no longer provide adequate funds to hospitals to maintain their normal budgetary services. For example, the Royal Children's Hospital had to curtail the supply of drugs to children with serious and acute long-term illnesses, such as children who suffer from cystic fibrosis and other illnesses. Once these children are discharged from hospital—and, fortunately, they have to go back to the hospital at regular intervals—they are not able to receive from the hospital a continuous supply of the life-giving drugs that they need to maintain a reasonable semblance of health.

Again, the Government has stated that it is not its responsibility to provide State hospitals with funds in their budgets to provide drugs for children once they have been discharged from hospital and that it is the Commonwealth Government's responsibility to provide the funds for those drugs once the children have been discharged from hospital so that these expensive life-giving drugs can be purchased. It may be agreed that it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government to provide those funds but the State Government had not made any arrangements with the Commonwealth Government to provide those funds for these children.

The Government had not made any arrangements for these children and it then told those families to sink or swim. Parents of children with cystic fibrosis were told that they had to deal with the Commonwealth Government.

The Minister of Health indicated that he had written a letter to the Commonwealth Government requesting funds to be provided, and he then washed his hands of the matter. That was a disgraceful exhibition. It is another indication of how the Government is actually performing. The Government asks Parliament for a continuation of Supply and trumpets how well it is doing in areas such as health, but it is talking nonsense. The Government is causing havoc in the health area and morale is at its lowest ebb. The staff of hospitals walk around with badges which state "Beware of the grim Roper" which obviously refers to the Minister of Health. The morale of staff in public hospitals is the lowest that it has ever been.

Over the past two months, because of decisions made by the Government, there has been an almost continuous procession of disruption, stop-work meetings and public meetings expressing alarm and dismay. The first ever stop-work meeting in the history of Victoria was held by resident medical officers last year when the Minister of Health stated that they were earning too much. After weeks and weeks of canning the resident medical officers, it turned out that the award under which they were paid and the hours for which they were paid had been consented to by the relevant State Conciliation and Arbitration Board. As soon as that was discovered, the Minister immediately consented and provided more funds for the resident medical officers. What a beauty that was!

The largest meeting of health employees ever was also held when they expressed their concern about what was happening with funding for hospitals. That argument has been continuing in public hospitals, and the

morale of health employees is diminishing every day.

The Government needs Supply to continue in the dying months of its life. The performance of the Government in respect of the financial management, taxing and charging of people at an ever-increasing rate will mean that the Government will not have the opportunity of presiding over the Department of Management and Budget after the next election.

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—In relation to the Supply Bill and the matters before the House, I shall make a few pertinent comments of significance concerning the administration of the Government and the services that it provides, especially in the community welfare sector in Victoria. In presenting the various documents associated with the Supply Bill, the Government has indicated, in appropriate Budget form, an attempt to set out the aims and objectives of the various programmes of Government and to provide the allocations to be provided against those programmes.

It is unfortunate that, although it is a distinct improvement on many past presentations of these documents, the information provided is extraordinarily sketchy. If one considers the Supply Bill, one notes on the back pages that the information is very light. There are huge amounts of funds against line items which do not inform the House anything of significance. If one turns to the *Program Budget* 1983–84 documents, one finds that many of the statements are expressed in generalities. The documents do not define the number of staff, specific programmes or aims of specific sub-programmes. The documents leave much to be desired.

Although every effort has been made to capitalize on the new format, the benefits in the long term are nowhere near commensurate with the claims that have been made. Recently honourable members saw another set of documents which have represented an expensive production for the promotion of a political party approach called the Government approach. Again many statements were made about economic development in Victoria. That is part and parcel of the budgetary programme and process.

If one examines the documents which the Government informs the House have been hailed with significant acclamation throughout the community, but really is a large yawn for the majority of Victorians, although there is some reference to economic planning over a ten-year programme, there is no reference to the social impact of those programmes. There is no indication of any specific social goals in the development of Victoria.

This is extraordinary, given the rhetoric that Labor politicians have used in the past in trying to indicate that the Labor Party is concerned with the social development and social programme of Victoria. There is nothing in those documents to support that view. Members of the Opposition have read through those documents and can find nothing of any consequence concerning that important programme.

Some Labor Party supporters in the community have strongly criticized the Government. People in charge of the Victorian Council of Social Services and leading members of other welfare organizations have strongly condemned the Government for its failure to spell out any programme in these documents or to provide any description of social development in Victoria. One can understand, when one examines the various Supply documents and other related material, why there is a reluctance to spell them out. Many of the programmes which operate at the grassroots level, such as the family welfare services, family counselling services, and a whole range of community organizations, especially in the volunteer sector, have effectively been cut in the Budget programmes in the amount of funding that has been provided for these organizations.

A letter was sent to the residential child care agencies only a couple of weeks ago in which the Government indicated that no more funds were available this financial year for any maintenance programmes in these organizations or institutions. If there are maintenance breakdowns within those homes, for which voluntary organizations are accepting State responsibilities, the Government has no funds available for the remainder of the financial year.

It is clear on that basis that the Government does not have the ability to accept any responsibility for social programming. If one considers a whole range of other welfare activities, one would realize that currently representatives from women's refuges are

screaming out because they have not been able to balance their budgets since the Government has made an 8 per cent cut in allocations. Despite continual denials, the Minister for Community Welfare Services had to run to the Commonwealth Government to see whether it could provide additional resources to allow the women's refuges to remain viable. In many areas of the voluntary sector there have been cuts in allocations. None of these organizations can look forward with any glee to the Supply documents or the projected forecasts of Government support in the future.

In dealing with workers in the field of family, finance and marriage counselling, one becomes alarmed to note that in the past two years there has been a dramatic change in the fortunes and well-being of many families. That is evident in family welfare matters and in cases before the Family Law Court involving property settlement. More and more families are moving into the poverty syndrome. They are not able to cope for the major reason that the costs associated with living have increased dramatically in the past couple of years. Honourable members are aware of the massive increase in State costs and charges, particularly gas, electricity, public transport and related local government costs, and those cost increases are having a dramatic impact on thousands of families.

I was speaking today with people involved in finance counselling in the Dandenong area. The Treasurer ought to know something about Dandenong. It was indicated to me that even people who are buying their own homes and who would have been basically independent families two years ago are finding that they are no longer able to cope financially. They are having to approach welfare agencies for assistance in paying their gas and electricity accounts.

I visited Warrnambool last week, as the honourable member for Warrnambool has indicated, and spoke to welfare agencies in the area. The St Vincent de Paul Society, the Salvation Army and various other welfare groups are unable to cope with the increased demand that families are placing on them for assistance in paying their gas, electricity and transport charges, in addition to the increased cost of rental accommodation. It is a terrible indictment on the Government. A response will be evident in the next State elections with a dramatic turnaround by people in the middle income class.

Middle income families, who only a couple of years ago were coping reasonably well, are finding that the only way out of their situations is to do what a young family with which I was involved today did. The husband was a clerk in the Public Service, and the wife was at home caring for two young children. As a single income family, they were unable to cope financially. Despite carefully considering the expenditure of every cent, they were still unable to cope because of the drain on their income by increased costs of services. The husband decided that the only way he could cope was to resign from the Public Service and cash in his superannuation and set himself up in a small business. The small business he has established is facing the same sorts of competitive problems being experienced by ordinary families trying to cope without sufficient capital and a good business enterprise. The young family has found that it is running into difficulties in trying to provide for its well-being out of its own activities and resources.

People in those situations are having to depend on the State for social security benefits. According to people working in the field, an increased number of people are trying to cope on their incomes while also applying for social security benefits under another name. In many respects who can blame them? They cannot be blamed for trying to feed and clothe their children in a situation caused by a dramatic increase in costs and charges with a decreased income to meet the normal expenditures of food, health, food and shelter.

This is a tragic indictment on the Government. The funds being allocated by the Government to meet the needs of people are becoming less available. The funds being provided in the Budget will go increasingly to the highly paid senior executives within the Public Service. In the correctional fields of Victoria, the same situation applies. The salaries of persons within the Office of Corrections welfare services in the category of $40 000 a year and more have been dramatically increased by about 60 per cent. However, one notes that insufficient funds are available in community regions to employ sufficient field workers to cope adequately

with people on parole and probation. An insufficient number of field workers are available to cope with child protection services and other areas. The Government is employing "fat cats", but is unable to provide field workers to care for people who are in need.

The Budget documents clearly indicate that the Government is not concerned with the well-being of families on middle and lower incomes; it is not concerned to ensure that those people are able to cope with charges for fuel, gas and electricity and, if they fall into difficulties, the Government is not concerned with making field workers available to provide counselling and assistance, or even the necessary emergency relief or other assistance.

The whole budgetary process has gone off the rails. The Government should ensure that the average family and the average small battler are supported by Government initiatives and programmes. I assure people that the next Liberal Government will be redirecting many more of the resources away from the "fat cat" sector into providing necessary support and welfare programmes for people with economic problems, to ensure that those families are adequately supported. I agree that the best form of welfare policy in the long term is a growth in employment and economic activity. The movement away from the current disastrous situation towards real growth in the economy and opportunities for people to share that growth calls for a compassionate Administration with compassionate programmes. The Budget documents clearly indicate that those compassionate programmes are not being provided.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—The Bill fails to address certain urgent matters. One is the Cottage by the Sea at Queenscliff, which provides a holiday facility for underprivileged children. The local community has done much to raise ongoing funds for that facility, and a further $83 000 is required to continue this work. There appears to be a contradiction in priorities when money is not being spent on this project and at the same time the City of South Barwon is asking the Government for $250 000 to build a road to a free beach area near Torquay.

Our priorities are mixed because, in the well-known tourist resort of Torquay, there is a sad lack of adequate funds for maintenance of the road system. Torquay is one of the growing community areas along the coastline which was not devastated by the Ash Wednesday bush fires, yet over a number of years the roads in the area have deteriorated because of a lack of funds. The Government needs to examine the requirements of that town which has a large tourist potential. On a recent visit to the area, it was obvious to me where one council's work started and another's finished, because there is a clear demarcation line between the municipalities of South Barwon and Barrabool.

Some people may have a misconception concerning a housing boom in the South Barwon area. Certainly a boom is occurring there, but it results from the replacement of the $54 million worth of property that was destroyed by the Ash Wednesday bush fires—some 720 homes. The Shire of Barrabool has already issued permits for 250 homes, and that building activity has generated employment for people in and around the Geelong area who would otherwise be unemployed and has provided useful work in other retail areas such as white goods, carpets, curtains and other requirements that go into making up a home.

It would be incorrect to attribute that housing activity to a large input of public money. The Ash Wednesday bush fires resulted in $23 million being raised by public donation. The Salvation Army raised $3 million. Those moneys were distributed to persons who had lost property in the bush fires. One should not allow oneself to be misled by figures relating to housing construction because the figures are distorted by the fact that that building activity relates to the replacement of a large number of homes that were destroyed in that disaster.

Another area in the electorate of South Barwon that deserves closer scrutiny by the Government relates to the provision of an adequate police station in that area. Currently, no police station is located in the area of Highton, Belmont and Grovedale. In the event of an emergency, the police must send cars from the City of Geelong. Those cars can be boxed in on the wrong side of the Barwon River bridge and may be unable to reach those suburbs quickly to meet urgent requirements. That situation

has arisen in cases of serious accident, break-ins to buildings such as banks and injury to people. A petition signed by some 3000 residents requesting urgent consideration of that matter has been presented to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

On the question of funding, the Government should bear in mind that $2 million a year is taken in on-the-spot fines in the Geelong area and some $32 million throughout Victoria, and the necessary funds could come from that revenue. The needs of the South Barwon community cannot be ignored forever. The municipality has taken initial steps to set aside an area of land on the Princes Highway between Geelong and Colac which would be a suitable site, and the Minister is aware of the approaches made by that council. I urge the Government to award this matter a higher priority than it was given in the last Budget, and I urge the Minister's support.

Another area of concern relates to the high cost of school bus services to bring children to technical schools in Geelong. Earlier in the year, many of the parents concerned signed a petition requesting some relief because some families could not cope with the high cost of those fares. I appreciate that a large sum is committed each year to providing the necessary facilities. However, large increases were sprung suddenly on parents and that created hardship so that, in many instances, parents were forced to keep their children at home, and that is undesirable.

A further request on behalf of the Geelong community arises from the needs of the cancer after-care group. Many hundreds of people in the Geelong region and the Western District of Victoria are cancer sufferers who must come to the Peter MacCallum Hospital for treatment. A big building programme is in hand at the Geelong Hospital, where a new wing is under construction. I understand that the group has raised $150 000 and is seeking to raise a further sum by way of public appeal. It has made representations to the Minister of Health to consider additional funding in the current financial year to enable radiotherapy equipment to be installed in the new wing of that hospital. This should not be too much to ask when one considers that Tasmania—a small island with a small population—has similar equipment to that at the Peter MacCallum Hospital in two locations in that State.

I appreciate that there are cancer sufferers not only in the Geelong area and the Western District but also in the northern and Gippsland regions of Victoria, so it makes sense to regionalize some of this equipment to enable people to be treated near to their homes rather than having to travel long distances by car or public transport and having to incur the expense of staying in Melbourne.

Anyone who has ever visited the Peter MacCallum Hospital at 5 p.m. knows that it is depressing to see staff leaving in a hurry while patients clad in dressing gowns and pyjamas sit in waiting rooms waiting for ambulances to return them to their homes. It is difficult for people to obtain car parking spaces near that hospital because of the inadequate parking facilities in that area.

This matter affects all Victorians, and I am sure honourable members know people within their own circle of friends who are sufferers of cancer and are being treated for cancer. We must look at this area with compassion and understanding, and I am sure the Minister of Health appreciates that something needs to be done urgently in this area.

On the question of the high salaries that are being paid to many Government officials, honourable members should look closely at where Victoria is going because, although salaries in the order of $70 000 to $80 000 on which 60 cents in the $1 is paid in tax may not mean very much when the net salary reaches the public servant, people who have unemployed children may have the impression that the Government cares only about creating jobs for public servants and not about looking after the areas that stimulate the economy.

I was disturbed to note that the Green Papers that were produced this week make no mention of agricultural exports from this State, particularly the live sheep export industry which is worth many millions of dollars to Victoria. If Victoria does not export sheep, those sheep will be exported through other States and that will be a loss to Victoria. There is a flow-on effect from such exports. When farmers are able to sell

their sheep and are paid for them by overseas money, those farmers can spend money in the community. That has a flow-on to the people in the city who have stores and to manufacturers of farm equipment. Honourable members should not be selfish about this; it is a worth-while industry which should be cultivated and supported. That export does not put at risk the jobs of workers in abattoirs. In supporting live sheep exports, the Opposition is conscious of the over-all community needs of the rural sector of Victoria.

The omission from the Green Papers could have been rectified. However, members of the Government are not closely involved with the rural sector.

I appreciate the endeavours made by the Government following the bush fires of Ash Wednesday and the drought. Many of the hardships caused by those factors were overcome with good rainfalls and crops returning good yields in the last harvest. However, areas that provide a good financial return for the Government should not be used merely to expand the Public Service and provide a massive superannuation scheme.

In subsequent debates, I shall be closely examining areas of Government administration that affect the Geelong region. The Government could make a better allocation of funds to stimulate the economy.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—It is absolutely ridiculous for the Government to force debate on the Bill at 3 a.m. It shows the incompetence of the Government. If the Government cannot run Parliament effectively, it cannot run the economy effectively.

I direct the attention of the Government to the area of Government tenders. It is often six weeks before Government tenders are finalized. However, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works often decides that it is important for its tenders to be filled within days and the company that wins the tender often has to employ an additional 50 to 100 men. Once the contract is completed those men have to be sacked. The present system of tenders causes a fluctuation in the number of people in and out of work. I urge the Minister for Employment and Training to review the present Government tender system.

At present, there are seven tourist regions. The administration of tourism by the Government is a bungle. The Victorian Eastern Development Association is a magnificent organization but it has been completely deprived of finances. I am deeply concerned for tourism in Victoria because it is one of the major employers. Many more thousands of people could be employed in the area of tourism.

The Bendigo and Ballarat tourist regions have been combined. It is unfortunate that people in those areas are competing for positions. Last week I visited Ballarat and I was told by the tourist officials in that area that it was their hope that Ballarat would become the regional tourist headquarters. The following day I visited Bendigo where I was informed by tourist officials that it was their hope that Bendigo would become the regional tourist headquarters. When there is conflict between tourist areas, one can have nothing but trouble.

Wilsons Promontory could be developed into a major tourist area. It is almost impossible for people to visit the lighthouse at the promontory. I urge the Government to provide money to improve the roads that lead into the area, especially to some of the coves.

It is to be hoped in the next twelve months that the Government will allocate sufficient funds to improve facilities in the area so that over the Christmas and Easter holidays visitors can view the magnificent sight of Wilsons Promontory.

I have been concerned at the low number of recruits at the Police Training Academy. After the elections, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services claimed he would ensure that the strength of the Police Force would be increased by 1000. However, it is obvious from the allocation in the Bill that the Government will not be able to fulfil that promise.

Many country police stations are under manned and the officers at those stations work under an enormous amount of pressure. If an accident occurred at Wilsons Promontory, it could involve a round trip of 200 kilometres for a police officer to attend that accident. Visitors to these areas

need the safety and protection afforded by the Police Force. Therefore, more police should be trained.

I turn now to examine the allocation for the Country Fire Authority, which is one of the greatest organizations in the world. It is extremely sad to note that there is no chairman of the Country Fire Authority. It is to be hoped that in the next few weeks and prior to the next bush-fire season the Minister for Police and Emergency services will consider appointing a chairman to the Country Fire Authority.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—A chairman for the Country Fire Authority has been called for before. When the Minister was put to the jump, he turned around on his undertaking and did not appoint a chairman.

The cyclic maintenance programme at the Yarram High School is well and truly behind schedule. Approximately $610 000 will be spent on the maintenance of that school. Perhaps the programme should be carried out when the repairs are needed and not only when the money is available. If one maintains one's assets it will not cost as much to repair as it would if the assets were nearly falling down.

The Yarram High School is in a terribly dilapidated state. I hope the situation will be improved in the near future. The library at that school is extremely important to students and without its facilities one could not expect the students to complete their studies or their higher school certificate. A centenary celebration is being held for the school at Fish Creek. For twelve months, I have endeavoured through the various channels that are open to me to have the cyclic maintenance finished before the centenary next Saturday. Unfortunately time has run out and the centenary celebration will be held in the dilapidated school. I hope in the near future the situation will be improved so that the people in Fish Creek who have spent 100 years there——

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STEGGALL—I point out to honourable members who are interjecting and laughing that some people who live in Fish Creek are 100 years old. The Fish Creek area is good to live in because one can expect longevity.

I noticed in the *Sun* an advertisement stating that marine reserves have been called for and that people in the areas involved will once again have to put forward submissions. This process has been gone through three times. It is absolutely scandalous because the Government will not make decisions. The Government does not perform as it should.

The Inverloch sewerage problem is serious. If the Minister of Water Supply and the Treasurer got together perhaps $300 000 could be saved. I hope the Treasurer will take up the matter with the Minister of Water Supply. At Inverloch a land-based scheme with an outfall to the sea is in operation. All it requires is to have the pipeline finished. At present it protrudes over the cliff face, but it needs to go through the cliff and out to sea.

Unfortunately black bans were placed on the outfall programme, but the bans have now been lifted. The Minister suggested that perhaps a spray irrigation plant should be installed, which will cost another $300 000. It is not required. Obviously if a discharge can be placed in other areas which lead to the sea, for example, at Toora and some areas where the sewage is pumped straight into the sea, another spray irrigation plant at Inverloch is unnecessary.

If the Government really wishes to save money, this proposal offers a tremendous opportunity for it to save $300 000. I hope the Government will consider the problem in the near future. There are many other matters I would like to raise, but the early hours of the morning are creeping on. It is already 3.25 a.m. and other speakers are to follow me. I do not know whether the clauses will be dealt with one by one during the Committee stage—I certainly hope not—but if they are, I will have something to say later.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—As the honourable member for Gippsland South pointed out, it is a disgrace that at 3.28 a.m. honourable members are discussing probably the second most important Bill for the year other than the Budget Bill. When the Government was in opposition, honourable members heard the then Leader of the

Opposition, the Minister for Local Government, say that the Government of the day could not run a pie stall. If he were in the House this morning, would he say the same thing? I know the Minister is away attending a conference so honourable members will not have the pleasure of hearing him reiterate those words.

I congratulate the Treasurer on his efforts at programme budgeting and the new system which takes up the initiative of the former Liberal Government, which tried to implement this programme in the field of agriculture. The programme is being extended slowly and surely throughout all the departments. It must be infinitely easier for the Treasurer to implement a Budget when he has $2500 million more to spend than the former Liberal Government had.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr REYNOLDS—The Treasurer has $2500 million more to spend this year than the former Treasurer did when the Liberal Government was in power. The question that people will ask is: From where has the Treasurer obtained that money? There is no doubt that he has obtained that money by taxing every Victorian more than they have ever been taxed before, as people have said in recent weeks, following the revelations by the Opposition of the huge rises in taxes and charges—241 at the last count—with more every day. People are more concerned about that than about any other thing that the Government has achieved.

The Supply Bill mentions the funding for the running of the Parliament and its services. I note that a considerable amount of money is being spent in the Library. This is excellent value to all honourable members and I congratulate the Library Committee on its endeavours in this direction. More has been achieved with the assistance of research staff and the information they provide for honourable members.

I suggest to the House Committee that the speaker system be installed in every office in Parliament, not just a few. I know that speakers relay the proceedings of the House to some offices but that does not occur in every office, especially those in the temporary offices at the back of the building. I ask that the committee look into the provision of this speaker system. It would enable honourable members to be better advised of what is happening within the House whilst they are doing other things which relate to the running of their electorates. All honourable members should share the benefits of such an acquisition.

The Deputy Premier said earlier that in the life of the Government he would consider providing honourable members with additional electorate support for their electorate offices. I represent a large electorate—not with 25 000 voters but 40 000 voters. Some of the smaller electorates would only have 10 or 11 schools. The Gisborne electorate has 76 schools and 14 shires—ten complete shires and part of four others. It is difficult to handle the electorate in the same way that city electorates are handled. I recall the Deputy Premier promising to look at the matter. I have not heard of any results of his investigations. I speak on behalf of many members who represent large electorates and who must spend a lot of time in Melbourne away from their electorates. Additional assistance to staff those offices would be invaluable.

I address the community welfare services section of the Bill. When in opposition, the honourable member for Greensborough, now the Minister for Community Welfare Services, made many visits to the area I represent and on each occasion she raised the provision of a sub-branch of the department at Sunbury. She was especially prickly and sarcastic about the previous Administration and now when the matter is raised she becomes equally prickly and sarcastic. As the then Opposition spokesperson had a lot to say. I would like to see some results in this area so that what she believed was necessary two or three years ago can be provided. It is even more necessary with the growing community and population in the Sunbury district.

The education section is a major item within the Supply Budget, especially as about 34 cents in every dollar of Government funds are spent in education areas. It is a huge expenditure item and every hungry department will continue to eat as much

money as it can get. Uneconomic or unsuccessful programmes cannot be phased out because someone who is missing out will make a lot of noise—really they are empire builders. One cannot be rid of those programmes that eat a lot of money but are of very little value.

A strong administration in that area is needed. Some 34 cents of every dollar are spent in education areas, yet a child spends only about 11 000 hours in the class-room from beginning school at prep until he finishes higher school certificate. In the same time, that child spends 22 000 hours in front of a television set. The period spent in the class-room is a very expensive period of a person's life and the best value must be obtained from dollars spent in that direction.

The Government no doubt came to power with a debt owing to unions for their support and assistance throughout the previous election campaign and it took only two weeks to pay off that debt, so there is very little money left for many other areas, especially staffing. Money is needed to pay for staffing secondary schools which are understaffed. Areas within the electorate I represent need attention. I specifically refer to the Diggers Rest Primary School, which needs redeveloping. It has grown rapidly because of the itinerant population as a result of the proximity of the army camp. The buildings are old and require a great deal of maintenance.

There is a lack of senior teachers in the four primary schools at Sunbury. The Sunbury Primary School, the Sunbury West Primary School, the Kismet Park Primary School and Sunbury Heights Primary School have grown since 1982 when the figure in the teaching agreement was set. Although teachers have been provided, senior teachers have not been provided and those senior teachers situated there are overworked. Also, the Sunbury High School has twelve portable class-rooms, and it is in need of an extra floor in the library complex. Those twelve portables are scattered in a hotchpotch way throughout the school grounds. There is a need for additional woodwork and metalwork rooms. At present the curriculum for those two programmes is scattered throughout the class-rooms because it is just not possible to put all classes through the two rooms that are available.

At Kyneton Technical School, there are fourteen relocatables on site. The school council is currently undertaking a redevelopment scheme and is awaiting action by the Public Works Department for parts for some five module relocatable class-rooms that recently were installed at the school. There is urgent need for replacement of the toilets, as a plumber comes every day to fix the same cistern. He suggests that a whole new plumbing system is needed to overcome the minor faults. The systems are plain worn out.

As I understand it, the work has been approved but, because of lack of funds for this area, the goahead has not been given. At another school nearby, the same situation applies; work has been approved, but has not yet been undertaken because of lack of funds.

A redevelopment programme is proposed for the Bacchus Marsh Primary School, which is also awaiting funds and, again, I believe that is as a result of the money being spent by the Government in honouring its promises to the teacher unions for their services prior to the election.

Another area of concern relates to the provision of technical education in the Sunbury township. A large number of pupils who wish to receive a technical education are transported out of the town every day. On the figures that are currently available, it is obvious that in excess of 100 pupils would attend year 9 for technical education in Sunbury. This education should be provided in Sunbury, either in a new technical school or in a wing of the Sunbury High School, as it is urgently needed.

An excellent proposal which needs serious consideration by the Minister of Health was put forward concerning the establishment of a community health centre in the Kyneton–Woodend area. The four shires in that area, namely, Kyneton, Romsey, Newham and Woodend, and Metcalfe, have together presented a submission to the Minister regarding the establishment of a new health centre to service the four shires. The centre would be located in a central position, between the existing community health centre services and Bendigo. At present,

there is a distance of 18 miles to the nearest health centre. I believe this is a sound proposal and deserving of the Minister's personal attention. When that submission comes to hand, I shall direct it to the Minister's attention.

With regard to the provision of assistance for police officers, I point out that I was recently at the Kyneton police station, at which 29 officers are stationed, and I found that the officers do not have a typist to perform the duties of typing out the charge sheets, and so on, and other typing that needs to be performed. At present, 9 men out of the 29 are away from work for various reasons; for example, on paternity leave, sick leave, annual leave, and so on. The remaining officers have to spend an infinite amount of time bent over a typewriter when the provision of one typist could overcome the problems.

The reports of the Chief Commissioner of Police for the years 1981 and 1983 stated that Kyneton was the only 24-hour police station of its size in Victoria without the benefit of a permanent typist. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services should pay some attention to the matter. I am pleased that the Minister suggested that, in the next Budget, consideration would be given to the provision of a 24-hour police station at Sunbury or, should I say, an upgrading towards a 24-hour police station. I hope that will be provided for in the next Budget, although I see there has been no attempt to provide it in the Supply Bill.

As all honourable members are aware, the Minister promised that 1000 additional police would be employed in the first three years of this Government. That is a promise that will be impossible for the Government to keep. The Minister is always fobbing it off at question time in this House, and wherever else he goes, by saying that this is the largest Police Force Victoria has ever had. There is no doubt that that is exactly right, but Victoria has the largest population it has ever enjoyed in its history; there is also the greatest number of cars on the road; there is also the highest crime rate that has ever existed. Therefore, there needs to be an increase in the numbers of members in the Police Force. The Minister promised an additional 1000 police. To date he has provided about 300, give or take a few, depending on whichever fudging trick he uses on the people of Victoria. However, it still appears that he will not be able to provide the full number that he promised.

If the Minister is able to provide those extra police, I am sure that a 24-hour police station at Sunbury will be a *fait accompli.* When the Minister makes statements about how Victoria has the largest Police Force that has ever existed, I wonder how naive he thinks the Opposition and the public of Victoria are.

The Minister of Transport has spent much time in putting concrete blocks on the roadways, having the trams painted, which cost some $13 million, and he has recently taken delivery of new trams and train carriages which were originally purchased by the previous Government. Then this Minister turned around and sold them. The Minister must have more money than ever before, because he sold $14 million worth of Victoria's rolling-stock and then leased it back from the people to whom he had sold it. I do not know how anyone can think that that is good financial management when loan money was used to purchase the trams and trains in the first place. Therefore, Victoria is paying interest on the loans; it is paying leasing charges to the people who bought them; and honourable members now realize that the money obtained from selling them has been spent on recurrent expenditure. I do not see the logic in that sort of action. As someone said to me, if, as a businessman, one sells assets that one is paying off, one would have to be just about bankrupt, and that seems to me to be the case.

I have been inundated recently with complaints about the quality of the train service in the Sunbury area, and I am sure that many people would agree that the service is fairly poor. Particular attention has been drawn to the 8.27 a.m. train from Sunbury, which is rarely on time; it is most unreliable. The following train, the 9.05 a.m. from Sunbury, often leaves after the time it is due to arrive in Melbourne, which is at 9.50 a.m. In other words, it is 45 minutes late leaving the Sunbury township. This makes it impossible for people who work in Melbourne to obtain secure employment. It has been brought to my attention that many employers will not employ persons from Sunbury once they find out where they come

from. It is an indictment of the Minister of Transport, who promised to get everything up to scratch quickly, but has been unable to do so, that people cannot obtain employment, even though they are adequately suited for the job, because they are required to travel by train from Sunbury, and the employers have turned them away for that very reason.

I also direct to the attention of the Minister of Transport the situation that has occurred following the disastrous bush fires in the electorate I represent, namely, the Greendale fire and the two Macedon fires. A situation has arisen where, in taking the timber out of the area to store it for milling for the future, dozens and dozens of extremely heavy semi-trailer trucks and timber-jinkers absolutely tore the roads to shreds. I have been informed by one shire that the roads have suffered approximately 15 years' wear in just twelve months, which is fifteen times the normal wear rate.

So far, the Minister has chosen to ignore the submission from the shires. It is not their fault that thousands of acres were burnt in that area and that trucks had to cart the timber out. It is unfortunate that many people lost their homes, but they are still paying the cost through roads torn up because of the fires. This is one way in which the Minister could assist by providing moneys for the repair of the damaged roads.

The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is mentioned in the Bill, and I am worried that eleven of the top fifteen staff have left that department over the past two years. I do not know where they have gone; they have probably gone to jobs with higher morale and a safer position. There are five top people in the department, the director-general and the four assistant director-generals, four of those people hold acting positions—they are not permanent. I know that morale in the department is low because the eleven people who have left have told me.

The funds of the department are depleted. The Minister had to take $500 000 from the sports section and allocate it to the youth section because a number of youths camped on his doorstep, and something must suffer. The Minister has not been allocated any extra funds, so he has had to rob Peter to pay Paul. I wonder whether the Treasurer realizes that the department is a milking cow for the Treasurer—the department provides approximately 12 per cent of the total income of the Treasurer through racing and gambling.

Submissions have been presented and press releases have been issued regarding the relocation of Melbourne's sale-yards from Newmarket to Laverton North. The necessary approvals will be obtained and the second stage is to ask the Government to fund the relocation. For some time, I have been pushing the Minister of Agriculture, as have many other people, to consider the establishment of a regional sale-yard at Kyneton, which would be infinitely cheaper. The land would cost nothing as the shire has yards that would need only to be doubled in size. The facilities are already provided, and they would be much closer to the electorates of Rodney and Swan Hill. I would be delighted for residents of those electorates to sell their stock at the sale-yards at Kyneton. If the Government is going to put money into sale-yards, Kyneton should be considered.

I now refer to the glossy publication called *Victoria. The State of Achievement.* I wonder whether members of the Government shake at night and whether their consciences hurt them. The booklet contains a free gift voucher indicating that one can write to the Victorian Government Bookshop to obtain additional copies at no extra charge. That is blatant political advertising and party political promotion at the expense of the taxpayers. The front page comprises a full-page picture of the Premier. It is disgraceful that this type of political advertising goes on. I hope the Labor Party is paying for the booklet, and I will be interested to know exactly how much it costs; how much the distribution costs are and who is receiving it. I dare say that every member of the Government is placing copies of the booklets in every letter box because it appears to be extremely cheap.

I am concerned about some of the matters referred to in the booklet. For example, the Government has taken credit for the funding of a grand prix motor racing circuit at Sandown Park. That is $2·9 million of Federal money; the State Government has not contributed a brass razoo. However, it has taken credit for it. The Treasurer indicates, by interjection, that members of the

Government are smart operators. If he takes credit for using someone else's money, I give him credit for that.

The Government is also taking credit for adopting the plan for continuing the establishment of sports assemblies throughout Victoria. That was an initiative of the previous Government, but this Government is taking credit for it. The booklet is a blatant political advertising exercise and the taxpayers' money is being wasted on publication.

The motion was agreed to.

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

The House adjourned at 3.58 *a.m* (*Thursday*).

Thursday, 19 April 1984

The SPEAKER (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds) took the chair at 10.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BASS STRAIT OIL FIELDS

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—I direct a question to the Treasurer. Is it a fact that the decision by the Federal Government to impose a levy of up to 35 per cent on new oil will reduce the Victorian Government's revenue from the Fortescue oil field in Bass Strait? What action did the Victorian Government take to try to forestall this revenue grab by Canberra? Will the Government seek reimbursement of the lost revenue from Canberra so that Victorians will not be disadvantaged by this action of the Federal Government?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As the honourable member of Balwyn would be aware, the failure of the previous Liberal Government to enter into long-term arrangements with the Federal Government resulted in a loss of revenue in this area. The Government has taken up the proposition with both the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer to ensure that Victoria obtains a fair deal from Bass Strait oil field revenue. Last year, I met with the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer to discuss the matter when a further problem arose because of the High Court decision on the pipeline licence fee which meant a further loss of revenue to Victoria.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Forest Hill that interjections are disorderly.

Mr JOLLY—The Federal Government clearly understands the Victorian position and is sympathetic to the proposals put to it regarding the long-term arrangements concerning the Bass Strait oil fields. Last week, the Minister for Minerals and Energy and I held discussions with the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy and the Federal Treasurer. Yesterday I spoke to the Federal Treasurer following the announcement of the Federal Government. We will be continuing negotiations with the Federal Government to ensure that Victoria obtains a fair share of the revenue obtained from the Bass Strait oil fields.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTRES

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Will the Minister for the Arts advise the House whether he has lifted the moratorium on performing arts centres throughout Victoria? If so, has he laid down guidelines regarding the capital costing and maintenance costs of those projects?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—It is well known that the former Liberal Government suffered from a psychosis of monumental proportions. It scattered around country Victoria a number of performing arts centres, in some instances at a large capital cost. The West Gippsland Performing Arts Centre at Warragul cost more than $4 million and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre cost close to $9 million.

Unfortunately, Victoria's former Liberal Government showed no comparable zeal for providing arrangements for the recurrent cost of operating the performing arts centres which have been provided. The Labor Government came to office and faced a situation where the entire cost of operating the performing arts centres was a charge against the local communities in which they had been situated and, in particular, a charge against local government.

Therefore, as a matter of high priority, the Government introduced in its first Budget a scheme whereby the twelve performing arts centres were classified into three categories. Those in category 1, which includes the largest of the performing arts centres, receive a subsidy of $35 000 a year; those in category 2 receive $25 000 a year, and those in category 3, which covers the smallest of the performing arts centres, receive a subsidy of $20 000 a year.

At the outset, I formed the opinion that it was necessary to carry out an evaluation of the programme of construction of performing arts centres which had been undertaken by the former Government, to determine whether the performing arts centres which had been completed or commenced up to that point could ever be cost effective and

whether their use would be within the financial reach of the local community and the local performing arts companies for whom they were primarily intended.

I, therefore, said that there should be a two-year moratorium before the construction of any further performing arts centres should be initiated. That two-year moratorium is now nearing its end. I have set up a working party within the Ministry for the Arts to undertake a systematic assessment of the experience of that two-year period. I expect that working party to report to me within the next two or three weeks.

CLASS SIZES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Mr McDONALD (Evelyn)—Can the Minister of Education inform the House of the progress that the Government has made in implementing its policy of providing one class-room for every 30 primary school students?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I thank the honourable member for his question. As a very active member of the Government's education committee, I know of his continuing concern for primary education in this State.

It was clear that there was widespread community concern about the neglect of primary school education under our predecessors. In recent years, the situation was that one-third of primary school classes in the State had more than 30 students.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Forest Hill that I have now spoken to him twice and asked him to cease interjecting. I will not warn him again.

Mr FORDHAM—I wish the honourable member for Forest Hill had some concern for the primary school children of the State. Obviously parents were concerned that it was not possible for a teacher—no matter how dedicated and hard working—with classes of that size, to be able to meet the individual needs of the children under his or her care. Therefore, the Government made a commitment to the Victorian people that, within the lifetime of this Parliament, sufficient primary school teachers and primary school class-rooms would be provided so that no class size need exceed 30 students.

I am pleased to be able to confirm to the honourable member for Evelyn, to the House and to the Victorian community that the Government will reach that target by February of next year. I believe it is a major triumph for the Government and it shows that the Government has honoured its commitment to the Victorian community.

I know that the many thousands of parents and teachers associated with primary school education realize the significance of this target not only to present students but also to students in Victoria in the years ahead.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE AGREEMENT

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—In view of the failure of the Minister for the Arts and his colleagues to keep control of the industrial dispute at the Victorian Arts Centre, I ask the Minister for the Arts whether he had any discussions with the trustees of the Arts Centre with regard to the recent industrial situation and dispute and was he, in those discussions, made aware of the claims of the union involved and the likelihood that they might be settled?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—I had no such discussion prior to the settlement which was reached on Wednesday at the compulsory conference called by Commissioner Merriman between Lewis Construction Co. Pty Ltd and the union involved.

I have since been involved in discussions with representatives of the Victorian Arts Centre Trust who have acknowledged that they were in error in not keeping myself and the Minister for Industrial Affairs informed of the negotiations. They also provided an assurance that a similar omission would not recur in the future.

DECRIMINALIZATION OF PROSTITUTION

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I direct my question to the Premier. In view of the fact that one of the major reasons the Government refused to permit the introduction

of poker machines in Victoria was the possible link with organized crime, how can the Premier justify the Government's decision to decriminalize prostitution, which is also linked with organized crime and illegal drug trafficking?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—As the honourable member would be aware, the Government responded to what it regarded as the best advice in regard to both poker machines and casinos. Inquiries were conducted by men of distinction that provided solid evidence as to why the Government should not introduce either form of gambling. The decisive action on the part of the Government is in marked contrast to the vacillation and ineptitude of our predecessors on that issue.

The Government has taken the view, after close examination and after listening to a wide range of people, that massage parlours in some form have been around for a long period. There is no reason to think they will disappear under this Government or any other Government. What the Government is seeking to do is to recognize the realities of the world, to regulate what will occur and to do in it an orderly way through the planning process. At the same time, it is taking steps to enforce the existing law against those who fail or refuse to comply with planning requirements. The Government believes that response is realistic and reflects the Government's attitidue on social issues, again in marked contrast to that of our predecessors.

The previous Government ran away from four social issues that this Government disposed of in two years, namely casinos, poker machines, nude bathing and massage parlours. That is a fact. The Liberal Government was always frightened to grapple with what it thought were the socially contentious issues.

The honourable member has drawn to my attention the difference in the Govenment's response, and I emphasize that it is a difference in Government attitude and Government capacity. This Government can make decisions; the previous Government never could. It could not make decisions about anything. That is why the whole of the community, including the traditional supporters in the business community, lost faith in the Liberal Government. Nothing has occurred in the past two years to suggest that that faith has been or will be restored.

When I hear the rantings of the Leader of the Opposition *in absentia* and the Leader of the Liberal Party in Canberra about what they want to do with the economy——

Mr Reynolds—What has that got to do with it?

Mr CAIN—It has got a lot to do with it, because it shows how bankrupt the Liberal Party has become and how bankrupt it was while in government. That is why it was chucked out and why the community will not have it back.

HEALTH COMMISSION

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN (Ballarat South)—Can the Minister of Health inform the House of the details of action taken by the Health Commission to boost Victorian industry?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I thank the honourable member for Ballarat South for his question, because he and many members of this side of the House have determined that all aspects of Government administration will be about boosting Victorian industry.

I am pleased today to be able to announce that there has been a major $4 million hospital boiler development programme. Members of the Opposition, who are interjecting, have taken very little interest in these matters, whether old or new boilers. The Opposition when in government was all for making plans and for digging holes, but it was not for looking after the basic maintenance of the fabric of the hospital system.

The Government has instituted not only this major programme which is costing nearly $4 million and ensured that new boilers will be available for Aradale Hospital, Brierly Hospital, May Day Hills Hospital and the Mildura Base Hospital—and distinguished people in Mildura may visit that today—and the Ballarat Base Hospital, but also has ensured that the boilers will be built using maximum Victorian content. That was one area of Victoria's heavy industry that had suffered over time.

The Government has entered into an arrangement with Maxitherm Boilers Pty

Ltd for the $1·3 million hospital boiler contract which will ensure that there will be extra jobs in Victoria. Maxitherm Boilers Pty Ltd will be expanding its plant to carry out this task.

As a result of this project, by increasing fuel efficiency significant savings will be achieved. The Government is pleased about the development, as are the various hospitals that are involved. I am sure that the Ballarat Base Hospital particularly is pleased because it has wanted a proper boiler system since early in the time when I was a shadow Minister. The Government is pleased to be able to put that into effect.

The project will give a significant job boost to heavy industry in Victoria. The Government intends to continue upgrading the basic maintenance of hospitals.

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I ask the Minister for Employment and Training: Has a new deputy director been appointed to his Ministry and, if so, what qualifications for the task does the appointee have and was the appointment made after the job had been advertised?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—There has been a restructuring in the Ministry and the Ministry has been successful in recruiting the former librarian of South Australia to assist in the affirmative action programme in Victoria. She is currently engaged in that work.

PRISON ADMINISTRATION

Mr HILL (Warrandyte)—Will the Minister for Community Welfare Services indicate what action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the master plan on the training of prison staff and the organization and management of the Office of Corrections?

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I thank the honourable member for his question on the progress made on prison officer training as recommended in the master plan. The Government took up the recommendations of the master plan and on 20 February gave approval to the development of the new training college, along with the first prison that will have been built for quite a number of years. The construction of that prison is expected in the 1984–85 year and until that new complex is operational, the Corrections Training College has been established in what was formerly the Commmunity Welfare Training Institute at Watsonia.

The intention is to develop a highly disciplined staff. The first training programme began on 20 February with 51 prison officers. There will be twelve courses throughout this year with a total of 230 officers receiving basic training and promotional training.

The promotional training commenced on Monday of this week. Action has been taken to ensure that fully-qualified professionals are available to train staff. The training at the college is not just for prison officers but also for other officers in the administration so that the service will be disciplined. The training is also for those volunteers who provide an integral part of the correctional services process, that is, those serving on the community corrections committees and probation officers. They will also be receiving the training provided through the new training college.

I am sure honourable members will welcome this new approach to training, the highly professional courses that are being developed and the higher spirit of morale that is now accompanying the development of prison officers. The Government has taken this matter seriously and it has moved a long way in the past few months towards progress in that direction.

BANK ACCOUNT DEBIT TAX

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—Could the Treasurer inform the House whether he is aware of the unfair Federal Government cheque debit tax imposed on the non-profit committees running the Victorian 150th Anniversary celebrations? If the Treasurer is aware of that, what representations has he made to the Federal Government to correct this unfair tax?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As the honourable member for Gippsland South would be aware, the bank account debit tax was introduced by the Liberal–National party coalition Government and was inherited by the Hawke Government. It is true that it is not a satisfactory tax. The matter was raised at the Premiers Conference when the Fraser

Government was in office. The matter has also been taken up with the Hawke Government. The Federal Government recognizes a number of deficiencies in the tax. However, because it, like the Victorian Government, inherited a large deficit it has had enormous difficulties in getting rid of it.

SAILBOARD RIDING

Mr ERNST (Geelong East)—Can the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation inform the House what steps have been taken to ensure that the popular sport of sailboard riding or wind surfing does not endanger other beach users?

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—There is no doubt that sailboard riding has become a very popular sport at beaches in recent years. It appears that it will continue to grow in popularity in the summers ahead.

With the growth in the sport, there is now more awareness of the dangers not only to sailboard riders getting into trouble with the wind and other aspects of the bay but also the fact that innocent people, who do not take part in this sport but are on the beaches for a swim or to participate in other activities, are in danger of being injured by sailboards becoming adrift or uncontrollable.

I have tried to combat the position and to act for the future by appointing a working party comprising various groups associated with sailboard riding and other aspects of water sports to formulate a safety policy that will maximize the popularity of sailboard riding and allow the safe use of beaches by other people. I expect that report to be finalized and delivered in May of this year.

EQUITY INTEREST IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—If the Government does proceed with its announced intention to take an equity interest in private enterprise, can the Treasurer inform the House whether that will make the Government and, therefore, Victorian taxpayers liable for losses incurred by those companies?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—It is a very interesting negative question that the honourable member for Ripon has raised. Since the Labor Party has been in government, it has been prepared to enter into joint ventures with the private sector and those ventures have been successful. I refer honourable members to the Geelong engineering and agricultural company which rose out of the dust of the International Harvester Australia Ltd collapse. That development has been extremely successful.

It was partly financed through the Victorian Development Fund and is yielding a positive return. The company has been able to repay substantial sums to the Victorian Development Fund.

The Government has also been prepared to become involved in high technology ventures. The Silenus organization has a representative of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation on its board of management. That again illustrates the partnership between the private and public sectors.

The honourable member would also be aware that this approach has been adopted by the Japanese Government in its industry policy, and that has been most successful.

The proposals that have been put forward by the Victorian Government in this area are certainly visionary and will ensure that Victoria benefits from increased growth, employment and income.

SERVICES FOR THE INTELLECTUALLY HANDICAPPED

Mrs RAY (Box Hill)—Is the Minister of Health aware of opposition by local residents to a number of community services for intellectually handicapped people; if so, can he inform the House what action has been taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I am well aware of the honourable member's interest in developing services for intellectually disabled Victorians in the eastern suburban area of Melbourne. It is unfortunate that only a baker's dozen of Opposition members are present to hear the answer, because it relates to an important area of public activity.

The action of the Camberwell City Council—albeit a very narrow decision—should be praised. It will allow the proposal of the Eastern District Association for the Retarded to go ahead. For those members who are not aware of the facts, I point out that that organization proposes to establish

a facility for a number of retarded Victorians in the Surrey Hills area, and a number of local residents are opposed to that facility. On the casting vote of the mayor, Councillor Hosking, the Camberwell City Council has agreed to the proposal to provide additional places for persons who are currently residents of St Nicholas Hospital and for others living in that area.

The Government has a strong commitment to the development of community services for the retarded and, during the past year, has increased funding for that purpose by 15 per cent. That was a significant achievement in a difficult financial year. An additional 78 teachers have been appointed to day training centres, and additional community residential units have been provided. When the Labor Government came to office, twelve such residential units were operating; by the end of the current financial year, that number will be increased to 65.

Some difficulty has been experienced with certain local residents who have not understood the importance of the community-based programme. Both the former Government and the present Government have made it clear that services should be provided in the community in as normal an environment as possible, and action has been taken to ensure that that policy is put into effect. Ordinary houses in ordinary streets are being purchased so that intellectually disabled Victorians can live in the community, and the Government believes community acceptance of that arrangement will improve over the next few years. Some people had a fear of the unknown, and it was suggested that somehow property values would deteriorate, but that is not the case. Indeed, intellectually disabled persons make excellent neighbours, as was pointed out to me during a visit to Wangaratta when the neighbours concerned assured me that they were pleased to have a community residential unit in their street. I have heard similar reports again and again. I hope that, increasingly, local residents will resist action of the sort that was proposed in relation to the Guildford Road proposal.

Further, the Government is concerned to develop, in conjunction with the voluntary sector and the Federal Government, additional community services so that those areas which currently do not have access to services can obtain access to them. It is unfortunate that the development which has occurred over the years in, say, the Loddon–Campaspe area has not been matched in other areas.

For instance, in the Westernport area, there are far fewer community residential units than in the Loddon–Campaspe region. I should hope that there is the support of all honourable members to ensure that facilities are provided for retarded Victorians in the community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna)—Mr Speaker, I desire to make a brief personal explanation about two matters, the first being what I regard as misrepresentation of my support for pre-release and the second about the incomplete remand information that I inadvertently conveyed in the matter I raised in the House on 5 April.

I asked the Premier a question without notice on whether he was aware that a man charged with murder and convicted for manslaughter following a shooting in a milkbar was released from gaol under the pre-release programme after serving only seven months of a three-year to six-year term.

Some two weeks after the question was raised, the Premier responded and stated that I had created a false and misleading impression and had set out to denigrate the Adult Parole Board.

In relation to the claim that I created a false and misleading impression, I state the following facts: As a result of a domestic dispute on 1 July 1982, a killing occurred. On 5 July, Mr Vincenzo Falleti was charged with murder and taken into custody where he remained on remand until his conviction and sentence for manslaughter on 30 November 1983.

The certified extract from the Supreme Court states that Mr Falleti was informed against, tried and convicted and was thereupon ordered and adjudged by the said court to be sentenced to six years' imprisonment, with a minimum of three years before being eligible for parole.

These substantiated facts are as I conveyed in this House and to the media on 5 April.

I regret, however, that further information was inadvertently incomplete in that Mr Falleti was held on remand from 5 July 1982, totalling some 392 days, which period was taken into account when automatic remission was calculated and pre-release eligibility established.

My information was that the killing occurred in a milkbar but whether or not that was the place neither repudiates nor supports the fact that manslaughter occurred and was proven in court.

My position with regard to pre-release was misrepresented yesterday when it was claimed that I set out to denigrate the Adult Parole Board—nothing could be further from the truth, and my public statements confirm my support for pre-release. My belief in the integrity of the independent Adult Parole Board is firm.

Any questions about mathematical calculations and departmental administrative decisions in determining remission and release dates can in no way be construed as a criticism of the Adult Parole Board.

PETITIONS

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

Refusal of medical treatment legislation

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

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

That the protection of human life is under attack by the euthanasia movement which is using a co-ordinated international strategy to attain its objectives; that the immediate aim of the euthanasia movement is to create a false problem about the management of patients who are dying by trading on ill founded fears and popular misconceptions on the care of the dying;

That mover of the Refusal of Medical Treatment Bill admits his aim "to air the euthanasia" and claims his Bill would introduce "passive euthanasia"; and

That the report of the Health Advisory Council on this Bill accepts that some human lives are not meaningful and so endorses a categorization of human life which was the basis of the German euthanasia programme.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Government of the State of Victoria will reject the Refusal of Medical Treatment Bill and all other legislation designed to introduce euthanasia in any form.

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

By **Mr F. P. Sheehan** (1380 signatures)

Logging in national parks

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

The humble petition of the Native Forest Action Council and the undersigned citizens sheweth that the Victorian timber industry, and in particular the East Gippsland timber industry needs to be reviewed. Your petitioners therefore pray that:

(1) The Errinundra Plateau; the Rodger River—Gelantipy Plateau—Bowen Range—Yalmy River area; and the Mount Kaye areas, be declared national parks;

(2) Overcutting of Victoria's native forests cease and forest harvesting be conducted on a long-term sustainable basis; and

(3) All logging in National Parks cease forthwith.

By **Mr Remington** (45 signatures)

Controlled litter reduction programme

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth our concern at the potential loss of over 3000 jobs and disruption to growth in Victorian industry, which would occur if any law requiring the payment of a deposit on drink containers was introduced in this State.

Experience in South Australia and overseas has shown that compulsory deposits are an ineffective and costly method of litter control and resource conservation. Beverage containers make up only 4·8 per cent of litter in Victoria. The remaining 95·2 per cent of litter will be untouched by deposit legislation.

We urge that as an alternative, a Government controlled litter reduction programme be introduced. Such a system has been a proven success in New South Wales, reducing litter by almost 60 per cent in four years.

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

By **Mr Jasper** (120 signatures)

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

PAPERS

The following papers, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, were laid on the table by the Clerk:

Police Regulation Act 1958—

Determination No. 396 of the Police Service Board.

Determination No. 2 of the Police Service Board with respect to the Retired Police Reserve.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The SPEAKER presented the fourth report of the Auditor-General for the year 1982–83.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, May 1.

The motion was agreed to.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER 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:

Exhibition (Borrowing Power) Bill
Stamps Bill

SECONDARY TEACHER SHORTAGES

Mr HANN (Rodney)—I move:

That in view of the disastrous shortage of staff in Victorian secondary schools during February 1984, this House expresses its lack of confidence in the Minister of Education for his failure to provide adequate facilities for the appointment of sufficient teachers to cover school enrolments at the commencement of the school year, and calls for an immediate independent inquiry into the operations of the staffing branch of the Education Department.

I start my address to the House by quoting from an extract in the *Age* newspaper of 16 February 1984 which relates to comments made by the Principal of the Mildura High School, Miss Borschmann. It reads:

The school's principal, Miss Enid Borschmann, yesterday angrily criticised the Education Department for what she said was its inefficiency in staffing schools. "In my 12 years as principal, I have never known such chaos," she said.

"Before school finished last year, we wrote to the department that their estimate of enrolments and ours were two different things. We estimated we would have more than 1000 students, they estimated 976. Today, we have 1035 students and because their estimate was out, we are eight teachers short."

The heading of the article reads:

A serious shortage of teachers at Mildura High School has resulted in every staff member, except for cleaners, gardeners, and office staff having to take classes.

That is an example of what many other schools are suffering throughout Victoria. Many schools are desperately short of staff. The Koo-wee-rup High School has a shortage of staff and is having difficulty in obtaining a response from the Minister of Education on the matter. Some of the students from that school are today in the reception hall of Parliament House.

One would have expected a significant improvement on the situation that existed in the Education Department in 1983 but there has been only a marginal improvement and the department commenced the year with 250 unfilled vacancies. Two factors made the situation worse than in 1983. The shortfalls were more heavily concentrated, from 4, 5 or 6 teachers short in some 20 schools, and 5500 students enrolled who were not included when the estimated staffing establishments were issued by the Education Department.

In my discussions last year with school councils, especially those in the area I represent, they expressed concern about the refusal of the Education Department to accept their estimates. As a result, it has become very difficult for schools and school councils to plan for the new school year. No secondary schools in Victoria were advised of their establishment figures until as late as 31 January 1984.

My information is that the staffing office of the Education Department, especially the secondary area, was virtually inoperable during the January period when one would have expected the department would be working all out so that schools were fully staffed at the commencement of the school year.

It has been strongly suggested to me, and the Minister of Education may wish to respond on this information, that it was a deliberate policy of the Government not to employ teachers prior to 31 January because that would effectively save the Education Department a substantial sum of money in

salaries. If staff are not advised early in January of their employment and then put on the pay-roll, especially the new teachers, the Government and the Education Department save a substantial amount of money. The positive suggestion was put to me that that move was made by the Minister and the department.

Mr Fordham—That is outrageous; where is the evidence for that?

Mr HANN—The evidence for that was that decisions were not made until 31 January. A difficult problem was caused by the fact that registrations of student teachers were not made until early February. Those student teachers were unable to take up positions because their registrations had not been finalized, and that aggravated the situation.

Until ten weeks into the school year, the Koo-wee-rup High School has been experiencing difficulties in staffing levels. The education of students and school programmes have been disrupted. On 12 December 1983, I drew to the attention of the Minister of Education the likely problems in staffing of State schools. This matter was first raised with me around that time by the Mildura High School and a letter dated 2 December was sent by the school to the Minister, of which I received a copy. I wrote to the Minister on 12 December and I shall read the letter to the House because it is relevant to the debate. It states:

> The principal of the Mildura High School, Miss Borschmann, has drawn my attention to a copy of a letter addressed to you on 2nd December 1983, in which she expresses the grave concern of the school council regarding the proposed staffing situation at the Mildura High School in 1984.
>
> Miss Borschmann's letter is self explanatory and similar concern has been expressed to me by a number of other high school principals throughout the country Victoria.
>
> It does appear as though the staffing proposal is going to cause significant inconvenience to many high schools and I believe that an urgent review of the proposals should be carried out immediately in order to overcome this situation.
>
> I would be pleased to receive your comments on Miss Borschmann's letter and your advice as to how the Education Department intends to overcome the concerns expressed in it.

The Education Department did not respond to those comments until well into the new school year and the Minister also did not respond to my suggestion that he should urgently review the likely staffing problems that could be experienced in 1984, despite the fact that he was warned of the situation in December 1983.

Similar problems have been experienced in many high schools in Victoria. In some respects, this demonstrates the total inflexibility of the written staffing agreement which the Minister entered into with the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association in relation to staffing establishments of the schools, and the dilemma that the Minister has in solving this. Very real anomalies exist at present.

Mildura High School was not the only high school affected. Significant numbers of other high schools experienced similar problems. Being parochial, one should deal in the first instance with the electorate that one represents.

On 14 February I wrote to the Minister of Education pointing out the problems with secondary schools in the electorate of Rodney. For example, the Rochester High School had an emergency teacher filling a vacancy and wished to have that teacher appointed to a full-time position. The Cohuna High School was short of a home economics and needlecraft teacher. That position had been vacant since November–December 1983. The school also required an English and history teacher. The Kyabram High School required two additional history and English teachers and a woodwork-graphic communications teacher. The Echuca High School required a commercial teacher and an English teacher and the Echuca Technical School required a humanities teacher. Virtually every significant high school in the electorate was short of staff at the commencement of the school year.

I am quoting examples from a schedule dated 1 February 1984 which was provided to me and deals with the period about which I am speaking, namely, the commencement of the school year. I refer to the Wimmera–Central Highlands region of the Education Department. Edenhope High School was three teachers short with no possibility of cover. Students were to be sent home and no emergency teachers were available. The

position at other schools in that district was as follows:

Ararat OK at start. 1 down for increased enrolment.

Stawell 2 short. 1·5 required for increased enrolment (total 3).

Rainbow OK. But no replacement for HE to go on leave in April.

Hopetoun 2 down, plus problems with staffing of tech component.

Kaniva 1 down—no prospect of MK/Automotive.

Nhill 2 down, plus 1·5 for increased enrolment.

Dimboola 1 down.

Ballarat OK by establishment but in difficulty because of poor subject cover. Will be sending students home.

Warracknabeal 2 down, plus 1 extra for increased enrolment.

This comes back to the whole question of anomalies. The list continues:

Murtoa 2 down.

Beaufort OK technically but will have to reduce one year level from 3 groups to 2 if 51 not accepted.

Lake Bolac 1 down, plus 1 for increased enrolment, otherwise no librarian.

Donald 3 down, plus 1 for increased enrolment.

Birchip 1 down (but 1 in excess who will be reabsorbed if 0·8 supplied).

Ballarat East down 1·2 (2 bodies).

Horsham down 2·4 (3 bodies) plus 3 for increased enrolment i.e. 6 needed.

Balmoral 3 down, plus 0·2 VSTA Committee of which school not told.

The situation in the Wimmera–Central Highlands region was critical. I received a letter from the Colac High School which is in the south-western region of the Education Department, which is based at Geelong. The letter stated:

The school experienced considerable difficulty with staffing until the sixth week of the school year—and thus we are very aware of the concepts involved in your motion.

Similar problems exist in high schools throughout the State. The Shepparton High School has experienced serious staffing problems. On 23 February, the school wrote to the Minister pointing out that the school council members were shocked at the report from the principal regarding the situation facing the school in 1984. The letter stated *inter alia*:

As a consequence of our year 12 enrolment being 96 (now up to 100) instead of 101 the staffing establishment of our school was decreased by 1·5; this was required by the rules of staffing.

The school has had to alter time-tables and examine the possibility of sending students home. More recently, the same situation applied at the Blackburn Technical School because the school was short of mathematics and science teachers. It must be remembered that that school has almost doubled in size.

The Minister interjects and speaks about establishment figures. As I pointed out earlier, the total inflexibility that the Minister has introduced with the written agreements he has entered into with teacher unions has created a situation where anomalies cannot be rectified. It has created a situation where schools have effectively lost staff. The Blackburn Technical School is one of those schools. A number of important problems have arisen in providing real support to the schools. The Minister has not been prepared to come to grips with the situation and provide the schools with the teachers they require.

It is interesting to examine in more detail the staffing arrangements at the Mildura High School. If the Minister wants to speak about school establishment figures, I will do so. On 20 February 1984, the school establishment figures at the Mildura High School was confirmed at 71·4 teachers. I pointed out earlier that the Minister of Education and the Education Department were advised in December 1983 that the school expected an enrolment of more than 1000 students. The Education Department was not prepared to accept that estimate and said that the school enrolment estimate would be 976 students. The school ended up with 1035 students.

As I said earlier, the confirmed school establishment figure at the Mildura High School was 71·4 teachers. On 31 January, the first day of the school year of 1984, the Mildura High School had 64·7 teachers. In other words, it was short 6·7 teachers, according to the figures of the Education Department.

On 13 February, the first day of the third week of the school year, the school had 65·5

teachers and was therefore short by 5·9 teachers. On 20 February, the first day of the fourth week of the school year, the school had 67·9 teachers, which was 3·5 teachers short of the establishment figure.

On 22 February, the third day of the fourth week of the school year, the school had 69·5 teachers, which meant it was 1·9 teachers short of the establishment figure. On the fourth day of the fifth week of the school year, the school had 70·5 teachers, which meant it was 0·9 teachers short of the establishment figure. On 19 March 1984, the first day of the eighth week of the school year, the school had 71·3 teachers and was only 0·1 teacher short of the establishment figure.

Therefore, in the eighth week of the school year the school finally reached the establishment figure. Because of the significant disruption to the school programme, the situation is totally unsatisfactory. One is speaking about the education of secondary students who are facing a critical stage in their development. The Minister has completely refused to acknowledge or respond to the representations made. For example, with respect to the Mildura High School, the problems were drawn to the attention of the Minister on 12 December. However, it was 19 March 1984 before the school finally received its full staff numbers according to the school establishment figure.

Today concern has been expressed to me about staffing at the Koo-wee-rup High School. In 1983, the school had 551 students with a staff of 41·7 teachers. In November 1983, the school was provided with an estimated enrolment and staff figure of 536 students and 41 staff respectively. I have already made the point that the establishment of a school must be organized in the preceding year. If one is trying to plan a school programme, it is obviously ridiculous to enter the first two or three weeks of the school year and then attempt to organize the teaching programme for that year. To do so means a significant loss of valuable time for students. Senior classes have to be arranged, students must choose courses, buy books and start reading for the new year. Junior classes also choose electives and buy books. Schools must order necessary equipment.

Therefore, the Koo-wee-rup High School was organized on the basis of a staff of 41. In 1984, the enrolement figure exceeded the estimated figure and 541 students arrived. The school began work. On 17 February, the principal received notification that the school's teaching entitlement was to be dropped to 39·5 teachers because, although the over-all enrolment had increased, the expected figure for the year 1 level had not been reached.

There were 98 students instead of the 101 students who were needed for staff entitlements. As a result of the reduction of students in that year 9 level, the staff establishment level of this school dropped back to 39·5. The result was chaotic in the extra workload for the administration and staff. It was impossible at that late stage to ask seniors to drop higher school certificate subjects and take up new ones and year 11 students to change courses.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr HANN—I welcome the calling of a quorum because this is an important subject and members of Parliament should be in the House listening to the debate and taking notice of it. I was drawing attention to the Koo-wee-rup High School where the staffing establishment has been dropped back from 41 to 31·5 because of a loss of three students only at the year 9 level.

The year 11 students had to change their courses and the following adjustments had to be made: Metalcraft classes dropped at years 9 and 10; craft classes increased in size and decreased in number to limits beyond the safety of the facilities; the principal and the deputy principal both took up teaching and their administration duties had to suffer. It is ridiculous to force principals and deputy principals back into class-rooms because they have a very large and important administrative overload and they should not be required to teach in class-rooms.

Library services were cut back also. As there was an unfilled position at the school, it had to be French–English to cover what was left of the school programme. No one has been appointed. At this stage of the year, no French–English teacher is prepared to go to the school and it appears that the school will need to modify its programme further

and cut out foreign languages unless it can get back to its entitlement of 41 staff. The students will be further disadvantaged.

Already students with an ethnic background have been refused migrant English teacher assistance. Some students are without a teacher at all and now no foreign language can be taught. It is a disturbing situation in a country supposedly supporting a multicultural approach and the Minister has been making a great play of the importance of that subject.

In 1983, Koo-wee-rup High School had 551 students and an entitlement of 41·7 staff, but with a loss of ten students in 1984, it has 541 students and the staff entitlement has been dropped back to 39·5. The questions being asked are: Why has Koo-wee-rup High School been disadvantaged by having no special needs component in its staffing establishment, which is an additional problem, even though a number of students need this help?

Why was it necessary to cut the entitlement of staff as late as 17 February when the whole school had been organized, students had chosen subjects and parents had bought books? Why has the Minister not answered the many letters and calls from parents and the community about the staffing situation?

Why has the Minister consistently refused to meet a deputation from the high school council to enable the council to discuss the matters further with him? It is a valid request and the Minister should have responded to it.

Some comparisons with surrounding schools have been drawn to my attention. The Wonthaggi High School has 525 students and a staff entitlement of 42·6; the Yarram High School has 526 students and a staff entitlement of 48·8; and Leongatha High School has 575 students and a staff entitlement of 46·1; whereas the Koo-wee-rup High School has 541 students and a staff entitlement of 39·5.

Mr Leigh—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr HANN—The present situation at the Koo-wee-rup High School is that metalwork has been abandoned at years 9 and 10 and at present equipment worth thousands of dollars is lying idle; craft classes are oversized, unsafe and restricted; library services have been curtailed; the principal and deputy principal are teaching and many supervision and administrative tasks are not possible; the year 11 legal studies is a class of 28; some English classes are without a teacher and will not get one unless the foreign language is abandoned; and no remedial teaching is possible in mathematics and English.

A serious shortage of staff has been experienced by many schools and I refer to representations made to the Education Department as a result of a request for a deputation to the Minister, who initially refused that deputation. Senior staff from the north-western high schools group, which had made a deputation to the Minister earlier in February, met with the Director-General of Education and Director of Personnel. The group's reaction was that the department appeared to be unsympathetic to the individual problems of schools. There tended to be a defensive attitude in the department on the question of estimates of school numbers. The department argued that it believed schools were giving false figures to try to boost their staff establishments. On the establishment figures this year, it is not true. By far the majority of schools have been underestimated by the department rather than overestimated. Very few schools were overestimated.

Certainly, the over-all situation is that the department has been short of staff in a significant number of schools because of its refusal to accept the numbers put forward. By interjection, the Minister says it is the same procedure every year. That is no reason to continue with the procedure. That is the thrust of the National Party's attitude on the whole matter. Is the situation to be accepted from year to year when schools are short of staff for up to eight weeks, or will that situation be reviewed?

The National Party is seeking an independent inquiry and internal review of the staffing situation, the staffing mechanism and procedure of secondary schools in the State. Will the Education Department improve the situation in the future? That is the real challenge. I am concerned that late last year the Minister refused to acknowledge that there were likely to be problems, despite the fact that his attention was drawn

to the situation by me as National Party spokesman on education and by my colleagues, the honourable members for Mildura and Swan Hill, and by a number of other honourable members who expressed concern that problems could likely be experienced in 1984 unless appropriate remedial action was taken.

However, it was not taken. No final decisions on staffing were made until 31 January, the day before schools commenced this year. As a consequence, schools are still facing staffing difficulties. A school in Mildura took eight weeks to reach its staffing establishment figure. That is an unsatisfactory situation. An independent review should be undertaken to ensure that schools know their staffing establishment figures much earlier in January of the school year so that their programmes can be finalized and students can begin the school year with their courses already organized.

It is an intolerable situation. I will not accept the Minister's claim that it is the same situation that has occurred every year. Parliament will not accept that statement. Dramatic improvements should be made to ensure that schools are properly staffed. I urge the House to support the motion.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I welcome the opportunity of discussing this matter. It was raised many weeks ago by the Deputy Leader of the National Party, but for one reason or another the opposition parties have not chosen to bring on the debate. It was desirable that it be dealt with to provide an opportunity for honourable members to comment on the issue.

I shall put the situation in context. Education is probably the biggest and most complex business in Victoria. The Government school sector alone has enrolments of approximately 570 000 pupils, approximately 50 000 teachers, plus support staff in approximately 2100 schools and budget of approximately $1700 million. That is a large operation for any Government or non-Government establishment to control.

The complexities of that business are added to each year when thousands of new pupils enter schools, largely at the preparatory level. There is a significant movement each year between primary school education and post-primary education. Thousands of students leave schools after the compulsory school leaving age of fifteen years of age in years 10 to 12. Those complexities make it a difficult operation.

On dealing with the performance of the Government in coping with the opening of this school year, I shall make a passing reference to the massive movement of pupils each year to the metropolitan area from provincial cities and country Victoria, which requires adjustment by the Government.

Mr Whiting—It is nothing new.

Mr FORDHAM—I did not say it was. I am explaining the complexities of the school year. This year, 1480 modules had to be shifted between Christmas and the end of February. That logistical operation involving the Education Department and the Public Works Department was one of the biggest operations in Victoria. Most people have commended the Government for the success of that task.

About 1700 primary schools are operating in Victoria, varying in enrolments from 7 to nearly 1000 pupils. This year, about 43 000 new pupils will enter the State primary system, which has a total of about 318 000 pupils and 18 500 establishment teachers. It is recognized that the opening of the primary school year was highly successful, despite the need for significant movements of staff to cope with changing demographic patterns and other requirements of teachers.

Technical schools have about 74 000 students in 108 schools with approximately 7500 teachers. Significant movements of students occur in and out of that system. The difficulties experienced in that area have not related to the provision of staffing numbers within the Technical Schools Division, but rather to subject imbalances, which reflect curricula changes in technical schools. The problem is not a shortage of teachers deemed either by the schools or the system. Difficulties have been encountered this year because schools have changed their curricula moving away from trade subjects to more traditional subjects, such as mathematics and humanities. The general consensus has been that the over-all staffing operation for technical schools, where it was mounted, has been successful.

I now turn to what I acknowledge has proved to be a major problem area in 1984, namely, the staffing of high schools. There are 288 high schools, together with six post-primary schools of the new form of secondary education initiated this year, making a total of 294 schools. The Deputy Leader of the National Party misunderstood my comments earlier. I was not suggesting that the fact that we followed the same procedures as previous Governments is in any way an excuse. I was making the point that it was not a deliberate Government initiative this year to bring in new procedures that did not prove successful. What has proved to be a problem is that the traditional procedures, not initiated by the Government but by other Governments, were clearly inadequate for the 1984 school year.

The Education Department followed, in broad terms, the same procedures that have been followed for many years. In October 1983, the escalated enrolment data was prepared and forwarded to schools and regions for their comments. The data was based on the previous retention rates between levels in each school. After consideration of the comments that were invited both from schools and regions, the professional staffing establishment was set for each school. That figure became the working figure for the staffing office until the final confirmed enrolments for each school as at the first week of the new school year were forwarded from the regional office to the central administration of the department.

In summary, the authorized staffing establishment for 1984 was based upon the confirmed enrolments, and any vacancies arising from changes in the establishment were authorized and appropriate offers of employment were made. I repeat that it is the same procedure as previously. No initiative taken by the Government was designed to upset schools or the traditional staffing establishment arrangements. That procedure was followed for many years because it was the experience of the department, under successive Governments, that many schools overstated the number of teachers they needed. It was not a deliberate exercise, but that has been the past experience and practice.

However, if every school were given the number of teachers for which it asked this year, many would have been overstaffed. In fact, 104 high schools overstated enrolments by a total of more than 2400 students. The staffing section of the department has used the more conservative estimates of enrolment numbers based on retention rates of statistical formulae over ten years. The experience over that ten years has indicated to the staffing office that those estimates are closer to the final figures. That has been the experience year after year, but it was not the experience in 1984.

To some extent, 1984 was a watershed year in that the previous formulae and arrangements for determining the staffing establishment in secondary schools were clearly inadequate and needed fundamental change. I acknowledge that here and now, as I have already indicated in the media and in discussions with various schools in recent weeks.

This year the Education Department underestimated by 2537 the number of enrolments in high schools. The actual number of enrolments in high schools for 1983 was 178 579. The estimated number of enrolments by the department for February 1984 was 182 357, whereas the actual enrolments in high schools were 184 894, which was an under-estimation of 2537. Between 1983 and 1984, there was an overall increase of 6315 in the number of enrolments in high schools.

The Government is delighted at the increase in the enrolments in high schools. For many years, the Labor Party has argued that if Australia is to develop the necessary expertise and skills it will have to develop a higher retention rate amongst students. That is a policy that the Labor Party has encouraged in the past, and it will continue to encourage in the future. I make it crystal clear that the Government welcomes the decision of Victorian students and their families to remain longer at school.

However, it became clear when the enrolment figures were released in the first week of February that the Education Department, the Government and the community had to address a major problem very quickly indeed. The situation was complicated. It was not merely a matter of finding an individual teacher but of addressing the issue of subject requirements and needs. High schools need to develop a profile within their staffing establishments and it is then the responsibility of the department to try to

meet the particular curriculum profile through the provision of an appropriate subject teacher.

In defence of the staffing office, it should be noted that teacher appointments are often complicated by late resignations. Regrettably, many teachers choose to leave it until the last minute before they notify the department of their resignation. The position is further complicated by the late availability of results of exit students from the universities and colleges of advanced education often until late in January. The position is further complicated by the difficulty in trying to contact people in January, that is, people who have earlier applied for appointment to the department.

In January, Victorians take their holidays in large numbers. Therefore, there is often some difficulty in contacting persons who are eligible for appointment to the department. There was, however, a need for a major recruitment and staffing campaign because 174 high schools had an increased number of enrolments, 109 high schools had no changes in the number of enrolments and 31 high schools had a decrease in their establishment figures owing to the actual student enrolments at the schools.

In the two weeks following the confirmation of the vacancies at the schools, the staffing office was able to fill 550 vacancies, which was an average of 55 a day, which was a most commendable record over that period.

By 16 March, there were fewer than 100 vacancies in the high schools. When one considers the size of the teaching staff in the high schools, one realizes that is a reasonable figure. Although there were 94 vacancies at that time, the department was also 43 teachers in excess. That has to be seen as a counterbalance. In the interests of the public purse, efforts were made to transfer teachers in excess from one school to another as it became feasible.

At that stage, offers were made for all of the vacancies notified by the department but, as is often the case, the situation changed significantly from when the first round of offers were made when there was a 70 per cent acceptance rate by would-be teachers who were prepared to move to particular locations and fill subject areas. That acceptance rate dropped rapidly to less than 50 per cent. Once again the staffing office faced a major task in meeting the requirements of schools. That is not to say that there are no hard-to-fill locations in some parts of Victoria. For a number of years, the department has had difficulty in attracting teachers to schools situated in some of the more isolated areas of country Victoria.

For the life of me I cannot understand why that is the case. I have visited the regions. I believe those regions would provide a valuable experience for young teachers. I refer to places such as Mildura and Orbost where there are wonderful communities that could provide an invaluable start to the career of any young teacher. However, regrettably, a number of young people are not prepared to move to such areas.

The Education Department also faces difficulties in filling vacancies in schools in some parts of the western and northern suburbs. For some reason, the department has difficulty in attracting teachers to take up appointments in schools located in those areas.

So far as subject areas are concerned, there is a continuing shortage in some branches of mathematics and science. Last year, the Government addressed that issue through the establishment of special courses being commenced mid-year at both the Melbourne College of Advanced Education and the Hawthorn Institute of Education in an endeavour to address a shortage of mathematics and science teachers. That shortage exists not only in Victoria but also across Australia where every State is facing a shortage of mathematics and science teachers. For example, the West Australian Government recently sought permission from the Federal Government to try to recruit mathematics teachers from England. Last year, the Victorian Government was able to recruit almost 25 mathematics teachers from England. It is most difficult because of the changing patterns of employment across society.

By early April, the situation has stabilized, so that the over-all vacancy rate as at the latest notification I have received from the department had fallen to 30 vacancies across the system. Most of those vacancies did not exist at the commencement of the school year. Teachers resign or, regrettably, die or retire at various times during the year. Therefore, as the year progresses there is

always a vacancy level of around that level on a day-to-day basis as appointments are made and new vacancies are notified.

The Government accepts the need for a fundamental new approach to this issue. I shall return to that subject in a moment. I should like to comment on a number of matters raised by the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

It ought to be made clear that the Government is staffing schools according to a formula. This year Victoria has more teachers than it had last year. However, staffing is not based according to the wants of schools. It is not a matter of an individual school saying, "We want such and such a level of teachers". No Government, and I hope no political party, would say that it is the decision of a particular school to say that it wants a certain number of teachers and that it is the responsibility of the Government of the day to provide those teachers.

The Government must take into account the financial position facing the State, and the department must ensure an equitable and proper level of staffing.

I am prepared to compare the staffing level in Victorian high schools with the staffing level in the high schools of any other State. I attend meetings of Ministers of Education on a regular basis and, without fail, at every meeting other Ministers of Education say to me, "For goodness sake, slow down the staffing in Victorian schools because the staffing rate there is putting enormous pressures on the other States". The most recent statistics demonstrate that the Government has significantly enhanced resources in education.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party quoted at length the situation at the Koowee-rup High School. He reflected his concern for that school in his remarks, and I am sure there are representatives of the school here today. I have received representations from the school. Last week I met with officers of the Education Department to discuss the matter and to consider the material which was received and which dealt with staffing numbers, curriculum profiles and so on in an attempt to meet the requirements of the local community.

I have arranged for the Director of Personnel of the Education Department to meet with the representatives from the school immediately after the debate. Mr Jim Betson, who is known to many honourable members, has done a marvellous job since being appointed director. He has listened at first hand to claims about the schools' requirements and has considered what can be done to meet those needs.

I have endeavoured to explain the background to the 1984 staffing arrangements. I reiterate that the outcome of the staffing arrangements in Victoria's high schools is completely unacceptable to the Government. One should have expected that, given the number of variables involved, there would not be an exact match in February of the expectations of people to fill the hundreds of positions. Students leave their decisions whether they shall remain at school until the last minute, and teachers also leave it until the last minute to decide what they intend to do. Last year, the outcome was completely unsatisfactory to the Government.

The Government has agreed to establish a review which will completely overhaul the staffing and recruitment arrangements in Victoria's high schools. Members of the Opposition and the National Party have received a copy of the terms of reference of that review. I seek leave to have the terms of reference incorporated in *Hansard* without them being read.

Leave was granted, and the terms of reference were as follows:

Terms of Reference

To review the means by which secondary schools are provided with teaching staff in order to ensure that the most efficient and effective methods are used.

This review should look into and make recommendations to the Minister regarding:

(i) Whether or not the current calculations regarding staffing entitlements and pupil enrolments mitigate against efficient operations;

(ii) Whether or not the timelines used by the Staffing Office are the most appropriate, particularly with regard to the framework used for—

teacher requested transfers

advanced/prior offers of employment

excess transfers

new employment;

(iii) Whether or not the current policies and practices with regard to recruitment of new employees is appropriate, particularly with regard to the restrictions applied because of certification requirements;

(iv) How the system is best able to react to sudden changes in enrolments, either upwards or downwards, which are revealed in a February census;

(v) Whether or not the operational procedures used by the Staffing Office are the most appropriate for today's schools. In particular, recommendations are required regarding—

(*a*) the extent to which Regions should be involved in the staffing operation;

(*b*) the ways in which computer facilities might further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the staffing operation;

(vi) The best means by which those interested in the staffing of schools are provided with up to date information during the crucial periods of the staffing operation;

(vii) The particular difficulties of staffing certain country schools.

Mr FORDHAM—I shall briefly cover the terms of reference. In essence, the opening words explain them. They are:

To review the means by which secondary schools are provided with teaching staff in order to ensure that the most efficient and effective methods are used.

The review will deal with such things as the appropriate time to make contact with students who are exiting various Victorian colleges; to ascertain what the appropriate time will be to contact schools; to obtain initial estimates and to ensure those estimates are as soundly based as possible; to review to what extent the new decentralized administration system is working and whether it should be dealt with more at a regional administrative level, which is closer to the schools than the central administration; and to review how involved they are with staffing. Senior education officers who have a feel for the situation forced by Victorian schools will be able to deal with a whole range of issues and all the variables to which I have referred. As an indication of how seriously the Government takes the review, I am pleased to confirm that the review will be chaired by the Director-General of Education. I have had discussions with him and he has agreed to take on this major job. The others involved are representatives of the Victorian High Schools Principals Association, a representative from the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, the Director of Personnel of the Education Department, some employment officers from the Education Department and a regional director. A complete perspective of the education system will be obtained by involving the people who have been and will be involved in future staffing operations.

Mr Hann—What about the needs of country Victoria?

Mr FORDHAM—I shall come to that. The particular needs of that area will be considered. Recently, in conjunction with Mr Jim Betson, I met a deputation of principals and school council representatives from north-western Victoria. I commend them for their initiative and for the work they have put into ensuring that some of the schools which over many years have been hard to fill are taking every step to minimize possible disruption to the education of children at those schools.

I have undertaken that a particular focus of the review will be to meet the needs of country Victoria. I give that assurance because the issue will be addressed. People from country Victoria will be brought into that review process so that their needs can be properly understood.

In summary, I have outlined the situation as it has emerged in 1984. I reiterate that that year was unsatisfactory. The staffing people of the Education Department are to be commended for the tremendous job they did once the school year began. They endeavoured to meet the needs of Victorian schools and, more importantly, the children within them. The structure under which they operate and the procedures involved were clearly inadequate. The Government intends to address that issue and it will be seen to be a major task during the second term of the 1984 school year. Under those circumstances, the motion should not be supported.

Mr JONA (Hawthorn)—The Liberal Party strongly supports the motion because the evidence that was presented by the Deputy Leader of the National Party reiterated the evidence that has been received by the Opposition from all sections of the State since the beginning of the 1984 school year. Clearly, both a censure of the Minister and an independent inquiry are needed.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party adequately presented the justification for the motion. He has provided the House with indisputable evidence from a large number

of case examples that apply throughout Victoria, both in the country and the metropolitan areas of Victoria. Those examples illustrated the utter failure of the Minister to ensure that adequate procedures were available for the appointment of such teachers in 1984, and particularly at the beginning of the 1984 school year.

In his response, the Minister claimed a defence on two or three grounds. The first was that the Education Department is an enormous operation which involved expenditure in excess of $2000 million, tens of thousands of personnel and hundreds of thousands of buildings worth millions of dollars. It is an enormous operation. The Opposition does not deny that. The size of the operation compounds the problems that exist in smaller organizations. It is the responsibility of the Government through the Minister to ensure that if an organization as big as the Education Department needs additional staff and resources, the additional staff and resources are obtained to cope with the problems.

Secondly, the Minister claimed that significant problems existed with the logistics arising from demographic changes in the movements of the population throughout Victoria. The problems are not new. Over the years successive Governments have faced the same problem. The demographic effect on this year's education planning has been considerably less than in past years when more substantial changes occurred in the population and in the movements of population throughout the State, as well as between the various metropolitan regions.

The Minister outlined all of the procedures that were being taken by the Education Department, and the only conclusion that one could reach from his remarks was that nothing more could have been done. I was listening closely to the Minister's remarks. The Minister has now agreed to establish an inquiry, which is an admission that not all is good and proper and that inadequacies exist. However, the Opposition suggests that the Minister had ample opportunity, after last year's gross bungling, of establishing some type of inquiry between last year and the beginning of the 1984 school year so that the problems occurring at the beginning of this year could have been minimized.

It has taken this debate in Parliament for the Minister to announce that he will establish some review of the staffing of high schools.

Mr Fordham—I announced it weeks ago.

Mr JONA—I draw the attention of the Minister to the enormous amount of press material that was available, which highlighted the grave deficiencies and mismanagement of the staffing of high schools in Victoria at the beginning of this school year. In the *Age* of 21 February 1984, an editorial appeared headed "Bad guesswork by educators" which stated:

> But this is the second year running the department has made the same mistake. To do it once might be understandable but to repeat the dose raises serious questions about the efficiency of the department's staffing operations. If there are not enough people in the staffing office then more should be appointed. If they are not senior enough then more senior ones should be appointed.

The editorial continues in that vein.

On 15 February 1984—six days earlier—the principals, through the President of the Victorian High Schools Principals Association, Mr Richard Davies, called on the Government to establish a staffing inquiry. The *Age* of 15 February indicated that the President of the Victorian High Schools Principals Association said that the inquiry should investigate the Government's underestimation of school enrolments in 1984. Mr Davies made a serious allegation against the Government because he said that the Government had deliberately understaffed schools in January in line with its conservative enrolment estimates. He claimed that, in scores of cases, high school principals had advised that the estimates the department was working on were unduly low and serious staff shortages would result. However, the Minister of Education did not respond to the advice given to him at that time.

The effects of the staffing shortages in the schools, which have reached a serious level and are still continuing in some respects, are causing considerable cutbacks in the educational opportunities of thousands of children attending those schools. I refer to one example. The Sea Lake High School in the central Mallee began the school year with

6 of its 24 teachers missing. At the beginning of the school year, the principal, Mr Michael Nhill, said:

> This is the worst staffing situation I have ever faced, and I have been teaching in the Mallee for 22 years.

He went on to say that the only way that he could overcome the problem at the school was to introduce a four-day week for years 7 to 11—that was the only way to utilize the teachers available to the school in accordance with agreements that the school was required to observe through arrangements with the teacher unions, but which the Minister was not prepared to back up with the necessary financial resources.

I will deal with one other aspect because the Minister has not adequately answered this allegation. In his speech today and on previous occasions, the Minister has explained the position of the Government and of the department regarding the assessment of school enrolments on the basis of the best information available prior to the commencement of any school year. He has not attempted to explain whether the agreements he has signed with the teacher unions, particularly with the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association, provide for limited class sizes, a maximum number of hours teaching in front of a class and a maximum number of classes in any one term that a teacher can act for an absent teacher, and he has not explained whether there were inadequacies of resources in the department to cope with the additional staff that would be required as a result of the artificial shortage that was created by those cutbacks.

Based on all information available, it is the estimate of the Opposition that there is an artificial shortage of almost 600 teachers in the high school system as a result of the Minister failing to back up his agreement with the unions with the additional resources necessary to provide for the artificial teacher shortage imposed by limited teaching hours and limited class sizes. The Minister has not commented on that, and it appears that the unions were taken for a ride by being led to believe that those agreements would be honoured.

I refer to one serious by-product of the agreement with the unions which has not been backed up by resources from the department. No doubt exists that there are serious inequalities in staffing brought about by the industrial agreements made between the Minister and the teacher unions. For example, the Balwyn High School is extremely concerned about the failure of the Minister to make adjustments in response to the provisions of the agreement and to the needs in schools which grow from that.

A serious problem exists in the portion of the industrial agreement with the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association dealing with teacher conditions, and that is causing particular problems. In order to avoid giving a teacher the seventh extra period for term one, the Minister, through his departmental representative, Mr Jim Betson, insisted that teachers should not be given a seventh extra period unless the teachers agreed. As the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association has told its members to refuse such an instruction, a member of the association cannot agree even though Mr Jim Betson said the schools should implement the practice if the teachers agreed. The teachers have been informed that they must not agree, and the Minister must make some immediate clarification.

I put three questions to the Minister: Firstly, is the instruction by Mr Betson valid in law in a period of compulsory education and having regard to the Minister's commitment to educate children in Victoria; secondly, does Parliament recognize the Minister's authority to implicitly support a teacher disobeying an instruction; and, thirdly, does the Minister support Mr Betson's alternative strategies to avoid the seventh period to include a teacher supervising two classes from an outside corridor, combining two smaller classes and redeploying a teacher, the principal and/or the deputy principal taking classes, and grouping classes in an assembly hall or gymnasium?

I am sorry that the Minister of Education is busy having a private conversation with the Minister of Consumer Affairs while I am making these very important points.

The Minister is now claiming, by interjection, that representatives from the Balwyn High School do not know what they are talking about and that other high schools which have raised this matter with me do not know what they are talking about. The Minister suggests that I do not have a clue—it is not a matter of whether I have a clue, it is a matter of me passing on the concerns of

the high schools to the Minister and obtaining a response from him.

If the honourable gentleman is not prepared to listen to the points I am making, the schools have no hope of obtaining a reply. The schools want a deputation to the Minister, but he insists that Mr Betson should see them and now the Minister will not even listen when I raise the matter in Parliament. The Minister is showing utter contempt for the schools that he has a statutory obligation to administer.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party spoke this morning about the problems at the Koo-wee-rup school. The honourable member for Westernport has put me in the picture about the problems at Koo-wee-rup. I will not repeat what the Deputy Leader of the National Party said about the specific problems at the school. However, I point out that the school council did not ask to see Mr Betson; it asked to see the Minister and has been asking to see the Minister for four weeks.

In the twenty years that I have been a member of Parliament, Ministers of Education have always agreed to meet deputations from school councils. I have introduced many deputations to Ministers over the years, but today one cannot get to the Minister because he is surrounded by competent officers in whom he has so much confidence that he does not have to get involved himself.

There are occasions when schools council members are entitled to see the Minister of Education. The Minister should not pull down the blind on them all. The honourable gentleman will not even see the school councils which seek an interview with him at the request of members of his own party.

The response given by the Minister of Education today was that the Government recognizes that things are wrong and it is going to set up a review. I congratulate the Minister for agreeing to set up a review of the staffing of high schools. The terms of reference are adequate and I have no doubt that if the review comes up with the proper answers to questions which have been posed a great service will have been provided as a result of this motion.

However, I quarrel with the composition of the review panel because the motion states that the Minister should establish an independent inquiry. There is not one independent person on the review panel that the Minister proposes to set up.

Honourable members have the greatest respect for the capacity and integrity of the Director-General of Education and recognize the high degree of professional skill and competence of Mr Jim Betson. Honourable members also have the same high regard for the Victorian High Schools Principals Association and the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association and their representatives who will participate in the review. However, the Minister must recognize that the review panel could hardly be said to be independent when it is the Director-General of Education who accepts responsibility from the Minister for what goes on in his department, but it is what is going on in the department that is under review. Mr Betson accepts prime responsibility for reporting to the Director-General of Education on the matters that are to be investigated by this review panel.

The group of people who are responsible for the course of action which is now to be reviewed are being asked to undertake the review. I have no quarrel with any of those persons being on such a review panel, but it is important that the Minister should add some outside and truly independent persons who can work closely with the senior and respected officers of the department, the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association representative and the representatives of the Victorian High Schools Principals Association in carrying out this examination. Those persons whom the Minister has nominated will certainly need to be on the review panel because a review could not be carried out without their contribution and participation.

I urge the Minister to add to that panel and perhaps even discuss with the Liberal and National parties the qualification of people from outside groups or bodies who might be considered suitable to represent school community interests and who might be added to the review panel. Under those circumstances, the Opposition views with some degree of satisfaction the terms of reference which the Minister has laid down for this review and trusts that, as a result of the recommendations that will flow from it in the coming months, the problems experienced in 1984 will be avoided next year.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—The saga of staffing of secondary schools in Victoria has been very interesting because it began towards the end of last year when it became apparent to many school principals that the agreement reached between the teacher organizations in this State and the Government was not going to work so far as the staffing formula was concerned. This should have been apparent to those people at the top level of education administration, particularly with regard to the number of staffing officers available in the section of the Education Department which deals with staffing in secondary schools. The whole system broke down in that area.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party outlined a number of cases where staff shortages occurred and no action was taken to improve or alleviate the situation even though definite staffing figures were given by school councils and school principals indicating that there would be a staff shortage at the beginning of the 1984 school year.

I do not wish to traverse much of what occurred in regard to the Mildura High School because that has already been adequately covered by several speakers. The interesting school is the Red Cliffs High School which wrote to Miss O. Hamilton of the Agreement Implication Committee on 23 November 1983 indicating that the school believed it would have a shortage of four teachers at the beginning of 1984. The principal of the Red Cliffs High School indicated to Miss Hamilton:

> I understand your situation very clearly when you state that, because you do not have further staffing resources available, A.I.C. is unable to alter the staffing establishment of Red Cliffs High School.

That was in November 1983. I do not know why the Minister, who is in charge of the department, did not take steps to adequately staff the Agreement Implementation Committee or the staffing section of the department.

When in opposition, for some years the Minister of Education and many of his colleagues crucified Jack Ford, who was then the secondary staffing officer, because he failed to do the same thing that the staffing officers did in November and December 1983. I fail to see the difference because the Minister knew very well what the previous situation had been and he failed to take action on a situation that was developing as early as 23 November, when the situation was raised by the Red Cliffs High School.

The Minister was being hypocritical when he claimed in the debate this morning that the situation is far more difficult than anybody expected and that there had been a movement of people, buildings, and so on. Surely the Minister was in the same position in 1983 when the same problems existed. Perhaps it was not as serious then and was aggravated by the agreement with the teacher unions. The Government has only itself to blame for the mess it has got itself into with the staffing situation generally.

I continue quoting from the letter from the principal at Red Cliffs High School:

> On 8 November 1983 I appealed against the non-allocation of a special needs component and emphasized that the school and the school council were amazed and deeply concerned that no special needs staff could be made available to Red Cliffs High School in 1984.
>
> Given this, you will understand our disappointment now when it appears that our need is not necessarily being questioned but that staffing resources are just not available.

I believe that is a serious allegation. The principal goes on to indicate why he believes Red Cliffs High School should have some component for special needs. He said:

> Approximately 25 per cent of the student population are Australian born students of migrant background, nearly 30 per cent are overseas born and of migrant background. In fact some 18 nationalities are represented in the school.
>
> Almost 25 per cent of students come from houses where English is not the main language spoken.
>
> Some 17 per cent of students belong to single parent families and 20 per cent of families are recipients of the maintenance allowance.

That surely indicates that some consideration should have been given to for the special needs component in that school staff. The principal went on to indicate that there were four areas of considerable disadvantage because of lack of staffing, namely, mathematics/science, home economics, English, sport and drama.

At the beginning of the school year, the school was short of two of those teachers for several weeks. That situation has now been rectified, but it is simply not good enough

to have the situation where schools make the department and the staffing officers aware in November of the previous year that a problem is likely to exist and nothing happens.

The situation in the north-western part of the State was so serious that a north-western high school group was formed. The group had its first meeting on 8 December 1983, when sixteen secondary schools in the area were represented. All schools had similar problems caused by the potential for staff shortages. As a result of the meeting, a number of motions were passed and an attempt was made to have a deputation to the Minister of Education. Unfortunately, at that time he was the Acting Premier because the Premier was overseas and it was not possible to arrange a deputation to see him, but the group meet with the Director-General of Education, Dr Curry, and the Director of Personnel, Mr Betson, from the industrial relations office, on 21 December 1983. One of the matters that was of particular concern was the failure of the staffing office to accept well documented variations of their enrolment projections with the consequent benefit of adjustments to 1984 when the placement of staff in these areas is impossible.

The situation is aggravated in country Victoria because once all the newly-appointed teachers, exit students from teacher training colleges and anyone else interested in being employed by the Education Department obtain positions with the department, those who come along later are unlikely to be prepared to go to more remote parts of the State. Consequently, country high schools suffer as a result of that natural phenomenon with regard to people who are only on the fringe of the education system and who are persuaded at a late stage of the school year to take up positions with the department.

The deputation to the director-general and the director of personnel was of some duration. It went for more than two and a quarter hours and a great number of points were raised. While the original feeling of departmental officers was one of some reserve and distrust, they eventually agreed that schools from the north-western part of the State had a considerable problem and that something should be done about it. Unfortunately, very little happened at that stage and it was necessary for most of the schools in the area either to conduct their own recruiting programme or continually contact the staffing office and almost bludgeon staffing officers into accepting the fact that additional staff would be required.

I cannot understand the attitude of the Minister and director of personnel with regard to what they claim to be false claims by principals of schools in their estimates of enrolments for the coming school year. That may happen in metropolitan areas, but certainly the majority of country schools and country principals that I am familiar with are a little conservative in their estimates of enrolments for the ensuing school year. The situation that developed with Mildura High School certainly bore that out because its estimate on 15 September 1983 was approximately 1000 students. It finished up being 1032 students. The department stuck to its figure and obviously from the outset there was going to be a conflict with staffing positions at that school.

It was only with some reluctance that staffing officers in the department and the Minister eventually accepted that the enrolment was 1032 and, therefore, the Mildura High School was originally six teachers short. It took seven weeks before the last of those teachers was appointed to that school.

The situation was little different at Merbein High School. That school inserted an advertisement in the *Sunraysia Daily* dated 16 February, three weeks after school had started, indicating that Merbein High School wanted teachers. It is a sad state of affairs when a situation is reached where the department that is responsible for staffing schools is in such a mess that the schools have to go public and advertise for teachers interstate or out in the general public area where those teachers with qualifications may be available. It was stated that the Merbein High School had vacancies for teachers in typing, metalcraft and mathematics. Eventually two people were obtained as a result of that advertisement, and I understand the school is now reasonably happy with its staffing situation, although it is difficult to get teachers for the typing subjects in country Victoria and it is also difficult to obtain teachers in metalwork.

The Ouyen High School on 17 February 1984 was short of one typing teacher and

one metalwork teacher. Other schools in the area had similar problems but to a lesser degree. The teacher shortage problem is accentuated in schools such as Rainbow High School, where there was a shortage due to one teacher leaving the school. The teacher was on the staff during the 1983 year but left at the commencement of 1984.

A shortage of one teacher in a school with a staff of sixteen is more serious than a shortage of one teacher in a school with a staff of 66. The smaller the high school, the greater the burden on the remaining staff who have to try to cover the loss of the teacher. In a small school, that problem is almost insurmountable. This year it is unfortunate that a situation such as that developed in a number of smaller Victorian schools. That point should be addressed by the Government.

At a deputation on 21 March 1984 from the north-western high schools group to the Minister of Education at which Mr Betson was present, a number of proposals were put forward in the hope that some method of overcoming the problem in future years could be adopted.

Another matter that has already been raised concerned the late sitting of the Secondary Teachers Registration Board. The Mildura High School was caught up in that situation because it was approached by a teacher who virtually came in "off the street" seeking employment at that school. There was a vacancy for the subject in which the teacher was qualified. The teacher was asked whether she had a secondary teacher registration but, unfortunately, the reply was "No". She did not possess that registration because she was an exit student from a training college and the only recourse she had was to wait until she was registered.

The principal contacted the Secondary Teachers Registration Board and was informed that the board would not be sitting until 3 February 1984, which was the day on which schools reopened. Approximately 1200 teachers had applied for registration and it would take some time for those teachers to go through the registration process. This represents another delay for teachers who, for all intents and purposes, are qualified except for the requirement to be registered by the board. Therefore, a further two to three weeks' delay at the commencement of the school year was caused by that board not sitting earlier.

It should not be too difficult for the Minister and the Education Department to overcome that problem because they know that a reasonably high number of teachers will seek registration at the commencement of any school year. It should not be too difficult for the registration board to sit during the last two weeks of January and the first week of February in an attempt to catch up with the backlog that obviously occurs. The motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the National Party calls for the establishment of an independent inquiry into the operations of the staffing branch of the Education Department, but the Minister of Education indicated in his reply that an inquiry would be established. It is difficult to understand why only this morning the Minister released a statement containing a reference to that board of inquiry to the spokesmen for the opposition parties, although other honourable members did not have the benefit of that information because the Minister had the document incorporated in *Hansard.*

It is strange that the Minister was critical of the Deputy Leader of the National Party for not proceeding with his motion earlier in the sessional period. The Speaker would be aware that these motions are only available for debate on three Thursdays in the month. If the House is not sitting on one of those Thursdays, if another Thursday is a Grievance Day and if other honourable members have a motion that has precedence over a specific motion that is to be discussed, the efforts to get that motion to the top of the list are considerable.

Because of the problems occurring in the staffing branch at the beginning of 1984, and the fact that there was a shortage of staff, each of the regions was asked to supply one person to travel to Melbourne to assist with the staffing operations. The principal staffing officer in the post-primary section, Mr Lockhart, was almost run off his feet and was completely at a loss to know what to do. He eventually coped once the regional staff officers were sent to the head office of the staffing branch to assist in the placement of Victorian teachers. It is patently obvious that that situation must be rectified

before the end of 1984 so that new procedures can be implemented before the commencement of the 1985 school year.

In the deputation to the Minister and Mr Betson on 21 March 1984, a number of positive proposals were put forward concerning a solution that may be available for staffing country secondary schools in Victoria. A number of points were raised and I refer honourable members to a document supplied to the Minister at that time. The South Australian procedure apparently is one that tends to overcome the problem better than what occurs in Victoria. However, the statement relating to New South Wales was:

> Clearly there is an essential need for a link or contact person in the staffing operation, particularly when applied to country schools (cf. the New South Wales system where one person is appointed per area at the secondary level).

I hope the Minister has taken that recommendation on board and that he will do something about it. Incentive proposals to teachers, particularly junior staff, to go to country areas should also be considered. For a "penalty" of spending two or three years in a remote country school, teachers should receive some credit or time off their probation or other benefits to encourage them to go to those areas.

The Minister indicated that he could not understand why teachers did not go to country high schools. Incentives such as a climatic disability allowance, isolation allowance, travel expenses, improved seniority and recreation leave could be provided. A suggestion has been made that up to three return trips each year to the homes of teachers could be provided. Assistance concerning accountants fees, solicitors fees and stamp duty on selling one's property, if one has to move to a country area, could be made for teachers who transfer to country areas when they own properties in other parts of the State. If New South Wales teachers spend two years in a country area, this rebate is provided for them.

Obviously, something must be done to encourage teachers to go voluntarily to schools in country areas. I hope the Minister will take those points into account.

The deputation had a positive attitude along the lines that, although problems had occurred at the beginning of the 1984 school year, the north-western high schools group was not interested in blaming any specific person. However, under the system of Ministerial responsibility, in the long term, the blame must come back to the Minister.

It was not only secondary schools that were in trouble at the beginning of this year. As at 14 February this year, the Mildura Technical School was short of one home economics teacher and one member of the library staff. In both instances staff members had previously indicated that they would resign either for long service leave or, as in one case, overseas leave on the part of a spouse. The staffing office and the Minister were aware of those intentions at an early stage. It is hard to understand why efforts are not made to cover those vacancies when they occur, and it is extremely difficult for school councils and school principals in remote parts of the State to cope with that situation.

I strongly support the motion of the Deputy Leader of the National Party. The National Party believes all schools in Victoria were unhappy with the Minister's performance in regard to staffing at the beginning of the 1984 school year, and the National Party urgently requests that the independent inquiry should go ahead with all haste to ensure that the same situation does not arise at the beginning of the 1985 school year.

Mrs RAY (Box Hill)—I oppose the motion and, in the few minutes remaining, will rehash some of the material the Minister put before the House.

He has acknowledged that this year the traditional procedures were inadequate to cope with the vastly increased number of students. The increased retention rate has not been given sufficient emphasis in the debate. Clearly the difficulties in secondary schools have not been due as much to demographic changes as they have been to economic changes. This year, 6300-odd secondary students returned to school and their return was unanticipated. The Government is pleased that those students have chosen to stay at school longer, although it is not happy with the circumstances which have necessitated their choice and hopes to be able to plan successfully for that situation in the future.

One point I make refers to the inflexibility that has been spoken of in respect of the agreement. It is not the agreement that is inflexible. I have had experiences of people in the electorate that I represent who are determined not to make the agreement work. Staffing wants are capable of infinite expansion, but there comes a time when people must ask the question: "When do we have enough teachers?" Parents have become inflamed to the point where they write to their local member saying, "Do not give me the arithmetic, just the teachers".

Mr Leigh—Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mrs RAY—In addressing the notion of inflexibility of staffing arrangements in schools, I repeat that staffing wants are capable of infinite expansion, and there comes a time when the formula and not just the wants of the school must be considered. It is perhaps difficult for the Opposition to comprehend the notion of an agreement between the Government and teachers but, nevertheless, many schools have been able to implement the agreement smoothly and without detriment to their students.

I make specific reference to two schools in my area. The Box Hill Technical School was built in a record 38 contract days to accommodate the relocation of 400 additional students. It is a credit to the officers of the Education Department, the Public Works Department and the staff of the school, all of whom were amazed at the commitment of both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Public Works. That relocation also involved an enormous movement of portable class-rooms to the various corners of Victoria, and one begins to appreciate the many miles that portable class-rooms are moved at the beginning of any school year.

This is a good opportunity for me to publicly set the record straight about the Blackburn Technical School. It has five more teachers this year than it had last year and eighteen fewer students. An extra staff component was allowed to that school to help it to implement the agreement. The inflexibility is not in the agreement but in the attitude of those responsible for implementing it. The responsibility is clearly on the administration and community of any school to use its available staff to the best advantage of its educational programme.

I commend the Director of Personnel, Mr Betson, for his willingness to spend time with deputations from Blackburn Technical School and his willingness to acknowledge the needs of the Blackburn High School which this year needed additional music staff. This was again related to the higher retention rate of senior students. More than 350 students in that school are committed to practical music and a large number study at the higher school certificate level. Their needs were not graciously recognized by the Principal of the Blackburn Technical School who recently wrote to me pointing out that he believed Blackburn High School students were being advantaged at the expense of students at the technical school. I can only say that a school that has the generous staffing arrangements that that school has at present has little cause to complain about the staff room and administration facilities, to request a music and drama complex and to complain that its woodwork room is dangerously unsafe.

The 350 students who learn musical instruments at the Blackburn High School are attending a designated music school whose duty it is to deliver musical education, just as it is the obligation of the Blackburn Technical School to deliver technical education in that area. It is difficult to conceive that such a situation as existed at the Blackburn Technical School represents a serious shortage of teachers.

I conclude by commending the Minister for his patience in the debate and stating that, in directing deputations to the director of personnel, the honourable gentleman was acting quite properly. Mr Jim Betson has been patient with both schools and the solution was a just one.

In accordance with Sessional Orders, the debate was interrupted.

The SPEAKER—Order! The time appointed under Sessional Orders for Government Business to take precedence has now arrived. The honourable member for Box Hill will have 23 minutes to contribute to the debate when the matter is before the House again.

The sitting was suspended at 1 *p.m. until* 2.5 *p.m.*

PRAHRAN MECHANICS' INSTITUTE BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr CAIN (Premier), was read a first time.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION (REVOCATION) BILL

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to repeal statutory rules made prior to 1 August 1962, the date upon which the Subordinate Legislaton Act 1962 came into operation. That date is significant because until the Act commenced operation regulations were available only in the *Government Gazette* and not in bound volume, as are statutory rules made after that time. This caused, and has continued to cause, problems for persons seeking access to these old pieces of subordinate legislation. Even solicitors are unlikely to hold complete sets of the *Government Gazette* and, if they do, the effort required to locate all relevant pre-1962 regulations may well be prohibitive. This raises obvious problems for compliance with the law, particularly for people engaged in small business or who are not skilled in legal matters.

A general Bill to repeal outstanding and redundant pre-1962 statutory rules is the most efficient and complete method of removing out-dated subordinate legislation. With the exception of those statutory rules referred to in the schedule to the Bill or made under or continued in force by the Acts referred to in clause 2, and that are, in consequence, exempted from the repealing provisions of the Bill, passage of this proposed legislation will ensure that all statutory rules will be available in bound volume.

Although the Bill represents a significant step in making the law more accessible and is consistent with the Government's philosophy of open access to information, I am certain that honourable members will be pleased to know that the Bill represents only the first stage of a significant legislative reform to improve the process of making and reviewing subordinate legislation. As honourable members are aware, the Legal and Constitutional Committee of the Parliament has been asked to report upon the Subordinate Legislation (Deregulation) Bill 1983, a Bill introduced in another place by the Honourable A. J. Hunt, an honourable member for South Eastern Province. Subject to consideration of the committee's forthcoming report upon that Bill, I can inform the House that further legislation will be introduced by the Government in the spring sessional period to provide for the phased repeal of all remaining statutory rules made between 1962 and 1984, the repeal of new statutory rules at regular ten-yearly intervals and the widening of the grounds for review of new rules by the Legal and Constitutional Committee. I am sure honourable members will agree that this further legislation will constitute a major change to, and improvement in, the existing rule-making and review process. It is consistent with the Government's economic strategy released recently to encourage growth in the business community.

The Bill will eliminate out-dated and inaccessible subordinate legislation and will ensure that statutory rules are available to the public in bound volume. 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, May 1.

CO-OPERATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Through this Bill, the Co-operation Act will be amended to provide for improved annual appropriation of profits of credit co-operatives for reserve purposes. It will also empower the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, with the approval of the Minister of Housing, to vary the common bond requirements of credit co-operatives.

The objective of these amendments is to ensure the continuing financial security and economic viability of the credit co-operative movement. They have been developed after consultation with the Credit Societies' Guarantee Fund Advisory Committee, the Victorian Credit Co-operative Association Ltd, and other representatives of the industry. They also reflect the views of the Government's financial institutions review

currently being undertaken by representatives of the Ministry of Housing and the Department of Management and Budget.

At present the reserve provisions of the Co-operation Act require only that 5 per cent of any year's surplus be appropriated to reserves until these equal at least one quarter of the aggregate of the paid up capital, borrowings and deposits. This provision does not generate adequate reserves as no appropriation is made when a co-operative fails to generate a surplus. Although the targeted reserve level is high, it has proved to be quite unrealistic, given the failure of many societies to generate significant annual surpluses. No credit co-operative has yet reached the present statutory reserve requirements, and the average level of reserves in Victoria is below that of any other State.

The amendment proposed will require credit co-operatives to progressively build their reserves at the rate of 0·5 per cent per annum until they equal at least 2·5 per cent of total assets. This is considered to be an acceptable level which can be achieved within a reasonable period. Most importantly, this provision will apply irrespective of whether individual credit co-operatives generate a surplus. All credit co-operatives will, therefore, be required to establish adequate reserves. Specific provision is made for co-operatives which cannot meet these requirements.

With respect to the proposed amendments to the common bond provisions of the Co-operation Act, it will be appreciated that this is a central feature of credit co-operatives, and one which has contributed to their degree of support within the community. The common bond of credit co-operatives makes membership available to those people who share a common occupation or employer, who live or work in a definable neighbourhood or local community, or who have a common ethnic origin.

Unfortunately, these provisions are somewhat inflexible and restrictive and, in particular, make it difficult for credit co-operatives to merge or amalgamate to protect their financial viability.

The proposed amendments will enable the Government to respond quickly and decisively to particular problems experienced by credit co-operatives by allowing for their amalgamation and rationalization.

In conclusion, I stress the Government's commitment to the continued growth and viability of the credit co-operative movement. These proposed amendments are a tangible expression of that commitment, and will ensure that the industry continues to serve the financial needs of many people within our community. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr BROWN (Westernport), the debate was adjourned.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday week.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—On the question of time, I make it clear to the House that the Opposition had no forewarning of the introduction of this measure prior to Friday of last week, when the Minister telephoned me and informed me that he was proposing to introduce this measure. It was introduced today. Next week is a holiday week involving the Easter break. Therefore, there will be no mail until Thursday of next week, and the Minister is proposing a totally inadequate time for the Opposition to adequately consult with the community. It will not be possible for the Opposition to consult with the community in any other way than by telephone. Unless I get into the car myself and meet with various interested parties, there is no way that I will be able to consult the co-operatives and other persons who will be involved prior to the second-reading debate on the Bill.

Next week is a holiday week, and there is only one more sitting week to go, and yet a Bill has been introduced into the House as late as today. The Opposition will agree in this instance to the time period proposed, which is as late as can be proposed if this Bill is to pass during this sessional period. I make it crystal clear that this is a co-operation Bill, and the Opposition will try its very best to co-operate. However, it is totally unreasonable for the Government to come in under circumstances where a totally inadequate length of time is given for consultation. It is not only a sleight on the community but it is also a sleight on this House that such a measure is put to Parliament at such short notice.

The Opposition puts the Government on notice—even though this is a co-operation Bill and we will co-operate and help the

Government get it through under duress and on such short notice—that it is up to the Government to control its affairs much better than it has.

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—I spoke with members of the Opposition about the Government's reasons for wanting the Bill to be passed during this sessional period. Furthermore, I arranged for a meeting between the spokesperson for the Opposition on this subject and officers within the registrar's division and the Ministry of Housing. Therefore, the Opposition has been fully briefed not only on the necessity for the measure but also on its impact. Small amendments are proposed in the measure, but they are necessary.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 1.

SALE (LAND DEVELOPMENT) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of the Bill is to adjust the areas of land transferred to and by the State Transport Authority, STA, and the City of Sale pursuant to the Sale Station Relocation and Development Act 1981.

Honourable members will be aware that during the 1970s the former Railway Construction and Property Board, acting on behalf of the Victorian Railways Board, and the City of Sale conducted discussions on a proposal to relocate the existing Sale railway station approximately 1 kilometre to the west on a connecting loop between the Melbourne–Sale and the Sale–Bairnsdale rail lines. The loop was to be constructed to avoid the need for all trains to be shunted at Sale to continue their journey. All parties reached agreement on a specific proposal which involved railway land occupied by the existing station and associated railway works being vacated and transferred to the City of Sale for the development of a commercial, retail and residential complex in exchange for land belonging to the City of Sale upon which a new station and associated facilities were to be built by and at the expense of the City of Sale. This agreement was formalized in the Sale Station Relocation and Development Act 1981.

In May 1983, the Ministry of Transport obtained a loan of approximately $3·3 million through the State Development Programme for the council to undertake the station relocation stage of the project. Formal agreements between the relevant parties involved in the project were signed in July 1983.

The City of Sale completed the necessary works in November 1983. Following acceptance and issue of a certificate of completion by the State Transport Authority, the Governor in Council took the necessary steps to vest the lands referred to in Schedule 1 of the Sale Station Relocation and Development Act 1981 in accordance with the terms of that Act to enable the council to proceed with the commercial development.

Since the passing of the Act, however, two problems have arisen. First, the City of Sale found that the extent of the works involved in constructing the new station and associated railway facilities were greater than originally anticipated.

Secondly, included in the land vested in the council were eight railway houses located in MacArthur and Thompson streets, which are currently occupied by railway personnel and their families. An approach was made by the unions, tenants, local members of Parliament and others and discussions were held between officers of the council, the State Transport Authority and the Ministry of Transport with a view to allowing the houses to remain the property of the authority. The council agreed to this provided other specified land was transferred to it.

As the State Transport Authority wished to retain occupancy of the houses for their employees working in Sale, and having regard to the increased costs to the council of constructing the new station, all parties have agreed to a proposal under which the City of Sale will transfer the land upon which the railway houses were built, as well as other land, in exchange for the authority transferring to the City of Sale the land known as the "warf line" which runs south of the Melbourne–Sale railway line to the Princes Highway and other specified land.

The lands which are now proposed to be transferred between the council and the State Transport Authority are shown on a plan which is lodged in the Central Plan

Office of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey. The cross-hatched State Transport Authority land shown on the plan is to be vested in the council and the hatched council land is to vested in the authority.

The plan also shows stippled areas. The stippled areas and the cross-hatched areas are areas to which the powers granted under section 16 of the Sale Station Relocation and Development Act 1981 are to apply. These powers will facilitate the commercial developlment proceeding. 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, May 1.

MOTOR CAR (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of the Bill is to reduce the number of alcohol-related road fatalities and injuries particularly involving inexperienced drivers and motor cyclists. It creates a new offence of driving while alcohol is present in the blood. The offence applies to an unlicensed driver, a learner driver and the holder of a licence issued on probation during the first year of the licence. The Bill also:

(*a*) Provides for recognition in Victoria of interstate learner drivers' permits; and

(*b*) amends the definition of "classic and historic" vehicles to bring within the definition those vehicles manufactured after 31 December 1930 and more than 25 years ago.

Honourable members will be aware that alcohol is the single most frequent casual factor in serious road accidents. About 40 per cent of drivers killed and about 20 per cent of drivers taken to hospital have a blood alcohol content of over ·05.

Inexperienced drivers are over-involved in serious road accidents, including alcohol-related accidents. As a group, drivers licensed for fewer than three years—the "probationary" group—are more than twice as likely to be involved in alcohol-related accidents than are those licensed for more than three years. However, the risk of an alcohol-related accident decreases with each year's experience. First-year drivers are about three and a half times more likely to have an alcohol-related accident than drivers with more than three years' experience, second-year drivers are about two and a half times more likely, and third-year drivers are just under twice as likely.

Learner permit holders are also almost twice as likely to have an alcohol-related accident as drivers licensed for more than three years, but it should be noted that this figure includes motor cyclists who are, of course, driving whilst unsupervised.

Having regard to the high incidence of casualty accidents amongst "P" plate and "L" plate drivers, the Government has decided to lower the odds by making it an offence for this group to drink at all before driving.

The probationary licence scheme currently imposes several limitations on inexperienced drivers to assist them to gain their experience in a safer manner. For example, in the first year, they are restricted to a maximum open road speed of 80 km an hour. In addition, motor cyclists may not carry pillion passengers, nor may they ride machines with an engine capacity over 260 cc. Recent research has shown this last measure to be a particularly effective counter to the over-involvement in accidents of inexperienced riders on high-powered machines.

The proposed zero blood alcohol content limit for learner permit and first-year drivers is a further application of the already accepted licensing principle of controlling the risks in the "learning" stage. On the grounds of equity, it is reasonable to include unlicensed drivers among those to whom the legislation applies.

It is pleasing to note that, during recent years in Victoria, there have been marked reductions in the involvement of alcohol in serious crashes. This appears to be due in part to the general increased community concern about drink-driving. This concern in turn has almost certainly been generated by high penalties, increased visible enforcement through random breath testing and continued mass media publicity.

A zero blood alcohol content limit for "L" and "P" plate drivers is a further step in this direction and reinforces the community view of drink-driving as a serious problem. Although few alcohol-related acci-

dents involve a blood alcohol content of below ·05, it is expected that the main effect of the proposed legislation would be to deter many inexperienced drivers from drinking at all before driving and to provide a reason for parents and others to restrict drinking among inexperienced drivers. This is likely to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related accidents among inexperienced drivers. In the longer term, it is hoped that the proposed legislation will lead to a change in the drinking patterns of this age group.

The proposed legislation also provides for convicted offenders to undergo an educational programme on the effects of alcohol on driving, as a condition of licenced restoration. It is the Government's intention that the introduction of this new legislation would be supported by an extensive public education programme.

In passing, it should be noted that Tasmania and Western Australia have similar schemes in operation which appear to be operating successfully. The former Road Safety Committee and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons strongly supported the proposal.

The Bill also makes two miscellaneous amendments to the Motor Car Act. All States except Victoria have legislation allowing interstate learner drivers who hold the necessary authority from their home State or Territory to drive in that State. The recognition by Victoria of interstate learner permits will bring permits in line with long standing reciprocal arrangements for interstate recognition of drivers' licences.

It is proposed that the conditions which apply to Victorian authorized learners will apply also to interstate learners when driving in Victoria. These conditions will include not exceeding 80 km an hour, not riding a motor cycle in excess of 260 cc engine capacity and not contravening the proposed zero blood alcohol content limit.

The proposed amendment applies regardless of the age at which an interstate learner may obtain a learner's permit in his home State or Territory. In New South Wales a learner's permit can be obtained at the age of 16 years and 9 months. South Australia issues learners' permits to persons over the age of 16 years.

With regard to amending the definition of "classic or historic" vehicles, the Motor Car Act currently provides that vehicles which fall into the categories of veteran cars, vintage cars and classic and historic cars may be driven on a highway in connection with approved official rallies without their being registered provided that a permit has been obtained. A permit fee of $20 applies in lieu of the normal registration fee.

The category of "classic and historic" motor cars is currently defined as a motor car manufactured after 31 December 1930 and before 1 January 1943.

The government has received representations from the Association of Motoring Clubs seeking to have the category of classic and historic motor cars defined as a motor car manufactured after 31 December 1930 and more than 25 years ago. This amendment would bring the definition of "classic and historic" motor cars into line with legislation in the other States. 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, May 1.

TEACHING SERVICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The issue of whether school councils should be involved in the selection process for the appointment of principals of schools has been widely debated within the education community over the past decade.

The argument has been put, with which I concur, that as the responsibilities of school councils have been widened to enable them and the school community they represent to have a greater influence on a school's policies and programmes, then the school council should have an input into who is going to be the educational leader of the school.

Although there had been some informal consultations with school councils of technical schools in the early 1970s, in 1978 the then Government formalized the involvement of technical school councils in the selection of technical school principals and

vice-principals by amending the Teaching Service Act 1958.

This action increased the debate on the issue and resulted in requests to widen the school council involvement in the selection of principals to embrace other schools and in particular high schools.

The next formal statement from the then government was contained in a Green Paper on "Strategies and Structures for Education in Victoria" issued by my predecessor the Honourable Alan Hunt on 8 May 1980. In that paper, clause 4.22 stated:

> In a school system principals are in a better position than any other person to influence the course of education and its effectiveness. In fact, the principal is an administrator at the most critical point in the system. Serious consideration should therefore be given to the process of selecting principals. Proven merit should take precedence over seniority and there is justification for requiring qualifications in education administration as a prerequisite for appointment. Schools should be able at the least to provide some input affecting the choice of principal.

That is clearly a statement of principle with which I concur.

Following the Green Paper, the then Minister, the Honourable Alan Hunt, issued a White Paper in December 1980. The first sentence of clause 5.5 in that paper stated:

> School councils may elect to be involved in the appointment of principals and deputy principals, and opportunities will be progressively expanded for them to take initiatives which result in buildings and facilities being in tune with the school curriculum and local needs.

My predecessor then proceeded to include the following clause in the Education Service Bill debated by this House in December, 1981.

> 61. In the case of a vacancy in the office of principal in a school the relevant appointments board shall consider the recommendation of the school council or, where there is no school council, the recommendations of a committee approved by the Minister as representing the local community, when determining whom to appoint to fill the vacancy.

Following the establishment of the State Board of Education in 1982, I requested that they advise me on how members of a school council could become involved in the selection of the principal of their school. The State board presented a report to me late last year. The report was made available to honourable members. I take this opportunity to commend the State board for its efforts in facilitating discussion in the education community on this important matter.

I have considered the report of the State board and have decided to implement the recommendation to involve technical, high school and post-primary school councils in the selection of their principal but to defer the involvement of primary school councils until 1985. The basic reason for this decision is that the primary career structure three-year agreement will be renegotiated later this year and it seems appropriate that any new procedures should be considered in conjunction with any new agreement.

The Bill therefore provides for two basic measures: Firstly, to implement school council involvement in selection of principals of technical, high and post-primary schools; and, secondly, to provide for the measures not to apply to primary schools until a date determined by the Minister.

In proceeding with this measure, I wish to emphasize that if the school council involves itself in the principal selection process, the appointments board is required to take the school council recommendation into account, however, there is no requirement on school councils to be involved in the process.

Any school council that decides not to be included in its principal selection process will not be disadvantaged. However, I am of the opinion that the number of school councils involved in the selection of principals will increase as the benefits of the process are realized.

I am also conscious of the necessity to maintain the *status quo* so far as any new structure is concerned to ensure that it cannot be substantiated or implied that the Minister or Government is endeavouring to influence the result of a matter currently before the Teaching Service Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. By using existing legislation, primary, secondary and technical appointments boards will be established to replace the current Primary, Secondary and Technical Committee of Classifiers.

I have given an undertaking that these boards will be established to complete the appointment process for schools this year or until the Teaching Service Conciliation

and Arbitration Commission has issued its determination on units and agents. Following this determination, the matter of the number and type of appointments boards will be reviewed.

As the method of and grounds for appeal differ between primary, secondary and technical schools, it has been necessary to provide for the grounds of appeal and procedures to be followed by the Teaching Service Appeals Board to be prescribed by regulation. For instance, in primary schools teachers appeal against non-inclusion on the relevant promotion list whereas secondary school teachers appeal against appointments to particular schools.

As the appointment process for primary schools for 1984 has begun, it is essential on the grounds of natural justice alone that the *status quo* be maintained for this year. Primary, secondary and technical appeal boards will be established on an interim basis to maintain the current procedures for 1984.

The Bill also provides that appeals by unsuccessful applicants on the nomination made by appointments boards, following school council consultation, shall be limited to the correctness of the process and procedures followed.

The Teaching Service Appeals Board will be able to refer the matter back to the relevant appointments board and school council. If, after the process of reconsideration, the Teaching Service Appeals Board is still not satisfied, it may declare the position vacant and require the position to be advertised again.

The Government has also decided to provide for school councils to be involved in the selection of deputy principals and vice-principals as well as principals, as recommended by the State board. This has been the situation in technical schools since 1978.

The Bill also provides for the establishment of an eligibility list of teachers considered eligible to be able to apply for principal, deputy principal and vice-principal positions. Teachers not included on the eligibility list will have the right of appeal.

In concluding, I reassure those who still have some apprehension concerning the involvement of school councils in the selection of principals. The introduction of these new procedures is not "the thin edge of the wedge" to abolish central employment of teachers leading to school council hire and fire but a recognition of the importance and enhanced role of the school principal in advising the school council on the development and implementation of school policies and programmes. 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, May 1.

LAND TAX (LANDATA PROJECT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The establishment of an automated land information system, known as Landata, was approved as a Government priority shortly after the election of the present Government in April 1982. A comprehensive corporate plan for the implementation of Landata was prepared by an executive committee, chaired by the Surveyor-General, to provide advice on the development and implementation of the system. Certain aspects of the plan were subsequently considered by an inter-departmental committee which has expressed its satisfaction that, in a technical sense, there is no impediment to the successful introduction of a computer-based land information system and that there are administrative and operational advantages as well as cost savings to be gained.

The inter-departmental committee did, however, identify one absolute impediment to the implementation of Landata; namely, the secrecy provisions contained in the Land Tax Act which did not allow the Commissioner of Land Tax to release information on land and its ownership to Landata. This information is essential if Landata is to compile a file of all land in Victoria and its ownership. The committee concluded that the land tax data base is the only suitable source for this file as all alternatives to it are prohibitively expensive.

If the secrecy provisions contained in the Land Tax Act are not amended, Landata could, if necessary, obtain details of all land in Victoria and its ownership from each of the 211 municipalities in Victoria. This

would be a most expensive process and extremely time consuming.

The Government is concerned that any proposal to relax the secrecy provisions contained in taxation legislation should be carefully considered before being implemented. In this instance, as I have already said, the relaxation of the secrecy provisions contained in the Land Tax Act will not enable Landata to have access to information it could not obtain by other means. The relaxation of these secrecy provisions will merely simplify the process and make it far less expensive. It is not intended that the Commissioner of Land Tax will reveal details of land tax payable by each taxpayer in respect of his or her aggregated land holdings. This information will still remain confidential.

The Landata project will provide a data exchange network between a number of State departments and authorities. It will receive data related to land from different sources and create a corporate data base from which a number of products can be produced to service the needs of other State agencies, commercial institutions and the general public. The Government is firmly committed to the project because of the advantages that will result for the benefit of the community, and has therefore approved the relaxation of the secrecy provisions in the Land Tax Act for this purpose. 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 Tuesday, 1 May.

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—I point out that the report of the committee on revenue raising in Victoria referred to a report of the Valuer-General that is closely related to the Landata project. I ask the Treasurer whether he will give an assurance that a copy of that report will be made available to members of the Opposition and the National Party prior to the debate being resumed.

Mr RAMSAY (Balwyn)—On the question of time, I would like to be sure that if more time is required for honourable members to consider the matter, it will be made available by the Treasurer when the debate is resumed on Tuesday week. The Treasurer has pointed out that any relaxation of the secrecy provisions must be carefully examined. A short adjournment scarcely gives the House time to carefully consider a matter which the Treasurer has acknowledged as important.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) (*By leave*)—I indicate that if additional time is required I will acquiesce to that request. In reply to the honourable member for Gippsland East, I will peruse the revenue raising report and ascertain why it is not publicly available. If there are no problems of confidentiality, it will be made available.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 1.

SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As a result of approaches made by employee associations and as part of its stated policy, the Government has agreed:

(*a*) To introduce permanent part-time work in the Victorian Teaching Service; and

(*b*) to extend family leave without pay for members of the teaching profession.

Guidelines for the introduction of permanent part-time work have been agreed between the relevant associations, the Public Service Board and the Education Department.

One of the problems associated with the introduction of permanent part-time employment is that, under current legislation, movement between full-time and part-time employment would require complementary moves between two superannuation schemes. A further complication is the requirement of another medical classification on re-joining the State superannuation scheme. Therefore, it is proposed to incorporate the superannuation provisions for permanent part-time officers into the existing full-time superannuation fund, that is, the Superannuation Act 1958, and to allow the current, non-permanent, part-time fund, that is, the Superannuation (Lump Sum Benefits) Act 1981, to be phased out.

The Bill ensures that all future permanent part-time employees will be compulsory contributors to the State Superannuation Fund, in a similar manner to full-time employees. A part-time employee is defined as a person who works at least 40 per cent of the time appropriate for a similar full-time employee.

The intention of this Bill is to ensure that the rights and entitlements of part-time employees, whilst so employed, are in direct proportion to the rights of full-time employees. Contributions will be on a *pro rata* basis.

The Bill provides that maximum superannuation entitlements can be achieved only where the total service, both full-time and part-time, equates to 30 years full-time service.

Currently there are some 600 contributors to the Superannuation Lump Sum Fund, some of whom are part-time employees. These persons will have a period of six months in which to elect to join the State Superannuation Fund, and there will be no further new contributors to the Superannuation Lump Sum Fund.

The family leave without pay provisions have been agreed between the three teacher unions, the Education Department and the Industrial Relations Task Force. The family leave agreement will entitle a person, male or female, to take leave without pay which, together with family leave with pay, shall not exceed a maximum of seven years. The intention is to allow persons to apply for family leave to bring up a family, and subsequently to re-enter the work force without losing any rights.

This Bill will allow any Government employee granted family leave to remain a member of the State Superannuation Fund and, as soon as the application for family leave is approved, to exercise one of the following three options:

(*a*) Pay no contributions and receive no benefits whilst on leave, unless any death or disability occurring in the leave period had its origin during the employment prior to the leave-taking;

(*b*) pay half the expected contribution to maintain death and disablement benefits during the period of the leave-taking; and

(*c*) pay three and a half times the expected contributions, to remain entitled to benefits based on total service, including the period of the leave-taking.

The proposed amendments are similar to both part-time and leave without pay provisions for members of the State Employees Retirement Benefits Fund. 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, May 1.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill makes four changes of significance to the Medical Practitioners Act 1970. The first group of amendments is designed to facilitate the conduct of disciplinary inquiries by the Medical Board of Victoria.

Disciplinary inquiries are held by the board under either section 16 or section 17 of the Act. Section 16 enables the board to censure a medical practitioner, or reprimand a medical practitioner, for failing to carry out his professional duties adequately, or to accept his professional responsibilities.

More serious inquiries are conducted under section 17. This section empowers the board to find, in essence, that a practitioner has been guilty of an indictable offence, is drug dependent or repeatedly intoxicated, has been convicted of an offence under the Medical Practitioners Act or Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances Act, or has been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect.

The options available to the board under section 17 are a reprimand, the imposition of conditions on the doctor's practice, suspension, or removal from the register. The conduct of disciplinary inquiries represents an increasingly important component of the work of the board.

For example, in the five years ending 30 June 1982, the board conducted an average of seventeen section 16 and one section 17 inquiries a year. However, in the last financial year alone the number jumped to 35

section 16 and ten section 17 inquiries. It is expected that in this financial year the board will complete 46 section 16 inquiries and thirteen section 17 inquiries. On the section 17 inquiries held to date, the board has sat for a total of 25 days.

The Government welcomes the greater involvement of the board in investigating unprofessional conduct by doctors. This not only reflects the concern of the members of the present board in maintaining the standards of the profession, but also is a direct result of the amendments made to the Medical Practitioners Act late in 1981 which gave the board the ability to initiate its own inquiries, rather than having to wait until it received a complaint.

One effect has been that members of the board have had to shoulder a much heavier workload. I take this opportunity to point out to the House that the quorum required for the conduct of a disciplinary inquiry is five—two more than is required for a meeting of the board. In fact, six members usually sit on a disciplinary inquiry so that if one is called away, or unable to complete an inquiry, proceedings can be continued by the remaining five members, if the parties agree.

The total membership of the board is nine. Thus, two-thirds of the full membership of the board is currently required to be present for the conduct of a disciplinary inquiry. Members of the board are eminent in their profession and the Government believes it is unreasonable that such considerable demands should be made on the limited time of already busy members of the board. With this in mind, the Bill will reduce the quorum required for disciplinary proceedings from five to three.

This will bring the quorum into line with that currently required for a meeting of the board and will help reduce the workload being carried by individual members. A related amendment will permit the board to sit in panels. Such a change will allow the board to conduct two inquiries simultaneously and, in particular, is designed to assist the board in reducing the current backlog of pending inquiries.

A third amendment takes account of the views expressed by Mr Justice Nicholson in his decision last August in *Grace* v *The Medical Board of Victoria*. In his decision, His Honour observed that a finding of infamous conduct in a professional respect by the Medical Board involved—

> . . . a serious and lasting slur on the character of the practitioner concerned, whatever the penalty imposed and should not be made unless he has been, in fact, guilty of conduct falling within the category of infamous conduct in a professional respect as it has been generally understood.

His Honour added—

> It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the legislature, when it saw fit to give the board a greater discretion as to the imposition of penalties, did not introduce some lesser standard of prescribed conduct such as, for example, conduct unbecoming a member of the profession.

The Government has noted the views of Mr Justice Nicholson and the Bill will introduce an alternative finding which will not carry the stigma of "infamous conduct".

The new finding of "professional misconduct" takes up the suggestion of His Honour, and will carry the full range of penalties open to the board under section 17 as I have already described to the House. As a consequence, the finding of "infamous conduct" is to be reserved for the most heinous of professional offences. The only penalty which will be available to the board in the event of making such a finding will be removal from the register.

The over-all effect of these amendments will be to restore the finding of "infamous conduct" to its former status and will enable the board to distinguish between what, perhaps, constitutes foolish behaviour by a doctor, and that which warrants the condemnation of his peers.

The second change being made by the Bill is to resolve an administrative problem which has become apparent with respect to the renewal of temporary registrations granted by the board.

Section 27 (3) of the principal Act makes provision for the renewal of such registrations "during the currency of the certificate" issued by the board, but does not refer to the renewal of a temporary registration outside this period. The Bill will resolve the anomaly by deleting the words "during the currency of the certificate" in section 27 (3). Its effect will be to permit the board to renew a temporary registration either before, or after, the date of expiry.

The third change being made by the Bill will facilitate certain forms of advertising by medical practitioners. Honourable members will recall that one of the amendments made to the principal Act by the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Act 1983 was to insert a new section 29 to authorize medical practitioners to display details of their fees in their professional rooms.

The Government believes there is a need for even more flexibility in fixing parameters for advertising by medical practitioners. The new sections which will replace section 29 are designed to make the Act more flexible by giving the Governor in Council the capacity to authorize certain forms of advertising by regulation.

Those types of advertising envisaged by the Government include announcements by a doctor of his skills in a particular language or the fact that he bulk bills under the Medicare scheme.

This type of information should be readily available to the consumer of medical services, and the fact that doctors are currently inhibited from making such information public is not in the interests of the community.

The proposed amendment will make Victoria more consistent with the position which has applied for some time in New South Wales and benefit both the profession and the patient alike.

The fourth change proposed to the Medical Practitioners Act will enable the board to impose restrictions and conditions on the practice of medical practitioners who hold dual registration, where such conditions and restrictions have been imposed by some other medical board.

The Medical Board has advised the Government that there have been instances where a doctor registered both in Victoria and in another State or overseas has become addicted to drugs and has had restrictions on his right to prescribe certain drugs imposed by the Medical Board of that State or country. However, such restrictions are not recognized in Victoria and there is nothing to prevent such a doctor continuing to prescribe these drugs in this State.

The Bill will amend the Act to enable the Medical Board, following the service of a "show cause" notice on the doctor concerned, to impose a similar requirement on the Victorian registration of such a practitioner without the need for a section 17 inquiry. The Bill will require notice of any restrictions so imposed to be published in the *Government Gazette* as would be required if such restrictions were imposed as a result of an inquiry under that section.

Apart from the four changes I have mentioned, the opportunity of the Bill is also being taken to incorporate an amendment to preclude possible proceedings against the Medical Board or its officers.

The Government understands that the board has received several requests from the Commonwealth Department of Health for information about proceedings taken by the board against a number of medical practitioners.

Legal advice which has been sought following receipt of these requests indicates that the board, or its officers, could risk action for defamation if it made such information available.

The advice is to the effect that while section 21A of the Medical Practitioners Act confers absolute privilege with respect to defamatory statements made in the course of an inquiry, and qualified privilege in respect of any report of such proceedings, it would be prudent to assume that any publication of material defamatory to the character of a doctor, either directly or indirectly in the form of a report, would be actionable.

The amendment I have foreshadowed is designed to protect the board in the event of the disclosure of such information to another registration board or to a Commonwealth body responsible for the funding of medical or health services where the information is requested by that board or body for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the spirit of the amendments made last year to section 31 of the Health Commission Act which authorized the communication of information to the Commonwealth in connection with the Medicare scheme.

The amendments I have outlined have either been requested by the Medical Board, or have its support. I commend the Bill to the the House.

On the motion of Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra), the debate was adjourned.

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

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER announced the presentation of a message from His Exellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Pathology Services Accreditation Bill.

PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (YOUTH ATTENDANCE PROJECTS) BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides a new correctional measure for young offenders, similar to the attendance centre orders available to adult offenders.

The Bill has two main objectives: Firstly, it aims to reduce the use of institutional care at youth training centres for young offenders. This is desirable on both social and financial grounds. Institutions have unintended negative effects on their inmates which are counterproductive to their rehabilitative goals. Further, it costs the taxpayer more that $600 a week to keep one person in a youth training centre, but only $90 a week to have that person at a youth attendance project.

Secondly, the Bill aims to provide a more realistic choice of dispositions to magistrates when sentencing young offenders. At present magistrates have a choice of wardship, probation, adjournment, fines, bonds or committal to a youth training centre. An intermediate option is needed which is more severe than probation yet which is not as drastic as, not as stigmatizing as committal to a youth training centre. The lack of an intermediate option has also led to some practices which have been criticized in the recent discussion paper by the Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review Committee. The difficulties arise in relation to probation and other orders which have a condition that the young person attends a youth welfare service, which is the use of general orders for a specific and more intrusive purpose. These orders were not designed to be used in this way. The Government is therefore introducing a new legal disposition which fills this gap in sentencing options available to courts dealing with young offenders in the fifteen to twenty years of age group.

There is a history to the measures in the Bill which I would like to briefly describe.

In 1970, youth welfare services were first established. These services were accommodated at centres where young offenders could attend during an evening and week-end to undertake community work and rehabilitational activities. The services cater for young people referred by the courts, as a condition of a probation or other orders, and also for other young people referred by the Department of Community Welfare Services, schools or community agencies because these young people are perceived to be at risk. The aims of youth welfare services are in many ways similar to the new youth attendance projects introduced in this Bill, but there are also significant differences, which I shall explain later.

In 1976, adult attendance centres were introduced. These provided for adult offenders convicted of less serious crimes to be sentenced to supervised attendance at regional attendance centres, to undertake rehabilitative activities and perform unpaid community work on selected community projects. This incorporated a punishment by loss of leisure time as well as aims of rehabilitation and restitution. This has since been supplemented by the Community Welfare Services (Attendance Centre Permits) Act 1983, which provides for adult fine defaulters to be transferred from prison to attendance centres. The corrections master plan has since recommended that the legislation be broadened to refer to attendance orders rather than attendance centres, in order that adult offenders in areas with few offenders are not deprived of this sentencing option because of a lack of an attendance centre in their vicinity. There is now a wide availability of attendance centre orders for adult offenders. The Bill extends these measures, with some modifications, to juvenile offenders.

In 1982, my department conducted a review of youth training centres. That review, which has since been published,

concluded that youth training centres are highly expensive, and that a significant proportion of their residents do not need to be there, either for their own good or for the protection of the public.

Given this background, the Government has decided to introduce new legislation in the youth corrections field. This legislation creates a youth attendance order and a youth attendance permit. It also includes two machinery amendments to the Community Welfare Services Act.

A youth attendance order is a court order obliging a young offender to attend a gazetted youth attendance project for up to 10 hours a week, of which 4 hours must be spent performing community service work during the week-end. The order is for a maximum period of up to twelve months. The object of a youth attendance order is to provide a non-custodial alternative for offenders who would otherwise be sentenced to detention in a youth training centre.

The Bill includes provisions for variations and breaches of the order, the types of community work which can be undertaken, and workers compensation cover for offenders while undertaking such work. Breaches of the order will be prosecuted by the department.

It is intended that existing youth welfare services and youth support units will be gazetted as youth attendance projects. At present these are situated at Brunswick, Ascot Vale, Windsor, Hawthorn, Doveton, Geelong and Ballarat, and the Bill contains flexibility for other projects to be gazetted. These may be special purpose centres or community buildings which are used only part time for this purpose. However, youth attendance projects will be different in several significant respects from other programmes conducted by youth welfare services. They will contain only offenders sentenced to attend by the courts, rather than a mixture of offenders and other young people under other court orders. Sentencing will in all cases include week-end community work and offenders will attend other locations as well as at youth welfare service centres.

The objectives of these youth attendance projects are specified in the proposed legislation as follows:

To provide a young offender with activities and requirements—

(*a*) which take into account the gravity of an offender's behaviour;

(*b*) which penalize an offender by imposing restrictions on his liberty;

(*c*) which require an offender to make amends for the offence committed by performing community services; and

(*d*) which provide the offender with an opportunity of receiving such instruction, guidance, assistance and experiences as will assist the offender to develop an ability to abide by the law and complete the requirements of the youth attendance order.

A significant aspect of the Bill is the selection of young offenders who may be placed in this programme. The legislation leaves this decision to the courts, with three important provisos.

The first is that the court may only sentence to a youth attendance order a youth who would otherwise have been committed to a youth training centre. This is intended to prevent the net-widening effect, namely that new programmes may lead to greater social control than is necessary over people for whom the programme was not intended. The legislation makes it clear that youth attendance orders are an alternative to youth training centres, not an alternative to probation or other lighter dispositions.

The second proviso is that the court must receive a report from the Department of Community Welfare Services before placing a young offender on this programme. The regulations and departmental guidelines will ensure that those placed on youth attendance orders will not present a significant risk to the safety of the public.

There will be careful selection of those on the programme to ensure that no unreasonable risks are taken. This combination of court decision and departmental advice, with provision for return to the court to vary or revoke an order, provides both control by the court and a reasonable degree of flexibility for the attendance projects in addressing the circumstances of adolescent offenders.

The third proviso is that the young offender must consent to being placed on a youth attendance project. This recognizes that unwilling attenders may not be successful on the programme.

The Bill also creates a second type of provision, namely a youth attendance permit. This will give the Director-General of Community Welfare Services the power to transfer a young offender who is in default of fine payment from a youth training centre to a youth attendance project. In the current situation, if a young offender fails to pay a fine, a period of detention in a prison or youth training centre is mandatory.

The Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review Committee has disclosed that many young offenders convicted and fined are unable rather than unwilling to pay their fines. This is particularly the case with those young people on low incomes or who are unemployed. Many of these young people do not need to be placed in detention, and should be permitted to pay their debt to society in a more constructive manner.

The Bill will, therefore, enable suitable fine defaulters to be transferred to youth attendance projects. This is consistent with similar legislation in the adult corrections field. Although these new arrangements for fine defaulters will improve the current situation, the Government wishes to see a wider review of the fine system, which considers the offender's ability to pay, and examines the types of dispositions that should be available to magistrates in cases of fine default.

The Child Welfare Practice and Legislation Review Committee will be reporting on this matter later this year and the Government will be considering more extensive changes at that time. The Bill also contains two machinery amendments unrelated to youth attendance projects. The first of these expands existing provisions to apprehend a ward. At present, a ward who refuses to comply with a direction from the Director-General of Community Welfare Services can be apprehended; however, a ward cannot be apprehended if it is the parents rather than the child who refuses to comply. This most commonly occurs when a parent refuses to allow the child to be returned to a children's home, youth training centre or foster care, and the child is at risk of neglect or maltreatment at home. The Bill will correct that anomaly in the current legislation.

The other machinery amendment is to abolish the provision for the offence of vagrancy in the Community Welfare Services Act. This is an outdated concept which makes poverty a crime. There have been no arrests under the provision since 1977.

In concluding, I state that the Bill extends to young offenders some of the sentencing alternatives currently available to adults. It implements the Government's objective of institutional care as a last resort when other options for care and containment have been exhausted.

Previous experience with adult attendance centres and youth welfare services has shown that this is a practical and economical way of dealing with young offenders. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna), the debate was adjourned.

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

PROFESSIONAL BOXING CONTROL (SUSPENSION OF REGISTRATION) BILL

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to extend the present controls over professional boxers in relation to their conduct in boxing contests and at venues where boxing contests are held in order to control unsuitable and improper behaviour at such events.

The Bill provides for the Minister to suspend a boxer's registration if this is seen to be necessary. The boxers have the opportunity to show cause why such suspension should not occur. Failing a suitable response, the boxer may be suspended for a specified period.

Honourable members would be aware of recent incidents written up in the press, where particular boxers' behaviour at contests has been substantially less than appropriate for a public exhibition.

Pending the finalization of a major review of boxing legislation and its extension to

cover all combat sports, this small but significant amendment will assist in overcoming this particular problem in the interim. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne), the debate was adjourned.

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

PENSIONER CONCESSIONS (REHABILITATION ALLOWANCE) BILL

Mrs TONER (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before the House has been introduced in order to extend eligibility for State Government concessions to recipients of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Allowance provided by the Department of Social Security. The rehabilitation allowance is a relatively new allowance which is not covered by existing legislation. It is the Government's view that recipients of rehabilitation allowances should be entitled to the same concessions as other pensioners in receipt of a Commonwealth health card.

State concessions are designed to ensure a basic standard of living for all Victorians, as part of the Government's commitment to disadvantaged groups and to a fair distribution of resources. Our Government believes that income security is a Commonwealth responsibility, and State concessions, or fringe benefits, are basically a substitute for inadequate Commonwealth payments. This is why our Government commissioned the Income Security Task Force report, which indicated large deficiencies in Commonwealth income security provisions and recommended a number of extensions to them.

Since that report, my department has participated in a working party of officials from the Commonwealth and all States on income security and emergency relief. That working party reported to the welfare Ministers' conference on 6 April.

In the area of youth income support, a Victorian Government position has been prepared in response to the Commonwealth discussion paper on income support options for youth. This position was put before the youth Ministers' conference on 12 and 13 April.

In both the youth area and within the broader income support provisions provided by the Commonwealth, a number of changes are needed. I am hopeful that the forthcoming Commonwealth Budget will implement some of the recommendations suggested at the Ministers' conference.

Our Government believes that all Victorians have a right to those essential services necessary for an acceptable standard of living. These services include transport, energy, housing, education and health.

Because people dependent on social security payments often have difficulty in gaining access to these essential services, concessions are provided by the State Government. Recently, entitlement for State concessions was extended to recipients of the new spouse carer's pension for men providing long-term care for an aged, invalid or veteran service pensioner wife. Eligibility for State concessions is linked primarily to Commonwealth fringe benefit entitlement.

In March 1983, a rehabilitation allowance was introduced by the Commonwealth Government. This allowance is paid to people undergoing treatment with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, who would otherwise be eligible to receive a social security pension/benefit or allowance.

The rehabilitation allowance is paid at the same rates and is subject to the same test conditions and Commonwealth fringe benefit entitlements as an invalid pension; recipients are accordingly issued with a pensioner health benefit card. As at 16 December 1983, there were some 743 people receiving a rehabilitation allowance in Victoria.

The Solicitor-General has indicated the necessity for legislative change to ensure that rehabilitation allowance recipients could be eligible for the same concessions as other pensioners in Victoria. Therefore, the purpose of the Bill is to incorporate amendments to the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973, the Motor Car Act 1958, and the Land Tax Act 1958, to ensure that recipients of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Allowance in receipt of a transport concession card, will be eligible for municipal, water

and sewerage rate concessions, motor registration, third-party premium concessions. They will also be eligible for transport and energy concessions.

The Bill amends the following:

Section 2 (1) (*a*) of the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973 by including in the interpretation of "Pensioner" a person receiving the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Allowance;

Section 7 (1A) of the Motor Car Act 1958, relating to concessions on car registration fees by referring to the definition of "Pensioner" as contained in the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973;

Section 71 (2A) of the Motor Car Act 1958 in relation to concessions on third-party insurance by providing the same definition of "Pensioner" as contained in the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973;

Section 91A (2) (*a*) of the Land Tax Act 1958 by tying in the definition of "Pensioner" as contained in the Municipalities Assistance Act 1973 with the definition of necessitous circumstances.

These measures will provide significant assistance to recipients of the rehabilitation allowance and are in keeping with the objectives of the Ministerial committee on State concessions to extend equity within the State concessions system. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr SALTMARSH (Wantirna), the debate was adjourned.

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

PUBLIC LANDS AND WORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I desire to introduce a small Bill which will provide power for the Minister of Public Works to delegate to other Ministers his authority for the carrying out of minor works.

Honourable members will recall a similar Bill introduced late in 1983 which allowed the Minister of Public Works to delegate by agreement some of his powers to other Ministers for them to arrange urgent maintenance programmes to buildings under their control.

That legislation is now deemed not to be sufficiently broad enough in interpretation to permit the Minister to delegate to other Ministers the power to arrange minor works.

It is apparent that the wording "repairs to or maintenance of any building" in section 8AA (1) does not include any new minor works that are strictly not deemed to be a repair or maintenance work.

The intention of the recent legislation was for the Minister of Public Works to be able to delegate authority to other Ministers desirous of carrying out minor works as well as repairs and maintenance programmes.

The new wording proposed will now put the matter beyond doubt, and lift the restriction on the ability of the Minister of Public Works in this regard.

The proposed new wording will not only permit the carrying out of minor works to buildings but will also cover areas outside and around buildings, thus giving a greater flexibility in the delegation of authority to other Ministers who desire to carry out works associated with projects under their control.

The extension of this delegation of power will relieve the Public Works Department of some of its involvement with minor works programmes which it carries out on behalf of client agencies, thus allowing them to arrange their own programmes quickly and enabling the Public Works Department to concentrate more time and resources on major capital works programmes.

Technical guidance will continue to be provided by the Public Works Department and the Minister of Public Works will determine appropriate levels of delegation based on complexity of the works and not dollar value thresholds.

Any work not of a minor nature must be undertaken by a professional architect, engineer, technical expert or alternatively by the Public Works Department.

Where authority for the carrying out of minor works is delegated to a client agency, that client agency must satisfy all regulatory requirements, for example:

Uniform Building Regulations;
Health and safety regulations;
State Tender Board requirements;
Treasury regulations; and

use of the Public Works Department minor works conditions of contract or similar.

Also, a set of all "as built documents", namely services location plans and drawings and so on, must be prepared and lodged with the Public Works Department plan room for future reference. These requirements will be enunciated when a delegation is given and will be detailed in the actual instrument of delegation.

As with the recent legislation, this amendment will provide the Minister of Public Works with a greater degree of flexibility, thus enabling immediate action to be taken when changing circumstances demand and to improve the delivery of public sector construction and minor works programmes. 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, May 1.

WATER (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill amends the Water Act by allowing the introduction of a two-tier "pay by measure" system of calculating water charges in the Otway rural district. The Bill also amends the Water Act by giving authorities the power to make a by-law which reduces the three months interest free period in which consumers may pay charges for water.

The first of these amendments inserts a new sub-section in section 256C of the Water Act which allows an authority to levy a water rate consisting of a basic service charge and the amount of water actually supplied to each holding. It is proposed to introduce this new system of charging to the Otway rural district.

The system of "pay by measure" is a far more equitable system than the system currently in use, as consumers will now pay for water they have actually used. The proposed system has been examined by consumers in the Otway rural district and approved by them at a public meeting held in 1983.

The second amendment inserts new subsections into sections 332 and 369 of the Water Act which will enable an authority to reduce the three months interest free period in which consumers may pay charges for water. At present all accounts for water charges are subject to an interest free period. This situation presents difficulties for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to recover water charges in the financial year in which they are generated.

To permit the commission to recover revenue from water sales in the financial year in which the water is used, it is necessary to amend the Water Act by inserting a by-law making power to reduce the interest free period allowed to consumers. Both of these amendments accord with Government policy on improving financial management in the public sector. 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, May 1.

PATHOLOGY SERVICES ACCREDITATION BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 22) on the motion of Mr Roper (Minister of Health) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—This is a Bill which, on the face of it, is worthy of support and the Opposition does not oppose it. The Opposition has a number of concerns about the Bill, mainly due to the fact that it appears to the Opposition that inputs from vital professional organizations, which have a real area of expertise and knowledge and a real expectation that they should have been included more in the consultation process, do not appear to have had the opportunity to have all the consultation for which they asked. That aspect is always a matter for debate.

I acknowledge that the Minister introduced the Bill almost four weeks ago and, in normal circumstances, one would have expected that to have allowed sufficient time for consultation. However, it is my duty as shadow Minister of Health to inform the Government that the Australian Medical Association would like further time because it wants to raise a number of serious issues.

The association asks that the Bill be adjourned until the spring sessional period. I will be speaking further about that later.

I propose to move a reasoned amendment designed to facilitate more consultation and discussion between the Government and interested parties in the hope that, by doing so, the Opposition is acting in a positive way to allow all of the interested parties and the Government to reach consensus on an important Bill that deserves general support and appreciation from everyone involved.

The Bill is the result of a working party that was set up some years ago by Federal and State Ministers of Health with a view to examining the practice of pathology and the delivery of pathology services throughout the nation, and in an attempt to achieve uniformity.

The working party was representative. It comprised representatives of Commonwealth and State authorities, the Royal College of Pathologists from each State, the Australian Medical Association, the Society of Pathologists in Private Practice, the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists, the Australian Institute of Medical Technologists and the Royal Australian College of Medical Practitioners.

The discussions which occurred in the working party indicated that there were strong grounds to provide for some legislation which would assist in ensuring that Australia has available to it the highest standards of pathology practice and tests which were subject to peer review and which were approved by the experts as being appropriate and beneficial to mankind.

The recommendation of the working party was that each State should establish an accreditation board designed to provide a mechanism for registration and oversight and to provide advice to State and Federal Governments about the laboratories that should be permitted to operate, the way in which they operate, the persons who should work in those laboratories and which provide the essential services of pathology, services which can be life saving or certainly prolonging of life and, in many cases, are the way in which illnesses are finally diagnosed with certainty. Pathology services are very important and will, in years to come, become increasingly important with advancing technology and more laboratory research, in developing techniques to be used to help mankind ease pain and suffering.

I was particularly interested to learn something of the Mayo Clinic in New York in the United States of America and how it is very much to the fore in advancing the roll of diagnostic medicine and working in the preventive areas as well. I am told that about 30 000 patients a week are dealt with at the clinic, but none is admitted to hospital. People come in one day for tests, and the clinic is doing wonderful work in trying to find out what is wrong with those people and in working out a regime of medicine for them. Obviously, by doing that the clinic is avoiding, in many cases, admitting people to hospital, or at least saving them from entering hospital and occupying expensive beds and the time of staff when the tests can be done, especially in pathology, but in other areas as well, under such an institution of excellence.

That is another illustration of what the future holds for us in these areas, and pathologists and scientists in Australia, particularly Victoria, have done wonderful work and can be congratulated for the tremendous improvement they have made to the lot of mankind and to medical research and knowledge.

That is why the Opposition wants to see the Bill adopted in a form which has the widespread support of all medical bodies and experts who practise in the field because the Opposition regards it as its Bill. It is a Bill that serves the people as well, and enables those people working in that profession to meet the challenge of the future in a united complementary way which is free of professional rivalry, divisions and jealousies.

Some of the submissions I have received to which I will be referring in my remarks highlight that there are still some problems to be worked out between the various bodies involved. The working party report presented to the Commonwealth, States and Territories recommended the adoption of an accreditation Bill. I am bound to say that the Honourable Vasey Houghton introduced the Bill in 1979, but the following State election meant that the Bill was removed from the Notice Paper. Three years went by, with the change in Government, and now the present Minister has seen fit to

bring in the Bill. That is an indication of how long it takes for important legislation to finally see the light of day. All honourable members should heed from that experience the need to be more determined and not allow the years to roll by, as has happened in this case.

I emphasize that from inquiries I have made I understand the contributions and standards of service provided by people working in pathology in the State are extremely high. There has been some suggestion, perhaps by the unfortunate use of a word or perhaps by some reporting, that the standard of pathology services in the State is not high.

From my general knowledge and from thorough inquiries I have made, I can indicate that any suggestion that they are not high is not sustained. In fact, Victorians have every reason to be proud of the standard of excellence that has been achieved. There have been a few areas of concern, but they are minute when one considers the number of pathology tests that have been done over many years in the State and the number of people working in the area.

I do not intend to go through the Bill in a general sense because the Minister's second-reading speech has described it adequately for the purposes of the debate. I will spend the minutes I have in the second-reading response to highlight briefly some of the issues raised with me by the various bodies, which will be examined in more detail in Committee. I understand that the Minister will advance a number of amendments, some of which probably give effect to the wishes of the various bodies that have expressed concern.

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australia, which will be recognized as part of the accreditation mechanism, has expressed to me and the Minister the fact that, firstly, it has for many years advocated a system of accreditation as being appropriate for pathology laboratories, and it obviously welcomes the initiative of the Government's legislation.

The principles on which the Bill is based, which are referred to in clause 9—and it is important that honourable members bear them in mind—have the complete support of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia, but it has some doubt about the effect of a few clauses. It has doubts about those in Part V of the Bill, which refer to the ownership of laboratories. I do not intend to go into too much detail now, except to indicate that it is an area about which the college has some concern, and the Minister will be making some comments in an effort to allay the fears of the college in that direction.

The college is concerned about the ability to have a body corporate involved in the proprietorship of approved bodies and services. It is a complex issue, but it is something that honourable members must do justice to in the debate in the Committee stage.

The college is also concerned that where a proprietor or person who, under the Act, has a proprietary interest in a pathology service dies, there needs to be some way of protecting the rights of the next of kin to ensure that the deceased's efforts in a lifetime of work in his profession are not lost and that the laboratory and expertise and goodwill of it can continue to operate until the family can dispose of the very valuable asset which would have been built up by a lot of dedicated hard work over a long period.

The people involved in the discipline honourable members are talking about are not all the same in the sense that they are not all qualified in the same way. That is a little hard for lay people to grapple with. It is confusing, and it is probably useful for me to mention briefly by and large that the structure of the legislation and the practice of pathology in the State involves medical practitioners in some areas conducting pathology services. These are medical practitioners who generally have qualified in the normal way by completing their primary training and a residency following qualification through the university system. There are others who proceed, after obtaining their primary degree, with years of specialist training. I was very interested to learn from the Royal College of Pathologists that thirteen years is involved in the training of people to become qualified as specialized medical practitioners in pathology and thus entitled to admission to the Royal College of Pathologists. The thirteen years' training works this way: There are six years of primary medical training; two years of service in a public hospital, one of which may be an extension of the normal residency; and

seven years of work in a public hospital full time in training as a pathologist. That is an enormous effort for any human being to make to obtain a speciality and the right to practise as a member of the Royal College of Pathologists. Honourable members can see that a considerable amount of skill is gained from all those years of learning.

I am told there are approximately 150 qualified specialist pathologists in the State. About two-thirds of them work mainly in public hospitals and one-third are involved in private practice. Honourable members can see that there are not many of them, which is not surprising when one thinks of the enormous amount of study and sacrifice involved in obtaining the full qualification.

Medical scientists are involved in pathology and the Bill recognizes them. I have received a submission from the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists which represents many of these medical scientists. There is also another category of scientists, if I may refer to them as such, who are represented by another professional body.

The medical scientists are involved in a group of professional people associated with pathology. There are interesting combinations in this area. Medical practitioners who conduct pathology services are included. Pathologists—the specialized medical practitioners who conduct pathology services in laboratories or public hospitals—are included. Medical scientists who conduct pathology services either in partnership with medical practitioners or pathologists are included. There are also combinations of those various qualifications.

The Bill attempts to inhibit the use of pathology services in laboratories and public hospitals by allowing people who do not have these skills to perform those functions. Of course, that is confusing. Much has been said about the earnings of pathologists and specialists working in public hospitals in discussion on Medicare. The pathologists who work in public hospitals earn salaries ranging from $35 000 to $60 000 a year for the most senior position. One must remember that these pathologists have completed approximately thirteen years of professional training and are highly skilled.

Although the range of their salaries is substantial, it does not seem to be inordinate or inappropriate. Medical practitioners who work in this area are also entitled to have their services charged for in public hospitals and are entitled to retain 25 per cent of that income. They are entitled to their base salary, plus 25 per cent of the fees that they earn and no more.

Mr Roper—Some of them can get a little more.

Mr LIEBERMAN—Yes, not all but a few. The fees that are earned by these pathologists, other than the 25 per cent of charges and their base salary, are used by hospitals for general administration, for meeting overheads in part and the remainder is for the purchase of equipment and the provision of funds for further training.

Mr Roper—There were some problems with the Royal Southern Memorial Hospital.

Mr LIEBERMAN—Yes, that is so. I know the Minister will agree with me that there is no question about the general reputation and integrity of practising pathologists in Victoria. Victorians should be proud of them because of their high standards, ethics and general practice to which they adhere. It is like everthing else, sometimes a minority of people make it extremely difficult for the good ones. That has been one of the lessons with the Royal Southern Memorial Hospital that honourable members would glean from the Parliamentary committee's report. Pathologists make a significant contribution towards providing professional skills in hospitals and by earning income which substantially goes towards the improvement of hospital services, the provision of new equipment and technology. That is a significant contribution and indicates how excellence provided by a mixture of private sector involvement with public sector health service can generate a better service for everybody.

The presence of these eminent people working in public hospitals means that student medical practitioners, general practitioners and nurses are part of an atmosphere whereby their own training and work experience is improved and their own objectives are uplifted. That is something that should not be put in jeopardy and I hope the Federal Minister for Health, Dr Blewett, will be

mindful of that in the future when he tackles people in the public arena or in political debate on the role of doctors and specialists in public hospitals. I hope the Federal Minister for Health will take time to put the other side of the coin on behalf of these people and inform Australians through television, radio and newspapers of the tremendous work that these medical specialists undertake. He should not continue with the jaundiced view which he espoused when he was under pressure during the Medicare controversy.

The Australian Medical Association has written to me about clause 6 and stated:

> The practice of pathology is, in the view of this branch, an integral and important part of the practice of many practitioners other than specialist pathologists. It is an important part of the practice of many other specialist groups and of general practitioners. As this association draws together the interests of all such groups it should have appropriate representation on the proposed board.

The Australian Medical Association stated that the report of the joint pathology working party, to which I referred earlier, was the genesis of the proposed legislation and recommends that two members of the board should be medical practitioners nominated by the Australian Medical Association. The Australian Medical Association is concerned that the composition of the accreditation board does not provide for two members nominated by the association.

I realize that no one always gets what one wants in these matters, but it is important to note the continued concern of the Australian Medical Association in that regard. The association has provided a major submission to me and to the Minister of Health on clause 19 which deals with persons who may or may not own and operate pathology services. It is important to understand the measure because once it is passed by Parliament it will have the effect of prohibiting certain people from having any interest in the practice and delivery of pathology services in Victoria. It will be a substantial law providing substantial restrictions on the rights of people to participate in pathology practices.

In the Committee stage I will refer to the Australian Medical Association's concern about ownership and the need to enable incorporation through a court ratified body. Therefore, those involved in the practice, provided that they comply with very strict guidelines, can participate in an approved management and corporate ownership model that is seen by the Federal Commissioner of Taxation, the Federal Minister responsible for income tax law, the Medical Board and those involved with the ethical side of the practice, as being entirely satisfactory as a method of operation through a corporate body.

The Australian Medical Association has provided me with a substantial submission on what it sees as defects in the Bill which would make it difficult, if not impossible, for these models of corporate ownership to be implemented. I know the Minister of Health will say something about that, but it is my duty to emphasize the position.

The association also points out, quite correctly, that clause 23 deals with the powers and duties of inspectors who will be required to make sure that the high standards of excellence, practice and the maintenance of minimum standards are maintained at all times. Once the operation of those inspectors is commenced, they can trigger of procedures in the case of alleged breaches that could result in the closure of a pathology laboratory and the loss of the right to practice.

The Bill also provides for a right of appeal to the County Court. The inspector is an important person in terms of maintaining standards and in his "policing" role; he is not a policeman but an enforcer of the law in respect of making complaints about allegations of breach of duty and of the law.

The Australian Medical Association points out that that clause gives inspectors substantial power of entry and search and says that there is no statutory check on the use of those powers and no recourse against inspectors of the board by the proprietor of a pathology service who may believe he is being harassed or victimized by the board. The association believes inspection should occur only by appointment and should be confined to sighting the actual premises and any records and registers that are required under the Act to be kept by the pathology service. The association further says that inspection of any documents other than those mentioned should be only with the consent of the proprietor or pursuant to a duly executed search warrant.

Clause 28 deals with accredited pathology services which are required to pay substantial fees. The initial fee is $2000 and annual fees are prescribed. The association says that those accreditation and renewal fees should be retained by the board to finance its performance under the Act. The association says—and I accept its view to be sound—that this will ensure that the cost of establishing and maintaining the regulatory mechanism proposed by the Bill is a matter of public record and that it will also help to dispel any suggestion—a most diplomatic expression—that the scheme is in fact nothing more than another revenue-raising exercise by the State Government. Honourable members have seen many such exercises during the past few years. Without labouring the point, I believe the association is correct in saying that the Bill should provide that the fees collected each year are to be used for the purposes of the Bill and should not be transferred to consolidated revenue to be siphoned off for other obvious purposes.

The Australian Medical Association also dealt with clause 30 which relates to the prohibition on the performance of certain tests. The clause introduces a blanket prohibition on performance of any pathology test, other than exempted tests, by a non-accredited pathology service. The association expresses the view that this clause may inhibit a practitioner from carrying out treatment that is appropriate for his patient. Many practitioners have developed a high level of expertise in performing a range of pathology tests as part of their daily practice. Many of those tests are not included in the exempted list, as drafted. However, I understand that the Minister proposes to attempt to remedy that situation by moving various amendments in the Committee stage. The association requests that the Minister be asked to consult with the general practice section of the association and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners with a view to either expanding the list of exempted tests so that it will more realistically reflect the scope of pathology practice amongst general practitioners or exploring mechanisms for quality assurance in pathology practice amongst general practitioners as an alternative to delineation of pathology practice amongst general practitioners.

The association requests that, in view of the concerns expressed about the Bill and the short period that has been given for relevant interest groups to comment on the Bill, I on its behalf—and it has asked the Minister the same question—should arrange for Parliament to defer debate on the Bill until the spring sessional period to allow time for further consultation and discussion of the matters that have been raised by the association.

In my preliminary remarks, I indicated that I would move a reasoned amendment with a view to facilitating the consultation process that the association seeks. That request for an extended consultation process is echoed by the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists, and later I will refer in more detail to the submissions made by the institute.

I therefore move:

> That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "this House refuses to read this Bill a second time until proper consultations have been held with the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia, the Australian Medical Association and other appropriate professional associations on the provisions of the Bill".

As I have already mentioned—and I know the Minister understands the position—the amendment should not be seen as a delaying tactic on the part of the Opposition. The Opposition wants the general principles of the Bill to be brought into operation. The amendment is a constructive proposal that is designed to assist the Minister in his difficult task of achieving mutuality and consensus between the various professional groups and ironing out some of the technical areas that have been raised, to which I have already referred in part, by the Australian Medical Association.

The Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists has indicated to me that it appreciates the opportunity the Minister has given of making formal comments and recommendations on the Bill. However, the institute was able to meet only on 2 April and, although it has been diligent and has provided a lengthy submission—upon which I know the Minister proposes to act—it indicates that an extension of the time allowed for consultation between these groups and the Minister would result in a much better Bill.

The institute indicates strong support for the concept and objects of the proposed legislation. However, although it notes that the proposed Bill is an improvement in some respects on the 1978 draft legislation, the Victorian branch of the institute is still of the view that the Bill does not meet the objectives stated or the sentiments and aims expressed by the Minister in his second-reading speech on 22 March 1984.

The institute says that, in order to enable the objects of the Bill to be fulfilled, considerable amendment is necessary, and the Victorian branch of the institute recommends that the Bill should be redrafted following consultation with all interested parties. The institute is of the view that the objects of the Bill, as set out in clause 4, clearly reflect the day-to-day domain and responsibility of the scientists. The institute further says—and this indicates some of the difficulties that still exist between the various professional arms of the pathology profession—that it is the scientist who is normally responsible for quality control, the standards of technical procedures, safe working practices and record keeping, whilst the responsibilities of the pathologists lie in the interpretive and diagnostic fields, and in patient care and liaison.

Pathologists and medical practitioners would express some concern about that view. That is another reason why a round-table conference between all these associations would be helpful in making a decision as to the ultimate form of the Bill. The scientists in their submission to the Minister and to me state:

> . . . , we are most concerned with the medical bias demonstrated in the composition of the proposed Pathology Services Accreditation Board. We believe that this bias could reflect in the appointment of inspection teams [Section 13 (4)] which could compromise the concept of peer review which is proposed in the legislation.

There are problems between the two groups. Honourable members would remember that in its submission the Australian Medical Association said that there ought to be more representation by medical practitioners on the Pathology Services Accreditation Board. The scientists are seeking to balance the representation on the board, as being more representative of the duties involved and seek a number of substantial amendments to the Bill in clauses 3, 6 and 9, dealing with persons in charge of accredited laboratories. The branch also points out in its submission that it is deeply concerned that under Part IX, clause 30 (2), the performance of certain pathology tests is specified for exemption from the accreditation process. The submission continues:

> Many of the tests listed in Schedule 2 are of a routine haematological or microbiological nature and require a certain level of technical expertise to obtain a valid result. Tests, such as differential white cell counts, also require a degree of interpretive skill.
>
> Further, the rapid advance of medical technology can result in new and amended tests which may frequently alter the skill required for performance.
>
> The Victorian Branch of the A.I.M.L.S. therefore strongly recommends that these "exempted tests" should not be enshrined in the legislation and it is the responsibility of the Pathology Services Accreditation Board to determine which tests, if any, are to be exempted.

It refers to the New South Wales Parliament in dealing with this matter and it states that the New South Wales Act does not exempt tests. I am having grave difficulty in following and understanding the full import of these suggestions. I believe it would be important to obtain a response from the Royal College of Pathologists on the requests of the scientists.

The Minister proposes certain amendments in response to the submissions of the scientists. If honourable members deal with those amendments without knowing the view of the Royal College of Pathologists, the Australian Medical Association and other professional bodies, we shall not be doing them a service. They ought to be involved. I do not think that I, as a lay person, should be dealing with technical responses. The technical response may be good, but it may be an over reaction and it may need some balance. That is a grave illustration of the support I hope to receive from honourable members to my proposal that the Bill be withdrawn to enable the consultation process to continue.

Again, I emphasize that I do not criticize the Minister for a lack of consultation *per se*. He has done his best and he has advanced the Bill, which has been around for a long time. The Parliament should have dealt with the measure before. I ask the Minister to spend a little more time in consultation, for the benefit of all. I believe he will appreciate that, because he will be more reinforced in

the final decision that he makes on those amendments, even if he cannot get complete unanimity between the parties.

The Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists informs me and the Minister that its branch in Victoria has concern regarding the increasing number of pathology services that are being set up by group practices of general practitioners who they say have no specialist pathology qualifications. I do not want to be the judge on these matters until I have had an opportunity of hearing the responses of the Australian Medical Association and the Royal College of Pathologists, and of obtaining their views in a round-table conference atmosphere to seek consensus.

I highlight the obvious importance of the statement made by these scientists. I do not reject it for the reason that I am a lay person and need more input. I hope the Minister may be able to take that on board so that the consultative process is facilitated. The Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists states:

> One of the objects stressed in the second-reading speech made on 22nd March, 1984, was "to ensure that staff employed in pathology services have adequate and appropriate training". Section 4 (*d*) of the proposed Bill varies from this statement in that it places the training in the past tense: ". . . have had adequate and appropriate training".
>
> The Victorian Branch A.I.M.L.S. is convinced that it is essential for education and training to be an ongoing process and that continual post-graduate education and revision should be mandatory. In this regard, it is recommended that the Minister seriously consider that the most efficient way of ensuring a satisfactory level of performance in accredited pathology services would be by the registration of scientists. Such registration would ensure an adequate level of qualification and expertise as well as the maintenance of a high standard by the issue of annual practising certificates based on satisfactory continuing education units. Registration would then be reflected in the provision of quality diagnostic services and a high standard of patient care.

That is another area that has its pros and cons. On the one hand, there will be more bureaucracy, more control and more red tape. On the other hand, it may be a good thing to agree to such a request and thus maintain a continuing improvement in professional standards and expertise of people in this area who are scientists. The conclusion of the Victorian branch of the scientists was:

> The Victorian Branch A.I.M.L.S. is concerned that the proposed Pathology Services Accreditation Bill cannot adequately meet the stated objects of the Bill without a complete re-draft. The majority of persons performing the pathology tests, monitoring the quality of performance and keeping adequate records will be the medical scientist (as defined). For the Bill to be effective it is essential that the scientists should have an input into the board commensurate with their professional standing and responsibilities.
>
> It is these professional responsibilities which ensure that the Victorian Branch A.I.M.L.S. will continue to support the concept of a Bill which will provide a reliable and efficient pathology service to patients. The branch committee will assist in any way requested in the re-drafting of the proposed Bill to ensure its effectiveness.

There is goodwill but there are some very controversial points of view that other professional bodies may not appreciate.

I received a letter from an eminent pathologist who is a director of pathology in a major hospital in Victoria. He says he has been invited to comment on the Bill. He supports the purpose of the Bill and believes it will be readily acceptable to all pathologists. It is readily acceptable to the college, apart from the misgivings it expressed but, as a broader point, this eminent pathologist says that at times pathologists will have indirect pecuniary interests—he refers to clause 8. Obviously, a member of the accreditation board who is a non-participating director must have an indirect pecuniary interest. The pathologist believes it is inevitable that pathologists will have an indirect pecuniary interest.

In matters under discussion, being specialists and professionals, this eminent pathologist states that it may be appropriate to allow the chairman of the board the right to allow participation in some of the discussion. This is an interesting point of law that ought be to examined by the Minister as part of the consultation process so that some specialist advice can be received on the matter.

The way the Bill stands at present, any discussions that take place with the accreditation board may inevitably embarrass some members of it who are pathologists, because they may indirectly have a pecuniary interest in the pathology area. The Government should do what has been done in

the local government area with regard to pecuniary interests, and should stipulate that general discussion dealing with, for example, general planning schemes being considered by municipal councils, would not necessarily involve an indirect breach of a provision or pose a pecuniary interest problem. Even if the member has property, or even has his home in that area, it should be stipulated in legislation that, in practice, the involvement of a professional pathologist, shall not be deemed to be a pecuniary interest. That is a valid comment that needs to be examined, and it supports my call for the adjournment of the debate until proper consultations have been held with the bodies concerned.

The pathologist to whom I referred earlier said that he was concerned about the annual renewal fee of $2000. He stated that this might be a burden on some smaller laboratories and, since the fee will apply across the board, he believes it is unfair that laboratories of whatever size should be required to pay the same fee. Of course, the larger laboratories would say that they should be required to pay the same fee, but the smaller ones would say that they should not.

Mr Roper—That cannot be done at this stage.

Mr LIEBERMAN—I know that, under the law, that is not able to be done. However, it is an area that needs to be considered.

Another matter that concerned the pathologist relates to clause 30, which deals with additional tests which a pathology service may wish to implement. He says that one would expect that if a need arose for additional tests, it should not be an offence to introduce this test. However, the Bill seems to prohibit additional tests being made unless they are one of the approved tests, and it stipulates dire consequences for breach of the provision.

The pathologist also said that it appears that to conduct additional tests would be an offence unless the board was approached to amend the Register of Pathology Services and the Certificate of Accreditation—but how much time would elapse in between, I would not know. He also mentioned that he was concerned about a statement in the Minister's second-reading speech that might be considered by some as an emphasis on abuses. He said that he believes abuses are minimal in Victoria and relate, to a greater extent, to the doctors who order the tests rather than the pathology services that perform the tests. He states that it is unethical for a pathologist to refuse a test ordered by another doctor, although he may counsel him about its suitability. He says that he is also concerned at the Minister's implication that patient care and hospital stay is prolonged as a result of inaccurate and unreliable laboratory results, and that the implication is serious and generally untrue. This pathologist believes this problem is one of education of doctors in general, to ensure the best use of an expensive and sophisticated service.

I am not qualified to judge the matters raised by that eminent pathologist, and I am sure the general medical profession itself would want it to be known that the abuse from the general medical service is not evident, but that there may well be, on occasions, some areas where concern arises.

I have tried as best I can, on an extremely technical matter, to outline the areas of concern. I have indicated that I believe the Bill could become a good measure and one I would like to see in operation. However, it is one on which more consultation needs to occur, and I urge honourable members to support the reasoned amendment, because it is a positive, rather than a negative move and one that I believe would bring all the parties towards reaching a solution by way of a round-table discussion on some of these issues.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—The honourable member for Benambra should be congratulated for the extensive coverage he has given to this issue, and I agree that it is of a technical nature and relates to an area in which there are some conflicting interests by the parties engaged in the provision of pathology services throughout Victoria.

Honourable members should bear in mind that pathology services are provided on an increasing scale, not only at public hospitals but also in private practice and, again, at the level of a group of general practitioners who band together to provide a minor pathology service for their own patients to cover the less detailed procedures that have to be carried out by the major pathology departments in hospitals or in private practice.

I certainly agree, as does the National Party, that accreditation and some standard approach to this important part of medicine in Victoria is necessary, and there is no doubt that the Bill goes a long way towards providing that stability and accreditation, which is desirable.

Because draft Bill was circulated in 1978, it has been considered by various people for some time and the discussions and points that have been raised since that time have assisted in producing the proposed legislation which is now before the House. Unfortunately, the Minister has still not had sufficient discussions with certain groups in the community, and he has indicated already that some amendments will be made to the Bill, and that those amendments may or may not go all the way, in the view of the various groups involved, in covering pathology services in this State.

I have had discussions with representatives of the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists this afternoon and also with the Victorian branch of the Australian Medical Association. The executive officers of both of those organizations indicated that the Minister had had discussions with them, even as late as this afternoon, and that he indicated to them he could go only part of the way in meeting their requests for representation on the Pathology Services Accreditation Board.

That indicates to me that there is a need for further discussions, for more give and take and goodwill to take place between the scientists, who are mainly the technicians who do the work in a pathology service, and the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia, who are the professionally trained people who, as the honourable member for Benambra said, perform the interpretive work regarding the results of the tests that are carried out.

The various bodies have different requirements when it comes to legislation It is interesting to note that some 860 scientists are involved in the pathology service area in this State and that approximately 56 pathologists are usually in charge of pathology laboratories. There are also laboratories that do not have fully qualified pathologists in charge simply because there is an insufficient number of pathologists in Victoria, and they are unable to visit all the pathology laboratories that exist in this State.

The needs of the various groups are diverse and it would be difficult to meet their requirements simply because sufficient discussion has not taken place. There has been insufficient time in which to examine the amendments which I understand will be introduced later this afternoon. When those amendments are introduced, honourable members will know exactly what amendments apply to the requirements of various interest groups. It would be ideal if progress could be reported at that stage to allow those interested groups to study the amendments and decide whether further amendments need to be made to the proposed legislation.

Like the honourable member for Benambra, I have had discussions with representatives of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia who are concerned about the clause dealing with the proprietorship of pathology services. It is difficult for laymen like the honourable member for Benambra and me to understand the full impact of the terminology in clause 19, which recommends which persons shall and shall not conduct or have a pecuniary interest in a pathology service. Clause 19 (5) states:

> A proprietary or pecuniary interest in a pathology service shall not be held in partnership—
>
> (*a*) by a pathologist with a person other than another pathologist or a scientist;
>
> (*b*) by a medical practitioner who is not a pathologist with a person other than another medical practitioner who is not a pathologist; and
>
> (*c*) by a scientist with a person other than another scientist or a pathologist.

It would be helpful if the Minister would indicate to whom those terms refer. Further information needs to be provided to ensure a proper understanding of the sub-clause to ascertain whether further changes need to be made.

It is understandable that members of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia are concerned about who may be a proprietor of, or have a pecuniary interest in, pathology services. In some professions, it is possible for a spouse or children of a qualified person to be silent partners in a business. A reading of clause 19 reveals that this might not be possible. It is important that

this point is clarified before the House proceeds with the Bill.

It is also important, because of the technical content in the categories listed in Schedule 1, that further information is made available to honourable members and the public, because only some of those categories may be eligible for benefits under Medicare. No publicity has been given to which services are eligible for Medicare benefits under the new national health service in this country. Further time should be allowed to investigate this aspect. Four years have passed since the first draft of the Bill was made available.

Mr Roper—Six years.

Mr WHITING—The Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists informed me that the draft Bill was circulated in 1978.

Mr Roper—It was introduced then.

Mr WHITING—I stand corrected. I took it to be that the draft Bill was circulated to the medical community at that time. If it was introduced at that time, it is six years since the first draft was introduced to Parliament. Mr Derek Ford, the Victorian Branch Chairman and Ms Denise Jackson, the Victorian Branch Honorary Secretary of the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists had the following to say at page 6 in the conclusion of a letter to me:

> The Victorian Branch A.I.M.L.S. is concerned that the proposed Pathology Services Accreditation Bill cannot adequately meet the stated objects of the Bill without a complete re-draft. The majority of persons performing the pathology tests, monitoring the quality of performance and keeping adequate records will be the medical scientist (as defined). For the Bill to be effective it is essential that the scientists should have an input into the board commensurate with their professional standing and responsibilities.

They pointed out that there should be a qualification to the definition of "scientist", emphasizing that this should include reference to a non-medically qualified person, who holds whatever qualifications are necessary. They further pointed out that a scientist is distinct from a pathologist or a medical practitioner and such a qualification to the definition of "scientist" would clarify this aspect. It will be interesting to note whether the Minister agrees to that amendment, because it will have an important bearing on how the rest of the Bill operates.

The other major concern of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists is that—bearing in mind the figures I quoted earlier—there is a large ratio of scientists as compared with pathologists practising in Victoria, and they should have at least equal representation on the proposed accreditation board.

Clause 6 (1), which deals with the composition of the proposed Pathology Services Accreditation Board, provides:

> The Board shall consist of seven members appointed by the Governor in Council of whom—
>
> (*a*) one shall be a person representing the Government of Victoria, who shall be appointed as chairperson;
>
> (*b*) three shall be pathologists appointed from a panel of six names submitted by the Victorian State Committee of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia;
>
> (*c*) two shall be scientists of whom—
>
> (i) one shall be appointed from a panel of three names submitted by the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists; and
>
> (ii) one shall be appointed from a panel of three names submitted by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists; and
>
> (*d*) one shall be a medical practitioner appointed from a panel of three names submitted by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Medical Association.

The laboratory scientists consider that, because of the percentage of those practitioners within the service, they should have more representation on the board. As I understand it, the Minister is considering increasing the number of members on the board to allow for the appointment of an additional scientist. The percentage representation on the board will not improve when that occurs.

I suppose it is possible in that case that there would be three scientists, three pathologists, one medical practitioner and, if the Minister believed the chairperson may also be someone from a scientific background, at least there would be equal numbers of scientists and medically qualified people on the accreditation board, which would mean that it would depend solely on the Minister appointing a chairperson with

a scientific background rather than a medical background.

It is possible for the Minister to bring about that equality, but the medical laboratory scientists would be concerned to ensure that there would be two pathologists, one medical practitioner and three or four scientists on the chance that the chairperson would be a person with a medical background. That would still mean there would be an equality of numbers between the two groups.

As I said before, the honourable member for Benambra has thoroughly covered most aspects of the Bill. He has detailed the points made by the various groups involved. The National Party will support his reasoned amendment that seeks to have the Bill held over until proper consultation has been held and appropriate professional associations have discussed its provisions.

Although it has been six years since the Bill was first drafted and introduced, another two weeks or perhaps even two to three months until the spring sessional period will not disadvantage anyone concerned in the pathology field, particularly when the end result will be a better Bill which will give consideration to the importance of pathology and medicine in Victoria.

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—I will not deal with all the matters that have been raised in the debate because, as has been properly pointed out, most matters relate to the Committee stage of the Bill and it is the intention of the Government to deal with a number of those matters by amendment in Committee. However, I stress that it is not just a matter of the "last month" as has been suggested. The proposed legislation was initiated by my predecessor, the Honourable Vasey Houghton, in 1978, and the various groups which have contacted the Government this time also contacted the Honourable Vasey Houghton in 1978 and made copies of their submissions available to me at that stage in my capacity as the shadow Minister.

In preparing this Bill, careful attention was paid to the propositions put forward by those various organizations in 1978 and further attention is now being paid to the additional matters that those groups have put forward on this occasion. As I have mentioned to a number of honourable members, there has been a meeting between the Health Commission officers and the scientists to discuss the matter and, as a result, a number of amendments have been prepared.

Unfortunately, the Australian Medical Association has been comparatively tardy compared with everyone else in making a submission and rather than sending telegrams today it would have been helpful if the association had paid attention earlier because the scientists and pathologists, who have nowhere near the resources of the Australian Medical Association, have been able to get the most detailed submissions to the Government and to the opposition parties much more quickly than the Australian Medical Association.

It is not the Government's intention to accept the reasoned amendment for a number of reasons. Firstly, the reasoned amendment states, "Until proper consultations have been held", and those who have dealt with consultations know that someone will always find that consultations are not proper or have not been completed. There is always something that someone believes has not been properly addressed and I cannot agree to that because, virtually, it would mean that proposed legislation would never be passed.

Secondly, there has been a lot of input into the Bill, not only since 1978 but also when the original work was being done by the committee. Thirdly, meetings have been held with interested parties and the one interested party which has not had the opportunity of having direct discussion has been the Australian Medical Association. The Government will make provision so that there can be those direct discussions between now and when Parliament meets again in the week after next. Therefore, any particular matters that the Australian Medical Association wishes to put can be considered both in correspondence and in person. I give that undertaking to the House and that a meeting will be arranged.

For these reasons, the Government does not agree with the reasoned amendment. I give the undertaking that meetings will be held with the Australian Medical Association between now and when Parliament next considers this measure. I reiterate that the individual items raised by honourable members will be dealt with either by

amendment or by comment during the Committee stage of the Bill.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Lieberman to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. C. T. Edmunds in the chair).

Ayes	35
Noes	21
Majority against the amendment	14

AYES

Mr Cathie	Mr Pope
Dr Coghill	Mrs Ray
Mr Culpin	Mr Remington
Mr Ernst	Mr Roper
Mr Fogarty	Mr Sheehan (*Ivanhoe*)
Mr Fordham	Mr Sheehan (*Ballarat South*)
Mr Gray	Mr Shell
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Simpson
Mr Hassett	Mr Spyker
Mrs Hill	Mr Stirling
Mr Hockley	Mrs Toner
Mr Ihlein	Dr Vaughan
Mr Jolly	Mr Walsh
Mr Kirkwood	Mr Wilton
Mr McCutcheon	*Tellers:*
Mr Mathews	Mr Newton
Mr Micallef	Mr Seitz
Mr Miller	
Mr Norris	

NOES

Mr Brown	Mr Richardson
Mr Delzoppo	Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dickinson	Mrs Sibree
Mr Hann	Mr Tanner
Mr Jasper	Mr Templeton
Mr Jona	Mr Wallace
Mr Kempton	Mr Whiting
Mr Lieberman	Mr Williams
Mr Maclellan	*Tellers:*
Mr Ramsay	Mr Leigh
Mr Reynolds	Mr Steggall

PAIRS

Mr Cain	Mr Kennett
Miss Callister	Mrs Patrick
Mr Gavin	Mr Austin
Mr McDonald	Mr McKellar
Mr Rowe	Mr Burgin
Mrs Setches	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Sidiropoulos	Mr Evans (*Gippsland East*)
Mr Trezise	Mr McGrath

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1

Progress was reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Educational services for the disabled—Felicitations to members of Parliamentary Press Gallery

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Education. A community worker from the southern suburbs, who works in the Caulfield area with parents of disabled children, has directed my attention to a Ministerial review of educational services for the disabled. The community worker advised me that he had encouraged many parents of disabled children to make submissions to the Ministerial review in the hope that the Government would include financial support in the next State Budget for schools to be assisted in the integration of disabled students into the student membership.

He advised me that, unfortunately, the Minister of Education has not yet released the report or made a Ministerial comment on the matter. The gentleman is concerned that if the Minister does not respond to the review in the near future, funds will not be made available in the next State Budget to enable the integration of disabled students into Victorian schools.

My constituent asks the Minister whether he will release the report in the near future and, if so, whether time will be available before the next State Budget to take account of the recommendations of that review.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I raise a matter of felicitations. On behalf of the Opposition and honourable members, I express best wishes to Allison Brouwer, the senior member of the Press Gallery of Parliament, who is leaving today to take up the position of a features writer for the *Sun*.

On behalf of the Opposition, I wish Allison Brouwer and Garry Walsh all the best in their new endeavours. Allison and Garry have been long-serving members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and they have performed an excellent job for honourable members of all parties. Their ability and impartiality have been beyond reproach and

they should not leave the service of the Parliamentary Press Gallery without the best wishes of the Opposition. I will leave it to the Deputy Premier, if he so wishes, in response to my remarks, to make some further comment on behalf of the Government.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—On behalf of the National Party, I hope the two senior members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, Allison Brouwer and Garry Walsh, who are moving to different pursuits, will have as much success in those areas as they have had in this particular area. The National Party wishes Allison and Garry the best of health and progress in their new ventures.

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The honourable member for Caulfield has raised with me a matter of making public the report on the integration of the disabled. I hope that report will be available in the near future. It is at present with the Government Printer and it will be released in time for consideration in the 1984–85 Budget, which was obviously the concern of the constituent referred to by the honourable member.

In a somewhat unorthodox fashion, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Mildura referred to the fact that two of the senior and well loved members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery are moving on in various ways. All honourable members have come to know both Allison and Garry very well indeed. The comment made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on the important role the press plays can often be forgotten by honourable members or taken for granted.

The Parliamentary process does require a responsible and hard working approach by the media if the task of politicians is to be conveyed to the people whom they are meant to serve. I believe Victoria is well served indeed. Allison and Garry, through the newspaper they work for, the *Sun News-Pictorial,* have given valuable service to the Parliament and to the people of Victoria. The Government wishes them well in their new work.

The SPEAKER—Order! On behalf of all honourable members of the Legislative Assembly, I wish both Allison Brouwer and Garry Walsh all the best in their new ventures. Both of them have been particularly competent and respected journalists. I believe they have a long and successful venture ahead of them in their chosen fields.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.54 *p.m. until Tuesday, May* 1.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

EDUCATION BOARDS

(Question No. 109)

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill) asked the Minister of Education:

How many teacher union representatives have been appointed by him or the Government to advisory and/or statutory committees or boards relating to education since 3 April 1982, indicating the name of the committees, boards or other bodies?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Governor in Council appointments have been made to the following advisory and/or statutory committees or boards since 3 April 1982:

Advisory Committees:

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity—1.

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Migrant and Multi-cultural Education—1.

Statutory Boards/Committees:

Technical and Further Education Board—1.

EDUCATION STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

(Question No. 263)

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill) asked the Minister of Education:

Which statutory authorities are responsible to the Minister of Education, when they were established, how many staff are employed by each authority and what is the annual cost of each authority?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Statutory Authority	*Established*	*Staff*	*Cost*
Victorian Education Service Conciliation and Arbitration Commission	28.9.82	2 (September 1983)	$395 000 (est. 1983–84)
Registered Schools Board (Formerly Council of Public Education Established 1912)	1982	3 (September 1983)	Within Education Department.
Council of Adult Education	1947	148 (October 1983)	$4 112 513 (1982–83)
Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission	25.10.78	47 (September 1983)	$1 887 000 (1982–83)
Victorian Institute of Secondary Education	1976	104 (October 1983)	$4 800 000 (est. 1983–84)
Institute of Educational Administration	1.8.78	7 (October 1983)	$713 000 (est. 1983–84)
Committees of Classifiers	1884	(Under Education Department)	
Education Service Appeals Board	—.11.82	4 (December 1983)	$244 000 (est. 1983–84)
State Board of Education	6.7.83	14 (September 1983)	$800 000 (est. 1983–84)
Technical and Further Education Board	—.8.83	140 (November 1983)	$5 200 000 (est. 1983–84)
Teacher Registration Council	1971	12 (November 1983)	$245 000 (est. 1983–84)

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS

(Question No. 547)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. What annual reports and other publications are issued by departments, authorities and agencies within his administration?

2. What was the cost of producing these publications?

3. What was the authority for these publications?

4. In cases where Parliament ordered such production whether its requirements have been met; if not, why?

5. What was the cost of—(*a*) production; and (*b*) distribution of these publications?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Name of Authority	*Report*	*Cost*	*Authority*	*Requirements Met*	*Production Distribution*
Deakin University	Annual report Audited financial statements.	$5626.00 Within university general audit.	Deakin University Act 1974	Yes	(*a*) $5626 for the report. The financial statements are within general audit costs. (*b*) Within university general distribution.
La Trobe University	Annual report	$5952.00	La Trobe University Act 1964	Yes	(*a*) $5952 (*b*) Within university general distribution.
University of Melbourne	Annual report Financial statement	$5270.00 $2315.00	University of Melbourne Act	Yes	(*a*) $7585 (*b*) $200 approx.
Monash University	Annual report	$4980.00	Monash University Act 1958	Yes	(*a*) $4980 (*b*) $480 approx.
Council of Adult Education	Annual report and Audit Statement	$2950.00	Council of Adult Education Act	Yes	(*a*) $2950 (*b*) $500 approx.
Institute of Educational Administration	Annual report	$278.00	Educational Administration Act	Yes	(*a*) $278 (*b*) Nil.
Victorian Institute of Secondary Education	Annual report	$4248.00	Victorian Institute of Secondary Education Act	Yes	(*a*) $4248 (*b*) Within general distribution costs.
Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission	Annual report	$2848.55	Post-Secondary Education Act 1978	Yes	(*a*) $2848.55 (*b*) $640.00
Registered Schools Board	Annual report	$510.00	Education Act	Yes	(*a*) $510 (*b*) $15
Education Department	Annual report of the Minister	$10 286.59	Education Act	Yes	(*a*) $10 286.59 (*b*) $430 approx.

FUNDS GRANTED TO ORGANIZATIONS BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1129)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

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?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

The Education Department makes grants, which are subject to annual review, to a number of organizations. The details of these grants can be found in the Estimates of the Receipts and Payments of the Consolidated Fund for the respective financial years—Division 301, Sub-Division 3—Other Services.

In addition, the department makes capitation grants to Victorian registered schools and interest subsidies to some of these schools. In respect of the capitation grants a Statement of Recurrent Income and Expenditure for the calendar year is certified to by the principal/school authority and a qualified accountant has to satisfy himself that a sum being equal to the total of all payments made has been applied, prior to 1 April of the following year, for the purpose of the recurrent expenditure in accordance with the conditions of payment as set out in the respective sections in Educational Grants Act 1973.

The general conditions of eligibility and information required to be furnished in support of an application under the State Government scheme to assist independent schools by way of interest subsidies to provide school buildings requires school authorities to furnish information to support the application including detailed architect's plans, proposals for financing the project including evidence as to the source and availability of the loan, rate of interest and terms of repayment of the principal sum. This information is used to identify the loan and its term when claims are made for interest subsidies to recoup part of the interest costs. Such claims must be supported by evidence in the form of a bank receipt, provident fund certification, or other relevant document, that instalments of principal and interest have actually been paid, and that such payments have been in accordance with the terms of the approved subsidy agreement.

Council of Adult Education

Funds granted by the Council of Adult Education amounted to $11 372 in 1981–82 and $13 360 in 1982–83. They are allocated for specific purposes in small amounts to a range of community education providers. Detail of allocation is available to the Auditor-General and field officers ensure that expenditure is within the terms and conditions of the allocations.

Technical and Further Education Board

An accountability statement is required by the TAFE Board (against guidelines attached to the funds) in all instances where funds which are the responsibility of the TAFE Board are directed to non-Government organizations.

Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission

Section 4A of the Post-Secondary Education Act 1978 provides for the audit of the commission's accounts as follows:

4A (1) The commission shall cause proper accounts and records to be kept of its financial affairs in such form as the Auditor-General requires.

(2) The accounts of the commission shall be audited at least once in each year by the Auditor-General who shall have in respect of the accounts all powers conferred on him by any law for the time being in force relating to the audit of public accounts.

Institute of Educational Administration

The IEA's accounts are audited annually by the Auditor-General's Department.

INTERPRETERS WITHIN ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 1132)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Education:

1. How many interpreters are employed by departments, agencies and authorities within his administration, indicating the languages other than English spoken?

2. In which offices such interpreters are located?

3. Whether such interpreters are employed on a full-time or part-time basis, indicating the numbers employed in each category?

4. Whether officers undertaking private courses in foreign languages receive any Government assistance?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

The honourable member's attention is drawn to my answer to Question No. 2524 as it relates to parts (1), (2) and (3) of his question. The answer to part (4) is leave with pay may be granted for certain approved courses.

VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS IN MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS

(Question No. 2077)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

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 MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

1. There are 23 visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within my administration.

2. The Ministry is continually examining its information systems requirements, and any increases in equipment would be based on the results of such examination.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES

(Question No. 2526)

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill) asked the Minister of Education:

What action the Government has taken to develop pilot progammes in community languages, indicating the location of each pilot programme, the number of staff involved in each case, the number of children involved in each location, the languages taught, the establishment and expiry date of each programme and the cost of each programme?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. Pilot programmes in community languages in primary schools were established in 1983 when the appointment of 56 teachers was approved. The list of schools is attached to Table 1 and shows locations, languages and number of teachers in each school.

2. Following the 1983 Budget, the number of teachers was increased to 100. Schools which were involved in the programme in 1983 were required to submit evaluation reports as part of their submission for teachers in 1984. Other schools also were invited to make submissions to join the programme. Schools to which appointments were made are listed in Table 2 which also shows languages taught and the number of teachers in each school. The expiry date of programmes is not predetermined, but is related to progressive evaluations of the programmes at both local and departmental levels.

3. The exact number of children taught in each school is a school decision and will vary with local policies on intensity of language instruction, class sizes, and so on.

4. The cost of the programme in 1983 was as follows:

	$
Salaries of 56 teachers @ $20 000	1 120 000
Curriculum and support services	20 000
	1 140 000

5. The cost of the programme in 1984:

	$
Salaries of 100 teachers @ $20 000	2 000 000
Curriculum guidelines, grants for materials and other support activities	159 000
Including 3 community language consultants based at Child Migrant Education	21 599 000
1983:	1 140 000
1984:	2 159 000
Total 1983–1984	3 299 000

Table 1
COMMUNITY LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1983

German

1. Coburg P.S.	·6
2. Bayswater South P.S.	1·0
3. Bayswater West P.S.	·4
4. Ferntree Gully P.S.	1·0
5. Karingal P.S.	1·0
6. Syndal North P.S.	1·0
7. Livingstone	1·0

Greek

1. Auburn P.S.	1·0
2. Brunswick North P.S.	1·0
3. Brunswick South P.S.	1·0
4. Clifton Hill P.S.	2·0
5. Coburg P.S.	·5
6. Collingwood Education Centre	2·0
7. Hughesdale P.S.	1·0
8. Lalor North P.S.	2·0
9. Oakleigh East P.S.	2·0
10. Port Melbourne (Graham Street) P.S.	·6
11. Port Melbourne (Nott Street) P.S.	·4
12. Richmond P.S. (Brighton Street)	2·0
13. Richmond Central	2·0
14. Richmond P.S. (Cremorne Street)	·5
15. Richmond North P.S. (Davison Street)	·5
16. Sunshine Heights P.S.	1·0
17. Yarraville P.S.	·5
18. Kingsville P.S.	·5
Plus Co-ordinator	1·0

Italian

1. Albion North P.S.	1·0
2. Bayswater West P.S.	1·0
3. Bulleen P.S.	·6
4. Carlton North P.S.	·4
5. Coburg P.S.	1·0
6. Doncaster P.S.	1·0
7. Donvale P.S.	·4
8. Milgate P.S.	1·0
9. Mossfiel P.S.	1·0
10. Overland P.S.	·5
11. Park Orchards P.S.	1·0
12. Templestowe Heights P.S.	1·0
13. Yarraleen P.S.	·6
14. Whitfield P.S.	1·0
King Valley Cluster	

Chinese

1. North Melbourne (Boundary Road) P.S.	·4
2. North Melbourne (Errol Street) P.S.	·3
3. West Melbourne P.S.	·3

Arabic

1. Coburg P.S.	·5
2. Newport P.S.	1·0

French

1. Malvern East P.S.	1·0

Macedonian

1. Thomastown West P.S.	1·0
2. Wembley P.S.	1·0
3. Yarraville P.S.	·5
4. Kingsville P.S.	·5

Maltese

1. St Albans P.S.	·6
2. St Albans Meadows P.S.	·4

Spanish

1. Serpell P.S.	1·0

Turkish

1. Brunswick North P.S.	·4
2. Coburg P.S.	1·0
3. Debney Meadows P.S.	1·0
4. Moreland P.S.	·6

Serbo Croatian

1. Spotswood P.S.	1·0

General

1. Kingsville P.S.	2·0
2. St Albans East P.S.	2·0

Table 2
COMMUNITY LANGUAGE TEACHERS, 1984

Italian

Brunswick North	1·0

Overland	1·0
Brunswick South	1·0
Bayswater West	1·0
Yarraleen	1·0
Mossfiel	1·0
Manorvale	·5
Millgate	1·0
Coburg	1·0
Bulleen	1·0
Brunswick West	·5
Moreland	·5
Doncaster P.S.	1·0
Carlton North	1·0
Craigieburn	2·0
King Valley	2·0
Tecoma	1·0
Campbellfield	1·0
Shepparton East/Orrvale/Lemnos/Grahamvale	1·0
Sunvale	1·0
Ascot Vale	1·0
Williamstown	1·0
Donburn	1·5
Albion North	1·0
Park Orchards	2·0
Mildura Cluster	2·0
Templestowe Heights	·2
Macedonian	
Thomastown West	1·0
Preston South	1·0
Lalor North	1·0
Wembley Primary School	1·0
Maltese	
St Albans	1·0
St Albans Meadows	1·0
Khmer	
Westall P.S. (as yet—26.3.84—not appointed)	1·0
Hebrew	
Doncaster Park P.S.	1·0
Serbo Croatian	
Spotswood—Croatian	1·0
St Albans—Serbian	1·0
Spanish	
Serpell	1·0
German	
Bayswater South	2·0
Livingstone P.S.	2·0
Karingal P.S.	2·0
Bayswater West	1·0
Syndal North	1·0
Ferntree Gully	1·0
Turkish	
Moreland	·5
Brunswick West	·5
Debney Meadows	·5
Carlton (Neil Street)	·5
Richmond West	1·0
Collingwood Education Centre	1·0
Debney Meadows	1·0
Coburg P.S.	1·0
Brunswick North	1·0
Greek	
Sunshine Heights	2·0
Thomastown West	1·0
Lalor North	2·0
Brunswick South	1·0
Brunswick West	·5
Moreland	·5
Brunswick North	2·0
Oakleigh East	2·0
Clifton Hill	2·0
Richmond North	1·0
Richmond	2·0
Coburg	·5
Port Melbourne	1·0
Coburg West	1·0
Preston South	1·0
Richmond (Cremorne Street)	1·0
Auburn	1·0
Northcote	1·0
Hughesdale	2·0
Victoria Park	1·0
Richmond Central	2·0
Collingwood Education Centre	2·0
Vietnamese	
Richmond West	1·0
Chinese	
West Melbourne	·3
North Melbourne (Boundary Road)	·7
Richmond West Richmond North Abbotsford	5·0
Lebanese	
Coburg	·5
Newport	1·0

Moreland	(as yet—26.3.84 not appointed)	·5
Brunswick West		·5
Brunswick South		1·0
Brunswick North		1·0

BILINGUAL COUNSELLING SERVICES

(Question No. 2560)

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill) asked the Minister of Health:

How many additional personnel have been appointed to provide interpreting and bilingual counselling services in the fields of preventative medicine, pre and post-natal services, services for the aged, for disabled people and children's health services since April 1982, indicating the location of such personnel, the date and duration of appointment in each case and the languages spoken in each location respectively?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

Since April 1982, additional funds have had to be provided by the State to make up for reductions in Commonwealth funding for the Community Health Programme caused by actions of the Fraser Government.

Consequently, extra funds have not been available for additional interpreters/translators in Government centres. However, there have been some changes at some public hospitals since 1982. The current state of interpreting services at public hospitals is as follows:

Royal Children's Hospital—2 full-time and 1 part-time interpreters covering Turkish, Greek, Italian, French, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, German and Arabic.

Preston and Northcote Community Hospital—2 full-time staff covering Italian, Greek, French, Arabic, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian.

Prince Henry's Hospital—2 full-time staff covering Greek, Italian, French and Arabic.

Queen Victoria Medical Centre—7 full-time staff covering Greek, Turkish, Italian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Polish, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian.

Royal Melbourne Hospital—4 full-time staff covering Serbo-Croatian, Italian, Greek and Turkish.

St Vincent's Hospital—4 full-time staff covering Greek, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, French, Maltese, Spanish and Turkish.

Western General Hospital—2 full-time staff covering French, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Serbo-Croatian and Spanish.

Alfred Hospital—3 full-time staff covering French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Ukranian and Serbo-Croatian.

Dandenong and District Hospital—4 full-time staff covering Greek, Italian, Serbo-Croatian, Arabic, Turkish, Spanish and French.

Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital—3 full-time staff covering Italian, French, Maltese, Greek, Turkish and Spanish.

Austin Hospital—1 half-time interpreter covering Italian, French, Greek, Maltese and Arabic.

Royal Women's Hospital—2 full-time and 6 part-time staff covering Serbo-Croatian, French, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Greek, Arabic and Italian.

The above interpreter establishment, together with the eight Public Service interpreters provide a service in the fields of preventative medicine, pre and post-natal services, services for the aged, for disabled people and children's health services. In addition, some community health centres and infant welfare services employ their own interpreters.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

(Question No. 2572)

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether any schools in Victoria conduct formal classes in consumer education if so, how many and which schools conduct such classes?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Yes—the subject is taught as consumer education, commerce or general business education but it will also be included in English, mathematics and primary social studies courses.

Commerce, 14 schools. General business education, 43 schools. Consumer education, 247 schools.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS—CONSUMER EDUCATION 1983

Ashwood	J. H. Boyd
Balwyn	Malvern Girls
Box Hill	McKinnon
Burwood	Mentone
Camberwell	Moorabbin
Doncaster	Murrumbeena
Doncaster East	Oakleigh
Donvale	Parkdale
Glen Waverley	Princess Hill
Greythorn	Richmond
Highvale	Richmond Girls
John Gardiner	Westall
Kew	Altona
Koonung	Altona North
Monash	Ardeer
Mount Waverley	Avondale
Syndal	Bacchus Marsh
Templestowe	Braybrook
Warrandyte	Buckley Park

Wattle Park
Wellington
Wheelers Hill
Bayswater
Blackburn
Burwood Heights
Croydon
Croydon Community
Ferntree Gully
Healesville
Heathmont
Lilydale
Maroondah
Mitcham
Monbulk
Mooroolbark
Nunawading
Pembroke
Scoresby
Upper Yarra
Upwey
Vermont
Wantirna
Ardoch
Beaumaris
Bentleigh
Brighton
Caulfield
Chadstone
Cheltenham
Collingwood
Correspondence
Debney Park
Elwood
Flemington
Hampton
Highett
Huntingdale
Cleeland
Coomoora
Cranbourne
Dandenong
Hallam
Hastings
Karingal
Koo-wee-rup
Lyndale
Mordialloc–Chelsea
Mornington
Noble Park
Pakenham
Seaford–Carrum
Springvale
Wonthaggi
Balmoral
Bell Park
Belmont
Camperdown
Casterton
Colac
Corio North
Derrinallum
Geelong North
Grovedale
Essendon
Footscray
Footscray Girls
Kealba
Kings Park
Melton
Niddrie
Strathmore
Sunshine
Werribee
Williamstown
Broadmeadows
Brunswick East
Coburg
Erinbank
Fawkner
Gladstone Park
Hadfield
Newlands
Pascoe Vale Girls
Banyule
Epping
Greenwood
Heidelberg
Hurstbridge
La Trobe
Lakeside
Montmorency
Northcote
Preston Girls
Reservoir
Rosanna East
Thomastown
Thornbury
Whittlesea
Berwick
Bonbeach
Chandler
Ballarat
Ballarat East
Beaufort
Donald
Edenhope
Goroke
Hopetoun
Horsham
Kaniva
Murtoa
Nhill
Rainbow
Stawell
Castlemaine
Charlton
East Loddon
Flora Hill
Golden Square
Kerang
Manangatang
Red Cliffs
Robinvale
Rochester
Sea Lake
St Arnaud
Wedderburn
Hamilton
Hawkesdale
Heywood
Lavers Hill
Matthew Flinders
Mortlake
Norlane
Queenscliffe
Terang
Timboon
Warrnambool
Drouin
Foster
Korumburra
Leongatha
Maffra
Mallacoota
Mirboo North
Moe
Morwell
Nerrim South
Newborough
Orbost
Sale
Werrimull
Alexandra
Beechworth
Benalla
Cobram
Corryong
Euroa
Kyabram
Mansfield
Mooroopna
Nathalia
Numurkah
Rushworth
Rutherglen
Seymour
Shepparton
Tallangatta
Wodonga West
Swifts Creek
Trafalgar
Traralgon
Warragul
Yarram

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS—CONSUMER EDUCATION 1983

Aspendale
Boronia
Brandon Park
Box Hill
Broadmeadows West
Burwood
Corio
Cranbourne Meadows
Dromana
Endeavour Hills
Footscray
Geelong West
Grovedale
Hamilton
Kangaroo Flat
Keon Park
Lalor
Macleod
Maryborough
Mildura
Mitcham
Moorabbin
Mooroolbark
Morwell
Mount Evelyn
Portland
Preston
Ringwood
Stawell
Sunshine
Warragul
Warrnambool North
Watsonia
Werribee

SECONDARY SCHOOLS—GENERAL BUSINESS EDUCATION 1983

Blackburn
Paisley
Merrilands
Mount Eliza
Newcomb
Cohuna
Pyramid Hill
Bright

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS—GENERAL BUSINESS EDUCATION

Altona North
Ararat
Bairnsdale
Ballarat North
Bell Park
Geelong East
Glenroy
Kingsbury
Knox
Leongatha

Benalla	Monterey
Box Hill	St Albans
Brighton	Sebastopol
Broadmeadows	Shepparton
Brunswick	Shepparton South
Castlemaine	Sunshine North
Caulfield	Swan Hill
Coburg	Swinburne
Colac	Templestowe
Collingwood	Wangaratta
Doveton	White Hills
Fawkner	Wonthaggi
Geelong	

SECONDARY SCHOOLS—COMMERCE 1983

Brentwood	Monterey
Fairhills	Apollo Bay
Ringwood	Lorne
Moreland	Wycheproof
Preston East	Broadford
Carwatha	Mount Beauty
Doveton	Wanganui Park

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS—COMMERCE

Nil

Figures for non-Government schools are not available.

USE OF DAY LABOUR BY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 2649)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry, for the Minister of Public Works:

1. How many contracts for work to be performed by departments, agencies and authorities within his administration were carried out by day labour in 1981-82 and 1982-83?

2. What percentage of total contracts awarded this represents?

3. What is the total value of contracts let in 1981-82 and 1982-83 and what is the estimated value of contracts awarded to day labour?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Public Works is:

Items 1 and 2.

Works in this category include a large number of minor works and I am not prepared to answer this question as the time and effort to do so cannot be justified.

Item 3.

Value of contracts for 1981-82, including Ports and Harbors contracts, but excluding rates and cleaning contracts—$103 441 824.

Value of contracts for 1982-83—$141 725 000.

Value of construction group contracts for 1982-83—$6 165 000.

Value of civil direct labour contracts for 1982-83—$2 000 000.

WATER AUTHORITIES ENTERTAINMENT EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 2651)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry, for the Minister of Water Supply:

1. What was the actual expenditure on entertainment and hospitality of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981-82 and 1982-83?

2. What positions are held by the persons authorizing such expenditure?

Mr SIMPSON (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is:

1. The actual expenditure incurred by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission was $482 for 1981-82 and $292 for 1982-83 whilst, in respect of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the amounts were $19 944.77 and $44 939.36 respectively.

2. Approval for such expenditure was given by the Secretary of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the Chairman and/or officers of the Board of Works with the approval of the board.

HEALTH COMMISSION ENTERTAINMENT EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 2655)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Health:

1. What was the actual expenditure on entertainment and hospitality of departments, authorities and agencies within his administration in 1981-82 and 1982-83?

2. What positions are held by the persons authorizing such expenditure?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

1. The Health Commission's hospitality expenditure figure for 1981-82 was $6330.00. The figure for 1982-83 was $11 379.61. In line with Government policy, since taking office in April 1982, the Health Commission has relied on frequent consultation with a large number of associations involved in the health

care field. Refreshments are occasionally served at meetings with these groups when held over lunch time or after hours.

2. Positions held by those authorizing such expenditure are the directors, secretaries, deputy secretaries and executive officers of the divisions of the commission.

SALARY INCREASES TO TEACHERS

(Question No. 2743)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister of Education:

1. Whether the Education Department, apart from giving teachers a 25 per cent increase in salaries, also made *ex gratia* payments to all State schools equivalent to $10 per child enrolled which was to be spent in any manner the principal and staff wished; if so, how the department justifies such payments?

2. What were the reasons for granting the salary increases and *ex gratia* payments?

3. Whether the department has—(*a*) dispensed with all Category "B" relieving teachers; (*b*) restricted employment of emergency teachers to one day per term per teacher; and (*c*) made cuts which will very seriously undermine teacher health and morale and which could also lead to neglect of children by working parents?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1 and 2. Since March 1982 the following increases in teachers' salaries have occurred:

On 11 March 1982 the Teachers Tribunal awarded teachers an 11 per cent increase in salary and the principals a 13 per cent increase in salary. The increases were backdated to 1 January 1982 and were awarded by the tribunal on the basis if changes that had occurred in work value.

On 24 May 1982 the Minister of Education determined that a 7 per cent increase should apply to all salaries in the education service effective from 29 March 1982. This increase, which was consistent with all public sector employees, was based upon a $25 community standard set by the Metal Trades Industry Agreement in December 1981.

On November 1982 the Minister of Education determined that a 4·9 per cent increase should apply to all salaries in the education service effective from 28 August 1982. This increase, which once again was consistent with increases granted by all public sector employees, was based upon a $14 Metal Trades Industry Agreement "mid-term" adjustment.

In addition, national wage case guidelines were adopted in 1983 leading to a 4·3 per cent across the board increase based upon the movement of the consumer price index for the first half of 1983 and was payable on or about 6 October 1983.

In late April 1983 a special once-only grant of $10 per pupil (minimum grant $100) was made to all school councils to be spent at their discretion. This grant was funded from the $8 million provided in the 1982–83 Budget under the Treasurer (Minister) Discretionary fund.

This grant was made to further assist school councils in overcoming the problems caused by the financial constraints of past years, when school grant allocations failed to keep pace with rising costs and councils' increased responsibilities. School councils were expected to use this special grant to purchase items and develop short-term projects which would help to alleviate unemployment in Victoria.

3. (*a*) and (*b*) For the period February to June 1984 schools are entitled to use emergency teachers to allow for a programme of excursions, camps and in-service activities up to 0·5 emergency teachers per establishment teacher. That is, for a school with 20 teachers, 10 emergency teacher days may be used for these activities.

This allowance has replaced what was previously designated as Category "B" emergency teacher entitlements.

For absences due to illness and other unforeseen circumstances employment of replacement staff is not restricted if a school falls below establishment. In primary schools, emergency teachers can be employed only when all existing relieving teachers, available to the group of schools, have been deployed. Three hundred and fifty additional relieving teachers have been made available to primary schools for this purpose this year.

(*c*) The Education Department has specifically kept the number of teachers intact, despite the need to save 2 per cent in the 1983–84 Budget, in order that there is no reduction in the level of teaching service.

TERTIARY STUDENTS' HOSTELS

(Question No. 2744)

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan) asked the Minister of Education:

1. How many tertiary students' hostels are conducted by the Education Department?

2. What was the income and expenditure of each hostel for the year 1980 to 1982 inclusive, and in 1983 to date?

3. How many hostels are to be closed to students for the year 1984?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. Number of tertiary students' hostels—7.

2A. REVENUE—1 January to 31 December

	1980	1981	1982	1983
	$	$	$	$
Alan Ramsay House	68 742.80	68 064.00	81 369.60	92 433.73
Ariston	46 464.00	49 966.00	63 203.20	91 720.70
Beaufort House	77 088.00	79 016.00	110 028.68	101 784.91
Commersdale	11 618.00	12 623.00	16 234.80	17 278.70
Frank Tate House	50 688.40	62 392.00	64 156.80	73 327.80
Hawthorne	23 246.00	25 585.00	32 860.80	35 155.27
Lancewood	25 232.00	28 564.00	34 425.60	37 277.10
Minimbah	99 264.00	45 376.00	115 795.20	131 632.34
Pinamani	40 128.00	46 483.80	50 073.60	63 637.90
Redcourt	24 684.00	20 916.00	18 777.60	35 486.14
Warwillah	54 912.00	44 156.30	76 675.20	82 377.77
Avonholme	6 018.50	7 313.20	5 476.80	Closed
Lauriston	5 481.00	6 013.00	7 872.90	Closed
Marne Street	5 142.00	7 191.40	Closed as a hostel	Closed
Walsh Street	6 864.00	6 966.20	8 606.40	Closed
Cowabee	59 156.20	79 408.00	82 934.40	93 165.74

2B. EXPENDITURE—1 July to 30 June

Hostel	1980	1981	1982	1983
	$	$	$	$
Alan Ramsay	123 438.00	122 802.00	131 662.00	161 187.00
Beaufort House	149 250.00	120 957.00	132 489.00	131 430.00
Bendigo— Lancewood Commersdale	81 395.00	75 033.00	80 215.00	88 029.00
Cowabee	117 110.00	123 043.00	139 526.00	125 536.00
Frank Tate	116 729.00	123 164.00	138 656.00	145 798.00
Geelong— Hawthorne Ariston Lauriston	197 137.00	228 057.00	207 402.00	208 485.00
Minimbah	169 127.00	181 142.00	174 510.00	190 158.00
Pinamani	60 470.00	78 376.00	88 503.00	101 869.00
Redcourt and Avonholme	67 886.00	86 107.00	56 239.00	66 325.00
Walsh and Marne St.	48 283.00	61 336.00	60 026.00	67 709.00
Warwillah	98 906.00	113 258.00	127 426.00	127 911.00

3. The following hostels have been closed to students for 1984:

Alan Ramsay House.

Avondale.

Cowabee.

Marne Street.

Pinamani.

Walsh Street.

Warwillah.

Lauriston.

MALPRACTICE BY EMPLOYMENT AGENTS

(Question No. 2751)

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton) asked the Minister of Consumer Affairs:

1. How many complaints have been received by the Consumer Affairs Bureau over the past two years concerning alleged malpractices by employment agents?

2. How many of these complaints have come from—(*a*) employers; and (*b*) job-seeking applicants?

3. What have been the most common grounds for complaint?

4. How many of the complaints from employers and job-seeking applicants against employment agents over

the past two years have been investigated, and found to be legitimate complaints, indicating the corrective action taken by the bureau?

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The answer is:

1. In the statistical system of the Ministry complaints are classified under product codes. The figures recorded for employment agents were:

1981-82 year—23.

1982-83 year—22.

There may be other complaints involving traders who have assumed the function of employment agents, but which cannot be identified as such because they are classified under a variety of other product codes.

2. The statistical collections available do not provide this information. As a general rule, complaints lodged are by consumers seeking jobs.

3. The most common grounds for complaint were that employment or earning prospects promised to the applicant did not eventuate.

4. Having regard to the cost and time involved in reviewing individual files, I am not able to provide the detailed information sought.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES

(Question No. 2758)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affiars:

1. How many Australian citizenship certificates were conferred in each metropolitan municipality in Victoria in 1982?

2. What was the total number conferred in Victoria in 1982?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. The total number of Australian citizenship certificates conferred in each metropolitan municipality in Victoria in 1982 are as follows:

Municipality	*Total Certificates*
Altona	188
Box Hill	101
Brighton	19
Broadmeadows	75
Brunswick	24
Camberwell	103
Caulfield	185
Chelsea	56
Coburg	110
Collingwood	112
Croydon	123
Dandenong	289
Diamond Valley	80
Doncaster and Templestowe	200
Essendon	156
Fitzroy	108
Footscray	72
Hawthorn	53
Heidelberg	103
Keilor	93
Kew	21
Knox	268
Lilydale	90
Malvern	76
Melbourne	135
Moorabbin	297
Mordialloc	59
Northcote	—
Nunawading	265
Oakleigh	271
Port Melbourne	50
Prahran	222
Preston	135
Richmond	117
Ringwood	50
Sandringham	22
Sherbrooke	71
South Melbourne	11
Springvale	536
Sunshine	589
St Kilda	304
Waverley	216
Whittlesea	422
Williamstown	78

2. The total number of certificates conferred in Victoria in 1982 was 16 216.

MIGRANT INTAKE IN VICTORIA

(Question No. 2759)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister for Ethnic Afairs:

What was the migrant intake in Victoria in 1982 indicating the countries of origin of the migrants?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

Country of origin	*Number*
Africa—	
Arab Republic of Egypt	82
Mauritius	91
South Africa	707
Other	200
Total, Africa	1080
America—	
Argentina	155
Brazil	7
Canada	224
Chile	81
Colombia	5
Ecuador	5
Peru	9
Uruguay	29
USA	433
Other	68
Total, America	1016
Asia—	
Cyprus	153
Hong Kong	318
India	536
Indonesia	137
Israel	84
Japan	71
Lebanon	186
Malaysia	686
Philippines	605
Singapore	159
Sri Lanka	.221
Turkey	237
Other	4129
Total, Asia	7522
Europe—	
Austria	79
Belgium	18
Denmark	69
Finland	9
France	99
Germany	895
Greece	274
Italy	283
Malta	293
Netherlands	606
Norway	12
Poland	1861
Portugal	142
Spain	143
Sweden	43
Switzerland	162
UK and Ireland	6900
USSR	105
Yugoslavia	576
Other	666
Total, Europe	13 235
Oceania—	
Fiji	107
New Zealand	1474
Papua-New Guinea	52
Other	158
Total, Oceania	1791
Not stated	—
Total all Countries	24 644

BUDGET CHANGES IN PRE-SCHOOL FUNDING

(Question No. 2774)

Mrs SIBREE (Kew) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of changes in the 1983–84 State Budget in relation to pre-schools:

1. Which three-year-old groups and seniors have been refused funding for 1984 and how many children will be affected?

2. Which three-year-old groups have been granted a "special needs" category for the continuation of their programmes?

3. What will be the savings in respect of three-year-old groups to whom funding has ceased?

4. How many teaching and assistants positions will be affected because of the changes and how these will be affected?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

1. (i) Funding of four-year-old groups has not been affected.

(ii) As the list of three-year-old groups not to be funded in 1984 is lengthy, the information has been provided for the honourable member's perusal, in the Parliamentary Library.

(iii) The maximum number of places for three-year-olds affected will be 2880.

2. Three-year-old groups to be funded in 1984 (as special needs):

Altona North	Orana
John Barnaby	Bell Post Hill
Norlane Church of Christ	Yandell
Annie Todd	Atherton Gardens
Radiata	North Kew
Tanti Park	Cabena Crescent
Ada Mary A'Beckett	Lady Forster
Port Melbourne	Middle Park
Clarendon	

3. Savings in respect of three-year-old groups in a full year are $1 605 080. These savings are being reallocated to provide additional sessions for four-year-olds and for visiting teachers.

4. Number of teaching and assistant positions affected:

(*a*) Teacher positions—

75 part-time teacher positions no longer funded.

66 part-time teacher positions reduced in sessions.

(*b*) Assistant positions—

75 part-time assistant positions no longer funded.

62 part-time positions reduced in sessions.

However, it is known many of the centres will maintain the now unsubsidized positions at their expense.

(*c*) 24 full-time teacher and assistant positions created.

13 part-time teacher and assistant positions created.

22 visiting teacher positions created.

In addition, 225 existing teacher and assistant positions have been offered additional sessions.

BUDGET CHANGES IN PRE-SCHOOL FUNDING

(Question No. 2775)

Mrs SIBREE (Kew) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of the Budget changes in pre-school funding in 1984:

1. How many new kindergarten sessions will be established for four-year-olds?

2. Where these new sessions are to be established?

3. What will be the cost of establishing these new sessions?

4. How many full-time and part-time teaching and assistants positions will be created?

5. How many four-year-olds who would otherwise have not received pre-school in 1984 will now receive pre-school in 1984?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

1. 727 new kindergarten sessions will be established for four year olds.

2. New sessions are to be established at the following centres:

Ballarat Grammar	Yarragon
San Remo	Glengarry
Goorambat	Kialla
Mossgiel Park	Shepparton East
David Collins	Tallygaroopna
St Peters	Len Jeffrey
Wonnai	Timberglade
Stuart Street	Swan Hill South
Yarra Valley	Manangatang
Eltham South	Nyah West
Waterfall Gully	Balmoral
Clare Street	Central
Footscray TAFE College	Pannam Drive
Denninallum	Stables
Keilor Downs	Sea Lake
Knoxfield	Willowgrove
Edenhope	Templeton Orchards
Wandong	Community Centre
Maldon	

3. Additional cost in a full year—$2 006 550.

4. Number of positions created:

24 full-time teacher and assistant positions

13 part-time teacher and assistant positions

22 visiting teacher positions

In addition, 225 existing teacher and assistant positions have been offered additional sessions.

5. Up to 2500 additional four-year-olds will be provided with pre-schooling in 1984.

REGISTRATION FOR ACUPUNCTURISTS

(Question No. 2815)

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra) asked the Minister of Health:

1. In respect of his view that the expertise and know-how for medical practitioners in relation to acupuncture came from traditional Chinese acupuncturists which was published in his statement of 1 June last

year, whether he still holds this view; if so, whether he intends to take steps to ensure that traditional Chinese acupuncturists are recognized in any registration procedure?

2. How many submissions he or the Health Commission has received in respect of his statement of 1 June 1982 concerning the registration of acupuncturists, indicating—(*a*) what was the source and nature of such submissions; and (*b*) what action he has taken to elicit further information from those providing such submissions?

3. In the event that he has taken no action to elicit further information from those who provided submissions or to seek some clarification on matters submitted, whether he will now seek such additional views so as to ensure that his review of the question of registration of acupuncturists is fair and based on a knowledge of all the facts?

Mr ROPER (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

1. It is not intended to register acupuncturists. It is a fact that acupuncture originated in China and has a very long history in that country. Acupuncture is, however, now practised in many other countries and by many nationalities, and there is no reason for dealing with Chinese acupuncturists in a way which differs from that which applies to other ethical and well trained acupuncturists.

2. (*a*) The following submissions were received in respect of the review of the registration of acupuncturists:

Australian Medical Acupuncture Society

Brisbane College of Traditional Acupuncture Ltd

Australian Acupuncture College

Acupuncture Ethics and Standards Organization

The Victorian Traditional Acupuncture Society

Korea Acupuncture Association

15 submissions from individuals

(*b*) There does not, as a result of the twelve-month study conducted in respect of the review of the registration of acupuncturists, appear to be any information which could be placed before the commission which might lead to its changing its mind on the subject of registration. Consequently, no further action was taken to elicit further information from those providing such submissions.

3. All the information received has been taken into consideration and I believe that the review of the question of registration of acupuncturists was fair and based on a knowledge of all the facts. If additional information is presented it will be carefully examined to ensure the community is protected.

HOUSING FUNDS

(Question No. 2822)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister of Housing:

In view of the fact that total availability of funds from the Victorian Government for housing assistance is limited, whether it is the Government's objective to obtain the maximum cost efficiency in its programmes and the maximum number of units of accommodation?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer is:

The State Government, in planning the expenditure of funds available for housing assistance, is concerned to provide maximum cost efficiency and effectiveness within the constraints of housing needs. To ensure public housing funds are spent effectively and equitably, some balance must be drawn between the achievement of a maximum output of dwelling units and the need to provide housing in suitable locations. The State is concerned not to repeat past errors in selecting cheap options merely to maximize output but to maximize efficiency within the constraints of housing needs and the capacity to respond effectively.

STAMPS ACT 1958

(Question No. 2849)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Treasurer:

What amounts of duty will be paid under the Stamps Act 1958 in 1982–83 and what are the estimates for 1983–84 in respect of duty on—(*a*) real estate transactions; (*b*) insurance business; (*c*) applications for registration and notices of acquisition of motor vehicles and related transactions; (*d*) sale of adhesive duty stamps; (*e*) duty on credit and rental business (registered person); and (*f*) sharebrokers' statements and share sales?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer is:

It is not usual to release estimates of revenue in the detail requested. However, the actual figures for 1982–83 on which the 1983–84 estimates were based are:

(*a*) $168·3 million.

(*b*) $101·1 million.

(*c*) $80·9 million.

(*d*) $29·4 million.

(*e*) $27·0 million.

(*f*) $22·3 million.

VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS

(Question No. 2876)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

With reference to a previous question regarding visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, what are—(*a*) the maximum number of hours worked by visual display unit operatives on any shift; and (*b*) the shift spacings?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

(*a*) With regard to departments, agencies and authorities within my administration, it is inappropriate to measure the actual hours worked by visual display unit operatives on a shift, as the shift is a normal working day, and the use of visual display units by the operators is interspersed with other duties. The duration of the normal day is 7 hours and 36 minutes and visual display unit operators have rest breaks within that time.

(*b*) As the shift is a normal working day, shift spacings are not applicable.

(Question No. 2877)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

With reference to a previous question regarding visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, what are—(*a*) the maximum number of hours worked by visual display unit operatives on any shift; and (*b*) the shift spacings?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The answer is:

(*a*) It is considered inappropriate to measure the hours actually worked in operating visual display units as flexitime, rest breaks, workload and the different skill levels of operatives would have to be taken into account.

(*b*) Visual display units are operated in the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services, the Police Department, the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board. Shift spacings are not applicable in the majority of cases as the shift would be a normal working day. Visual display unit operatives employed in the Police Department on a shift basis have a minimum period of 8 hours between shifts. The visual display unit operatives employed on a shift basis at the Communications Centre of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board work two consecutive day shifts and two consecutive night shifts followed by four consecutive shifts off. The minimum shift spacing is 10 hours.

(Question No. 2883)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Assistant Minister of Transport:

With reference to a previous question regarding visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, what are—(*a*) the maximum number of hours worked by visual display unit operatives on any shift; and (*b*) the shift spacings?

Mr SIMPSON (Assistant Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

I refer the honourable member to the answer of the Minister of Transport to an identical question.

(Question No. 2891)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Consumer Affairs:

With reference to a previous question regarding visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, what are—(*a*) the maximum number of hours worked by visual display unit operatives on any shift; and (*b*) the shift spacings?

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The answer is:

(*a*) It is considered inapproriate to measure the hours actually worked by Visual Display Unit operatives on a shift as the shift is a normal working day and flexitime, workload, rest breaks and the different skill level of the operatives would have to be taken into account.

(*b*) Shift spacings would not be applicable in the majority of cases as the shift would be a normal working day.

(Question No. 2892)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

With reference to a previous question regarding visual display units in use in departments, agencies and authorities within the Minister's administration, what are—(*a*) the maximum number of hours worked by visual display unit operatives on any shift; and (*b*) the shift spacings?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

(*a*) In the majority of cases the only shift work will be the normal working day. In this context any estimate made of the maximum hours worked by operators, shifts have to take into account workload, breaks during the day and flexitime.

(*b*) Shift spacings would not be applicable as the shift is a normal working day.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

(Question No. 2903)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

What are the details of any outstanding matters of complaint expressed by the Auditor-General in reports to Parliament, indicating the reasons corrective action has not been completed?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

I refer the honourable member for Doncaster to part 4 of the report by the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1982, and to part 3 of the third report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1983, for details of matters raised by the Auditor-General in relation to my department.

These matters are receiving attention.

(Question No. 2918)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Consumer Affairs:

What are the details of any outstanding matters of complaint expressed by the Auditor-General in reports to Parliament, indicating the reasons corrective action has not been completed?

Mr SPYKER (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The answer is:

I refer the honourable member to part 5 of the second and part 3 of the third report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30 June 1983 for details of the outstanding matters.

The matters referred to in the reports are being attended to.

(Question No. 2919)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

What are the details of any outstanding matters of complaint expressed by the Auditor-General in reports to Parliament, indicating the reasons corrective action has not been completed?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

Nil.

BREACHES OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS

(Question No. 2930)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

Whether the Minister will provide an analysis of all breaches of Acts of Parliament and regulations administered by him dating from April 1982, indicating the action taken in respect of such breaches?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

No, having regard to the large number of Acts and regulations administered, there would be significant costs and time involved in extracting such information.

(Question No. 2937)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Assistant Minister of Transport:

Whether the Minister will provide an analysis of all breaches of Acts of Parliament and regulations administered by him dating from April 1982, indicating the action taken in respect of such breaches?

Mr SIMPSON (Assistant Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

I refer the honourable member to the answer of the Minister of Transport to an identical question.

(Question No. 2946)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

Whether the Minister will provide an analysis of all breaches of Acts of Parliament and regulations administered by him dating from April 1982, indicating the action taken in respect of such breaches?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

No, having regard to the significant cost and time involved in extracting such information.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY POLICIES

(Question No. 2957)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

1. Whether the Minister will provide a progress report on the implementation of Australian Labor Party policies and the achievement of election promises of the party since April 1982?

2. Whether the Minister will specify reasons for policies not yet implemented or promises not yet achieved?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

1. No. The Government's programme has been well publicized in the Parliament and elsewhere in the form of Ministerial statements, legislation, the Budget Papers, *Victorian Government Notes* and press releases on administrative actions.

2. No. The Government has worked systematically to implement its programme and will continue to do so within the constraints imposed by tight economic conditions.

(Question No. 2973)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether the Minister will provide a progress report on the implementation of Australian Labor Party policies and the achievement of election promises of the party since April 1982?

2. Whether the Minister will specify reasons for policies not yet implemented or promises not yet achieved?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. No. The Government's programme has been well publicized in the Parliament and elsewhere in the form of Ministerial statements, legislation, the Budget Papers, *Victorian Government Notes* and press releases on administrative actions.

2. No. The Government has worked systematically to implement its programme and will continue to do so within the constraints imposed by tight economic conditions.

SOCIAL WORKER AND INTERPRETER SERVICES

(Question No. 3034)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether there has been any reduction in the social worker and interpreter services offered through his counselling, guidance and clinical services for the 1984 school year; if so, what are the details of the reduced services?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Staffing of social workers and interpreters has been maintained at the 1982–83 level although responsibility for interpreters has been transferred from Student Services Branch to the Equal Educational Opportunities Branch.

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES FOR EDUCATION OFFICERS

(Question No. 3035)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

Whether transport allowances paid to officers of counselling, guidance and clinical services have been cut by 50 per cent in the 1983–84 Budget year; if not, what has been the extent of any reduction in transport allowances and whether this cutback has resulted in any curtailment of counselling services provided in schools?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

(i) No.

(ii) Allocation maintained at 1982–83 level.

CUTBACKS IN COUNSELLING, GUIDANCE AND CLINICAL SERVICES

(Question No. 3036)

Mr JONA (Hawthorn) asked the Minister of Education:

What restrictions or other cutbacks are occurring in counselling, guidance, clinical and other special services in 1984 as compared with the level of services in those areas during 1983?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

Staff ceilings have been maintained at 1982–83 level. In some areas some difficulty has been experienced as a result of prevalence of unpaid long-term extended leave for which replacement staff are not available.

ADVANCEMENT IN TEACHERS' TOTAL EMOLUMENTS

(Question No. 3039)

Mr LEIGH (Malvern) asked the Minister of Education:

How many teachers had been denied advancements in their total emoluments as at 1 March 1984 following salary determinations effective from 1 January 1982, 29 March 1982, and 28 August 1982?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

I have been advised that no teachers have been denied advancement in their total emoluments as at 1 March 1984 following salary determinations effective from 1 January 1982, 29 March 1982 and 28 August 1982.

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY GROUPS

(Question No. 3042)

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Agriculture:

How many advisory groups have been established over the past twelve months, indicating—(*a*) their tasks; (*b*) their composition; (*c*) the remuneration paid to the members of these groups; and (*d*) the recommendations put forward by these groups which have been implemented?

Mr WILKES (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

Eleven Animal Health District Liaison Committees (AHDLC) were established during 1983. These met in Seymour, Wangaratta, Shepparton, Echuca, Bendigo, Swan Hill, Colac, Dandenong, Leongatha, Warrugal and Maffra. A further three similar committees at Horsham, Hamilton and Ballarat are proposed but have yet to be convened.

The purpose of the AHDLCs is to improve communication with industry, industry performance and feedback to the Department of Agriculture and the members' organizations on the national brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication programme as it operates in this State.

Each committee is convened by the regional veterinary officer, who is also the chairman. Members represent the local Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association, Pastoral Group district councils, United Dairyfarmers of Victoria district councils, the Australian Veterinary Association branches, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Stock and Station Agents Association branches and a transport operator representative, as well as the Department of Agriculture.

No remuneration is paid to members.

Rather than making recommendations to Government on technical or administrative policy on the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Council programme, the role of these committees is to advise on operational issues. The inputs from each committee have related to suggestions for more effective methods of dealing with problem farms, and matters of concern to the industry at the district level. Action has been taken by the Department of Agriculture, where advice has indicated the need for change.

The committees have also been valuable in explaining to industry the contingency plans for handling exotic diseases. The most recent instance of this arose from the foot and mouth disease extortion case.

VACANT RESIDENCES OWNED BY THE MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

(Question No. 3057)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for Employment and Training:

What are the locations of all residences which have been vacant for two months or longer, owned by the Ministry of Employment and Training and bodies under the Minister's control, as at 1 March 1984, indicating for what length of time each property has been vacant and the reasons?

Mr SIMMONDS (Minister for Employment and Training)—The answer is:

One residence is owned by the Ministry of Employment and Training and is currently occupied.

(Question No. 3058)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation:

What are the locations of all residences which have been vacant for two months or longer, owned by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation and bodies under the Minister's control, as at 1 March 1984, indicating for what length of time each property has been vacant and the reasons?

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The answer is:

All departmental residences have been submitted for inclusion in the Government Employee Housing Register. All residences were occupied during the two-month period prior to 1 March 1984.

(Question No. 3059)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology:

What are the locations of all residences which have been vacant for two months or longer, owned by the Department of Industry, Commerce and Technology and bodies under the Minister's control, as at 1 March 1984, indicating for what length of time each property has been vacant and the reasons?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The answer is:

The department and its agencies do not own any residences which have been vacant for two months or longer.

PURCHASE OF SCHOOL COMPUTERS BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(Question No. 3072)

Mr KEMPTON (Warrnambool) asked the Minister of Education:

With regard to Education Department purchases of school computers:

1. What policy guidelines the Government has with regard to purchases of such computers?

2. How much is expected to be expended on school computers in the 1983–84 Budget period?

3. What criteria are used to evaluate the appropriateness of school computers purchased?

4. What ongoing critical appraisal is made as to purchasing of school computers and the teaching of school computer programmes?

5. Whether the Government has a policy as to appropriate levels of contract hours for computer education in post-primary studies?

Mr FORDHAM (Minister of Education)—The answer is:

1. The Education Department has issued two recent statements concerning the use and purchase of computer systems in Victorian Government schools. The first, issued in October 1983, contained the department's policy on the introduction of computer technology into schools. The second, issued in March 1984, made recommendations concerning the types of computer systems best suited to school use.

2. The State Government has allocated $754 000 for computer education in the Budget period 1983–84. These funds will be used to acquire, develop and distribute educational computing software to schools, implement a programme of teacher professional development and assist schools to purchase computer equipment. The Minister recently announced an assistance scheme whereby eligible schools can obtain a rebate of up to $450 towards the purchase of computer hardware and software.

3. The major criterion for the evaluation of school computing systems is the availability of high quality, educationally sound software. Other factors such as hardware design and flexibility are also taken into account if this software is available.

4. The State Computer Education Centre, which is currently being established, is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the computer education programme. Several surveys relating to computing systems and computing curriculum have already been undertaken.

5. The Education Department believes that decisions related to contract hours for computer education in post-primary schools should be left to the schools themselves. Because the exposure of students to computing systems varies widely, decisions relating to this area are the responsibility of individual schools based on local need.

"WOMEN AGAINST RAPE IN WAR" GROUP

(Question No. 3079)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Premier:

1. Whether the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has given permission to a group known as "Women against Rape in War" to join in this year's Anzac Day march; if so, what are the details of this approval?

2. Whether he will give instructions that all State Government buildings fly the national flag on Anzac Day?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

1. No. The Anzac Day march is organized by the RSL

2. The Government has directed that on Anzac Day, State Government agencies should fly their flags outside Government buildings at half mast until 12 noon and then at the mast head until 6 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

REPAIRS TO VEHICLES OF MINISTRY FOR THE ARTS

(Question No. 1774)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister for the Arts:

1. Which garages handle motor repair work for all motor vehicles within his administration?

2. Whether this work is allocated by tender or otherwise, indicating the cost per hour or other basis of cost determination?

Mr MATHEWS (Minister for the Arts)—The answer is:

The warranty on a new vehicle is often conditional upon the vehicle being serviced by the supplier firm for an initial mileage or time span. Where this does not apply, departments are requested to have motor vehicle repairs carried out at the Public Works garage, provided this is reasonably convenient.

The following details are provided in respect of motor repair work for vehicles used within my administration:

Name of Agency	*Garage*	*Costing Basis*
Victorian Arts Centre	John Martins Motors Bob Binks Ford Mazda Motors Collins Mitsubishi Tolbert Motors	In each case repair work is carried out by the supplier of the vehicle at normal commercial rates.
State Library of Victoria	Public Works Department garage, Fitzroy	In accordance with Government directive. Rates are $27.00 per hour plus parts.
Film Victoria	Reg Hunt Rhodes	Authorized dealer for vehicle used by Film Victoria. Charges are normal commercial rate.
Ministry Head Office	Public Works garage	In accordance with Government directive. Rate is $27.00 per hour plus parts.
Museum of Victoria	Public Works garage	In accordance with Government directive. Rate is $27.00 per hour plus parts.
National Gallery of Victoria	The supplier of the vehicle	Collins Mitsubishi at $27.50 per hour and Patterson-Cheney (Truck Division) at $35.00 per hour.
Victorian College of the Arts	City Road garage	Authorized dealer Rate $27.00 per hour.
	City Mazda	Authorized dealer Rate $27.00 per hour.
State Film Centre	Public Works garage	In accordance with Government directive Rates are $27.00 per hour.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT EXPENDITURE

(Question No. 2577)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister of Transport:

In respect of the Transport Act 1983:

1. What is the cost of the stationery that is being destroyed as a result of the change of name of Government departments?

2. What is the cost of new uniforms for all personnel as a result of the change of name?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1. Where practicable, stationery will be overprinted or stamped with the new name.

2. Uniforms will be replaced as required at normal replacement costs.

BLASTING OF PORT PHILLIP RIP

(Question No. 2703)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. What expenditure has been incurred in each of the past three financial years on blasting the Port Phillip Rip by the Ports and Harbors Division?

2. Whether this annual expenditure is still warranted and justified given the reduction of large ships entering Port Phillip; if not, what steps will be taken to curtail or cease the blasting?

3. What effect the blasting programme over the years has had on the future of crayfish beds in the Queenscliff area?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1. 1980–81	$35 000
1981–82	$77 000
1982–83	$64 000

These figures exclude administrative costs.

2. I am advised that the number of large vessels has not decreased as the tendency is for bigger and deeper draught ships to replace smaller vessels on economic grounds.

In addition, the combination of extreme sea and tidal conditions and difficulties in locating all high spots has lead the Port Phillip pilots to impose a minimum underkeel clearance in the Rip of 3 metres. Consequently, a declared depth of 14·9 metres is required to allow vessels of 11·9 metres draught to navigate at all states of the tide and to bring the Port Phillip Bay channels in line with the current depth of the river and its approach channels.

The continuation of the deepening of the entrance is also needed to enable the ports of Melbourne and Geelong to be viable to overseas shipping.

3. The Ports and Harbors Division has always consulted with the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, which advised that any disturbance would be minimal.

VICTORIAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

(Question No. 2735)

Mr LEIGH (Malvern) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. What is the total cost of amalgamation of the Victorian public transport system?

2. What is the cost of painting, in the new colour scheme, all trains, trams, buses and other vehicles owned by the Ministry of Transport and its statutory authorities?

3. Whether the Government intends to paint any other equipment and buildings in the new colour scheme; if so, what is the cost and what equipment and buildings will be painted?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1, 2 and 3. Rolling-stock of the restructured Victorian transport authorities will be painted at normal cost during overhaul when repainting normally takes place. There are no plans to paint buildings with the new colour scheme. When equipment is due for repainting then it is likely to be repainted in the new colours.

ELECTRIFICATION OF THE WERRIBEE LINE

(Question No. 2753)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. What stage the electrification of the Werribee line has reached?

2. Whether electric trains were scheduled to run to Werribee as from 21 August; if so, whether they started; if not, why?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1. Electrification of the Werribee line has been completed and suburban trains commenced running to Werribee on 27 November 1983.

2. Electric trains were scheduled to run to Werribee as from 21 August 1983 but commencement was delayed by a series of factors.

FLOATING DOCK PROJECT IN MELBOURNE

(Question No. 2820)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. Whether he is aware of a proposal that Melbourne be the site of a floating dock to be operated by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; if so, what are the details?

2. Whether a public announcement will be made about this project; if so, when; if not, why?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1. No.

2. No.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY FUNDS

(Question No. 2821)

Mr LEIGH (Malvern) asked the Minister of Transport:

Whether the $8 959 949 not spent by the former Country Roads Board in 1982–83 will be additional funds to the budget of the Road Construction Authority or whether this amount was deducted from the budget allocated for the financial year 1983–84.

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

The amount of $8 959 949 is additional to the funds which would have been available to the Road Construction Authority in the financial year 1983–84.

FUNDING UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL ROAD DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND ACT

(Question No. 2848)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Transport:

Whether the East Preston tram extension was funded under the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund Act 1982; if so, whether application will be made for similar funding for the proposed Doncaster light railway; if not, why?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

Stage one of the East Preston tram extension was not funded under the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund Act, but stages two and three will be.

Application for similar funding has not been made for the proposed Doncaster light railway because a firm decision on the timing of this project has not been made. When that decision is made the project will be considered for funding under the Australian Bicentennial Road Development.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS

(Question No. 2900)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Transport:

What are the details of any outstanding matters of complaint expressed by the Auditor-General in reports to Parliament, indicating the reasons corrective action has not been completed?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

I am advised that, where necessary, corrective action has been taken in respect of those matters raised in the 1982–83 Auditor-General's reports.

FLOATING DOCK AT PORTLAND

(Question No. 3001)

Mr WILLIAMS (Doncaster) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. Whether he is aware of a proposal that Portland be the site of a floating dock to be operated by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; if so, what are the details?

2. Whether a public announcement will be made about this project; if so, when?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1. No.

2. No.

TRAIN TRAVEL FROM MELBOURNE TO BALLARAT

(Question No. 3019)

Mr EVANS (Ballarat North) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. How many passengers travelled on each train to Ballarat departing Melbourne 7.55 a.m. and 8.55 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday in December 1982 and 1983 respectively?

2. How many of these travellers were on combined tourist packages to Sovereign Hill?

Mr CRABB (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

1 and 2 December 1982			*December* 1983			
Date	7.55 *a.m.*	8.55 *a.m.*	*Date*	7.55 *a.m.*	8.55 *a.m.*	*Sovereign Hill*
Wednesday 1	7	26				
Thursday 2	12	27	Thursday 1	12	37	Nil
Friday 3	8	99	Friday 2	12	37	Nil
Saturday 4	68	No service	Saturday 3	52	No service	Nil
Monday 6	11	21	Monday 5	No train	No train	—
Tuesday 7	15	40	Tuesday 6	No train	No train	—
Wednesday 8	12	26	Wednesday 7	No train	No train	—
Thursday 9	11	37	Thursday 8	No train	No train	—
Friday 10	9	26	Friday 9	7	18	Nil
Saturday 11	32	No service	Saturday 10	36	No service	4
Monday 13	15	35	Monday 12	14	45	1
Tuesday 14	13	96	Tuesday 13	25	77	Nil
Wednesday 15	28	39	Wednesday 14	24	44	4
Thursday 16	18	56	Thursday 15	17	43	6
Friday 17	12	49	Friday 16	14	46	3
Saturday 18	61	No service	Saturday 17	55	No service	Nil
Monday 20	18	41	Monday 19	27	66	4

1 *and* 2 *December* 1982			*December* 1983			
Date	7.55 *a.m.*	8.55 *a.m.*	*Date*	7.55 *a.m.*	8.55 *a.m.*	*Sovereign Hill*
Tuesday 21	9	62	Tuesday 20	11	45	4
Wednesday 22	14	32	Wednesday 21	23	47	6
Thursday 23	18	38	Thursday 22	17	49	Nil
Friday 24	10	30	Friday 23	23	43	
Saturday 25	169	No service	Saturday 24	51	No service	Nil
Monday 27	42	No service	Monday 26	34	No service	Nil
Tuesday 28	40	No service	Tuesday 27	84	No service	2
Wednesday 29	33	104	Wednesday 28	35	125	12
Thursday 30	31	163	Thursday 29	36	105	25
Friday 31	17	59	Friday 30	32	150	Nil
			Saturday 31	58	No service	Nil

(i) Records were not kept in December 1982 of the number of travellers using combined tourist packages to Sovereign Hill.

(ii) "No service" indicates train not scheduled. "No train" indicates industrial stoppage.

INCLUSION OF MOUNT HOTHAM IN THE BOGONG NATIONAL PARK

(Question No. 3028)

Mr KEMPTON (Warrnambool) asked the Minister of Housing, for the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands:

1. How the inclusion of Mount Hotham in the Bogong National Park will affect future development of the mountain, particularly in relation to development of ski runs and buildings for additional facilities?

2. Why Mount Hotham Ski Resort and Mount Hotham Village area were added to the Bogong National Park?

3. Whether a survey has been done in relation to pigmy possums in the Mount Hotham area; if so, what evidence that survey produced that required Mount Hotham to be included in the Bogong National Park?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands is:

1. Mount Hotham is not being included in the Bogong National Park.

2. Mount Hotham Ski Resort and Mount Hotham Village are not being added to the Bogong National Park. A small area on the western slopes of Mount Higginbotham is being excised from the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort and is being added to Bogong National Parks. Areas containing facilities remain in the resort.

3. A survey of pigmy possums was carried out at Mount Hotham Alpine Resort as part of a broader survey to determine the distribution and abundance of this species throughout the State.

The survey found that the small area proposed to be included in the Bogong National Park contained the main breeding population of possums yet located in Australia.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

HOME PURCHASE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

(Question No. 2827)

Mr BROWN (Westernport) asked the Minister of Housing:

1. How many defaults on first mortgage loans have been encountered by the Ministry of Housing in 1981–82 and 1982–83?

2. What is the accrued total of defaults incurred by the Ministry under its home purchase assistance programme and how many of these have been forgiven and not recovered?

3. How many forced sales or foreclosures were undertaken by the Ministry in its programme in 1981–82 and 1982–83?

4. What is the current waiting time for persons currently on the centralized waiting list for home purchase assistance and whether this year's allocations for home purchase assistance will reduce the waiting time?

5. What is the number of persons living in rental accommodation who are not receiving a rental rebate under the current rebate scheme?

Mr CATHIE (Minister of Housing)—The answer is:

1. Total defaults under the home purchase assistance programme as at 31 December 1983, were $364 750.78.

2. Arrears of repayment on the first mortgage loans during the period 1981–82 and 1982–83 were:

30 June 1981	$128 078.58
30 June 1982	$239 263.47
30 June 1983	$393 810.90
31 December 1983	$244 072.76

In the period 1 July 1982 to 31 December 1983 a total sum of $35 478.15 was written off as irrecoverable.

3. The Ministry of Housing had not forced sales or foreclosures under its home purchase assistance programme during either 1981–82 or 1982–83.

4. The current minimum waiting period before an applicant's turn is reached and a loan assessment interview is conducted is approximately two years. A large proportion of loans committed this financial year are for applicants who had deferred their applications in the past due to insufficient savings and who are now able to proceed to purchase with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government's first home owner's assistance scheme.

5. There were 18 212 tenants not receiving a rental rebate as at 30 June 1983.

LAND OWNED BY THE GEELONG REGIONAL COMMISSION

(Question No. 3003)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology:

1. What land is currently held by the Geelong Regional Commission and what was the purchase price or cost to the Government of all land so acquired?

2. What is the current position regarding the sale or disposal of these sites by the commission and what plans have been made for their development in relation to the Geelong community?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The answer is:

1. Land and buildings held by the Geelong Regional Commission at 30 June 1983 at cost as shown in their accounts is $5 214 457.16 in respect of land and buildings on the development account; and $364 723.14 for land and buildings on community land account (community land being reserved as public open space). Such land is situated at:

Aireys Inlet
Breakwater
Ceres
Corio
Fyansford
Geelong
North Geelong
Ocean Grove
Point Wilson
South Geelong
St Leonards
Torquay

2. The commission's current marketing activities include a land sales programme for the balance of the commission's industrial estates at Breakwater, North Geelong, Ocean Grove, Torquay, Corio and South Geelong and a consistent sale pattern is being maintained.

Disposal of the balance of the former heath's site, Geelong, has been delayed pending a decision by the Law Department on the possible requirement of the site for Geelong's new court complex. This decision will determine the development future of the site.

The commission's property management and development programme incorporates the maintenance of all public open space holdings to allow for public access to such sites, together with the implementation of development projects designed to provide significant passive recreation amenities for local communities — properties at Ceres have already been so developed and projects are currently being finalized for the land held at St Leonards and Ocean Grove. The commission will continue to work closely with the municipalities of the Geelong region and local community groups to ensure that community needs and requirements are met in these local endeavours.

Industrial land is being held to enable the commission to carry out its objectives in respect of attracting employment and business opportunities to the region as required under the Geelong Regional Commission Act 1977.

The land on the community account is held under the Geelong Regional Commission Act for the enhancement and protection of special significance areas.

(Question No. 3004)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology:

How many plans have been put to the Geelong Regional Commission relating to the land owned by the commission at Torquay and what appraisals have been made in relation thereto, indicating—(*a*) what proposals have been accepted or rejected; and (*b*) the current position regarding development of these sites?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The answer is:

(*a*) The Geelong Regional Commission purchased some 5·73 ha of land at Torquay in 1980 to provide for the needs of industry and commerce in the area and to facilitate the establishment of a centre for surfing related enterprises and associated tourist developments.

Numerous proposals have been submitted to the commission in respect of various sites within this development project area.

Details of proposals to date are:

(i) a factory and shop development proposed in 1979 by Ripcurl and accepted as the initial development—Ripcurl now employs approximately 130 people and contributes to Torquay's position as an exporter to ten countries making it the fastest growing exporter in Australia.

(ii) a showroom and shop development proposed by Piping Hot—accepted and developed by the commission and leased to Piping Hot, thereby providing a retail outlet and facilitating expansion of manufacturing capability;

(iii) a site for the Torquay and District Ex-Servicemen's Club required as a vendor condition at the time of the commission's land purchase—accepted and site made available under the required contract of sale;

(iv) sites for a signwriter, a builder (factory and offices), a surfboard manufacturer, a gardenware supplier, a timber merchant and a unit factory developer, proposed by separate interests—accepted by the commission and sites sold within the service business zone of the project area for these developments;

(v) a caravan park development on portion of the remaining local business area proposed by a private interest—rejected on the grounds that the proposal is not an appropriate land use in the location and that the price offered for the land was inadequate;

(vi) a family restaurant development proposed by Ripcurl—rejected because the proposal was to purchase portion of the land which would have fragmented the project site and would have negated the commission's and the Government's intention to provide a surf coast plaza as a focal point for surfing in Victoria: a project to which the Government has allocated $830 000 and under which eleven enterprises are currently holding negotiations with the commission.

(*b*) The current position regarding development of the remaining sites in the project area, including the above sites for which proposals have been rejected, is the planning of various recreational retailing developments within a Surf Coast Plaza development on 1·6 ha of the project area. This will be designed to provide a focus for the tourist and surf sports which attract an estimated 2 million day visitors to Torquay annually.

The remaining 11 of the 21 service business allotments within the project area are available for sale to private interests desiring to establish businesses in Torquay and allotment sales are continuing.

TAKEOVER OF INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER PLANT

(Question No. 3005)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology:

In respect of the takeover of the International Harvester plant by the Geelong Agricultural Company in 1983, what are the details of the return from the clearing sale?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The answer is:

The commission has conducted two clearing auction sales, the net proceeds from which total $720 933. Items cleared under these auction sales included:

Major machines, equipment and testing equipment.
Hand tools, drills, reamers, cutters, etc.
Storage cupboards and racks.
Benches.
Miscellaneous sundry items.
Welding machines.
Mobile equipment, tractors, trailers, fork trucks.
Lifting equipment, hoists and cranes.
Office furniture and equipment.

GEELONG REGIONAL COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

(Question No. 3006)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology:

1. How many men and women are employed at the Geelong Regional Commission, indicating the number of married couples so employed?

2. How many employees are temporary, casual, permanent, or other category of staff?

Mr CATHIE (Minister for Industry, Commerce and Technology)—The answer is:

1. As at 1 March 1984, the Geelong Regional Commission employs 45 men and 16 women, with these numbers including one married couple.

2. The above employees are in the following categories:

Temporary:	8.
Casual:	Nil.
Permanent:	38 full-time 4 part-time.
Other:	11 (Commonwealth Employment Programme).