Tuesday, 18 April 1989

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Ken Coghill) took the chair at 2.5 p.m. and read the prayer.

TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS

The SPEAKER—Order! I desire to advise the House that I have given permission to Channel GTV9 to film question time today. The approval is on a shared basis on behalf of other channels, and under the usual guidelines.

I have invited the Press Gallery to indicate whether it wishes a permanent arrangement, but I have yet to receive a communication from the gallery.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TRADE DEFICIT STATISTICS

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of today's disastrous trade deficit figures and the likelihood of interest rates rising further, is the Premier now continuing to support the Federal government's high interest policy, or will he use his offices to protect hundreds of thousands of Victorian home buyers from government policies?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—One would expect the Leader of the Opposition to attempt to find some extraneous matter to direct attention away from the political disasters that seem to befall him regularly.

All the economic indicators that I have seen demonstrate that Victoria and Australia are doing very well. Victoria is outstripping other States in terms of economic growth.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—If members opposite want me to particularise: in the past five years Victoria's economic growth has outstripped that in other States; in terms of gross non-farm product, from 1982–83 to 1987–88, there was a 4·3 per cent growth in Victoria against 3·9 per cent for the rest of Australia. When one notes those indicators and examines the unemployment statistics for 70 consecutive months, one sees that Victoria has recorded the lowest rate of unemployment of any State.

As to Victoria's share of private new capital investment, it is a massive 7 percentage points above our share six years ago. Victoria will experience an estimated 29 per cent share of new business investment in 1988–89. The State is experiencing a very healthy economic climate and one that is working for the benefit of all Victorians. To the extent that people are required to pay more for housing, my government has done what the Opposition's mates in New South Wales have not done—something the Opposition would never do—namely, ensuring that families are given assistance in a whole range of matters such as the education expense allowance that provides $100 for each eligible school-age child in Victoria. The government has abolished motor registration renewal fees.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is too much audible conversation and too much interjection. I should have thought that the events of last Thursday would have provided a salutary lesson for all honourable members about the self-discipline required for the stature of this House and self-respect of each member. I know of no other Parliament in which the level of interjection which has just now been occurring occurs or is permitted. I suggest honourable members seek to achieve a standard of conduct in this House which is generally observed in other Parliaments.

Mr CAIN—I was pointing out ways in which the government is assisting those families and the households that are paying more for housing. Finally, the reason there are at present some problems with the balance of trade figures and with interest rates is very firmly sheeted home to the sloth, indolence and inaction of the previous Federal government in Canberra.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The Opposition well knows that the Hawke government has had to restructure Australia's economy over the past six years as a direct result of those awful lost Fraser years and in an attempt to make this country competitive.

High unemployment, high interest rates, high inflation—members of the Opposition did not give a damn about them; they did not care! What the Hawke government and the Victorian government have done in collaboration is to try to make the lot of ordinary Australians and Victorians better than it was under the previous Liberal administration.

If the government of this nation had acted back in the 1960s and the 1970s—when there were long years of conservative rule—and done something about the industries that should have earned export income, and not been content to export just wheat and wool and dig holes for minerals—which is all that government was concerned about—and if there had been some initiative taken, with some foresight and some strategy, Australians would not be experiencing the difficulties they are experiencing now. The Hawke government is making this nation competitive again, which is what the Opposition failed to do over the past 30 years!

IRRIGATION CHARGES

Mr McNAMARA (Leader of the National Party)—Does the Minister for Water Resources sincerely believe his own publicity in which he said that people in metropolitan areas are paying 65 per cent of the cost of supplying water to rural areas? Would the Minister inform the House exactly how this money is paid and where it is shown in the Budget Papers? If he cannot do that, can honourable members safely assume that the 65 per cent is nothing more than a figment of his fertile imagination?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources)—The question requires a detailed answer, but I inform the House that of the cost of supplying bulk water to users in rural Victoria the Rural Water Commission recovers 35 cents in the $1. Consumers in metropolitan areas are paying almost the total cost of providing water to the city area. The irrigators of the State have a highly subsidised water allocation.

In respect of an increase in water rates, the government is consulting with the people in country Victoria through the Rural Water Commission and the advisory committees that have been set up in the State. The government is slowly increasing the price of water in country Victoria. In this financial year, the increase will be the increase in the consumer price index plus 2 per cent.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr WALSH—I heard an interjection about making the pledge. That is not true. I am referring to the users of bulk water in this State, not those who use the domestic water supplies. If any honourable member wants to refer to the pledge, I suggest that he or she considers it properly. I assure honourable members that if I had a factory in Benalla or anywhere else which was using electricity or gas I would be paying 100 per cent of the charges for the electricity or gas. Irrigators in the State are paying only 35 cents in the $1 for their water.

BUDGET FORECASTS

Mr DOLLIS (Richmond)—In monitoring the outcome of this year's Budget, can the Premier inform the House of recent advice he has received about the likely outcome of the forecasts made in the Budget context?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Budget strategy for 1988–89, as for previous years, depends on the government's general ability to establish realistic targets for Budget expenditure and to forecast reasonably accurate economic indicators.

Last year the Institute of Public Affairs attacked the government saying that its Budget expenditure targets were increasingly unreliable. The institute was totally wrong. The government has achieved Budget targets with actual total expenditures and receipts running within 1 per cent, on average, of forecast. That is extremely good.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—Mr Kemp, who is attached to the Institute of Public Affairs, wants to get rid of Senator McGauran. In his view, the National Party is expendable. Mr Kemp has his facts wrong. That proves an old adage: it is not what you know, it is who you know—or who you are related to.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I am not saying that he is one of the new right wing ideologues who seem to be dominating the Liberal Party, but that seems to be the way to get there.

No economic forecaster can expect to get it right all the time. We will be reviewing our figures in the light of the Federal government's April economic statement and today's balance of payments results. As with everything, we have a better record of forecasting than have the parties opposite. We work from the facts available to us, not from fantasies such as those of the Leader of the Opposition who said he would win fifteen seats in the last election, or the Leader of the National Party who expected a 20 per cent swing in the Greensborough by-election, or the honourable member for Bennettswood who was modest in his fantasy of only a 15 per cent swing.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—Mr Speaker, I direct to your attention Standing Order No. 127. The Premier is debating the question. I ask you to bring him back to order.

The SPEAKER—Order! The question invited a wide-ranging response from the Premier, but that does not allow unrestricted comment by him. I invite the Premier to confine his answer to the points raised in the question.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—Some Budget forecasts have already been overtaken by events. The forecast was for an average unemployment rate of 5·8 per cent for Victoria; I might add that pleasingly Victoria now expects to achieve an average of 5·2 per cent, which is extremely good. We forecast an employment growth of 2·8 per cent. That figure has been revised upward to 3 per cent.

I do not say that all the Liberal forecasters are reading it wrongly. Mr Ian Macphee has forecast that they will lose the next Federal election and go into oblivion. That is not my word, that is his. I wonder what it means!

I conclude by saying that Victoria has stayed within 1 per cent or thereabouts of the forecasts. That is a commendable performance. It will be interesting to find out whether some of the forecasts being made about Liberal preselections are as close to the mark as we are.

VICTORIAN EQUITY TRUST

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—I refer to the Treasurer's undertaking to the Victorian Equity Trust that he will "endeavour to facilitate" purchase of Victorian Equity Trust assets for $490 million during December 1991. Will the Treasurer force State Bank Victoria, the State Superannuation Fund or some other public body to pay $490 million for these assets in 1991, and will this necessitate a further $490 million increase in the State debt?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I am delighted to receive a question from the "Goldfinger" from Brighton. The only trouble is that we do not know whether he is wet or dry at this stage. I have given an undertaking with respect to the value of the assets of the Victorian Equity Trust, that they are, in effect, at least $490 million, and I have outlined a course of action that could be taken. If that course of action were taken, the effective cost of funds to the four authorities in the Victorian Equity Trust would be of the order of 3 per cent a year—that is obviously extremely low.

I turn to the Victorian Equity Trust itself. It provides two fundamental strengths for our major authorities in Victoria. Firstly, it provides for the first time direct access to privately sourced equity capital. That was impossible under a Liberal government in Victoria. By doing so, the government strengthened the financial position of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and the Portland Smelter Unit Trust. As a result, the government received the top international rating possible for those organisations from Moody's Investors Service Inc. and Standard and Poor's Corporation.

Secondly, this innovative equity raising produced a far better outcome for Victorian consumers of electricity, gas and water. The end result of the private equity raising was to ensure that the charges by those three organisations were kept below the increase in the consumer price index; again, in direct contrast to the situation under the Liberal Party in this State.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—Honourable members opposite groan, but the fact is that when the government came to office in 1982 the Liberal Party was proposing a 25 per cent increase in electricity charges; that is a fact. Clearly, the Victorian Equity Trust has been an outstanding success in strengthening the financial position of the major authorities and ensuring that increases in their charges have been kept below consumer price index rises.

The government has a policy on these issues but the Liberal Party is totally bereft of policies. It is no wonder the Liberal Party was totally rejected in Greensborough.

ASSETS IN RURAL WATER INDUSTRY

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I direct my question to the Minister for Water Resources. Up until January 1989, the Labor government had always claimed that it had $4000 million worth of assets invested in the rural water industry. Since January this year the Minister for Water Resources has been claiming assets of $2600 million in the rural water industry. Can he explain to the House what he has done with the missing $1400 million worth of assets in the Victorian rural water industry?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources)—Greensborough has not done the Opposition any good at all! The assets of the rural water industry are approximately $2·8 billion, which includes channels and the value of the assets the irrigation industry uses around the State which must be looked after and maintained. The honourable member for Swan Hill goes around his little country towns mouthing off, but he does not tell the people what is really going on in the area. Since it has been in office the government has been giving a service to the rural water industry. The assets will be maintained and will be kept in the best possible condition. That cannot be done without finance coming in.

One cannot continue to take from the apple tree without contributing to some extent. People in rural Victoria are benefiting from the water subsidisation, but the benefits cannot be achieved without some contribution. It is about time the National Party woke up and started to understand the value of our assets. I believe they are around $2·8 billion.

BURDEKIN REPORT ON YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Mr LEIGHTON (Preston)—I ask the Minister for Labour, as the Minister responsible for youth affairs: what action has been taken to examine the Burdekin report on youth homelessness and what progress has been made in developing the government's response to the report?

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—The Burdekin report, which was released in February, has been examined in great depth by the government. In the past few months the government has been developing a comprehensive statement on youth homelessness. The statement will be used to develop initiatives to break the jobless-homeless cycle of the disadvantaged, which presently exists.

With further developments the government will be able to produce a youth homelessness statement in the near future. It is unfortunate that Opposition members are not serious about this issue, as is obvious by their interjections. Their position is in strong contrast to the government's. Within two days of the Burdekin report being released the Opposition produced a 220-word press release supposedly addressing the 382-page report. One day after producing this "quickfix" the Leader of the Opposition came out with the "bigquickfix", dealing with how to stop youth homelessness.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested—three days after the Burdekin report had been released—that the way to fix the problem was to put these young people into a ghetto in Willsmere Hospital, the former State psychiatric hospital in Kew. When he said that he forgot two things: firstly, the Burdekin report itself condemned institutionalisation as a way of fixing the problem.

Secondly, in pursuing the establishment of a ghetto at Willsmere Hospital, the Leader of the Opposition forgot that an all-party Parliamentary committee, of which the honourable member for Forest Hill, for one, was a member, examined the Willsmere situation and one of its major recommendations was that Willsmere Hospital should not be used for any human service provision in the future.

Nevertheless, the Leader of the Opposition was still hell-bent on his idea being a way of fixing the problem of youth homelessness—putting them in a ghetto. It is indicative of the Opposition's whole policy on youth homelessness because it does not have a youth policy; it has not one iota of an idea on how to go about it.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, it seems that it is infectious with the government this afternoon, and I direct to your attention Standing Order No. 127 which states that a Minister, in his reply, may not debate the question. I put it to you that the Minister is doing just that, and I ask you to bring him back to order.

The SPEAKER—Order! I have been listening carefully to the Minister's answer, and in large measure he has been providing information. However, I uphold the point of order in that he has been entering into some debate. I ask him to confine himself to answering the question.

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—The government is developing a comprehensive statement with respect to youth homelessness and it is in stark contrast to the position held by the honourable member for Ballarat North, who on 13 March in the *Bendigo Advertiser*, stated that the Opposition needs to have a youth policy because it needs to get the youth vote. But the honourable member also said that it will be hard to get the youth policy past the blue-rinse set. I am not sure what the blue-rinse set is, but if he is making these disparaging remarks about a number of senior woman in the Liberal Party who blue rinse their hair, perhaps people like Dame Beryl——

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I direct to your attention *May's Parliamentary Practice,* twentieth edition, page 345, which states:

> An answer should be confined to the points contained in the question, with such explanation only as renders the answer intelligible . . .

The Minister was asked a specific question: what progress is the government making in consideration of recommendations in a report? The Minister is straying from the question, and I ask you, Mr Speaker, to bring him to order.

The SPEAKER—Order! Since the previous point of order was raised, the Minister has continued his answer. Indeed, I believe he has strayed from the question. I uphold the point of order.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Chair does not require assistance from either side of the House. Again I suggest that there are a small number of honourable members who are interjecting to an unnecessary and unreasonable degree and who are interrupting the proceedings to the disadvantage of the whole Chamber.

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—The government will be developing a comprehensive statement on youth homelessness. It will not come out with a knee-jerk reaction. I have had numerous conversations and discussions with people working in this field, including practitioners from the Salvation Army and the Mission to Streets and Lanes, and others. The government is developing something that will not be a knee-jerk reaction to the issue.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The level of interjections is unacceptable. The interjections are neither pertinent to the Minister's answer nor witty, which are the two categories of interjections that seem to be accepted by Speakers. Again I invite honourable members to respect the forms of the House to enable the Minister to complete his answer promptly.

Mr POPE—This is obviously going to be the government's position not only on youth homelessness, which it is addressing, but also with its youth policy. That is in significant contradiction to what the Opposition is trying to develop and what it believes it cannot get past the blue-rinse set.

VICTORIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—After the high drama of the last answer, I ask the Treasurer: will he confirm that various lawyers have advised the government that the purported merger of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Rural Finance Corporation is invalid, and that only the Solicitor-General has provided a compliant opinion supporting the merger?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The blue boy from Brighton! With respect to the merger of the Rural Finance Corporation and the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, as has been stated on a number of occasions the government believed the most appropriate approach to development finance was to have a single development finance agency. The government decided that the best way to achieve that objective was for the Rural Finance Corporation to effectively absorb the operations of the VEDC. That still remains government policy, and to assist in that task legal assistance was sought and provided.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr ERNST (Bellarine)—Last year the Minister for Transport announced that he was calling for submissions in relation to an innovative program to assist groups of people in areas that were not catered for by the mainstream public transport system. Will the Minister for Transport advise the House——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! Again, I invite honourable members not to interject. In particular, I caution the honourable member for Syndal.

Mr ERNST—Last year the Minister for Transport announced that he was calling for submissions in relation to an innovative program to assist groups of people in areas that were not catered for by the mainstream public transport system. Will the Minister advise the House of his decision with respect to the submissions under the community transport program?

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I am grateful to the honourable member for his question and also for his ongoing interest in community transport—indeed, in all forms of transport—which stands in stark contrast to the attitude of members opposite. The purpose of community transport is to try to service those communities that, by reason of geographic isolation and other disadvantages, do not have access to the ordinary public transport service that the government provides.

Last year, under a study commenced by the Ministry of Transport in 1987, the government examined ways of formulating expressions of interest from those groups in the community that came forward with proposals for either research into or funding of various forms of community transport. This program relies heavily on a partnership between the government, local councils and local community groups. The government advertised for submissions in the second half of last year and received more than 170 submissions for funding as a result. That shows the high level of interest in this program.

It is an innovative program and it is in stark contrast to the Opposition's total failure to develop a constructive transport policy. The Opposition thinks that transport is all about demonstrations; it has a rent-a-crowd approach, a Mr-and-Mrs-Brown approach. One of the tragedies of the result in last Saturday's by-election is that honourable members will never know whether Mrs Brown agreed with Mr Brown; the answer to that vital question, a question posed so often, will never be known.

While the government is pressing forward with such innovative policies, the Opposition responds with a rent-a-crowd, "demo" approach. Indeed, the achievements of the *Herald*'s sausage man have been such that that paper is thinking of making him a butcher!

The SPEAKER—Order! If the Minister is referring to another honourable member, he should use that member's correct title.

Mr KENNAN—Certainly, Mr Speaker; I accept the correction. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who has previously been awarded two sausage man awards by the Melbourne *Herald* last October, is likely to win another one for his devastating efforts on behalf of the Opposition in contributing to another Liberal Party loss in Greensborough by failing to develop an effective transport policy and by now resorting to the rent-a-crowd approach.

The government has developed a very cost-effective approach to the provision of community transport services. In the next financial year $500 000 will be provided to a range of communities throughout Victoria, including communities in Woodend, Narracan, Alamein, Walpeup, Hamilton, Ripon, Phillip Island, Western Port, Kiewa and the Ovens Valley, Cohuna, the Wimmera, Bairnsdale and Sale. Those grants, which total $500 000, will be used to provide a range of services, including the hiring and purchasing of community buses. Studies will be funded where appropriate so that further submissions may be developed concerning the need for community transport. Also, buses will be provided with equipment, where appropriate, for lifts to assist people with mobility impairments, to improve access to those transport services.

In the next financial year the government will seek to call for further expressions of interest from other groups who need community transport so that the program can be continued next year, and those groups doing further studies and work this financial year will have some prospect of further funding next financial year.

WORKCARE

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—My question relates to the ill-fated WorkCare scheme. The Treasurer will be aware that more than twelve months ago Parliament passed legislation to enable the Accident Compensation Commission to make recoveries from previous insurers estimated by government actuaries at approximately $300 million. Will the Treasurer confirm that, to date, less than $100 000 has been recovered and explain why he has failed to collect the money now more than twelve months later?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has said by interjection, the honourable member for Hawthorn is the failed contender for the leadership of the Liberal Party. Not many can fill the chair of the Leader of the Opposition, and that is why he is still there today; he is the best the Liberal Party has, and I congratulate him for retaining his position.

As to the specific question raised by the honourable member for Hawthorn, he said that some $100 million has been recovered.

Mr Gude—I said $100 000.

Mr Maclellan—Why don't you get your figures right!

Mr JOLLY—I am not sure what figure the honourable member for Hawthorn used because of all the interjections. There was no expectation that the $400 million would be recovered overnight. Obviously, it involves many legal issues, and it has been given top priority by the new Chief Executive of the Accident Compensation Commission, Michael Roux. I have advised him and the board of the commission how important recovery of the money is in terms of overall priorities. I shall continue to apply pressure to the commission to ensure maximum recovery.

COMMUNITY SERVICES VICTORIA

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—Having regard to the answer of the Minister for Community Services to a question last week in which he said that he had directed Community Services Victoria to involve the Victoria Police in the Pierson, alias Dickson, paedophile scandal, will the Minister explain why his department has refused to act upon police advice to prosecute a single male foster parent who sexually interfered with two young boys placed in his care several years ago by the department, despite the specific wishes of the police, the natural parents and the children themselves?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—As I said in Parliament last week, and I shall repeat it, my advice is that police investigations are continuing. The police have indicated that, where appropriate, charges will be laid. Until a decision is made, I cannot interfere. I shall wait for advice from the Victoria Police.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Mr SERCOMBE (Niddrie)—Will the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs provide details to the House of the extensive review he has commissioned into the research activities of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs? Will he also advise the House how that review will be undertaken?

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—I thank the honourable member for Niddrie for the question and his interest in this important topic. Today at the annual conference of the Victorian Farmers Federation I announced a major review of the expenditure on research by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Currently, the department provides approximately $36 million, which is almost 40 per cent of its total budget, for agricultural research. There are approximately 33 research stations throughout the State and there are approximately 500 research scientists working on agricultural research in Victoria.

It is important to agricultural industries that they can be assured of resources being provided in an effective and efficient manner for their needs. Today I announced that a review panel would be set up including Dr Alistair Watson, formerly the Chief Economist with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and Professor Baklien, Professor of Chemistry at Monash University and formerly the Corporate Research Manager at ICI Australia Ltd. The research panel will be headed by the honourable member for Sunshine.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ROWE—It is interesting to hear the interjections from the other side. Agriculture is a vital and important area in the Victorian economy. The Victorian Farmers

Federation reacted quite differently to the announcement. The federation saw this review as a major step forward. It believes it is important that research funds are allocated appropriately by the government and that they are focused and directed to the needs not only of the government but also of the 30 industries within the agricultural sector.

I am surprised and disappointed at the reaction of honourable members opposite, who do not consider agriculture to be an important sector. It is no wonder the Leader of the National Party has called for a conservative coalition to include rural members of the Liberal Party because the city members of the Liberal Party have had so much to say about this major initiative.

Never before has there been a review of this type in Victoria. My Federal colleague, the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, the Honourable John Kerin, has indicated recently that he expects the industry groups within the agricultural sector to contribute 0·5 per cent of production as their contribution towards research funds. Not only is it important that the government can be certain that resources can be allocated efficiently and effectively but also increasingly in the future more funds will come from the private sector for research in agricultural economics and that is why it is important that the Victorian Farmers Federation has welcomed and endorsed the setting up of the panel. Interest groups, scientists and all industry groups will be represented on the panel.

WORKCARE

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—Is the Treasurer aware that an internal review has shown that $1 million of WorkCare benefit payments have been overpaid to the Ministry of Education and to the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services but those funds have not been recovered from those agencies even though the Accident Compensation Commission has known of the overpayment for several months? If the Treasurer is aware of this situation why has he not endeavoured to initiate action to recover those overpayments and duplicated payments?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—If there is any information that the honourable member for Hawthorn has available and wishes me to examine regarding overpayments I shall follow up the matter and ensure that the overpayments are recovered.

TREE VICTORIA PROGRAM

Mr SHELL (Geelong)—Following the recent announcement of the Tree Victoria program, will the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands provide details to the House of the public response that she and her department have received?

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—Since the Premier and myself jointly announced the Tree Victoria program, which will lead to the planting of 100 million trees throughout Victoria by the year 2010, the program has been accepted and acclaimed throughout Victoria. The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands has received dozens of inquiries from community groups, school organisations and individuals about how they can be involved in this exciting program.

Even though the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has decried the program as being a faintly ridiculous idea, the objective has been accepted by various organisations as being of considerable benefit to Victoria. People understand that tree clearing has occurred for a variety of good reasons, but especially for primary production. However, the enthusiasm of thousands of primary producers in Victoria has meant that far too much of our vegetation has been cleared.

Since approximately the middle of the 1860s Victorians have cleared twice the area of Tasmania of tree cover. The aim of the program is to revegetate an area four times the size of Wilson's Promontory by 2010. The world-renowned environmentalist, Dr David Bellamy, has seen the benefit of programs such as these and has not been backward in coming forward to praise Victoria for the types of programs that have been instituted by the government.

The government is anxious to commence work on the 235 000 hectares that are seen as critical areas requiring urgent revegetation. The programs will attack salinity and soil erosion and address stream degradation. I am pleased to be involved in this program and look forward to the achievement of the target of 100 million trees being planted throughout Victoria by the year 2010.

PETITION

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

State Emergency Service funding

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 their great concern at the lack of funding provided by the State government for the volunteer units of the Victoria State Emergency Service.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the Parliament will give urgent attention to providing additional funding for the volunteer units of the Victoria State Emergency Service so as to enable them to efficiently and safely carry out the statutory functions delegated to them under the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 1987.

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

By **Mr Norris** (695 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:

City of Melbourne Superannuation Fund Trustees—Report for the year 1987–88.

Gas and Fuel Corporation Superannuation Board—Report for the year 1987–88.

Law Reform Commission—

Occupational Regulation Report No. 3 on the Sheep Owners Protection Act.

Report No. 16—Second Report on Obsolete Legislation.

National Crime Authority—Report for the year 1987–88, together with comments made by the Inter-Governmental Committee.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Credit (Administration) Act 1984—SR No. 47.

Weights and Measures Act 1958—SR No. 48.

Victorian Fishing Industry Council—Report for the year 1987–88.

WARRNAMBOOL LAND BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 21) on the motion of Mrs Setches (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool)—I support the Warrnambool Land Bill, which is relatively small, but which is a very important measure to the people involved.

The introduction of the Bill has been necessary because of a situation that has occurred with land in the Logans Beach area, which is able to be subdivided. A plan that was originally set in 1860 made provision for an access road over an area that was quite accessible at that time. However, when one examines the areas along the various coasts, particularly in south-western Victoria around Warrnambool, one notes that the weather and the wind, in particular, have caused a significant shift in the sand-dunes.

The situation must be monitored over many years to understand the full picture. Probably one of the best illustrations of the shift in the sand-dunes was an old painting that was recently the subject of some discussion when it was purchased by a Melbourne collector at an auction in Warrnambool. In fact, that painting has some historical significance for the City of Warrnambool. It shows the position of the sand-dunes at that time, which can be compared with today, in 1989.

Therefore, if one monitors the situation over time, one notes that the sand-dunes do shift and one realises that, if an access road were proceeded with in accordance with the original plan in 1860, it would now be covered by the sand-dunes—that is how far they have shifted.

It was obvious that if the government were to facilitate the freeing of the land, something had to be done to protect the very sensitive coastal dunes in the Warrnambool area as well as allowing the owner of the property to improve his capital investment.

The Bill does not require lengthy debate, but it is important to reflect on conditions in the area of land concerned. That part of Warrnambool is significant because it is adjacent to Logans Beach which, as the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands would be aware, is where the southern right whale has been making its home between June and September in recent years. The whales travel from Antarctica in various numbers to that part of the coastline each year, and have become a significant tourist attraction. Under controlled conditions, the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands has undertaken various studies of the whales while they are beached, at times to within 50 metres of the shore. This is in an important aspect with respect to scientific research of marine life.

The parcel of land defined in the Bill is approximately 150 to 200 metres from Logans Beach. The area is at present subject to development; the developer has been prepared to make 4 hectares of land, including the sand-dunes, available to the government. Most land along that part of the coastline is privately owned to the high-water mark, thereby creating some difficulties with respect to the sand-dunes area. The Bill provides an opportunity for a vital piece of coastline to be subject to the management of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. This will enable it to be properly managed, and areas of development will be controlled. That has happened in other places along the coastline, although some areas have been detrimentally affected. One hopes that commonsense will prevail. The primary or secondary sand-dune areas should not be affected; nor should the general coastal management plan.

The Bill makes provision for the 4 hectares of land to be transferred to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands at a minimal cost of approximately $8000. The Bill facilitates the opportunity for the land-holder to subdivide and sell the valuable land. The government will not be faced with a large expense. The City of Warrnambool supports the passage of the Bill because the provisions will further enhance the area, including the extension of what is now a partly constructed bitumen road.

The Bill is important not only because the developer will be afforded the opportunities to which I have referred but also because the government will be seen to be doing something constructive about that sensitive sand-dune area.

Before coming to this place I was a member of the Warrnambool Foreshore Committee of Management for some time, including a period as chairman. That committee was continually challenged to ensure that the environmental sensitivity of the coastal areas was protected at all times. The Bill goes some way towards doing that.

The Bill has the support of the National Party and the City of Warrnambool, which will be the municipality responsible for ensuring that the road is extended in line with planning provisions, and only after consultation with personnel from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

The Bill also has the support of environmentalists. This is an issue of environmental significance. The parties have been able to reach consensus on this emotional issue. The Minister and her predecessor are to be commended for the work they have done to ensure a satisfactory resolution of this issue. I wish the Bill a speedy passage through Parliament.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—The Opposition supports the Bill. It originated from the former Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, now the Minister for Education, who was apparently unable to secure sufficient funds from the government for the purchase of private lands that, as a result of the issuing of titles in early colonial days by the then New South Wales government, went to the high-water mark. A number of properties referred to in the Bill now have freehold titles under Victorian legislation relating to the high-water mark.

The honourable member for Warrnambool has explained something of the background of the Bill. I believe this to be a private rather than a public Bill, although it does create a public road across part of the coastline protection reserve adjacent to the Hopkins River. The Bill has been introduced and the road is being extended not for public purposes but to provide access for a subdivision of Crown allotment 19, which is to be turned into four battleaxe allotments as a result of a written agreement entered into between the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, the owners of lot 19 and the owner of another lot. The other lot does not appear in the schedule to the Bill.

The reality is that the other lot to the south of lot 19 shown in Schedule 2 of the Bill is a larger area of sand-dune allotment which will be given to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands or, alternatively, sold to the department, depending on the enhancement to or the lack of enhancement to the four battleaxe lots to be cut out of lot 19 and the allotment which does not show in the schedule to the Bill.

One landowner, whom I shall call landowner A, is making a gift of or selling a substantial sand-dune area to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands to be added to, in this case, the foreshore reserve, although it would still have a coastal protection reserve classification. It does not extend to the Hopkins River; it extends partly to the Hopkins River and partly to Bass Strait.

The sister, and a company associated with the sister, of landowner A owns lot 19, which is in fact providing nothing to the enhancement of the sand-dunes or the protection of the foreshore area. What lot 19 is about to acquire is a legal and active road frontage to a block that never had a legal road frontage in historic terms. It had the right to pass and repass along the reserve. Literally hundreds of blocks in Victoria are in the same situation where Crown allotments were created by the Lands Department in early colonial days. They were sold with a presumption of the right to pass and repass along the abutting reserve because no road frontage was shown.

If the Minister is anxious to determine some of those blocks she should inspect San Remo, where the whole of the township was laid out with internal roads but no external road. All the external blocks fronted onto the foreshore but all were assured of the right to pass and repass along the foreshore reserve. It is now, of course, the Phillip Island Tourist Road, but it was made a road long after it was used by people to pass and repass. This is a bargain entered into because the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands and the Labor government are too mean to provide the funds to purchase the land or part of this land.

What we will have, as the honourable member for Warrnambool says, is a very sensitive sand-dune area. Lot 21 will be reduced to a small lot but will still have a new house built on it. Lot 19 will be subdivided in due course into four battleaxe blocks which will enjoy this road and the right to pass and repass along it. That leaves a small lot, lot 19B, which is in the corner of lot 19 and just misses out on being shown on the plan in the schedule to the Bill. It would be just below the word "metres" in the schedule. It is a small block which apparently has a building permit and it is tucked in either on top of or beside the sand-dunes; I am unsure which. Access is only by walking—it does not have a road access—and it has a theoretical right of pass and repass along the reserve.

I presume the construction of the house could be accomplished by a helicopter dropping the materials in, but we do not have an answer to the problem of access to that block. I asked whether the road could be extended further to accommodate that block also. The answer was, "No, because it would then go into sand-dunes".

It remains the hope of some people, and I say the "hope" perhaps of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands officers and of the City of Warrnambool, that the present owners of lot 19—an individual and a company, but I am unsure in what proportion ownership is held or whether the company is merely representative of an individual's interest —may, out of the goodness of their hearts, accommodate the owners of lot 19B by giving right of carriageway over some part of lot 19 to the road that the Bill creates. Maybe something nice will happen, but one cannot be certain.

As the Minister for Planning and Environment would know, in other parts of the State some old and inappropriate subdivisions exist where lots have to be reconsolidated where building permits are vigorously refused so that over-development does not occur over a whole range of sensitive situations, and a rolling fund is created. Out of the rolling fund lots are purchased and consolidated, and there is a reselling off—perhaps with one house on three allotments. That has happened in beach areas in Gippsland, in hilly areas in my electorate, on land on the Mornington Peninsula and in old and inappropriate subdivision areas in a number of other instances around the State.

There is never really enough money to achieve the best results. The Bill deals with a classic example of an old and inappropriate subdivision in a very sensitive environmental area of sand-dunes. If driven and walked across regularly, the sand-dunes may become unstable, may blow out and the sand may shift, and as the honourable member for Warrnambool puts it, that could have catastrophic results for

freehold land which could end up with a 50-foot sand-dune on it where it was once flat land.

The Bill deals with a sensitive area which has the added problem of inaccessibility; the title indicates that the land goes to the highwater mark. There is the desire to have the offsetting benefits of battleaxe subdivisions by using modern subdivisional techniques to perhaps provide sufficient houses to accommodate the present lot owners. In this case, the Bill does not accommodate the needs of existing lot owners. It is not as if lot 19 will get one small area and a house; it is proposed that lot 19 be turned into four different allotments with four houses. One can see the pay-off for the supposed gift of the sand-dune land from the abutting allotment owned by landowner A to landowner B of lot 19.

It appears that the family members have said that there will be a gift of the sand-dune area but only if their flat suitable freehold area is allowed to be subdivided into four lots. If there is a difference in price, the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands would get the sand-dunes for nothing; if there was not a difference, the department would pay for the sand-dune area, the costs incurred by the family members, stamp duty and so on.

It is obvious that a hard private deal has been negotiated. I commend the solicitor acting for the private individuals on the rigorous nature of the negotiations and the outcome. It appears to me that the department has succumbed to an offer it could not refuse because it was unable to obtain funds from the government to make a similar arrangement without having to create new allotments in the area and new risks.

Overall there is the risk of having an additional three houses or three families. Perhaps they will only be holiday houses, and only occasionally used, or perhaps a cluster subdivision if the scheme is adopted on lot 19, where there would not be a risk to the environment. But if there is not a cluster subdivision, and if lot 19B—which is part of Crown allotment 19, the one partly shown on schedule 2—is used, more people and more traffic will be introduced to this sensitive area, which I understand is one area the City of Warrnambool was anxious not to have used immediately.

What has been happening further down and immediately next to these allotments? I say "these allotments" because honourable members are concerned not only with the one shown on the schedule but also with the lots owned by the sister next door and beyond, involving cases that the City of Warrnambool has been systematically losing before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The department has been unable to obtain money from the Labor government to buy back these areas—and because of that it has been unable to say to a lot owner, "If you put your house at the front—which is the practical frontage on the flat land—on a smaller allotment and make a gift of the land at the rear of the property or sell the sand-dune area, the department will protect you; it will pay you to reduce the size of your allotment and to come right back from the high-water mark so that the property is inside the sand-dune area".

When the former Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, now the Deputy Premier, was fiddling around because she could not find funds for this sensitive area, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal was allowing appeal after appeal. One after another new house sites have been appearing at the base and close to the sand-dune areas, and close to these allotments. Honourable members are not dealing with a remote or sensitive area that could be bought back if people accommodated the government by reducing the size of their blocks and were compensated; they are dealing with a little boom town where the values and prices are increasing. The department has not been able to persuade the government or the Treasurer to make

available sufficient moneys for a rolling fund in the City of Warrnambool and in the abutting shire to create an approach that could be taken in an older or inappropriate subdivision in a thousand other areas of the State.

In this Bill honourable members are asked to approve of the creation of a government road across coastline protection reserve land. The excuse is that it is already a track and the Bill is only making it a bit longer. It is not disclosed in the Bill that the road is really to create four new allotments as a pay-off for the purchase without government funds, or for a gift without government funds, whichever way it goes, of an area of sand-dunes very sensitive and further south of the map in the schedule.

Parliament would be better off if Bills such as this were treated as private member's Bills and if they were sent to be considered by committees to determine whether their overall result would be a plus or minus for the State and the public interest.

Current information comes out only at the kindness of the Minister—and I thank the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands for allowing a briefing on the matter and for the frankness with which officers of the department dealt with my questions. I became involved only because I happen to have a legal background and became interested in the purchase of an allotment that did not have a road frontage and the fact that the area being acquired was not even connected to the road honourable members are being asked to approve in the Bill.

It is only when one starts pursuing that type of question or issue that one can bring out of the files in the offices the real situation. I am not even convinced that I know the whole situation. I know that there were two agreements—an earlier agreement and a second one. I do not believe I have seen the earlier agreement, although it may be like the second one. There were two agreements between solicitors and the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands on behalf of the company. During the briefing I asked questions relating to capital gains tax and was told that the first agreement preceded capital gains tax and the second agreement followed it. That is significant because if there is an agreement in writing that enhances the value of the land and the land being sold is one that may be up for capital gains tax.

The Minister may find she is making a gift of her precious money—what little she has for land acquisition—to the Federal Treasurer over the hills and far away in Canberra. I am sure that is the last thing she wants to do. The implications of capital gains tax must be carefully considered.

Honourable members have not considered what would happen—and the officers conceded this—if the enhancement of allotment 19 was not sufficient to make this a non-cash transaction. If that were the case, why not make a gift of the sensitive sand-dune area of allotment 21 to the Victorian Conservation Trust? The trust was set up for that purpose. During debates Ministers sometimes find out information about their departments that their officers would never tell them face to face. The reason why the Victorian Conservation Trust cannot acquire the sand-dune area and why a tax deduction cannot be given to the generous owner is that there was not sufficient money to make the money flow through the system of the donor and the trust. In other words, had there been enough money to cover the transaction, it would have been achieved in that way. Perhaps then we would not be faced with four new lots and a road to be established across public reserve land.

I ask you, Mr Speaker, to rule on my submission that this is a private member's Bill. I say that for the following reasons: the creation of the road is not for a public purpose; the Bill is to carry out a written agreement between the parties for the acquisition of land not shown in the Bill and not related to the Bill other than through a private agreement entered into between officers of the Department of Conservation,

Forests and Lands, with the authority of the former Minister, and the parties concerned. It is intended that a four-lot subdivision be created on lot 19 and that the four lots have road frontage. In other words, the Bill will create a private street for the four lots, and the owners will pay for its construction and extension. Upon the extension of the road, it will be a road like any other within the city.

It is further complicated by the fact that this land did not have a road frontage, but is now to acquire one. It could be argued that the provisions will change a right to pass and repass to a road frontage—that is one argument that could be made, but I do not think that carries substance. It may be the best of a bad group of possibilities.

The provisions will provide four new lots and another smaller lot No. 21, which means five new house sites. It is possible that lot No. 19B may be developed if a helicopter drops off material, and if that occurs it will mean six new house sites. The government will acquire the corner sand-dunes, which are so sensitive and significant. That may be a public purpose and I offer that to you, Mr Speaker, as the balancing comment to my raising the question of whether it is a public or private Bill. I feel I owe you that balancing comment because there are two ways of looking at it.

The SPEAKER—Order! Before calling the next speaker; the honourable member for Berwick has asked me to rule whether the Bill is a private Bill. I shall reserve comment on that matter until I have heard further speakers—in particular, the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I thank the honourable member for Warrnambool for his comments and support as the honourable member for this area and for the support of the National Party. The honourable member drew to my attention the movement of sand-dunes in that area and said, quite correctly, that this is an environmentally sensitive area. He also gave reasons why be believed Parliament should pass the Bill, one of which is that the area is adjacent to Logans Beach where the southern right whale is often seen.

I also support the honourable member's rationale when referring to the fact that the land is owned to the high-water mark, is freehold land and extends to the sand area. The sensitivity of the site cannot be dismissed lightly. The area has been under private ownership for a long while. Allotment 25 will become Crown land at no cost, except for the legal fees, and it is a particularly sensitive and vulnerable site. The land is at the intersection of the coastal sand-dune system of the Hopkins River and the ocean. It is subject to wind erosion and other problems that give rise to erosion by sea and adjoins the existing river reserve.

It is essential that the area be properly managed. The particular allotment not only requires development controls, as the honourable member for Berwick said, as there is an inappropriate subdivision in that area, but also requires proper management to protect the coastal ecosystem. Leaving the area in private ownership would not necessarily ensure that this would occur because there may be degradation or inadvertent erosion.

The City of Warrnambool, the committee of management under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act, supports the provisions of the Bill, as does the Coastal Management and Coordination Committee.

Mr Speaker, I cannot overstate how important it is for the revocation to proceed; the land has been in private ownership for many years. I endorse the comments made by the honourable member for Berwick regarding lot 19B, which I believe I called 19A. It is the area not shown on the schedule, but is attached to lot 19. I appreciate that the honourable member for Berwick did raise the matter of insufficient public money to buy land that the government would like to buy for environmental purposes.

As a former Minister of the Crown, the honourable member knows only too well the limitations of the public purse. It is desirable to find creative ways of ensuring that sensitive, important environmental areas do pass to the proper ownership and are subject to proper management.

It is important to know that the owner of lot 21 rejected the first offer made by the government to buy it. The honourable member for Berwick would also know that the purchase of lot 21 would not solve the access problems to lot 19 or lot 19A. Even if the government had purchased lot 21, the lots still would not have had any access.

The honourable member for Berwick keeps saying that it is a gift. However, it is an agreement of mutual benefit to both parties. The benefit is that this very sensitive area passes out of private ownership into public ownership. It should also be understood that negotiations are already under way particularly in respect of access to lot 19A. It has been stated that these allotments have different ownership. The owner of lot 18 can organise access through lot 19. The owner of lot 19A is, we believe, better off as he can now deal with the owner of allotment 19 when subdivisional access is provided. I believe this process is already in train and agreement should be reached about the access.

I conclude my remarks by reiterating that the purpose of the Bill is to revoke a portion of the permanent reservation for the protection of the coastline over Crown land near the mouth of the Hopkins River at Warrnambool. This is important for the sensitive piece of land at the intersection of the Hopkins River and the coastline. The measure has support from all interested people including the coastal management committee. It is made up of a group of people who closely scrutinised the proposals concerning coastal management around the City of Warrnambool. It is important that the Bill be accepted by all honourable members of the House.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—So that you can rule on the matter raised by the honourable member for Berwick, Mr Speaker, I suggest that prior to the Committee stage being dealt with, the debate be adjourned and, as soon as agreement is reached with the other two parties, the debate can be resumed.

On the motion of Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until later this day.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 161, page 67, line 1, omit "rates of taxation and amounts of tax" and insert "rate and amount of rates".

2. Clause 219, line 17, omit all words and expressions on this line and insert "is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the Council has failed in a serious or ongoing respect—".

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—The Opposition has no quarrel with the amendments proposed by the Minister for Local Government. Honourable members will remember that questions were raised in this House during the debate and the then Minister for Local Government, the Attorney-General, did not accept the amendments moved.

The amendments then proposed have been changed slightly, especially the amendment to clause 219, but the Bill has been significantly improved.

I am disappointed that the Minister for Local Government did not respond to the suggested amendment to clause 154, which it was agreed would be considered while the Bill was between here and another place. I refer to the words "religious body", which appear in clause 154 (2) (*d*). The same problem exists, but the Minister has ignored the matter and honourable members will be faced with the problem for some time to come.

As I said, the Opposition has no objection to the amendments made by the Legislative Council and supports them.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—The National Party also accepts the amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Local Government Bill. As the Attorney-General, the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government in this place, is present, I refer to another issue that was not addressed. It is the reference to "mining" in clause 154.

The Local Government Bill still has an enormous number of problems, even though the two amendments made by the Legislative Council have improved it somewhat. The first amendment relates to clause 161, differential rates. The definitions and operation of those rates gave local government and Parliament a few headaches for about eighteen months. The Legislative Council amendment was agreed to by the Municipal Association of Victoria, the government and the two conservative parties. It spells out one of the duties of councils in making available information to ratepayers. Clause 161 (3) reads:

> A Council which declares a differential rate must ensure that copies of the following information are available for inspection by residents of the Council's municipal district at the Council office during the Council office's office hours:
>
> (*a*) The amount of revenue which the Council estimates it will receive during that rating period from all rates and charges and any fines or fees;

Three more areas are listed on which the council must provide information, including the objectives of the differential rate. Councils are required to openly explain the objectives and the reasons for differential rates to the ratepayers. Clause 161 (3) (*c*) now reads:

> The rate and amount of rates payable in relation to land in each category of differential rating.

The amended subclause is an improvement on the previous wording, which was:

> The rates of taxation and amounts of tax payable in relation to land in each category of differential ratings.

Clause 161 (3) (*d*) provides that the council must make available:

> Any other information which the Council considers it necessary to make available.

It is important that local government understands what restrictions are placed on it by this Parliament in using differential rates. The restrictions have been imposed to stop councils from abusing their rating powers and discriminating against certain ratepayers within the community. Councils will still be able to apply differential rates but the amendments provide that they must explain and be accountable to the ratepayers for the type of differential rating, the way it is imposed, the reasons why it is there, the rate, and the amount of the rate which is to be collected. Also, of course, any council wishing to utilise the differential rate will have to revert to the capital improved value system. This will cause concern to some councils, particularly shires in rural Victoria which have a desire to include a differential rating system in their rating structures.

It has been argued by the government and also by the Municipal Association of Victoria that the reason for the differential rate is to allow councils to impose extra rates upon those who can afford to pay. The argument has been put very strongly by the association and also by the government that the intention was to derive a greater proportion of rate revenue from those ratepayers within their municipalities who could afford to pay; conversely, the proposed legislation allows for the differential rate to be less than the average rate.

So the Bill contains the restriction that the highest differential rate cannot be more than four times the lowest differential rate. I should think this would provide councils with all the flexibility that they desire. They may well get a shock when they start applying it because the proposed legislation will tell them that if they wish to impose a differential rate for any reason other than those that have applied over the years, they must explain fully to the ratepayers just what they wish to apply, the objectives of the application of the differential rate and how much money will be raised from it.

Any council that goes through those procedures will have on its hands an internal debate within its own community and that is the intention of the amendment.

One of the objectives of the proposed legislation is to make councils more accountable to their ratepayers. The amendment before the House today and clause 161 should have that effect. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how councils apply the differential rate and whether they will be able to do the sorts of things for which the government originally designed that clause, to rip the heart out of those people who could afford to pay extra rates in a particular municipality.

I will feel like I am losing an old friend when this proposed legislation goes through because I seem to have lived with clause 219 for the past two years. That clause, which relates to suspensions, has been the subject of many debates in this Chamber over the past two years and has been strenuously debated throughout Victoria. The original clause gave enormous powers to the Minister because it said:

> The Minister may recommend to the Governor in Council that all the councillors of the Council be suspended if the Minister considers the council has failed——

Then there was a series of provisions, one of which failed to provide for good government in the municipal district. It was wide open for any Minister to take any action he or she wished against a council with which the Minister happened to disagree. Many arguments ensued and the then Bill was introduced at a time when Victoria had a Minister for Local Government who I hope is sitting in his office smiling away now, dreaming of all those arguments we had, as he has been defrocked from his position. That Minister had lost the confidence of local councils throughout Victoria because of the tactics he had used on the forced amalgamation issue. He had attempted to use the same type of tactics to push through the earlier Bill because that Bill contained many, many clauses which are missing today. The current Bill contains amendments to some 30 clauses or thereabouts.

The SPEAKER—Order! I remind the honourable member that at this stage the debate must be confined to the particular amendments before the House. It is not an opportunity to raise wider issues.

Mr STEGGALL—Thank you, Mr Speaker. This particular clause is one of the key provisions of the legislation. It was the key for any Minister who comes along—either now or in the future—and who wished to use the powers of the former clause 219 to assert his or her wishes on a council.

After going through this House twice, and through the other House twice, on the last day of that very long series of debates the government agreed to an amendment and that amendment is the one that is before us today. If this amendment or similar

amendments had been agreed to during the course of its long and tortuous journey through the legislature maybe the proposed legislation would have been passed a lot faster.

The point I make is that the former clause, when tied to the motor engine of the Bill—clauses 6, 7 and 8 which are, the purposes, the objectives, the functions and powers of this proposed legislation—indicates what type of power the government wanted its Minister to have.

The Local Government Bill has become a very interesting piece of proposed legislation. It really revolves around clause 219 because there is an education Bill floating around in draft form at the moment which is set up in exactly the same way as this Local Government Bill. In the discussion paper which relates to the other Bill a comparison is made with this measure. I think we are seeing the same thing in many other Bills which are being introduced into this Parliament.

Provisions similar to clause 219 are the key parts of these types of proposed legislation. This is the area where the Ministers can correct if in their opinion some body—in this case any council—does something they do not agree with. Clause 219 allows them to deal unilaterally with the matter.

There has been argument about the legality of the proposed legislation and I suggest, with all the legal opinions which have floated around on this Bill, that some student who studies local government law in the not-too-distant future will closely examine those legal opinions because this proposed legislation will be before the courts regularly over the next few years. Moreover, I believe it will come back to Parliament for amendment.

Clause 219 of the Bill is watered down to the extent that it reads:

219. (1) The Minister may recommend to the Governor in Council that all of the Councillors of a Council be suspended, if the Minister considers that the Council has failed—

(*a*) to provide for the good government of its municipal district in relation to its functions; or

(*b*) to perform a function which it is required to perform; or

(*c*) to form or maintain a quorum; or

(*d*) to comply with any law.

The little catcher—to comply with any law—will have the litigation people really scratching their heads, as the courts try to come to grips with the intent of that little subclause.

The amendment to this clause will mean that the Minister has to be satisfied on reasonable grounds, and that will slow down the Minister, particularly in comparison with the previous situation where the Minister had only to "consider" that a council had failed.

Therefore, although the Bill has been improved enormously by the amendments both in the debate and discussion and the hours of meetings that have taken place and the so-called consultation between the parties, I assure honourable members that the Bill will give us a lot of headaches because with it we have thrown out 200 years of legal precedent in the old Local Government Act and the concept is that local government will now virtually become——

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the amendments before the Chair.

Mr STEGGALL—It is because of the existence of clause 219 and these amendments that local government will become just like another government department. It will

no longer be treated by government—and it is not the intention of the government to treat local government—as the third tier of government in this country.

In fact, it will become a committee of the State and it will have to jump to and obey the directions and desires of the State and the Ministers of the government not only now but also in the future. The amendment to clause 219 probably slows that process down a little. It will make the Minister justify her decision; and the Opposition argued long and hard that the original Bill had no justification—the Minister could take any action she likes without having to justify it. Now, the Legislative Council has decided, thanks to the conservative parties—and I hope local government one day will appreciate this—that an amendment to this Bill is necessary. The amendment to clause 219 will make a Minister justify his or her actions.

Although the amendment helps to slow down the power base that the Bill gives to the Minister or to the State, it still leaves a Bill which gives the State enormous power over local government; in other words, over local councils.

Previously, if a government wished to take action it had to do so by introducing a Bill into Parliament. That is no longer the case. In future any Minister will be able to take action against a council unilaterally. Had this Bill and these amendments been introduced about eighteen months ago, much of the argument that has taken place would not have occurred. The amendment to clause 219 really does improve the Bill. It will not be the be-all and end-all of local government but it will assist a little.

This amendment is a great example of the conservative parties working together at long last on the Bill to improve it still further. We had our moments, but this particular amendment, for the first time, received the support of the Liberals, and I appreciate their action in that regard.

Councils will receive a fair go now, through the actions of the Minister. The Minister will now have to justify any actions taken by him or her, or the government, in the dismissal of a council.

The motion was agreed to.

COUNTY COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 21) on the motion of Mr McCutcheon (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—The main purpose of the Bill is to ratify, validate and approve a new set of County Court civil rules. It also makes several other miscellaneous amendments to the County Court Act, and makes consequential amendments arising from the validation of the new rules.

Unlike the great majority of Bills which will emanate from the Attorney-General's Department, the Bill is a workmanlike document. It contains no propaganda, and it is directed at providing rules of court that are consistent with the Supreme Court Rules. This will mean that people practising in the Supreme Court and the County Court will not be required to cope with different practices in each court, and in many cases those different practices were based on historical accident.

It would seem that in this case the instructions for the Bill have come not from the bureaucrats in the Attorney-General's Department but from the County Court Rules Committee. I understand that the amendments have the support of the Victorian Bar Council, the Law Institute of Victoria and individual legal practitioners.

The new rules, which are being validated, ratified and approved in the Bill are available to members of the House in the Papers Room. It has been necessary to amend the County Court Act to ensure that there is no conflict between the Act and the rules, and it may seem odd to some honourable members that an Act should be amended to conform with rules made under that Act.

It is rather upside down from the usual way in which we go about our business. It is the normal practice, of course, for rules or regulations to be confined by the regulation or rule-making power in the Act itself. However, this is not the first time this has been done. I understand that in 1986 a similar procedure was followed when new Supreme Court Rules were ratified, approved and validated.

In both these instances it was considered desirable for honourable members to have the rules available at the time the Act was being amended so that they would be aware of the nature and extent of the new rules. This would seem to be a sensible approach.

The Bill and the rules accompanying it caused me to recall that, for a short time in 1979, I was secretary to the County Court Rules Committee. My major task was to assist in the rewriting of the County Court Rules, something I had totally forgotten until I examined the rules and the Act. My recollection is that it was supposed to take only two years, with the possibility of the task being completed earlier. Perhaps I was lucky to escape!

Shortly afterwards I was appointed as the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. When I realise that it has taken nine or ten years to complete the rewriting of the County Court Rules, I am glad I escaped. I should be grateful if the Attorney-General would supply a little more detail about the history of the task and why it has taken him so long to complete it.

The new rules are not exactly the same as the Supreme Court Rules, because the County Court has jurisdictional limits. Some provisions that are contained in the Supreme Court Rules have been incorporated in the Bill rather than in the new County Court Rules. The Supreme Court Rules contain provisions that allow the court to appoint specialist assessors and to seek the opinion of counsel in certain circumstances. They also permit that court to order the execution or endorsement of instruments. Similar provisions are to be found in proposed sections 48A, 48B and 49B, which are contained in clause 15.

Proposed section 39A authorises a litigation guardian or other person acting on behalf of a minor person to make an agreement to settle claims for damages for bodily injury other than injuries arising out of motor car accidents. This will be able to be done without the need to issue proceedings in court. This authority is already available in motor car injury cases, and the new provision will correct an anomoly. The fairly long schedule to the Bill makes consequential amendments to 59 other Acts that have reference to the County Court Act and rules.

Although there is no propaganda in the Bill the Minister has incorporated some dubious claims in his second-reading speech. In that speech he refers to the ongoing improvements to the operations of the County Court that have occurred in recent years:

> The increase in the number of judges and the provision of new courtrooms and up-to-date facilities are concrete examples of the government's commitment to the administration of justice in this State.

I shall respond to those comments. The Bill alone will not be sufficient to sort out the problems of the County Court. During the past few years, and particularly during the past year, a succession of reports have been presented to the government by the Victorian Bar Council and the Law Institute of Victoria.

Those reports have highlighted the problems in the courts, as well as the delays in virtually all of the court lists. Those reports have also highlighted the inadequate facilities and called for the appointment of additional judges. At present totally unacceptable delays occur in the County Court. The annual report of the Law Institute of Victoria for the year ended December 1988 has recently been released. The report highlights delays of up to eighteen months in the civil jury lists, and also states that 25 per cent of accused persons remanded in custody have to wait for six months before their cases come before the courts—and some of them have to wait up to sixteen months. One would assume that those accused who are released on bail have to wait even longer before their cases are tried.

Although the Attorney-General refers to increases in the number of judges and new courtrooms, the adequacy of such measures can be assessed by comparing the government's expenditure on courts with its expenditure in other areas of government administration. I refer honourable members to Budget Paper No. 6, which contains a table of government expenditure since 1978–79 on a consistent basis. That table shows that the last four Budgets of the Liberal government provided net funds for the legal system of between 0·5 and 0·6 per cent of total government outlays. In 1983–84 the Cain government reduced the Attorney-General's Department—then the Law Department—share of total Budget outlays to 0·4 per cent; and in 1984–85, that percentage dropped even further to 0·3 per cent of total outlays. The allocation in the present Budget, which has improved the situation slightly, does not give the same share of total outlays to the Attorney-General's Department as did the last two Liberal government Budgets.

It is plain that the government gives a low priority to the services provided by the Attorney-General's Department, which has resulted in a significant deterioration of the services provided by that department. It is also interesting to examine the Attorney-General's Department budget and especially the priorities the Attorney-General gives to the allocation of funds within his department.

It is clear that the Minister does not give a high priority to the court system. Instead, funds for his head office receive the highest priority. The department's budget for direct wage and salary costs for head office rose by an astonishing 42 per cent; the allocation rose by $1·5 million, from $3·5 million to $5 million. That is half of the absolute increase in funds provided for the administration of justice programs which is the courts program. That program was at a base figure of $25 million, and that was increased by only 11 per cent.

In terms of capital expenditure funding for the courts, appropriations have increased in recent years, but the total funds appropriated for the years 1985–88 have not been spent. During those years, a total of $6·6 million was appropriated for the special development of courts, but of that amount only $4·4 million was spent, which represents only two-thirds of the total amount.

Although it is a step forward to improve legislation for the courts and to introduce new court rules, it is not enough. The government is not committed to a first-class court system. Instead, it believes the community will accept justice on the cheap. That is not so. There must be a first-class system of justice in the State, and that system must be properly funded.

The Opposition supports both the Bill and the new County Court Rules, which will be validated by the Bill. But the Opposition says to both the government and the Attorney-General that legislation alone will not solve the very serious problems of the court system.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton)—The National Party supports the Bill. It is an example of a Bill being introduced by the Attorney-General that has been discussed

thoroughly with the legal professionals and everybody interested in the area; and it has received the endorsement of those groups. That means a very short and constructive debate. I hope that message sinks in. As soon as the Attorney-General tries to introduce legislation without proper consultation, he will find himself in trouble, trouble that is not very far away; but that is not the case with this Bill.

I share the amusement of the honourable member for Kew. When one reads the Minister's second-reading speech, one finds that, in part, it contains propaganda that has nothing to do with the Bill—propaganda about court facilities and the appointment of extra judges. Obviously, in deviating from the provisions of the Bill, the Minister has tried to include propaganda for which he has not been able to receive publicity elsewhere. I shall not waste the time of the House by commenting further.

The Bill has three main purposes—firstly, to ratify, validate and approve the new County Court civil proceedings rules; secondly, to make consequential amendments arising from the validation of those new rules—and although, as the honourable member for Kew said, to the uninitiated that seems a strange way of going about things, it is the only practical way of doing so; and thirdly, it makes miscellaneous amendments to the County Court Act.

The additional amendments are interesting. One will assist a litigation guardian or other person acting on behalf of a minor to make an agreement to settle a claim for bodily injury. There are also provisions which will permit the County Court to engage a specialist assessor or to seek the opinion of a counsel in certain circumstances. The Bill contains a provision that will permit the court to order the execution of instruments. Incidentally, these are powers which are already possessed by the Supreme Court.

I compliment the Attorney-General. There has been an effort in the proposed legislation and in previous legislation to make common ground the procedural matters between the County Court and the Supreme Court; it makes sense. Perhaps others may be better informed than I am with my absence from the law, but I believe there is room to go further.

I shall not delay the passage of the Bill. The honourable member for Kew, as usual, has competently handled the Bill. I congratulate the Attorney-General for his handling of the Bill. Obviously the Bill has been carefully prepared. It was discussed with those people who know a lot about the area. The department conferred with the Law Institute of Victoria and the Victorian Bar Council and agreement was reached, which gives us more confidence than when no agreement has been reached.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I thank the honourable members for Kew and Shepparton and the opposition parties for their support of the proposed legislation. These rules have been generated by the County Court itself and they echo the rules recently put in place for the Supreme Court. The honourable member for Shepparton indicated that it was good to have uniformity.

In response to the more critical comments made by the honourable member for Kew about the performance of the County Court, the figures that she used were not the latest figures. The criminal delay reduction committee is an important committee which I, as Minister, set up and which is chaired by the Chief Justice.

Its membership comprises the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commissioner for Legal Aid, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victorian Bar Council, the secretary of my department, the Office of Corrections, and a representative from the Police Force.

The committee has achieved an important result in the management of the total criminal justice process. It has set time targets. The honourable member for Kew

referred to delays and she commented on persons on remand and people who were held in custody.

Mr Ross-Edwards—This has nothing to do with the Bill!

Mr McCUTCHEON—But my remarks are made in response to the remarks made by the honourable member for Kew. The honourable member for Shepparton will be interested to know that the committee has set targets to reduce the backlog of cases and waiting time—the target date is October next year.

Mr Ross-Edwards interjected.

Mr McCUTCHEON—I am happy to distribute the information. A journalist with the *Age,* Prue Innes, wrote a good article on this matter some weeks ago. The project has been undertaken with the cooperation of all parties who take part in the handling of the criminal justice system.

The Bill is important for the smooth and effective working of the County Court. I am pleased that it has the support of the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 12 were agreed to.

Clause 13

Mrs WADE (Kew)—I move:

1. Clause 13, page 12, lines 39–40, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—

"(6) The Rules may be disallowed in whole or in part by resolution of either House of Parliament in accordance with the requirements of section 6 (2) of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.

(7) Disallowance under sub-section (6) is deemed to be disallowance by Parliament for the purposes of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.".

It is a standard provision which will permit the disallowance of County Court Rules by either Chamber. I do not believe it is necessary to detail the reasons why the amendment has been moved, as they would be well known to all honourable members.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I do not agree with the amendment. The subject of the amendment is a traditional battle whenever Bills are introduced. The amendment will be moved in another place if it is defeated in this Chamber but the government will vote against the amendment.

The Committee divided on the question that the words and expressions proposed by Mrs Wade to be omitted stand part of the clause (Mr Norris in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	41
Majority against the amendment	2

AYES	NOES
Mr Andrianopoulos	Mr Austin
Mr Baker	Mr Brown
Mrs Barker	Mr Clark
Mr Cain	Mr Coleman
Mr Cole	Mr Cooper
Mr Crabb	Mr Delzoppo
Mr Cunningham	Mr Dickinson
Mr Ernst	Mr Elder
Mr Fordham	Mr Evans

AYES	NOES
Mr Gavin	Mr Gude
Mrs Gleeson	Mr Hayward
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Heffernan
Mrs Hill	Mr Honeywood
Mrs Hirsh	Mr Jasper
Mr Jolly	Mr John
Mr Kennan	Mr Kennett
Mr Kennedy	Mr Lea
Ms Kirner	Mr Leigh
Mr Leighton	Mr Lieberman
Mr McCutcheon	Mr McGrath *(Lowan)*
Mr McDonald	Mr McGrath *(Warrnambool)*
Mr Mathews	Mr McNamara
Mr Micallef	Mr Maclellan
Mr Pope	Dr Napthine
Mrs Ray	Mr Perrin
Mr Roper	Mr Perton
Mr Rowe	Mr Pescott
Mr Sandon	Mr Reynolds
Mr Seitz	Mr Richardson
Mr Sercombe	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mrs Setches	Mr Smith *(Glen Waverley)*
Mr Sheehan *(Ballarat South)*	Mr Smith *(Polwarth)*
Mr Sheehan *(Northcote)*	Mr Steggall
Mr Shell	Mr Stockdale
Mr Simmonds	Mr Tanner
Mr Spyker	Mrs Wade
Mr Thomson	Mr Wallace
Mr Trezise	Mr Weideman
Dr Vaughan	Dr Wells
Mr Walsh	
Mrs Wilson	
Tellers:	*Tellers:*
Mr Dollis	Mr Bildstien
Mr Hamilton	Mr Maughan

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

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

WARRNAMBOOL LAND BILL

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) on the motion of Mrs Setches (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The SPEAKER—Order! When the Warrnambool Land Bill was last before the House, in the course of the debate there was a request by the honourable member for Berwick that I rule on whether the Bill was a private Bill or a public Bill.

In considering the matter I have referred to page 898 of the twentieth edition of *May*, which states:

> Bills which are brought in by the Government (dealing with Crown property, or with national and other works in different localities, etc.), and which affect private interests, are introduced as public bills, and subsequently treated as hybrid bills.

As honourable members will be aware, there is no provision under Victorian Standing Orders for hybrid Bills. Accordingly, I rule that this Bill should be treated as a public

Bill, having regard to the fact that it deals primarily with public interests and only to a secondary extent with private interests.

The motion was agreed to.

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

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from April 13) on the motion of Mr Cole (Melbourne) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—I am pleased to join this Address-in-Reply debate, although I am a little surprised that it is still continuing. However, I understand the wish of the government that the debate should be brought to a conclusion today so that the Address-in-Reply can be delivered to His Excellency the Governor.

I congratulate the honourable member for Werribee on his elevation to the office of Speaker and I wish him well in that role, as I wish you well, Mr Deputy Speaker, in your roles of Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees. I congratulate you on being elevated to those positions.

I am also pleased to express my best wishes to all new members in the Chamber and to congratulate them on their maiden speeches. I have listened with some interest to most of them, and I am aware of the pressure that members are under when they make their first speeches in this House. All have performed very well.

I particularly congratulate my colleagues on this side, the honourable members for Mildura, Balwyn, Warrandyte, Portland and Doncaster, who have made their maiden speeches as well as an "old" member who made his maiden speech in this 51st Parliament but who was elected in the 50th Parliament—the honourable member for Ballarat North. He made a memorable first speech that I am sure will not be forgotten by many members, and certainly not by those from the government side who were in the House and who listened to him. He had much to say with regard to matters of concern to him and his constituents. He left no stone unturned to make sure his feelings were demonstrated to the House.

On behalf of the constituents of my electorate, I express my loyalty and that of my constituents to Her Majesty the Queen and also our loyalty and best wishes to His Excellency the Governor. I hope that at some stage in his busy schedule the Governor may be able to visit Mornington, where he would be most welcome. I hope that invitation can be conveyed to His Excellency. So far as I am aware, he has not visited that spectacular part of Victoria, the Mornington Peninsula. The Governor and Mrs McCaughey would be extremely welcome.

Mr Steggall interjected.

Mr COOPER—I do not expect that the greenhouse effect will have taken over in the next two or three years.

Although it seems a long time ago, 1 October 1988 has certainly remained in the memories of honourable members in this place. All members faced the electorate on that day and experienced a variety of reflections of the opinions of the constituents about them and the parties they represented. All members would remember the lead-up to the 1988 election with varying degrees of comfort and discomfort.

I shall comment particularly on the 1988 election result with regard to my electorate. A strong effort was made by members of the Australian Labor Party and their colleagues, the Australian Democrats, to replace me as the honourable member for Mornington. I understand that more than $100 000 was spent by the ALP on its Mornington campaign. I know that more than $20 million worth of specific promises were made by the government in a blatant attempt to pork barrel the Mornington electorate and to unseat me.

In addition to the more than $100 000 expenditure and the $20 million worth of promises, the Labor Party candidate had the benefit of top position on the ballot-paper and of the preferences of the mickey mouse labor party, the Australian Democrats. Despite those advantages, the Labor Party went backwards in its vote in my electorate; it lost 5 per cent of its 1985 primary vote. The Australian Democrats lost 1 per cent of the primary vote that it collected in the Mornington electorate when it ran an Upper House candidate in 1985. The socialist vote dropped significantly in Mornington.

Obviously that must be a matter of grave concern to the Labor Party. Its campaign in Mornington was marked by personal abuse of me and backed throughout the electorate by an organised set of slanders against my wife and children. The Labor Party's loss of vote was a clear message from the electors of Mornington that gutter politics will not work in Mornington or elsewhere.

Coupled with the massive expenditure and the other advantages I have mentioned, and backed, aided and abetted by a campaign marked by personal vilification and some of the worst smears that could be uttered in company with the dirtiest tactics that could be used by a political party during a campaign, the Labor Party came off third-best—to the applause of the vast majority in my electorate.

I was interested to read an article in the last edition of the Labor Party newspaper, the *Labor Star*. The Labor Party was bemoaning its performance in some marginal electorates; apparently it was less than desirable. The publication advocated that the ALP should investigate why the party went backwards in some of the marginal seats, including Mornington. Obviously the party does not bother to talk to the ALP supporters in Mornington, nor does it trust their opinions. I understand that sentiment because the Mornington ALP officials are not trustworthy people; they pay little attention to what is happening in the electorate. They certainly advised the party and their candidate badly with regard to the tactics that could and should be used, and actually were used.

The campaign by the ALP candidate in Mornington was a total disaster. However, he has fared very well in that he has been appointed as the chief honcho and adviser to the Minister for Education at $68 000 a year. Failure in the Labor Party appears to pay very well!

His results and those of his party amounted to an increased Liberal vote. For that I am thankful to the electorate of Mornington, and promise my constituents that they will continue to receive the very strong support and representation that I have given them since 1985. I intend to continue that service for as many years as I wish to do so, and for as long as my party wishes me to be the honourable member for Mornington.

The needs of the people of the Mornington electorate reflect most of the needs of the people of Victoria. There is nothing much new under the sun from one electorate to another. Wherever one goes one hears that people need this or that in their electorates, they are short of this or that, and they need a lot more from the government than they have been getting.

Since 1985 the Cain government has been loud in its trumpeting about social justice issues. Social justice became a big item on the Cain government band wagon between 1985 and 1988. Since the 1 October election I have not heard much from government Ministers or government backbenchers about social justice issues. In fact, it is almost as though the phrase has gone out of style. Now that the election is over the government does not seem to be too worried about social justice.

I assure the government that people in the community are worried about issues of equity and justice, whether those issues be social or otherwise. In fact the community desires the government to direct its attention to those issues and to do something about them. Many measuring sticks can be used when speaking about social justice.

In the 20 minutes I have left to me in this debate I shall address three of those measuring sticks that are important because they demonstrate the lack of care, responsibility and responsiveness of this government to issues that are of great moment to the community of this State.

Those issues are: high taxes and charges that impact on every section of the community; housing; and law and order. Those three areas show the failures of the government to deliver.

High taxes and charges must be coupled with poor delivery of services. Every time taxes and charges are increased, the delivery of services either decreases or does not improve in accordance with the needs of the people. The electorate is badly affected. Certainly the people in the electorate I represent—and they are indicative of the bulk of electors in this State—are dramatically affected by the situation they face every day of their lives with the prices they pay for goods, the taxes that are imposed and the government and statutory authority charges levied for gas, electricity, water, council rates and so on.

No matter what measures people take in their personal lives to control their finances, they have little effect on the bills that come in. They have no ability to lower the imposts upon them that dramatically affect their ability to control the money they earn. The vast bulk of the money that people earn today is committed before it even hits their pay packets. Their freedom to pursue their chosen way of life, their ability to do more for their families or to acquire wealth through accumulated capital, houses, cars, or other things that people might want to have, is lessened dramatically by the effects of government taxes and charges on their incomes. Regardless of whether taxes and charges are imposed by Federal or State sources, they are impositions that dramatically affect their lives.

In this instance I am speaking about the effects of taxes and charges that are imposed on the Victorian community by the Victorian government. It is the Victorian government that can do something about those taxes and charges but it is the Victorian government that has clearly failed to improve the situation for Victorian taxpayers. Despite the Treasurer's rhetoric and his attempts to misrepresent the facts, it is indisputable that Victoria is the highest taxing State in Australia. Nothing has changed since 1985 and nothing that would change the situation appears to be on the books.

In January 1988 the Melbourne *Herald* had a banner headline, "Our taxes highest in Australia". That situation has not changed today and no amount of rhetoric or sidestepping the issues by the Treasurer or other Ministers can get them off the hook. They are part of a government that has achieved the status of being the highest taxing government in Australia. The article in the *Herald* of 12 January 1988 fits the situation today as well as it fitted the situation at that time:

Victoria is Australia's highest taxing State, according to the latest Bureau of Statistics figures.

The figures reveal that every Victorian is taxed $1030 a year by the State government, almost double that of Australia's lowest taxing State, Queensland . . .

Victoria's spending problems can be traced to its interest payment burden, subsidies to various enterprises and grants to non-profit institutions.

That is what the Opposition has said time and again. It has tried to make the government aware of its responsibility for fiscal management and to recognise that its policies and impositions have created the highest taxing State in this country. The community is wearing a tax burden that it should not be wearing.

The government has the power to do something about it but it has failed. Having failed, it must stand before the people and explain its policies. What did Victoria have prior to 1 October 1988? Did it have a government that was prepared to stand before the people and explain its financial policies and its financial mismanagement? The answer is now known to everyone in this State. The government headed by the Premier was more interested in cutting and running and covering up the mess that it was overseeing. It ran to the polls in an attempt to have an early election before the truth was found out.

The shame is that the government was returned to power narrowly. The government did not get the majority vote but it received the majority of seats. Subsequently the mess the government was covering up was exposed to the people of this State. It will continue to be exposed by the Opposition because a lot more financial mismanagement, culpability and cupidity by the people who decorate the front benches of Parliament will come out. It will come out to the eternal shame of the government, which cannot continue to stand back and hope that the truth will not come out. The government will not evade the wrath of the electorate in this State.

The government has failed to provide policies that would ensure a financial climate within which Victorians were taxed equitably and fairly. Victorians are taxed at a higher level than citizens of other States. The *Herald* article of January 1988 reported that Victorians pay almost double the taxes of Australia's lowest taxing State, Queensland.

The second measuring stick of social justice is housing. For years the Labor Party was badgering, whining and wimpering around the place that public housing in this State was in a shambles and that only a Labor government could fix it up. When the Labor government came to power in 1982 the public housing waiting list comprised approximately 14 000 families.

Where is public rental housing today? What has happened to the waiting list? It has more than doubled! In 1982 there was a waiting list of approximately 14 000 and today that list is in excess of 30 000 families who are waiting for public rental accommodation in Victoria. This is a government that preaches social justice, a government that says that it is for those people who are seeking public rental accommodation; the middle-income earner, but, more particularly, the low-income earner. They are the families the government said it would protect and look after when it came into power. They are the people that the government said had been deserted by the policies of the former Hamer and Thompson governments. What has happened? Not only have those families been deserted by this government, but they have also been forgotten by the government. Nothing illustrates that better than the figures that I shall reveal with regard to the public rental waiting list in my electorate of Mornington.

Recently, by way of a question on notice, I asked the Minister, among other things, how many applicants were waiting for rental accommodation in the shires of Mornington and Hastings, and how many of the applicants had been placed in rental

accommodation. I asked also how many houses had been purchased under the Ministry's spot purchase program over the period 1982–83 to 1987–88.

The Minister's answer was revealing. The Ministry for Housing and Construction did not bother to record figures until 1985–86. The Minister said that he could not supply me with two-thirds of the information—that is, for the first three years—because the Ministry did not have the facts and figures available to it. That is a damning indictment of mismanagement by the government if ever I have seen one. The Ministry did not keep statistics or, if it did, it could not find them. What clowns are running departments to mismanage them to that extent? At least I have been supplied with information for the years 1985–86 to 1987–88. One must remember that I am talking only about a small section of Victoria, the shires of Mornington and Hastings. One has to take that in the context of more than 30 000 families on a waiting list for the whole of Victoria.

In 1985–86 there were 1071 families on the waiting list in those two shires; in 1986–87, 1126, and in 1987–88, 1103. Over the past three years not much has changed. During those three years, the government has stretched itself and bought some houses in those two shires to cater for the demand. Against a record waiting list in 1985–86 of 1071, the government purchased 23 houses. In 1986–87, the number of applicants increased to 1126 and the government's response was to drop its purchase from 23 to 6 houses. In 1987–88 the number of rental applicants moved downwards to 1103 but the number of houses purchased increased to 28. The net result was that, in 1985–86, of the 1071 rental applicants on the waiting list in the shires of Mornington and Hastings, 80 applicants were placed. The following year, 1986–87, of the 1126 applicants on the waiting list, 82 were placed, and for the financial year 1987–88, of the 1103 applicants on the waiting list, 87 were placed.

So far as the shires of Mornington and Hastings are concerned, those on the waiting list are literally facing years of staying on that list. The Ministry of Housing and Construction is letting out three-bedroom houses and in one instance recently in my electorate it let a house to a nineteen-year-old unmarried mother with a six-month-old baby, and yet the waiting list is supposed to extend for three to four years. Single mothers with three children and widows who cannot obtain a house or afford rent are told that they will have to wait on the list for three or four years before they can get into a house. Those people are living in caravans; some children have bronchial diseases caused by their living conditions; they are being bypassed by the department. More than 1000 families are in that situation in my electorate and are not being looked after. They are deserted and forgotten by the government. It is a disgrace!

Public housing in Victoria is a lasting and monumental disgrace, and the government is so uncontrolled that it simply cannot do anything about it. It has reached the stage of frozen desperation, and it is apparent that those who have thrown themselves on the mercy of the Ministry of Housing and Construction will remain unsatisfied and, in many cases, will remain in desperate personal circumstances. The government told those people in 1982 that they would be taken care of and it has failed to deliver.

The New South Wales government, which is continually being attacked by the Victorian government, has public housing rental arrears of less than $1 million—approximately $600 000—whereas in Victoria rental arrears in 1986–87 were $19 million and in 1987–88 the figure had decreased to $12·5 million. That is mismanagement and incompetence. That area should be addressed by the government.

I turn to the question of law and order and the crime rate in Victoria. Since 1982 the massive escalation in reported crime has far outweighed the population growth. From 1982 to 30 June 1988 reported crime increased 72 per cent; at the same time the population increased by 7·3 per cent.

From information contained in the Victoria Police Statistical Reviews of Crime, I have prepared a table of the major crime, all crime, and the crime clearance rate for the years 1982 to 1987–88. I have shown the table to the Speaker, who has approved it for incorporation, and I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in *Hansard.*

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

REPORTED CRIME AND CLEARANCE RATE
VICTORIA

	Total Numbers		*Increase*		*Clearance Rate*	
	Major crime	*All crime*	*Major crime*	*All crime*	*Major crime*	*All crime*
1982	189 987	251 661	8·2%	9·7%	25·5%	32·4%
1983	200 569	259 851	5·6%	3·3%	22·2%	28·7%
1984	219 573	287 290	9·5%	10·6%	23·7%	29·4%
1984–85	222 825	293 962	1·5%	2·3%	24·9%	31·7%
1985–86	249 113	329 217	11·8%	12·0%	25·3%	31·9%
1986–87	283 666	373 307	13·9%	13·4%	23·8%	31·1%
1987–88	310 545	395 904	9·5%	6·1%	22·7%	28·4%

Source: Victoria Police Statistical Reviews of Crime.

Note: The 1984–85 statistics should not be regarded as fully indicative of the level of crime due to the changeover of reporting in that period from calendar year to fiscal year.

Mr COOPER—The public is concerned about law and order, and rightly so. The public clearly see that their lives and property are in greater danger, and their perception of the ability of the police to respond to normal calls is of concern. It is clear that the Police Force is undermanned, and honourable members do not have to take my word for it. I know the honourable member for Springvale would not take my word for it, but I hope he would take the word of the Chief Commissioner of Police and his predecessor, Mr Miller, who both said that we have a growing crime wave in this State: the present chief commissioner has described it as being of concern.

The Chief Commissioner of Police is worried that the situation is getting out of control. He does not believe—and neither do Victorians—that the Police Force has sufficient officers in this State; he believes Victoria needs 11 000 sworn police members. The Opposition has always said that Victoria needs that number of sworn police officers. Under the Cain government the number of police officers is dwindling, which is a significant worry to the Police Force and should be a worry to the government.

Again there is this frozen position, a lack of activity, concern and direction from the government. It virtually amounts to a failure to perform and it increases the perception and concerns of the community. Victorians believe the Police Force does not have the authority it requires, and those thoughts have been well demonstrated by Victorians at public meetings and in the press. The government has not made any reasonable or responsible reply to the community's request to grant police the power to ask for the names and addresses of suspects, a power that every other Police Force in Australia has.

Again as a measuring stick of social justice, the law and order position clearly demonstrates that the government has failed to perform. In all these areas, it can be clearly seen that the platform on which the government was elected in 1982, 1985, and again in 1988, the government has failed to deliver.

Mrs GLEESON (Thomastown)—On behalf of the electors of the Thomastown electorate, I congratulate His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs McCaughey on the excellent job they have been doing around Victoria for the Victorian people in his role as Governor and in Mrs McCaughey's supporting role. I extend my congratulations to the Governor on his excellent delivery of the Speech he made in Parliament which listed the government's program over the next four years.

I also congratulate the Speaker on his election to that role in this House. He is a worthwhile candidate for that role. From what honourable members have observed in the House since his election, it is obvious that he is a professional Speaker and has brought a good tone to the House. I am certain honourable members will look back with some pride on his time in the Chair.

I also congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to the role of Chairman of Committees. I am sure that you also will bring great credit to the Victorian Parliament.

When reflecting on the mandate given to the government last October when it was elected to office for the next four years—and this was restated in the Greensborough by-election last Saturday—it is important to recognise that the people have endorsed the government's program, which is underpinned by its social justice strategy.

I shall demonstrate the government's commitment to social justice by referring the House to what the government has done and will continue to do in the housing portfolio. Honourable members will be aware that the great Australian dream has always been for people to own their own homes. Housing is currently an important issue in Victoria. In the same way that there has been diversification of the various types of family living arrangements, there should be some diversification in the types of housing provided. The government is taking a responsible innovative approach to that problem. In so doing, it has developed a menu of choices in housing for Victorians.

Mr Tanner—Mr Acting Speaker, I direct to your attention the fact that it is an insult to the House that only three members of the government are present. Therefore, the House does not have a quorum.

A quorum was formed.

Mrs GLEESON—It is obvious that the Opposition is frustrated. The Opposition Whip could not wait for more than 3 minutes before he directed the attention of the Acting Speaker to the lack of a quorum. I take it as a compliment that he wants a large number of members in the House to hear my speech. Members of the Opposition do not take the time to read *Hansard*, so the Opposition Whip wants members of his party to be in the House to hear what is being said.

I return to the government's social justice program on housing. The Opposition should be aware that providing shelter for Victorians is within the government's mandate. Some 55 000 public housing units are provided throughout Victoria, and 10 000 families have been provided with housing. It is important to examine the types of rental provided to these families who are not able to afford rental in the private market.

Some 80 per cent of these 10 000 families are on rebated rent: they pay up to 60 per cent below the current market rent, which is a significant saving. In some instances this is the only way these people, who comprise large families or are on low incomes,

can afford a roof over their heads. The remaining 20 per cent of the families pay cost rent, which requires them to meet the outgoings of providing public housing, often 20 per cent below the current market rent.

Current market rents are too high for many of the people who apply for public housing. A formula has been determined to ensure that persons renting public housing, particularly those on the cost rent basis, pay no more than 25 per cent of their income on rent. This leaves them with money in their pockets to spend on other requirements such as food, clothing, transport and education expenses for their children. The government is keen to ensure that people have proper housing accommodation. If people do not have adequate housing, they do not have anything.

Housing is the most important need of Victorians, followed closely by food. It is difficult to provide housing at today's costs because house prices have been allowed to get out of hand in the private sector. Earlier I referred to the menu of choices available to people wanting to move into public rental. The Ministry of Housing and Construction has a public housing finance scheme, a cooperative housing program and a rooming house program which provide for people in similar circumstances to those in public rental but with different needs.

For example, housing must provide for the diversification of needs. The number of single-parent families has increased considerably, and, obviously, they do not need the same type of accommodation as two-parent families. Some single-parent families may have only one child and some two-parent families may receive an extremely low income due to both parties receiving only social welfare payments.

The government is looking to a cooperative arrangement for single people wanting public accommodation, and the rooming house program has been established. The government is providing for smaller families because the census taken every five years is proving that the nuclear family is now much smaller than it was 30 or 40 years ago when it was not uncommon for there to be six to eight children in a family. It must not be forgotten that there are homeless people; therefore, hostels and rooming houses must be provided.

The menu of choices also provides for home buyers, that is, people who are taking advantage of the Home Opportunity Loans Scheme. That involves the purchase of housing owned by the Ministry of Housing and Construction by those people who are unable to meet the repayments required in the private sector. As honourable members know, some people are paying up to 50 to 70 per cent of their incomes in loan repayments. People are overextended because banks are not as careful as the government believes they should be when lending money. In the past one was not able to get from a bank a housing loan that required repayments of more than 25 per cent of one income. That was the case 25 years ago when my husband and I applied for a housing loan to build our house. That is no longer the case and loans are, more often than not, approved on the basis of two incomes. If the wife becomes pregnant or one of the income earners drops out of the work force due to illness, injury and so on, enormous difficulty is experienced in meeting the repayments.

The Home Opportunity Loans Scheme is an innovative program that is capital indexed; therefore, the repayment is related to the value of the assets. When one obtains a loan from a bank to purchase a house in the private market, the larger repayments are made during the early years. That is a time when a young family does not have the disposable income to repay a housing loan and difficulties are experienced. In the public sector the government has structured loans so that the repayments are smaller in the early years. For the first seven years the loan repayments are at their lowest and they increase as the financial situation of a family improves. If difficulties are experienced families can negotiate with the Ministry of Housing and Construction.

It is important to note that the repayment amount is pegged at approximately 35 per cent of income, which is realistic. That leaves approximately 65 per cent of the income of a family to be used for other necessities as well as recreational needs. People involved in that scheme are able to retain their homes and are not caught in the tight financial situations in which people in the private sector are finding themselves. It is a good scheme and the government is to be commended. More and more loans are being made available under the scheme, which is limited to families with a maximum income of $550 a fortnight. All honourable members would agree that the scheme is plugging a huge gap in the marketplace that the private sector is not filling.

The scheme is helping people who have the same wishes as those on higher incomes. Those people want to own their own homes; they want the security, stability and autonomy of home ownership. The loans provided are taken out over 50 years, but that is not unusual. People are excited about the scheme. An estate has been established in Mill Park in the electorate I represent where four-bedroom homes were built to cater for larger families. All facilities are provided and the gardens are established by the Ministry. Being able to purchase a home gives parents the good feeling that they have done something for their children which, in other circumstances, they would not be able to provide. Some 80 houses are provided in the estate and families can start off renting them and then convert to home ownership. All honourable members would commend the government for the work it has done in that area.

Also included in the menu of choices is shared home ownership. That is an innovative scheme with tripartite ownership; one tenant buys up to one-third of the capital value of the house while another tenant purchases a further one-third. During the pilot stage the government is the institution taking up the final one-third, although, if the scheme is successful, it is hoped that private institutions will become involved and help people to take advantage of shared ownership. People becoming involved in such schemes are usually those on incomes of approximately $440 a week.

It is important to note that the government pledged that over the past four years it would provide 12 000 additional units of public housing. That target has not been met. The target for the next four years is 15 000 units, which is a total increase of 27 000 units. Redevelopment in public housing can be seen in the inner suburbs. The outer suburbs have mainly rental stock, but honourable members will be glad to know that the days of governments purchasing large tracts of land and putting houses on them are over.

The ghetto-type mentality of the 1950s no longer exists. At that time Ministry housing comprised the concrete house block with a toilet on the back verandah. We then progressed to governments purchasing large tracts of land and constructing weatherboard houses that were inadequately serviced. They were usually on the fringe of populated areas, particularly in the country, and the laundry and toilet were on the back verandah. That was not the most convenient arrangement but it was the only type of housing available in the immediate post-war years.

The type of housing that is available has improved dramatically. The government ignores the old ideology where people believed that if a person qualified for public housing that person should consider himself lucky and should be grateful for what he got. In the past no-one cared about the type of housing that was made available.

For example, if honourable members went to North Melbourne they would see multistorey flats like those that have also been built in Port Melbourne, Carlton and Fitzroy, fifteen to twenty storeys high. Often those multistorey flats have laundry facilities on the top floor, so tenants on the first floor have to travel up fifteen or twenty storeys to use the laundry. No doubt all honourable members have heard stories about the breakdown of lifts in multistorey buildings of this kind.

Families living in those units are extremely isolated and often the children cannot be allowed to go out to play unsupervised. Those of us who have brought up children in normal suburban houses with front and back gardens could allow our children to go out to the back garden to play knowing they were totally safe and that their friends could come and play with them. That is a wonderful environment for children to grow up in. In the high rises that is not the case. The children cannot leave their tenth or fifteenth floor flats to play downstairs because to be downstairs would require constant supervision.

I understand in recent years the parents of young families who were put into those multistorey buildings, particularly the women, made creative cooperative arrangements and shared the minding of their children, which relieved the burden on each mother of having to be downstairs with her children and meant that they were able to participate in other activities. These cooperative child-caring arrangements eventually spread throughout the outer suburbs. It was a way for young people who lacked disposable income to provide relief for their families. The present family day-care programs and child-care centres eventually sprang from the cooperative arrangements those parents, particularly women, made.

The great deprivation caused by the provision of the old style of public housing showed the need for a new government, the Labor government, which was elected in 1982 and which provided an extensive menu of public housing arrangements. The government should be congratulated for that. Not only has it housed 10 000 families within its public rental stock but it has provided housing relief for many more families through its Home Opportunity Loans Scheme and other programs.

Operating within the Ministry of Housing and Construction is a program called sweat equity, which is based on a self-building approach. That scheme is tapping into the traditional Australian philosophy of home ownership. People get together and apply their own toil and skills to building or renovating a house and by that process can save up to 20 per cent of the cost of the house.

I know this happened in my electorate where a group of men from the Victorian Trades Hall Council, who called themselves the Peter Lalor Cooperative, purchased paddocks in Lalor.

Mr Steggall—There is nothing wrong with paddocks.

Mrs GLEESON—They are fine if you want to graze cows on them but if people want housing they have to build houses on them, and that is what the people in Lalor did. The members of the cooperative were returned soldiers who had joined together to build houses in the area. They also formed the Bring the Train to Thomastown Committee and were successful in that endeavour and were also responsible for bringing many services to the area, including doctors.

The houses were built in the 1940s and early 1950s. Three or four books have been written on the history of the City of Whittlesea and all give considerable coverage of the work of the Peter Lalor Cooperative and how it started housing in that area in the immediate post-war years.

It is that ideology on which the sweat equity program is based. The Ministry of Housing and Construction finances people so that they can draw funds to purchase land, tools and the necessary materials to construct a house. They build the house themselves and on completion all the finances are reconciled. The Home Opportunity Loans Scheme is used to lend finance for homes obtained under the sweat equity program. The cost of homes built under this scheme may be 20 per cent less than the normal cost of a home and the scheme allows people to use their initiative and not be tied down to particular designs or, in many instances, locations. It also provides

flexibility and accommodates people who want to make a contribution to their own housing needs.

Honourable members should also examine the work done under the urban homesteading program, under which the Ministry does some of the work and finances people to undertake other work themselves. The program involves people buying run-down homes they can renovate. They obtain finance through the Ministry to carry out the renovation works or, as in many instances, the Ministry may do the renovation work itself. This scheme works a lot better in country areas than it does in the city because of the escalating land and housing costs, particularly in the inner urban parts of Melbourne, so it is definitely a scheme for the outer fringes of Melbourne or country areas of Victoria.

Honourable members should also examine the amount of maintenance that is undertaken by the Ministry, because the types of houses built in the 1950s and 1960s were not the types of houses that were suitable for a family. In the past four years the Ministry has spent $120 million in upgrading stock and last year alone spent $35 million on maintenance. Over the next four years the government has committed itself to lift its maintenance allocations to $140 million. A two-storey walk-up unit would cost approximately $70 000 to renovate, whereas in many instances the government can provide a house at near that value and have a better investment for its money, so the Ministry must consider whether to renovate old stock or to build new housing stock.

In many instances inequity could develop between tenants who are getting the old renovated stock and those tenants getting the new stock. It is the fault of former Liberal governments that did not take into consideration the ongoing needs of public housing tenants. The public rental market involves a roll-over situation; 50 per cent of the families would be subject to roll-over because public housing is merely a stopgap—they want to own their own homes.

The former Liberal governments took the same approach to public housing as they took to providing schools—especially in working-class electorates—where they just bought paddocks and built cheap housing or schools on them. The former Liberal governments thought that was good enough for the poorer people in the community. One remembers what took place with the provision of houses and schools in working-class electorates. I can testify to that policy in the electorate I represent, and it occurred in many other electorates around Melbourne where old concrete houses are now becoming run-down with cracks appearing in them and so on. It is almost unviable to spend money on repairing them because they were unsatisfactory and inadequate accommodation in the first place. The toilets and laundries were always placed on the back verandahs.

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—I have much pleasure in responding to the Governor's Speech. Firstly, I confirm my loyalty and that of the constituents of Glen Waverley to Her Majesty the Queen and her representative in Victoria, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey.

At the same time I acknowledge the honour bestowed on me by the electors of Glen Waverley and my pride in representing them in Parliament. I highlight the support I received from my electorate committee during the October election. The committee was headed by Alan Gostelow and ably assisted by Noela Parry and the campaign manager, Brian Dumps. I also thank the branch presidents of Wheelers Hill, Jeanette Milnes; Waverley East, Jim Wood; Legend Park, Penny Gent, and Wheelers Hill Young Liberals, Kelly Noakes; and the committees and members. I also thank my wife Sarah and the 130 workers who assisted on the day in the polling booths to ensure the Liberal Party victory.

I again pledge to dedicate the next four years to my constituents and to all people in the Glen Waverley electorate, whether they voted for the Liberal Party or any other party. The election is over and I guarantee to work for the good of all my constituents.

This afternoon honourable members are responding to the Governor's Speech. What a position of embarrassment the government placed His Excellency in by having him read out a Speech prepared by socialists who thrive on boasting. Socialists are inveterate boasters and propaganda experts; they even paint rosy pictures about absolute failures—namely, the Victorian Economic Development Corporation—and, as the honourable member for Sunshine would attest, WorkCare.

Even those experts in boasting wisely steered clear in the Governor's Speech of two minefields of disaster, one of which was the government's policy on the Victorian Economic Development Corporation; the closest it got to that was Victoria's economic strategy.

The compelling area of the Governor's Speech that I wish to discuss on behalf of my electors is dealt with under the heading "Police and Justice". Page 13 of the Speech states:

> The safety and security of the people of Victoria in their homes and on the streets is of paramount importance to my government and is demonstrated by its commitment to ensure an even more effective and efficient Police Force.

What a cheek! I feel for the poor Governor having to read that sort of rubbish; it makes one sit back and wonder. The Speech continues:

> By bringing the Victoria Police into the age of high technology, by increasing police powers where appropriate, and by employing more police my government is working to reduce crime in the community.

Honourable members should listen to this gross overstatement, and one must remember that the Speech was made back in October:

> By June next year the operational strength of the Police Force will have increased by 2200 since April 1982.

I thought this afternoon I would contact the Police Association of Victoria to ascertain the actual strength figures. The association did not have the figure for the April period to 1982, but it had the figure for the December 1982 period. The figure was 8302. The latest figure the association has for its total strength as at 15 March1987 is 9382. The gross increase during the period was 1080 and not 2200, the figure about which the government boasted. These are the sorts of statements that the Governor read in his Speech. The Governor's Speech is obviously misleading because, instead of the increase being 2200 since April 1982 it is only 1080, which is not even half of the stated increase.

Law and order is an important issue for the community. I have an article from the *Age* of 2 March which features the headline, "Gender Gap Alarms Labor Machos" and a Saulwick poll shows the results of a questionnaire setting out the priorities people considered to be most important for them. The categories were: law and order, supporting families, reducing tax, looking after the disadvantaged, and "don't know".

The highest priority in the poll was law and order; 47 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women placed this as their top priority. Some 19 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women placed supporting families as their first priority; and 12 per cent of men and 9 per cent of women placed reducing taxation as their priority. Some 17 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women placed looking after the disadvantaged as their priority; and the percentage who did not know was not as high as usual, with the figure being 5 per cent for men and 7 per cent for women. Overwhelmingly the biggest issue was law and order.

One would have thought that, in a period when law and order is such an issue and an important area of government responsibility, the government would be supporting the community. However, that is not the case. The morale of the Victoria Police Force has never been lower. One of the reasons is that resignations are at an all-time high. When I spoke with the Police Association this afternoon I was advised that in the year 1987–88 resignations reflected a 35 per cent increase. The association refers to them as discharges—officers being discharged from the force mainly because they are disgruntled or disillusioned and have decided to take advantage of the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

When one visits police stations or goes out on the job with police—as I have frequently done—one realises that the police consider that the government is not backing them either on the beat or in the courts. One of the cases I should like to mention is the government's recent decision to show its vindictiveness towards Detective Chief Inspector Laurie Neville over statements he made in Perth a week or so ago when he arrested John Friedrich, the former head of the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division).

When Detective Chief Inspector Neville stated on television that the Police Force was lucky that Friedrich was arrested in Western Australia because there the police have the power to take names and addresses and take fingerprints without any qualifications he was, to put it mildly, pilloried by the government. It transpired that a couple of weeks beforehand the force had nominated Mr Neville to attend a course in Paris. As most honourable members would be aware, Mr Neville is the head of the Fraud Squad, which has the responsibility for looking after a new section of legislation which deals with assets derived from crime. The police department quite properly nominated Mr Neville to go to Paris to take part in a conference which was to be held from 17 to 22 April.

At first, the Premier chose not to give permission for Mr Neville to travel to Paris. Some days before the arrest of Mr Friedrich the case was taken up again with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, where the Premier is the head of the particular committee that considers overseas visits. On that occasion permission was granted.

Just prior to his departure for Perth to arrest Mr Friedrich, Mr Neville received a cable from Interpol. I have a copy of the cable here. It indicates that a room had been booked; that permission had been granted; that Mr Neville was to stay at the Hotel Concorde in Saint Lazare; what the prices would be; and where he would be attending the conference. In other words, the man was given to understand that he would be sent to Paris, permission having been granted by the Premier.

This case is typical of how the government looks after the morale of its Police Force. As I said, when Mr Neville was in Perth he made a statement on television. No doubt most honourable members would have seen the television interview conducted after the arrest of Mr Friedrich. As I also said, Mr Neville indicated that police officers were lucky to have caught Mr Friedrich in Western Australia because, if it had been in Victoria where they do not have the same powers, it would have been much more difficult to arrest Mr Friedrich.

On the Friday evening, when Mr Neville returned to Melbourne with Mr Friedrich, he went to police headquarters and was told that his trip had been cancelled. During that afternoon the Premier had been interviewed on radio and had vilified Mr Neville because he had criticised the State on the ground that Victorian police officers do not have the same basic powers as officers in Western Australia.

Every other police force in Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom have those powers. However, it is a tool of trade that Victoria's police

officers have been denied. It is interesting to note that by-laws inspectors of local councils and people representing the Victorian Egg Marketing Board have the power to call for the names and addresses of suspects, but members of the Victoria Police Force do not.

The government has shown how vindictive it can be by denying Mr Neville the right to travel to Paris to attend a conference on assets derived from crime. As I said, the matter is extremely important to the Victoria Police Force. Although I do not have it in writing, I understand that Mr Neville was told by members of the Police Force that while he was in the area he should visit Munich in West Germany in an attempt to positively identify Mr Friedrich. The police are still having difficulty establishing his identity and how and when he came to Australia; they are having difficulty with the immigration records and the various other agencies involved. It was a commonsense approach to send him to the conference and allow him to seek information on Mr Friedrich which might aid in the inquiry being carried out by his colleagues in the Fraud Squad. The government chose to cancel Mr Neville's trip in an act of vindictiveness, which has greatly harmed police morale.

This is the same government that acted vindictively towards the previous Governor. The government did not consider that the Governor had done anything terribly wrong, but the Premier said that the Governor must resign, as an example to others. This is the government that applies double standards in its approach to such matters as the Victorian Economic Development Corporation.

Over the past couple of weeks, the message delivered to the Victoria Police Force was: if you talk out against the government it will get you. It is abominable behaviour, as I am sure 99 per cent of the members of the Victoria Police Force would agree. It is one of the reasons why morale among police officers is at rock bottom.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services does nothing to enhance the prestige of the Victoria Police Force. In another role, he is rushing about obsessed with trivia. Instead of addressing the main problems in the area of police and emergency services, the Minister is introducing subjects such as the renaming of the Grampians. What trivia; what nonsense; it is unnecessary at this stage and it will cause community division in the area! Instead of tackling the important issues concerning the community, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is behaving like Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned. He does not address the real issues.

I refer to another subject which causes concern to the electors in Glen Waverley. This afternoon during question time the Minister for Transport boasted that he will improve public transport on trains in certain areas. The Minister did not refer to public transport in one of the most important areas. Mr Acting Speaker, you and the honourable member for Dandenong North will be aware of the problems associated with the lack of public transport facilities in the Mulgrave area. After 7 p.m. train services cease. Young people who want to travel by train to town after 7 p.m. have no public transport and so must find their own transport. It is an indication of how little the government cares for the public transport users in the Mulgrave area.

I return to the use of public transport and defy any honourable member to indicate that he or she has used public transport more than I have since I have been a member of this House. I have made it a point to use public transport. The trains are a disgrace. On all the trips I have made back and forth to Glen Waverley, I have never seen a representative of the Police Force or the railways supervising the young people or anyone else travelling late at night. I have never seen anybody supervising the trains on those midafternoon weekday trips when many school children travel. There has never been an official of the railways or a member of the Police Force who has said, "Stop that unruly behaviour; stop putting your feet on the seats; move your bags away

so that ordinary members of the paying public can move comfortably through". There is no supervision on the trains from my observations.

The Minister for Transport cannot say that he has control of the trains because he has not. Victorian trains are still covered with graffiti. Prior to the October election, I thought the government had come to grips with the problem of graffiti, but as soon as the election was over the graffiti returned. The state of hygiene on trains is just as bad; it is appalling, as is the dirt, the rubbish, the filth of the trains! There is graffiti on the windows, the walls and the ceilings! The seats are ripped as well! These aspects frighten travellers.

Older people ring my office and ask when the government is going to do something to improve the safety of public transport users. The condition of trains causes a feeling of disquiet. The graffiti on trains engenders fear into older people, even before they board the train. As I have witnessed on many occasions, the behaviour of many young people travelling on the trains is appalling.

I turn to another area of law and order about which grave concern is being felt by people in my electorate. It is the harassment by prisoners within the prisons system. Today prisons seem to be run not by the government or the prison authorities but by the prisoners themselves. Let me illustrate this point by informing the House of two letters of which I received copies. These letters are written from a prisoner to a prosecutor. Under this government I suggest discipline in the prisons has reached rock bottom. The government actively encourages prisoners to make telephone calls, not only out of Pentridge Prison but out of all prisons, and also to take advantage of encouraging uncensored mail to be posted from Pentridge Prison.

The letter to which I refer is on government paper and the postage is at government expense. The copy of the letter to a prosecutor I would think is typical of the letters that prisoners are writing to their victims whom they intend to intimidate when they get out, or even worse. They also write intimidating letters to witnesses or even police. This is probably the first time I have heard of a letter being written to a prosecutor and indicates that we have reached rock bottom.

I am happy to allow honourable members to see copies of these two letters. They are from a prisoner whose name I do no not propose to put into the *Hansard* record at this stage but, if members want it, it is here. The letter is to a Prosecutor for the Queen. Some parts of the letter are whited out. It states:

> When do you intend to acknowledge my letter . . .

he goes on to quote dates—

> . . . as well as my many other correspondences? When do you intend to set the record straight regarding what occurred at my appeal, your knowledge, your discussions you held with my lawyers concerning Chief Inspector . . .

That part has been whited out. Honourable members should listen to the next part, which is the worrying section of the letter. This prosecutor has been receiving similar letters at least once a week since last October. The letter states, "I will never ever stop writing to you" words whited out "uphold your theoretical and legal obligation and acknowledge this serious matter".

I have another letter which is much the same. It states, "I will never cease writing to you, mate, until you set the record straight".

This prosecutor is naturally extremely worried. He is concerned that his home address will be found out and his family intimidated. Thank goodness, at this stage that has not happened. He has reported that matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the letters have gone round the mill.

The main problem is that the regulations the government has brought in allow prisoners to harass their victims. At Coburg prisoners can make three approved telephone calls through the switchboard. These are free calls. Any prisoner in the other twelve prisons can make any number of phone calls from the pay phones that are there. Obviously prisoners can organise crimes from within the prison and organise drugs to be brought into the prison. They can also use the telephone system rather like the letters, to harass their victims, witnesses, police and, indeed, the latest class of victims, their prosecutors.

Nothing is happening! This government has made it so easy that our prisons are no longer places of correction as they are meant to be. They have become safe havens for prisoners to improve their techniques and carry out further illicit activities. This is something about which all honourable members will feel extremely concerned and disgusted.

In very serious cases prisoners ought to be serving hard labour instead of lying on bunks, with their feet up watching television. On my visits to Pentridge Prison and other prisons that is the order of the day. Prisoners are not serving sentences as one would expect, but rather leading a hotel-like guest existence in the prisons. This is another area that very much concerns people in my electorate.

I refer to a public meeting I held recently at the Waverley Civic Centre which was attended by more than 200 representatives. I invited all local Parliamentary and Waverley City Council members to come and discuss with the ratepayers and other residents of Waverley the great concern for law and order in our municipality. The response was overwhelming. The publicity received from the local paper, the *Waverley Gazette* and the turnout by local members of Parliament was indeed very reassuring to the people who attended the meeting. The idea was for members of Parliament to listen to what the people had to say and to take back to government the concerns of the people.

The meeting was on 13 February and I wrote a letter to the Premier on 16 February giving him a one-page resumé of the findings of the meeting. To date I have not even received an acknowledgement from the Premier or his department. If the Premier or the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, to whom I also sent a copy of the letter, are serious and find it objectionable to write to a Liberal member of Parliament, I suggest they write to the editor of the *Waverley Gazette,* Mr Vivian Theobold. Mr Theobold was very much instrumental in helping to organise this public meeting through publicity in the local paper. The meeting was apolitical, of that I can assure honourable members. We wanted to hear the concerns of the people.

I am sure honourable members will be interested in some of the concerns. Deep concern was expressed over the administration of the criminal justice system and many people at the meeting gave anecdotal experiences. They were particularly concerned at the leniency of sentences for serious offences and the ease with which offenders evaded serving the full sentence imposed on them by judges and magistrates. The big message that came out of the meeting was concern that prisoners in gaol should be serving minimum sentences. People at the meeting said that the government must take initiatives to restore the feeling of security which has disappeared during the past decade. That is a far cry from the passages that I read out of the Governor's Speech written by the government for him which completely contradicted the reality of what is occurring in the suburbs and the feelings of the ordinary people who turned up at that meeting.

It would not surprise honourable members to know that police powers were discussed at the meeting. Resolutions were passed recommending that police be permitted to take the names and addresses of suspects and their fingerprints, without administrative

hindrance, together with the power to obtain body samples and conduct identity parades whenever necessary. Another broad motion which came out of the blue and which I found a little unexpected was the motion calling for the raising of the drinking age to 21 years, accompanied by severe penalties on suppliers of alcohol to underage drinkers. It was also recommended that local councils be given power to limit alcohol consumption in public places and to allow alcohol-free areas to be created.

The next idea I am about to outline I have heard suggested many times so it was not surprising to me. There was a further motion which called on the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to introduce a pilot scheme in Waverley involving intensive patrolling of the area using an additional staff of twenty police officers.

The idea was to combat, in a positive way, the rate of burglaries occurring in the Waverley area. The responses from the 200-plus people at the meeting suggest that the government would not find it difficult in many cases to implement. It would find them fairly easy because they are such commonsense suggestions. Therefore, the meeting found, as we have all expected, a certain hostility to the legal profession and to the judiciary. I must admit I found that surprising to begin with, but in the end, with the examples that the people present gave, it was not exceptional. They wanted to see light prison sentences increased. They were sick to death of the revolving door policies that the government has allowed to occur.

In other words, out there is a great deal of discontent about law and order. The people want to see the government taking positive action, and if the government cannot bring itself to respond to the letter I wrote to the Premier, then surely to goodness it should find time to write to Mr Vivian Theobald, editor of the *Waverley Gazette* and give him the government's response because, unless it does, its reputation in the Waverley district is completely shattered.

I place on record my appreciation to the electors of Glen Waverley for the support I have had in the past four years.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—Such has been life in the legislature of Victoria since the opening of this Parliament on 25 October 1988 that Parliament has not been able to complete the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech until now, but I am nevertheless pleased to be able, belatedly, to contribute tonight.

I pledge the loyalty of the people in the electorate of Swan Hill to Her Majesty the Queen and also to the Governor. I should also like to congratulate the Speaker on his elevation to that position, and I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your appointment. I know that both yourself and the Speaker will carry out your responsibilities to the best of your abilities, and I am sure that Parliament will be the better for it.

I also take the opportunity, belatedly, of congratulating all members of Parliament who have joined us since the 1 October 1988 election. Although we enjoyed their maiden speeches, it would appear that most of the government members since then have been rather quiet, except for a couple. I look forward to the challenge that new members bring to Parliament, and also the expertise that they bring with their different opinions; the wider the range of ideas and thought brought to this place the better Parliament will work. The contribution of honourable members ensures even more that the government is accountable to Victorians and that the Premier and Ministers in this place will account for the stewardship they have in the government of this State.

The Swan Hill electorate is a lot different from the electorates that have already been mentioned today. It is a rural electorate which spreads from Robinvale in the north down to Wedderburn in the south, taking in a huge range of farming interests,

from the dried fruit, citrus and horticultural industries of the Murray Valley to the goldmining and fossicking areas of the golden triangle at Wedderburn.

It also covers the area from Birchip in the far west of the electorate, in the middle of the Mallee, across to Koondrook on the River Murray. As a result, it is an electorate with a whole range of interests that do not yet receive much recognition in this place.

The electorate of Swan Hill, and particularly the smaller towns in the area, are going through a restructuring and a change. Interestingly enough, in his contribution, the honourable member for Mornington talked about the costs of city living and the enormous pressures being brought to bear on cities at the moment. I assure him that a similar situation exists in small towns. Although costs of living in the city of Melbourne are high and a lot of pressure is brought to bear as urban Melbourne spreads—which is having a detrimental effect on people who are unable to keep up with the growth and pace of Melbourne—in country Victoria a restructuring phase is also occurring. We are probably three-quarters of the way through a restructuring phase of the rural areas of the Mallee. This has been going on since about 1985.

As changes have been brought to bear, many people have left. The interesting thing is that the homes that were located in country Victoria have been occupied by those very same people who have found the pressure and the pace of life in Melbourne to be far too difficult for them. Many people who have dropped out of Melbourne have moved into cheaper housing in small country towns. They are mainly divided families—single mums—or people moving out of the lower social echelons of Melbourne.

An interesting problem has developed where the two cultures are clashing a little—the conservative country people in the small towns are finding it difficult to get to know and understand these new people who are coming away from the metropolitan area. For the first time in many areas we have troubles in our schools. When I say troubles, I mean that social battles are taking place in country schools. The small country schools have been a delight for new teachers coming from the city colleges but now we are finding discipline problems because of the changing attitudes of the school communities. Over the next few years the people who have just arrived in our smaller communities will become part of those communities and will play a positive role in those towns.

The bigger towns of the electorate—Swan Hill, Kerang and Robinvale—are progressing slowly. Swan Hill is still held back a little by the effects of the rural crisis in the Mallee, but there are signs of improvement in all those communities.

It is interesting to listen to members of the government talking about the great things happening in the electorates they represent, and hearing them talk about all of the expenditures that government has made in their electorates. The honourable member for Mornington spoke earlier about the pork-barrelling by the Labor Party at the last election in an effort to unseat him. Unfortunately, those types of things do not happen in rural areas!

Honourable members hear a great deal about the government's social justice strategy, but I find it difficult to see evidence of it in rural areas. Unfortunately, my electorate is at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. If the government's social justice policy is to be implemented throughout the State, Ministers should pay more attention to electorates such as mine.

Mr Baker—And Sunshine!

Mr STEGGALL—And to electorates such as Sunshine, as the honourable member says! Although I appreciate the problems in his electorate, residents of Swan Hill are also in need of social justice.

For some time I have been trying to have a college of technical and further education established in my electorate. Sunraysia TAFE has been providing services to students in Swan Hill. But for the past three years, Swan Hill residents have been battling to have a campus of Sunraysia TAFE established in Swan Hill. At the end of last year, after the opening of the new TAFE campus in Mildura, Swan Hill received Mildura's cast-offs; for example, portable classrooms from Mildura were sent to Swan Hill for the establishment of that city's TAFE campus. Slowly but surely headway is being made.

A campus of the Loddon/Campaspe College of TAFE has been established in Kerang, but it has been difficult to achieve the participation rate that is needed. In many ways rural areas are being left behind—and I get into trouble in my electorate from time to time by saying such things. With the introduction of the Victorian certificate of education—VCE—the needs of TAFE students have become more important. As I said, attempts have been made to establish TAFE campuses in Swan Hill and Kerang. Ideally, residents of my electorate would like to see a joint campus of the Murray/Mallee College of TAFE established in those cities.

I hope the government will seriously consider that proposal. Because of the introduction of the VCE, and the training components within it, the establishment of such campuses is vital. If such towns in my electorate miss out, they will slip further behind and the level of skills required by the demands of the 1990s will not be met.

Reference was made in the Governor's Speech to the government's programs, its economic strategy and a wide range of other matters. The government has spent a great deal of time praising itself for the successes of its economic strategy. But the problems with the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, in particular, caused the government to revamp that strategy. The government boasts about its ability as an economic manager; but the Premier should carefully examine the evidence given by the Minister for Community Services to the Estimates Committee. During a hearing of that committee the Minister spoke about his portfolio and the need to increase funding because of emerging socioeconomic problems. The Minister referred to such problems as the increasing level of homelessness and increasing levels of unemployment. Of course, people in rural areas are aware of the problem of unemployment, particularly among young people—but that problem is not being addressed by the government. The Minister referred to:

> . . . the pressures put on those families and individuals, particularly young people; also, the increasing number of children of low-income sole breadwinner families living in poverty and the increasing number of older people with increasing levels of frailty and dependence; also, the increasing number of disabled people living longer, their families, and the increasing levels of work force participation by women, resulting in a greater demand for child-care services.

When one considers that statement by the Minister one wonders whether the government is on the right track.

For a long time members of the National Party have argued that the economic thrust of government policies—with their continual concentration on the economic development of the metropolitan area—is putting enormous pressure on rural areas. In a fortnight's time honourable members will have the opportunity of debating the Children and Young Persons Bill, the problem of child abuse and the problem of violence in the home. With that in mind, the government, the media and members of the community should examine the types of problems that are worrying the Minister for Community Services.

For example, honourable members should examine the increasing level of homelessness among the young. The honourable member for Thomastown spoke about the success of the government's housing measures. I have not seen evidence of

that success in my electorate. Few honourable members have experienced the level of success of the government's policy to which the honourable member referred.

Time and again the Premier and the Treasurer point to the fact that Victoria has the lowest rate of unemployment of any State—a level that has been maintained for 70 consecutive months. But at the same time the Minister for Community Services is talking about the demands on his department caused by increasing levels of unemployment and the socioeconomic pressures that occur throughout society. Those problems are of great concern to many people.

Listening to members of the government one could think that they invented the term social justice; that is not correct. The term, adopted by the government and, to a lesser extent, the Commonwealth government, has come to mean all things to everyone, which is a great pity. All honourable members deal every day with the social needs of their constituents, and they are aware of the needs of people throughout society, particularly those who cannot withstand the pressures wrought by the dominance of big business and big government—and I referred earlier to the government's takeover of local government. The State is considered the "fix-it-all" by the government.

All the Bills that the government has been introducing appear to give the government total power over our lives and over the direction in which individuals and families are going. It appears that the Ministers and the members of the Labor Party believe for some reason that the State should have total power over what we do and what we have. They believe the government should have power over our children, over our families and over our work experience.

Mr Ross-Edwards—And over our money!

Mr STEGGALL—Yes, extremely so. Acceptance of the Labor Party is in a decline throughout Victoria because people are beginning to understand that the State government sees itself as the greatest do-gooder of all time and that it has the solution to all our problems. Of course it does not!

The cranes on the Melbourne skyline cause the Ministers to boast because they believe the cranes exemplify that the economic development of this State is good. The cranes may be good for the economic development of Melbourne and its greater urban area, but I assure honourable members that the cranes of Melbourne do not do a great deal for the employment rates or the education of people in country Victoria. I do not know how we can get this message across to the government. I do not believe we can get the message across because the government is interested only in what happens in the metropolitan area.

One matter that came through clearly during the last Federal and State election campaigns is that we have got into a situation in which the policies of the government and of the Opposition will be formed because of matters affecting marginal seats. Honourable members who hold safe electoral seats, whether Labor Party, Liberal Party, or National Party, should examine the direction in which they are heading because at the last State election the issues which were focused on were those that affected marginal seats.

We must ensure that factional fighting or bickering between conservative parties over minor differences ceases because there is no sense in exaggerating the minor differences between the two parties. Probably there is agreement between the parties on 98 per cent of the issues but because we are separated the differences are accentuated. That must stop because country people are the losers. The policies of country and provincial Victoria should be addressed by their representatives and we should be able to put in place policies that reflect the direction in which we wish to go. I hope that both conservative parties will work to achieve that goal. It is not much to ask.

Today is the 75th birthday of the National Party in Victoria. I am sure honourable members will join in extending our party good wishes. We will accept a bottle of wine at dinner, otherwise I shall have to shout!

Honourable members heard today that the honourable member for Sunshine will be the chairman of a panel to review agricultural research.

Mr Perrin—That is like Dracula being put in charge of a blood bank!

Mr STEGGALL—That is exactly what it will be like. So long as he does not do what he did with WorkCare, because agricultural research is an important part of our rural industries; it has been neglected for some time. Although the government said today that 40 per cent of the agricultural budget is used in research, honourable members must understand, when such a figure is quoted, that over the past six years the agriculture budget has been gutted by the government. Now we have a high proportion of private funding of the research area.

Research is important in this time of chemical use because people are now, because of the tremendous advances in technology, aware of the chemicals in our foodstuffs. The chemical residue in Australian food is much lower than it is in food in other countries around the world. The Labor government should consider reviewing agricultural research because it is funded not only by the State meeting the wages and so forth but also by chemical and phosphate companies who are researching in their area, but there is no research into farming without fertilisers and chemicals. The honourable member for Sunshine and his committee should examine research into farming without those substances. They make farming extremely difficult, as well as do high interest rates, for the survival of the family farm.

The Governor's Speech on 25 October 1988 outlined the government's program. Many of those matters have been debated, will soon be debated, or are already out of date, such as the economic strategy, which has already met its demise. I do not believe the direction in which the State is heading will benefit the majority of people in Victoria.

The people of Victoria will begin demanding that governments get their fingers out of their pockets and their lives. I hope, between now and the next State election, the conservative parties of this Parliament will be able to put forward a genuine alternative government so that the people of Victoria will have a clear choice to make when they are next asked to vote. If we do not offer a clear alternative government, Victorians will not give the National and Liberal parties the job of governing the State. All of us have a responsibility, particularly in the next few weeks, to try to bridge the gap and to ensure that this government does not get away as easily as it has in the past with the misleading and ill-directed policies that it has implemented in Victoria.

The sitting was suspended at 6.32 *p.m. until* 8.5 *p.m.*

Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool)—I welcome the opportunity of contributing to the debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. I commence by pledging my loyalty and that of the electorate of Warrnambool to Her Majesty the Queen. I express my appreciation and that of my electorate to His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs McCaughey for the way in which they have continued to carry out their role and function in this State.

They have applied themselves to their task in a commendable fashion; they have been able to make themselves available to people throughout the State. Every time that I have had the pleasure and privilege of welcoming the Governor and Mrs McCaughey to my electorate, they have certainly gone out of their way to make themselves available to the ordinary people. On occasions of official visits, one

sometimes gets caught up in the protocol, and there is no opportunity of allowing the ordinary, grassroots, people to have the pleasure of meeting visitors like the Governor and Mrs McCaughey, but they have certainly made sure that that does not happen during their term in that high office. I wish them well as they continue to carry out their important function.

I also express my appreciation to the electorate of Warrnambool for giving me the privilege of returning to this House again to represent them and charging me with the responsibility of expressing their views in Parliament. I hope, in the longer term, that my contributions in this place will be able to provide some benefits to those in country Victoria.

I also take this opportunity of congratulating the new members of Parliament on both sides of the House. In particular, I commend those who have made their maiden speeches, and I believe that is all of the new members. I am sure they will provide to this place a level of expertise that will enhance the functioning of the Victorian Parliament.

I extend a warm welcome and my congratulations to a most recent addition to this House, my Parliamentary colleague, the new honourable member for Rodney, who came to this place with a resounding win on 4 March last. Everyone who was privileged to hear his maiden speech will understand and realise that the National Party is extremely fortunate to have such a capable member in this place; we certainly wish him well in meeting his challenge of representing the electorate of Rodney.

I refer now to the issues to which the Governor referred in his Speech on 25 October 1988. Much was said about the challenges of the Cain government, what it has been able to achieve, and what it hopes to achieve. I shall commence my remarks about the State's economy and the disastrous position in which rural Victoria is placed by the Cain Labor government by quoting from the minutes of evidence of the Estimates Committee on the day on which the Minister for Community Services presented himself before the committee by invitation. I shall quote a brief passage of the statement that the Minister made to the committee before giving evidence and answering questions. He said:

> The major challenge for Community Services Victoria is to respond effectively and efficiently to increasing levels of need and demand for community services as a result of the changing social, economic and demographic environment. These include such things as the increasing level of homelessness, and unemployment with the pressures put on those families and individuals, particularly young people; also, the increasing number of children of low-income, sole breadwinner families living in poverty and the increasing number of older people with increasing levels of frailty and dependence; also, the increasing number of disabled people living longer, their families, and the increasing levels of work force participation by women, resulting in a greater demand for child-care services.

If taken as read, that statement is an absolute indictment of the economic mismanagement of the Cain government. It talks long and hard about the achievements made as a result of its economic management, but when one reflects on the words of the Minister for Community Services in relation to the increasing level of homelessness and unemployment and the number of children of low-income, sole-breadwinning families——

Mr Maclellan interjected.

Mr J. F. McGRATH—The honourable member for Berwick says that the Minister has not been listening to the Premier; one would agree with that after having read the comments of the Minister when he appeared before the Estimates Committee. The Minister is saying that the Cain government has not come to grips with the real issues affecting Victorian families. The statement talks long and hard about unemployment, but does not deal with the real issue. It tells us that Victoria had the lowest rate of

unemployment of any State in Australia over 70 months, but does not say that when the Cain government came to power in 1982, 110 800 people were unemployed. Of that number, 85 700 were registered as unemployed in the metropolitan area, and the figure had increased to 90 600 in 1988.

Many people would say that that is not a significant increase, but the government does not mention the statistics relating to the unemployed outside the metropolitan statistical area which should be considered before the government makes misleading and outrageous statements about Victorian unemployment levels.

At April 1982, 25 100 unemployed people were based outside Melbourne, and that number had increased to 47 800 in February 1988. That is an effective increase of 90 per cent in the number of unemployed outside the metropolitan area during the reign of the Cain government. The government has the audacity to claim that it has come to grips with unemployment, but the Minister for Community Services does not seem convinced. It would be difficult to convince Victorians of the government's claim when those statistics are taken into account.

It is time for the Victorian public to be made fully aware of the government's direction in relation to unemployment. Much is said about unemployment and its impact on people in rural areas and in the provincial cities. One should examine the statistical data supplied by the Parliamentary Library, including statistics on the percentage of annual incomes that commence at $9000 a year and the location of those affected. Not only is there a totally unacceptable level of unemployment because of the 90 per cent increase in unemployment in country areas over six and a half years, but also the government rates disastrously in country Victoria in relation to salary levels as distributed among electorates.

Of the 30 electorates in which the minimum $9000 a year salary levels applied, 24 are in country Victoria. To break that statistic down even further, eighteen of twenty electorates are in rural areas. Is it any wonder that whenever it has the opportunity the National Party raises in the House the problems that beset country Victorians?

It does not deny that the majority of Victorians live in the metropolitan area and that the government should provide the services on an equitable basis. The National Party unashamedly states that country people need a fair and equitable distribution of resources and funding from the State government. They do not receive that share at present.

The treatment of the Cain Labor government on the subject of decentralisation has been disastrous. In my electorate the organisation known as Fletcher Jones and Staff Pty Ltd needs no introduction. It has had a long and consistent involvement with its employees, particularly with its successful potential bonus-earning scheme. The government has dismantled the decentralisation policies put in place by the previous Liberal government, particularly those honed and implemented by the former Minister for State Development and Decentralization, the Honourable Murray Byrne, in a ten-point plan. The plan was instrumental in developing much industry in the country, thereby leading to significant financial benefits to rural Victoria.

The government has withdrawn those incentives and removed some of the legislation that supported decentralisation. That action is difficult to understand when one considers the policies of the New South Wales Labor government prior to the Greiner–Murray coalition government coming to power. The same situation applies in South Australia, where encouraging incentives continue to be provided for the establishment of businesses.

Fletcher Jones and Staff Pty Ltd has lost 160 jobs to South Australia in the past eighteen months because the Victorian government does not provide incentives for

expansion, so the South Australian government was able to attract those jobs. That must be an indictment of the Victorian Labor government. The New South Wales government is attracting industry across the River Murray while the South Australian government is attracting business over its border. Victoria is losing jobs. Is it any wonder that country Victoria has experienced a 90 per cent increase in unemployment over the past six and a half years?

The situation will only worsen if the government continues with its present attitude towards decentralisation and employment opportunities. The importance of primary industry in the overall welfare of Victoria and of Australia is being ignored when one considers the export earnings and the multiplier effect of primary industry on added job opportunities in relation to Victoria's economy.

The government has not considered the importance of the Victorian primary industry in providing cheap good quality food for all Victorians, remembering that a large percentage of them live in the metropolitan area. For example, 10 000 dairy farms in Victoria provide a quantity of market and manufacturing milk through the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority at 13 cents a litre less than the New South Wales dairy farmers can provide milk to the New South Wales consumers. I should have thought that fact would have deserved some support and encouragement when a higher level of efficiency is applicable in the dairy industry.

Government support is not there. The government is deregulating the milk industry in the hope of obtaining a cheaper commodity for metropolitan consumers. The buck has to stop somewhere. If the producer is continually being screwed, he will eventually go out of business or be taken over by multinational companies. The result of that in the dairy industry or any other primary industry will be disastrous for the consumers in this State because prices will escalate. I fail to understand the philosophy of a government that would enable monopolies and conglomerates to take over the vital food industries of our State.

Country Victoria has many areas of concern. I cannot mention the problems involved without talking about roads. Roads are the vital link with everything that happens in country Victoria. Because 40 per cent of our export earnings comes from primary industry, it is fair to say that the network of arterial and local roads that carry goods to consumers in the city or to the wharves for export is vitally important. The performance of the Federal and State governments in relation to road funding can best be described as deplorable. The road network is disintegrating before our eyes.

Municipal engineers estimate that roads should be reconstructed every 25 years. That estimate was formulated five years ago and was based on the condition of roads, the amount of transport, and the weight carried. Many municipalities are funded on the basis of a 50-year maintenance cycle. Some are based on an 80-year maintenance cycle. The result is the disintegration of the road network. Honourable members should consider the impact of that.

I debated this issue in the House some eighteen months or two years ago. I spoke about a road in the electorate of Warrnambool and the problems it created for the people who traversed it because of the front end and undercarriage damage it did to their vehicles. An interjection from the back bench of the government side was, "Why don't you use public transport?" That typifies the lack of understanding by government members of services available in country Victoria. On the road that I was speaking about, and on many country roads, no public transport is available. There are no buses, certainly no trams, and very few trains serve the area except on the main line from Warrnambool to Melbourne.

I recognise that the government has provided an excellent train service from Melbourne to Warrnambool. However, one must consider the broader picture. The

main line runs directly from Warrnambool to Melbourne. What happens to the country 3 kilometres from that line and beyond? The electorate of Warrnambool covers 5000 square kilometres. What do the people who live 200 kilometres from Warrnambool do for transport? The answer is that they provide their own. They purchase the large volumes of fuel needed to traverse those roads. They are paying huge sums of excise which are being swallowed up not necessarily by the State coffers but by the Federal government to the tune of $7 billion a year, but less than one-fifth of that amount comes back for road maintenance.

Anyone who can convince me that that is an equitable distribution of taxes and charges is a better man than I am, Gunga Din! I cannot accept that that is the deal that country people are expected to take. The services are not provided and country people are hit by enormous costs for fuel and the provision of private vehicles. The amount of taxes being taken from them in the purchase of their vehicles, fuel, tyres and so on is inequitable. By not returning any benefits to country people in the form of better roads, the government is placing an enormous burden on them.

One cannot adequately cover all the issues one would like to in the time available. I have already mentioned the importance of agriculture in this State. Much has been said recently about the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the cloud that that has cast over the government's financial management, albeit that the current debate is about the government's financial management and economic strategy.

Honourable members know the current situation with the VEDC and I do not intend to canvass the issue tonight except to say that I and my National Party colleagues have grave fears about the impact of the VEDC on the traditional lending role of the Rural Finance Corporation.

Up until now neither the Premier nor the Treasurer has responded positively to questions about the VEDC and the Rural Finance Corporation. It is obvious that the $111 million losses will have to be found from somewhere else. We ask that the Rural Finance Corporation be not asked to cover those losses; it would downgrade the corporation's traditional lending role, which has been a significant part of primary industry in this State.

The government stands condemned for its financial mismanagement in allowing the loss incurred by the VEDC. It should also be condemned for transferring that loss to an efficient organisation such as the Rural Finance Corporation. That situation is causing grave concern in the electorate I represent.

In considering the policies and strategies of the government, one must also consider education. It is hard to mention education in country Victoria without mentioning the provision of transport for schoolchildren. Millions of dollars weekly are spent on the metropolitan train, bus and tram systems where losses are incurred caused partly by various concessions made to people including schoolchildren. The measly proportion of what is spent on transport in Melbourne that now helps in providing transport to schoolchildren in country areas is to be cut by $60 million under a rationalisation program that seeks to withdraw part of that service. If the government calls that social justice, it will pay the price at the next election.

People in glass houses are making decisions about bus routes that are affecting the lives of country students. In some country areas students have to leave home at 7 a.m. to catch buses to school and do not arrive home until 5 p.m. That is an unacceptably long day for children. A better system must be provided.

Another issue that concerns country members of Parliament is the provision of teacher housing and the selling off of houses that are categorised as not being required for occupancy.

It has been long established that the provision of housing in country Victoria has been significant in attracting appropriately qualified staff to teach at various country schools. The government's intention is to sell off most of the property without considering the need to give incentive in attracting teachers from Geelong or Melbourne, or wherever, to teach at a country secondary or primary school. It is another fire sale that the government is conducting in its efforts to balance the Budget. There are far better ways of attempting to balance the Budget than a fire sale.

I raise the issue of police powers and police numbers. Police numbers are of constant concern to country people. Of particular concern in country Victoria are the number of police stations that are closed at 5 p.m. and unmanned until 8 or 9 a.m. the next day. That means that the police stations in the larger provincial centres have to provide a service when an emergency arises. The police station at Warrnambool has to service Port Fairy, which is approximately 30 kilometres from Warrnambool. If there is an emergency, problems arise. That gives an idea of the anomaly of the system.

In Warrnambool, a house built in the 1860s was converted to service the accommodation needs of police. That same house that was built in the 1860s is still being used by the police and will, most likely, accommodate the police in 1990 or to the year 2000. That is a disgrace! The building is in a dilapidated condition and is falling down. The police in Warrnambool service the district from three separate locations because they cannot be accommodated in the inadequate and inappropriate conditions of that particular police station. It is not on the priority list because the government does not see many votes in the City of Warrnambool. The courthouse at Warrnambool has been under review for some years.

One could go on and talk about the deinstitutionalisation or ten-year program that has been referred to in respect of the Intellectual Disability Services Branch of Community Services Victoria. That has had a tremendous impact on the community and on the staff at Brierly Psychiatric Hospital who have pledged their lives as a career to look after those people, to develop a relationship with them and to improve their quality of life, something that the government talks about so often. What does the government intend to do? The quality of life of those people will be jeopardised by the ill-considered and impractical deinstitutionalisation program. The program will turn dependent people out into the streets to fend for themselves with what can only be described as minimal supervision. It is an absolute disgrace! The Minister for Community Services has much to answer for if he pursues that program. Recently two persons under that program were placed in serious legal circumstances because of the deinstitutionalisation program and the lack of supervision. It is one of the many areas in which government seeks to cut its funding, and that is having a disastrous effect in country Victoria.

My contribution to the Address-in-Reply debate has touched on only a few of the issues that affect country Victoria, which is suffering at the hands of the Cain government.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House. There are twenty members required in the Chamber and there are insufficient honourable members present to form a quorum.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Malvern that his action simply serves to disrupt the proceedings of the House and does not serve a useful purpose. His action is of a frivolous nature and the honourable member would

be well aware, as other honourable members are well aware, that there is no doubt that there are sufficient honourable members available in the building to constitute a quorum.

The honourable member's action simply seeks to exploit the provisions of the Standing Orders for no good purpose and does nothing to facilitate the proceedings of the House. It is certainly obvious to me and to the House that there is not a quorum of honourable members present in the Chamber at the moment. In those circumstances, I shall ask the Clerk to ring the bells until a quorum is present.

I repeat: the honourable member's action does nothing whatever to foster democratic debate or the proceedings of the House. I suggest that he very carefully consider his action and reflect on whether his action is in any way assisting good government in this State. It is not obvious to me, and I doubt whether it is obvious to any other honourable member, that his action is facilitating the good government of this State or the operations of this House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr LEIGH—I am delighted to have so many government members present in the House. It appears that the government Whip, at least in the long term, has earnt her money, unlike the former honourable member for Richmond who used to lose $10 every time a quorum was called.

I thank my constituents for electing me to the seat of Malvern and I pledge my allegiance to the Crown. I am privileged again to represent the Malvern electorate in this House. I shall raise a number of issues, both local and on a larger scale, that I regard as substantially important to the State in the 19 minutes that I have available to me.

Since the Minister for Transport, better known as Jim Dandy, is sitting opposite, I shall refer the House to the South-Eastern arterial road opening and the crass political opportunism of the gentleman sitting on the other side of the table. It is difficult to call him a gentleman!

At the beginning of the State election campaign last year the Minister for Transport, in his brilliance, decided to open the South-Eastern arterial road, or car park, as it is now called. The gentleman opposite was supposed to open the roadway on the Wednesday, but a brawl erupted between him and the Premier. The Premier won and he wanted to open it on the Friday; so Jim did not get to cut the ribbon.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should refer to the Minister by his proper title.

Mr LEIGH—The honourable member for the marginal seat of Broadmeadows did not cut the ribbon—the Premier did! The Premier decided to overrule the supposed next Premier of this State—at least that is the Minister's claim to fame. The government arranged for the opening and invited the local Labor candidates from around the area. I remind the House that the government did not open the whole arterial roadway, or car park. It opened only one section, so vehicles went from one traffic jam to another. I presume the Premier is a fan of *Star Trek* and intended to dematerialise the vehicles between the two arterial roads.

Mr Trezise interjected.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister for Sport and Recreation said it was a vote catcher. It appears that I have hurt the feelings of the Minister for Transport, and he is upset. This supposed vote catcher wound up an absolute farce. As the local member, I took exception to the games that people on the other side of the Chamber played in a

cynical ploy to gain votes. I do not believe the government gained many votes out of that exercise.

Mrs Wilson interjected.

Mr LEIGH—I do not oppose the freeway, but I oppose the nonsense that the government wants to enforce on people.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr LEIGH—You and the socialist left will not sort out the traffic lights and traffic jams.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Norris)—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr LEIGH—I am delighted to do so. The fact is that the honourable member for the marginal seat of Broadmeadows decided to have a road opening. He is happy about the chaos that road has led to morning after morning and night after night. He is happy because he is in his chauffeur driven limousine and, like the Premier, does not travel on freeways or arterial roads.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr LEIGH—You will be Premier for a very short time, so do not worry about it, buddy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will refer to other honourable members by their correct titles.

Mr LEIGH—He is not the hero of his working-class electorate. He lives in Ivanhoe, so he is a silvertail. He should go back to Ivanhoe and forget about the poor old people of Broadmeadows. He is not interested in them.

The Minister for Transport knew my position on this matter long before he became the Minister in that portfolio.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr LEIGH—I know where your mouth was!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! Is this a conversation across the table between the honourable member for Malvern and the Minister for Transport?

Mr LEIGH—You stop him from interjecting!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member for Malvern to kindly address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister for Transport is one of the typical, cynical politicians who is prepared to use people. He has done that in every portfolio in which he has been involved. People around the State are praying, "Please God, bring back Tom Roper". The current Minister is a disaster, and he knows it.

On behalf of my electorate, I say that we want proper noise barriers constructed and we want the road fixed up properly instead of being stuck with a jerry-built road constructed by the Road Construction Authority on an in-house contract. It is an outrage that my constituents must put up with the nonsense caused by the government not being prepared to spend money properly. The Minister for Transport wasted more than $140 million because he decided to use an in-house arrangement instead of using subcontractors to construct the arterial road.

One of the major differences between the government and the Opposition is that if the Liberal Party were building roadways it would use subcontracted labour and not the Road Construction Authority, which is capable only of making a mess. I bet any money that the Minister has not driven on that arterial road when the traffic chaos is occurring. No way! The Minister makes fun of my comment and is pulling faces like the big kid he is. He may be the Premier one day if he can beat good old Joan, the honourable member for Williamstown, but we shall see how long he lasts!

I shall refer to the cynical attempt by the local Labor Party candidate for the electorate of Malvern at the last State election to offer its citizens the site of the former College of the Bible as open space. The Minister and his crony said, "In principle, we offer the site to the citizens of Malvern". After the election, when the Labor Party did not win Monash Province, the Minister decided that, in principle, he was not in favour of that land being made available to the community for open space. Why? Once again it was one of the cynical ploys in which he takes part.

Perhaps the Minister will fool the socialist left and the Labor unity faction into giving him the Premiership of Victoria, but he will not fool the people of Victoria at the next State election after he has rolled John Cain. The Minister has not met the commitments he gave to the people in my area. The Labor Party candidate has disappeared into the bureaucracy from which he came and is not interested in living up to his commitments. He has shown himself to be a man lacking in principle because he has not kept the promises he made.

The honourable member for Bendigo West is nodding. He suffered the biggest swing against any member of the Labor Party in the State. He barely scraped home at the last State election, and he will not be around next time. He knows that; he has worked out his superannuation plan and knows what he will do. He will not be around, so he should not worry.

I shall now refer to what the Premier and members of the government say in their diatribe day after day in this House. They say that for 70 months Victoria has had the lowest unemployment figures in the country. That is interesting, but members of the government do not tell us that there has been a redistribution of House of Representative seats. Because of the decline in population, Victoria has lost one Federal seat in Parliament. There is an exodus of people leaving Victoria to live in other States simply because of the government's economic policies and the disaster it is inflicting on the people.

Members of the government cover it up with their glib statements and self-praise. Self-praise is no praise at all, and the government is full of itself. I cannot use the expression in this House, but the gentlemen on the other side of the Chamber are full of it.

Mr Brown—What about the ladies?

Mr LEIGH—And the ladies, too!

The government has lost hundreds of millions of dollars through the VEDC, the VIC, the VET and so on. That is probably the way members of the government learnt the alphabet; they learnt about the disasters they have inflicted on the community of Victoria. Where could the hundreds of millions lost on WorkCare, the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the Victorian Investment Corporation and the Victorian Equity Trust have been spent? Hundreds of thousands of people in this State are suffering from the policies inflicted on them by the government. Enormous amounts of money have been squandered because of the crazy schemes the government implements, which have not advantaged the lives of Victorians.

I shall refer to a case that has not had media or public attention. Honourable members will recall the case involving the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and Whipstick Gold Mining and Development Company Pty Ltd. That company received money on the basis of a goldmine. The gentleman involved was charged with and convicted of selling amphetamines. There is one common factor in goldmining and the production of amphetamines—I refer to cyanide. The government funded a drug deal! The goldmine did not exist; it has never operated. The gentleman concerned did not have a licence from the Department of Labour or the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources. A person convicted of drug offences used Victorian taxpayers money to fund the production of amphetamines.

The honourable member for Thomastown, who is interjecting, has probably not even bothered to find out what the Cabinet has done about that situation. She is in the dark in the mushroom club and is aware that she has no opportunity of participating in Cabinet. Her government participated in the sale of drugs in this State! That is an outrage of which most Victorians are unaware, and they should know about it.

The Liberal Party is often accused of not caring about those in need in the community. In 1949 Sir Robert Menzies first used the term "social justice". The Labor Party has pinched a lovely term that was meant to refer to the interests of people in the community who were in need. The Labor Party has prostituted the term. Social justice today means every slick trick the government can think of and every $1000 it can give to lesbian groups or other groups in the community. It does not mean anything for the average Victorian, and that is an outrage. Most Victorians do not realise the amounts of money that have been squandered by the government in the name of so-called social justice.

In the electorate I represent, old ladies who purchased their homes in the 1940s and 1950s have been forced out of their homes because they cannot afford the land tax payments. They want to remain in their homes because they have memories and their homes are part of their lives. They are being forced from their homes because they cannot find $1000 to pay in land tax in 30 days. The Treasurer has written to me about this situation and has said that the ladies are rich and can afford to pay land tax. They are rich in assets but they are cash poor. Members of the government do not care about that because my electorate is a safe Liberal Party seat.

Most Victorians crave a government that is not simply interested in political gimmicks; they want a government to govern for all Victorians. I do not care whether one lives in Broadmeadows, Malvern, Berwick, or anywhere else, one is entitled to be treated equally. This slick government looks after its mates first and everyone else second. It is no coincidence that when the Labor Party and socialism are in power the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It is not members of the Liberal Party who sit beside Alan Bond at important functions smoking big cigars and wearing tuxedos. Members of the Labor Party have sold out to big business and have sold out the average workingman. The honourable member for Dandenong should be ashamed of himself for supporting a Prime Minister who eats out of the hand of the likes of Alan Bond. The Prime Minister has sold out the people of Australia in the interests of what he thinks is pragmatism.

Mr Roper—What about John Elliott?

Mr LEIGH—Mr Elliott is a citizen of Victoria and gets treated in exactly the same way as any other person in the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party does not deal with Alan Bond in the same way as the Australian Labor Party, by chauffeuring him around and looking after him as one of its long-lost mates.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr LEIGH—When the Minister leaves Parliament, his mates will look after him. Many members of the backbench on the government side cringe every time they see a photograph of the Prime Minister, Alan Bond and Kerry Packer sitting together because it shows the difference between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party. The Liberal Party has compassion and cares for all individuals in society; whether they are members of trade unions or not, they deserve to be treated equally. The Labor Party looks after those with money; that is what the government is about.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEIGH—The honourable member for Sunshine is the architect of WorkCare. A former director, recently retired, has said that the scheme will collapse in two years time owing $5 billion.

Mr Baker—Rubbish!

Mr LEIGH—That comment was made by an expert in the field, so it is the honourable member for Sunshine who has the problem. Most Victorians could not conceive of $5 billion. They do not understand that the butcher from Broadmeadows, the Minister for Transport, is costing the State $1 billion a year in transport losses. The government's incompetence is costing Victorian taxpayers a tremendous amount of money.

I hope, whenever the next election is, that Victorians will get a government that is interested in people whether they live in Sunshine, Broadmeadows or Armadale. If we allow our society to continue in the way it is proceeding, the rich will get richer and the poor poorer and Australia will not last as a democracy.

It is strange that the liquidation of public companies has occurred under Labor administrations, to the detriment of the average person in society. Many members of the backbench of the government cringe every time Cabinet makes a decision.

One of the things that I found particularly offensive when I called for a quorum is that there are supposed to be a minimum of twenty members present in the Chamber——

Mr Ross-Edwards—Where were your members?

Mr LEIGH—There were at least ten members of the Opposition but only two government members present, yet it is the government's responsibility to ensure that there is a quorum in this Chamber. It is atrocious that the government Whip should sit in the Chamber in a fit of giggles but beg her fellow socialist mates to stay out of the Chamber. I do not care whether the Chamber establishes a world record for calling quorums.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister for Transport should get on with his job in order to benefit Victorians. The government is a disaster and the sooner Victorians can get rid of it the sooner they will benefit.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—I am embarrassed that I have to follow such an extraordinary performance from the honourable member for Malvern. I am informed that the honourable member has made history by calling for a quorum when he was already speaking on the motion.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Mr Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

The SPEAKER—Order! I direct honourable members to a precedent, a ruling by Speaker Edmunds, which, as in all cases, provides a precedent to guide succeeding

Speakers. On 14 April 1988 at page 1396 of *Hansard*, Speaker Edmunds is recorded as having said:

> . . . I direct the attention of the House to what has been said at previous times about the continuous calling for quorums:
>
> . . . a member having sought to have the Bells rung again, the Chairman refused to ring the Bells ruling that it was entirely within the Chair's discretion whether he did so."
>
> That refers to a decision made by a Chairman Coyle, reported in *Hansard* Vol. 211, pages 1125 to 1127 in 1941. A second reference is made by Speaker Knox in 1942. Although a fair passage of time has elapsed between those events and today, I intend in the future, if there are continuous disruptions of the proceedings by calling quorums for no reason other than an interjection suggests that somebody is attacking somebody else—which is, in my view, a puerile attitude to take—to exercise my discretion on the matter of quorums and I shall refuse to ring the bells to summon members.

I believe that is an appropriate precedent for me to rely on in these circumstances and I call on the honourable member for Sunshine to continue.

Mr BROWN (Gippsland West)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I seek clarification on the ruling you have just given, because unless I have been mistaken there have not been continual callings of quorums. Admittedly I have not been in the House all the time, but I understand there has been only one quorum called since dinner and two quorums have been called for the full day's sitting.

I put it to you, Mr Speaker, that in no way could that be construed as a continual calling of quorums in this Chamber and, therefore, there has been no unreasonable disruption of the proceedings. Standing Orders state that honourable members have the right to call quorums and unless and until Standing Orders are changed it has been the ruling of successive Speakers over the past 40 years or more that the calling of quorums is in order unless, as you have just ruled, there has been a continual calling of quorums over a relatively short period.

Mr Speaker, the calling to your attention of the state of the House is correct under Standing Orders, and I urge you to reconsider your ruling. You, being a relatively new Speaker, will set a precedent that will be upheld by other Speakers and that would be a pity because it is important that new precedents, which will stay in place for many years to come, should be set only after full consideration of the facts.

I have no doubt that there has not been continuous or undue disruption in this House by the calling of quorums and I respectfully ask you to give further consideration to whether you may have been too hasty in giving that ruling on the basis that the House has been unduly disruptive.

I believe the honourable member for Shepparton is in order in directing your attention to the state of the House and to the fact that it does not have the prescribed number of members for normal business to continue.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order——

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the honourable member for Malvern indicate whether he has a further point of order or whether he is speaking on the point of order raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

Mr LEIGH—I wish to add to the point of order.

The SPEAKER—Order! I shall hear the honourable member for Malvern on the point of order raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr LEIGH—I believe the last time this issue was raised, 27 quorums were called by the Opposition that day. From my recollection, I called fifteen of those quorums and the rest were called by other members of the Opposition.

Only two quorums have been called tonight, one of which was called by me. When the 27 quorums were called, the Speaker at the time made a ruling because there had been a large number of quorums called. I have some difficulty understanding how you, Mr Speaker, can adopt that precedent when there were 27 quorums called at that time and only two tonight.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I deferred speaking on the point of order while you, Mr Speaker, were consulting with the Clerk. However, it should be urged on you that precedents like this should not be set merely because of your own view of Standing Orders. Standing Orders are not Mr Speaker's Standing Orders; they are the Standing Orders of the House, and the House has established a Standing Orders Committee to examine the Standing Orders from time to time and recommend changes to them.

I understand that has not been the situation yet in regard to the Standing Order regulating quorums. For you, Sir, to produce a ruling by former Speaker Edmunds and to proceed to give a ruling on the matter without hearing any honourable member on the subject while on your feet—making it impossible for any other honourable member to rise, in view of your recent attitude to disturbances of the House while you are on your feet—means that you launch into making a decision or a ruling without any honourable member having an opportunity of being heard on the subject.

The difference has now been forcefully pointed out between the number of quorums in the period in relation to which you quoted the ruling of former Speaker Edmunds and the number of quorums today.

I do not know whether it is in your mind to suggest that the honourable member for Shepparton, a former Leader of the National Party and a greatly respected member, was flippantly directing your attention to the state of the House. In the course of your ruling you totally ignored the fact that the honourable member for Sunshine, who was on his feet, was referring to quorums during his remarks and that the Minister for Transport was referring to quorums by way of interjection during the remarks of the honourable member for Sunshine, and the matter was being raised quite widely within the House before the formal raising of it by the calling for a quorum by the honourable member for Shepparton.

I, Sir, consider that the Standing Orders are the Standing Orders of the House and you are the guardian of them, and guarding them does not mean rating them down to suit the temporary feeling of frustration and annoyance at what might have happened previously.

I suppose it would be appropriate to consider confining your ruling to a situation as it happens and as I understand it that is unique, where there was a long delay in the forming of a quorum when the honourable member for Malvern called for a quorum at the beginning of his own remarks, thereby depriving himself of time. That marks off the situation today from every other situation.

However, to say that on a day from here until the end of time it would not be appropriate to twice call for quorums seems to me to be taking control of Standing Orders in a way that deprives the Standing Orders Committee of the ability to advise you on the subject or to advise the House as to its collective views.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—On the point of order, this House has been in existence since 1856 and you have often said, Mr Speaker, it is the master of its own destiny and does not heavily follow the traditions of Westminster. As you would be aware, Sir, in Westminster there are different traditions on this matter.

The Standing Orders of this House require that, if the state of the House is directed to the attention of the Speaker and a quorum is not present, the bells are then rung.

The situation that has occurred in this House is that on only one occasion, as I understand it, did a Speaker refuse to call a quorum and that was in 1942.

I am not aware of the circumstances surrounding that matter, but it did occur during wartime, and there may have been some other function being conducted at that particular time that meant the call for a quorum was not reasonable. However, by using as a precedent that one instance in 1942 since the Standing Orders came into being, you are, yourself, creating a precedent by refusing the calling of the quorum by the honourable member for Shepparton.

As was pointed out by the honourable member for Berwick, your responsibility is to be the guardian of the Standing Orders and not the arbiter of them. The proper course to be followed as you have made plain on previous occasions, if you discard this particular Standing Order, is for the Standing Order to be altered through the appropriate committee of Parliament.

I urge you, Mr Speaker, to uphold the Standing Orders, whether you agree with them or not; otherwise you are not only setting a precedent with respect to this particular Standing Order, but you are also creating a precedent which could be applied to every Standing Order and which could no doubt be used by future Speakers against the will of the House.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, as I understand it, you are relying on a precedent that recognises that, in certain cases, the House can be unduly disrupted by the calling of quorums notwithstanding sufficient members being in the building and, in that rare circumstance, the Speaker, on that occasion, decided that it was more important that the business of the House proceed even though the requisite number of members was not in the Chamber.

I know you would agree that it is more than desirable—in fact, it is essential—that the minimum number of honourable members be in the House. That is something we should all insist on, and only in the rarest case should one ever countenance that the requisite number of members not be in the House.

As I understand it, if you propose to rule that the Standing Orders should not be complied with and that the bells should not be rung in order to get the requisite minimum number of members in the House, by inference—and expressly—you are saying that the precedent that you are creating is that, on a set day such as this, it was found by the Speaker that the bells should not be rung and that the Standing Orders should not be used when, in this case, there were only two occasions when a quorum had been requested in the whole day. It is now 9.20 p.m. and the House has been sitting since 2 p.m. That is quite a long time.

I am sure, Mr Speaker, you would recognise the danger of that. No circumstances would justify a precedent being established in 1989 that would affect the future operation of this House, which precedent says that the bells should not be rung when there is not a requisite number of members present in the House when only two quorums have been called during the entire day. Such a precedent would haunt this House and, with great respect to you, yourself as Speaker for a long time.

It is a matter of determining on balance whether the former Speaker's ruling should be applied strictly or whether it should be applied only after the requisite evidence of disruption and unreasonable use of calling for the bells to be rung has been before the Speaker. In this case, that has not been established.

As the honourable member for Berwick said, the quorum was called by one of the most senior members of this House, the honourable member for Shepparton, recently the Leader of the National Party. He has much experience in these matters. If you, Mr

Speaker, were to rule against the calling of a quorum, you would be ruling that one of the most senior members of this House has acted frivolously without regard to the business of the House and with the intention of disrupting the House. That would not be so. Mr Speaker, if you rule against the Standing Orders being used in this case you would also add to the danger of a precedent being established tonight and that should not occur. I ask you to permit the Standing Orders to remain as they are without establishing a precedent that would haunt this House for a long time to come.

The SPEAKER—Order! On the point of order, the first point that will be obvious to all honourable members is that there is a quorum present in the House, so that issue does not arise.

The second point I make is that the action I have taken is in no sense an attempt to create a new Standing Order or to amend Standing Orders unilaterally or to use the powers of the Chair to introduce a new Standing Order. The responsibility of the Chair is to protect and preserve the rights of honourable members, and in so doing to maintain order in the House and, concurrently of course, to ensure that there is not undue disruption which inhibits or interferes with the rights of honourable members to make their contributions to debate in this House.

In the particular matter under discussion on the point of order, the Chair has a discretion and that discretion is being exercised. It is not a matter of establishing a precedent; it is a matter of relying on a precedent which is now of many years standing. As I indicated earlier, decisions of previous Speakers are binding on successive Speakers, so that I am bound by the precedents established by Speaker Edmunds, Speaker Knox, and all other Speakers.

My ruling in this case—firstly, on the quorum call and, secondly, on the point of order raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—is entirely in accordance with those precedents established by former Speakers. There is no point of order.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—I am most flattered that the Opposition does not want to hear me speak at length. In accordance with the forms and conventions which accompany a speech on the adoption of an Address-in-Reply, I congratulate the Governor on his excellent address, which gave an outline of the government's vision and policies for the future.

I also take the opportunity of congratulating you, Mr Speaker, on your appointment to that office. I have known you for some time and believe you to be a person of perspicacity, sagacity and great intellectual substance.

The honourable member for Malvern made some remarks about the Labor Party and how it is going. I was most interested in those remarks. I was proposing to talk about other matters but I shall give some kindly gentle advice to the members of the Liberal Party. Honourable members on this side of the House do not want to gloat but, last Saturday, members of the Liberal Party once again confronted the spectre of defeat. Your heads are down and your socks are down.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should address the Chair.

Mr BAKER—The heads of the Opposition members are down and their socks are down and they are, from our perspective, a rather sad and sorry lot. There are reasons that can be analysed for the change in the fortunes of the Liberal Party; they have come so far and they are now confronted with the prospect of a Labor culture emerging. A quarter generation of people have never known anything other than a Labor government. It is a long way back there for them; we can see that in the way their heads are down and we can see it in their eyes.

Some social factors and changes in our society over the past decade or fifteen years have not been understood by the Liberal Party. Their members have not been able to quantify them.

The first of those factors is the effects of Bob Menzies' mass education scheme. I give him credit for that scheme; it produced a range of people on this side of the House—particularly on the front bench—who can more than match members opposite in terms of training and intellectual standing. Worse than that, they can make you look as if you are playing the fifths.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should address the Chair and use the third person when referring to members of the Opposition.

Mr BAKER—The Opposition no longer has the intellectual weight to stand and deal with and take on the hard task of framing policies and confronting conceptual matters, as is necessary when one is in opposition.

The second factor to which I refer is the major change in the role of women in our society. Women have been emancipated and the participation rates of women in the work force have soared by comparison with the figures for the 1960s and even the early 1970s. Something of the order of 55 per cent of adult women work regularly in the work force. That has brought with it the increased unionisation and politicisation of women, with a much better understanding among women of the political process, the trade union movement, and the Labor Party which was spawned by the trade union movement.

The third factor is the rise of the managerial class. The Liberal Party never cottoned on to that. No longer do people from wealthy families control capital as a matter of course. There is a new managerial class and they are represented and quite often better known and understood by people on the government side of the House rather than——

Mr Coleman interjected.

Mr BAKER—I could not contemplate any of my contemporaries from the business school at the University of Melbourne talking to the honourable member for Syndal—or to any of that dopey lot on the front bench—about matters relating to business.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Speaker, I direct to your attention the remarks of the honourable member for Sunshine—which you might not have heard—which related to a general slur of dopeyness—if I can put it that way.

I understood, Mr Speaker, that it was one of your responsibilities to uphold Standing Orders. One of the Standing Orders states that honourable members must not make imputations about other members.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Berwick has drawn attention to an expression used by the honourable member for Sunshine and clearly believes it to be offensive to certain honourable members. I ask that the expression be withdrawn.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—I accept the point of order, Mr Speaker, and I certainly withdraw the remark. As I was saying, few people with that sort of training would bother to even talk about business or management matters, major conceptual or economic matters or strategic matters of any kind, with a large majority of members of the Opposition and certainly the large majority of its front bench.

The other factor that none of us could have properly foreseen is the effect of the period of student dissent in the late 1960s and early 1970s on campuses around the country, particularly in Victoria, and, whatever the ideological position, the effect of the Vietnam war on the political perspectives of one-quarter to one-half of a generation of Australian people. Members of the Opposition have to understand, if they are to

attempt to climb the long road back in any way whatever, that what happened then is that we stole to our side of politics half a generation of the best brains and the most gifted and talented people in the country as a consequence of the policies that the opposition parties adopted at that time. Worse, it is the opportunity cost of that loss that corrupts the Liberal Party and the National Party—not that anyone of any intellect ever went into the National Party, but there was a great loss to the Liberal Party of those good brains, the drive and the ability to develop policies and go forward into the future.

We on this side of the House should not be smug today about the great victory in Greensborough. We should look ahead to the future because it is a mellifluous victory.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has 2 minutes.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I believe the honourable member has been so unjustly treated in terms of his time, that I move an extension of 15 minutes.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is impossible at this stage of proceedings.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—"Mellifluous" by a literal definition means honey sweet. In the time available I just say that it is very important that the government continues with a program of reform, continues to seek major structural change, continues to pursue the light on the hill and continues to assure its supporters, without any sense of complacency, that it will continue to take the extra intellectual steps to make sure its policies and programs are designed to bring about major structural changes.

On the motion of Dr WELLS (Dromana), the debate was adjourned.

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

VALUATION OF LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from March 16) on the motion of Mr Walsh (Minister for Property and Services) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—On the face of it the Bill is a relatively simple measure although it deals with complex definitions which will be used for many years to come by valuers, municipal councils and other persons and bodies involved in the valuation of land process in Victoria. The purpose of the Bill is to actually achieve a transfer to the Valuation of Land Act of the valuation provisions that presently repose in the Local Government Act, particularly those dealing with the qualification of and discipline of valuers by the Valuers Qualification Board and in relation to general valuations.

As honourable members would know, some years ago the Valuer-General's Office was part of the responsibility of the Minister for Local Government. In fact, when I was Minister for Local Government, the office was part of the departmental structure for which I was responsible. In recent years the Cain government has, by administrative and legislative processes, transferred the responsibility for the Valuer-General's Office to the Minister for Property and Services and the Department of Property and Services. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, this Bill is intended in a way to provide for the "machinery of government", which is a quaint phrase and one wonders what it really means!

The Opposition will not oppose the proposed legislation but will seek a number of amendments. Indeed, the Opposition will be asking the Minister to elaborate on and explain a number of aspects of the Bill and its implications that are not clear from the second-reading speech and from the clauses in the Bill. These matters have been raised

by a number of associations and professional bodies and also in correspondence from some statutory authorities and other individuals who are interested in this process.

It may well be that the Opposition will move amendments in this place in the Committee stage which I hope the Minister will pick up. I understand the Minister may also be moving amendments as a result of some of the submissions we have all received. I make it entirely clear that the Opposition will be depending upon the explanations provided by the Minister. Members of the Opposition may well re-examine the matter while the Bill is between here and another place and they may wish to move further amendments in the Legislative Council. We hope that does not have to be the case, but it may well be.

Firstly, on behalf of the Opposition I pay tribute to the Valuer-General and his dedicated staff for the work they have been and are doing for the people of Victoria. It is an onerous task with great responsibility. It is one that requires great skill and dedication and it deserves the support of Parliament and of all members of the community.

The integrity of the Valuer-General has never been called into question, and the current Valuer-General, Mr D'Arcy, is a gentleman who performs his duties very well, and we wish him well in his task.

I must say that the Opposition is alarmed to note the difficulty that the Valuer-General and his staff are experiencing in dealing with the workload they have been asked to handle by the government. Indeed, the annual report of the Department of Property and Services is informative on this matter. It is only two or three pages long and I do not intend to read it to the House, but I recommend that honourable members examine the activities of the Valuer-General's Office for the year and note the massive extent of valuations that the valuers are required to perform.

For example, in the major projects area the report states that almost 18 000 valuations covering property worth $4739 million were carried out by the Valuer-General and his staff for client agencies last year. The Valuer-General has also been asked to provide expert advice and valuations for the government concerning the government's asset sales program, which we all know the government has embarked upon, particularly because of the serious financial position in which Victoria finds itself by reason of the massive debts that have been incurred by the Cain government since it was elected in 1982. Those debts are now crushing the people of Victoria and future taxpayers and, as a result of that, asset sales are now part of the government's financial strategy—its discredited financial strategy—in an effort to raise money from the sale of assets to help meet the interest debts of this State.

In the light of all of that, in recent weeks the Opposition has been alarmed that, so far as I am aware, the first ever stoppage by many of the valuers employed in the Valuer-General's Office took place. This was because of the government's failure to resource the Valuer-General's Office and provide adequate salaries and remuneration for the staff and for the Valuer-General.

Indeed, I understand that 20 or 30 vacancies exist in the Valuer-General's Office, and they cannot be filled because the salary that the government has agreed is available to those skilled people just does not match the salaries available in the private sector. The government has known about this for ages. It has known about the mounting concern and problems of loss of skilled people, particularly in the middle area of the profession, to the private sector. But, despite warnings from many, including me as the shadow Minister, the government has failed to arrange for a suitable work value case to be put to the State Industrial Relations Commission.

As a result, the frustration caused many of the valuers to stop work and have the first ever strike of valuers in this State, and what a tragedy that was. I understand the concern of many of those professional people who previously would never have contemplated going out on strike. They did it not so much for themselves but to emphasise in the only way they could what was happening to the work of the Valuer-General, which must be continued and kept up to date. These people had to signal in some way to the community that this was going on.

In practical terms the valuations of the Valuer-General's Office are usually carried out and made available within four weeks of requests. That is on average; but, as a result of the shortage of staff, the valuations are now being delayed by around about six months, and perhaps more. Unless the problem of adequate remuneration for valuers is resolved so that the Valuer-General can recruit and fill the vacancies and keep the staff he has left, the blow-out in turnaround time will go from six months to twelve months, and that will affect the government's Budget.

It will also affect the taxpayer because the asset sales will not be made in time or as quickly as they could have been made. Debt reductions will not be occurring, and the interest bill and capital repayments which we hope one day the government can make will be delayed, thus causing further problems.

So, in dealing with the Bill and seeing the provisions in the Local Government Act being transferred over to the Valuation of Land Act, we must note that at this time the Valuer-General's Office and his staff are not being looked after adequately by the government. I strongly criticise the government because of its failure to avert the problem, but I emphasise that, so far as I am aware, the problem still exists and the government has not resolved the problem and has not heeded my advice and arranged for an appropriate industrial arbitration body to deal with a work value case and let people put forward their points of view.

The private sector is paying approximately $45 000 to a middle-level valuer, and this includes a car and superannuation package, I understand. Valuers of equivalent experience in the Valuer-General's Office receive, at best, between $33 000 and $37 000, yet they have to stay there and put up with the frustrations as well, and it is no wonder they are leaving in droves and no wonder we have lost so many valuers to the private sector. That point needs to be addressed, and I throw down the gauntlet to the government and say that it must act. Its mismanagement and lack of positive action in this matter cannot be excused any longer.

In dealing with the Bill I was concerned that it purports to insert into the Valuation of Land Act some provisions of the Local Government Act—that is, the law as it is today—dealing with definitions of valuation of land and methods of valuation, but it also attempts to transfer into the Bill proposals for new law contained in the Local Government Bill, and I have spoken before about my concern that the government is increasingly asking Parliament to deal with a problem that should not arise, and that is the problem of Bills which purport to amend the provisions of Acts, not having yet passed through Parliament. The practice is increasing, and it puts honourable members in an impossible situation of being expected to debate, in this case proposed legislation, as if the Local Government Bill were law.

In fact, it is only by good luck and not good management that tonight in this House final amendments to the Local Government Bill were received for approval by this House after being debated in the other place. The Local Government Bill has been dragging on for two years or so because the government has not introduced it efficiently when it should have done so.

It is unacceptable for the government to ask honourable members to deal continually with Bills as if another Bill has already come into law, and I call on the government to

do better and to stop asking Parliament to make assumptions about new laws when those new laws have not been made and proclaimed.

It is an undesirable practice and it should not be impossible for the government to order its affairs so that Bills are brought into the House in proper sequence, debated in the proper order so that they complement each other where necessary rather than, as in this case, having the last few weeks being spent discussing with people and obtaining advice from outside groups on the effects of the Bill——

Mr Walsh—Do you want that consultation or not?

Mr LIEBERMAN—I am not complaining about the consultative process; I am explaining to the Minister that it is not satisfactory to obtain consultation about the effect of the Bill. Debate on the Bill should not involve assuming that other laws in other Acts of Parliament are already laws when they are not and when, in fact, in some cases they have not even been debated by Parliament. The Bill is mainly a Committee Bill. Most of the comments I shall make about it will be in the Committee stage when I shall be moving some amendments.

I have received submissions from a number of bodies, including the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.), the Law Institute of Victoria, municipal groups, groups of valuers, individual councillors and individual valuers, all of whom have expressed some concern about the effect and meaning of some of the new definitions that are proposed in the Bill concerning valuation procedures for rating purposes.

One of the most worrying problems concerns the new definition of "farm land" which is contained in clause 5. Concerns have been expressed that that new definition will give rise to a number of challenges by people who will claim that the new definition opens the gate for land to be classified as farmland for rating purposes, whereas previously that land could not be so considered under existing definitions.

The Opposition takes the view that the availability of concessional rates on farmland should be available only to genuine farmers. The existing discount provided by municipalities for land used for farming activities within its boundaries was enacted for special reasons and as a result of well-founded policy and should not be available to those who do not engage in genuine farming activities.

The new definition proposed by the government may not achieve its stated objective. Although I shall refer to this matter in the Committee stage, that definition is worth close examination. It is interesting to note that the change in wording will lead to an abandonment of the existing definition, a definition that has been tested in the courts on a number of occasions. Courts have established clear precedents to help define and interpret the meaning of the existing definition. Submissions I have received from some of the groups cast doubt on whether the new definition will achieve its stated purpose. Only time will tell.

As to the definition of units in clause 5, it is sad to see that the government has missed the opportunity of recognising that residents of retirement villages are not recognised within either the Local Government Act or the Bill. As a result, local councils using the net annual value rating system, for example, will not be able to adopt the 5 per cent assumed rental return for properties in retirement villages, whereas people residing in strata title units will be entitled to it under the definition proposed in the Bill.

Of all the people who should be given as much help as possible with annual rates, one would have thought it obvious that people in retirement villages should be helped because of the problems they are facing to make ends meet, due to the mismanagement

of both the Cain Labor government and the Federal Labor government. Such people have planned for their retirements. Most of them are on fixed incomes, pensions or superannuation and, because of inflation and mismanagement by Labor governments at both the State and Federal levels, their savings are being eroded and their standards of living are falling. They are finding it difficult to meet rates and other charges because of inflationary pressures.

It is obvious that retirement villages should be included within the meaning of unit in the clause, and the Opposition will move an amendment in the Committee stage of the Bill to deal with that issue. I am indebted to the honourable member for Berwick and to other colleagues who have raised the need for that problem to be rectified.

Through the Bill the government also proposes to change the secrecy provisions in the Valuation of Land Act as well as to change the procedures whereby the Director-General of Property and Services is assisted in providing information under the Freedom of Information Act. The Opposition believes the objective of providing as much information as possible to people is a good one. Through the efforts of the Honourable Mark Birrell, in another place, the Opposition has made it clear that it believes as much information as possible should be made available to individuals—and that right should not be taken away, as is increasingly occurring under the Cain government.

At present the Legal and Constitutional Committee is inquiring into the operations of the Freedom of Information Act. Members of the committee feel strongly that any proposal in the Bill to change the freedom of information law prior to the committee completing its report and presenting it to Parliament is the wrong way to go. In a way, such a proposal is insulting to members of the Legal and Constitutional Committee. If I were the Minister I would defer the proposal and refer it to the committee for its advice, and, having received its recommendations, I would introduce specific provisions to be included in the Bill. I hope the Minister will do that.

The Opposition will not prevent information being made available pending the completion of the Legal and Constitutional Committee's review of the Freedom of Information Act; the Opposition will not attempt to have that clause omitted, either in this place or in another place. But I hope the Minister will agree to undertake to refer the provisions of the Bill dealing with freedom of information to the Legal and Constitutional Committee so that it can examine those provisions and give advice to the House on them.

If the Minister agrees to defer these provisions, the Opposition will agree to examine closely the committee's recommendation and will assist the Minister, if he wishes, to introduce an amending Bill which reflects the recommendations of the committee on freedom of information provisions so far as the Director-General of Property and Services and the Valuer-General are concerned.

One of the provisions in the Bill will increase the membership of the Valuers Qualification Board from three to four. I was intrigued to read in the Minister's second-reading speech that the reason for the change is one of gender. There is no reason for it other than, at present, there is no female representative on the Valuers Qualification Board.

The Opposition would welcome the presence of a female on the board or any other board but it takes issue with the government when it appears that all the government is doing is playing to the audience by making a symbolic appointment to the Valuers Qualification Board when there is no case for the addition of another member.

Those who serve on the board have an excellent record over many years of performing their statutory duties to the satisfaction of not only this government and

past governments but also the community. It has an excellent track record. It does its job well at a minimum cost to the taxpayers.

The government is playing to its audience by proposing to appoint another board member for gender purposes. It is not to achieve a worthwhile objective, to enhance the work of the board, to ensure that the valuation process is enhanced, or to enable the board to go on serving the community.

The Opposition will have a great deal to say about the matter during the Committee stage. It will not oppose the increase in the composition of the board from three to four members, because after all the government was elected to make these decisions. It is the way this government wishes to go but it is not necessarily the way in which the Opposition would want to go.

The Opposition argues that whatever the sex of the person who is appointed the person should complement the work of the board and at least be qualified to deal with the matters before the board. The Opposition proposes that the person should be a qualified valuer. We will have a "tussle" about that. Perhaps the Minister will agree to the amendment in the Committee stage! If not, the amendment will be moved in the Legislative Council, not for any reason of obstructionism but because it is logical that the additional board member should be a valuer.

The Bill also proposes to change the rights of people who are aggrieved over rate valuations. They should not have the matter determined, as is presently provided in the Act, by a right of appeal to the board or to the Supreme Court; the Bill proposes to substitute the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for the Supreme Court. I say two things about that: firstly, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal has been burdened with a number of new jurisdictions transferred to it by the government over the past few years. It has apparently been falling behind in its work.

I have received reports that the waiting time for a hearing and disposal of many cases has blown out from what was previously a matter of weeks to many months. I ask the Minister: how will the tribunal service the extra load that is being transferred to it? What arrangements has the Minister for Property and Services made with the Attorney-General on the matter? I believe none has been made at all, but the Minister should enlighten us.

Currently, the Valuation of Land Act and the Local Government Act provide that appeals against valuations can be made to the court or to the board, depending on the value of the property involved. The values range from $3750 to $75 000. If a property is valued at more than $75 000, the matter can be dealt with in the Supreme Court under the existing Act. That was the wish of Parliament and that is the way it has been done for many years.

The government is saying: "That is a nuisance; we should like to change the jurisdictional limits by regulation rather than amending an Act of Parliament". The Opposition regards with great suspicion and alarm the propensity of the Labor government to increasingly maximise the activities of the executive arm and bypass Parliament. That is something that the Opposition has become more diligent about and it will not have a bar of that process. The government increasingly is removing the role of Parliament and is bypassing Parliament by using its executive arm. The Opposition will oppose the proposal to remove that role from Parliament. In the Committee stage it will move for the deletion of the clause.

The Opposition has received letters which highlight the fact that there is disquiet about the implication and effect of the Bill in carrying out future municipal valuations. Currently under the Act valuers have the right to enter properties and they can request information, verbally or in writing. The Opposition has received submissions from

the Municipal Association of Victoria and from others expressing alarm that provisions in the Bill will take away the right of valuers to carry out their work in that way. Instead valuers must rely upon the Local Government Act for their right of entry. However, the new provision is said to be restrictive. A valuer may enter a property but he may not be able to request information.

The Opposition will also raise the increasing concern of a number of municipalities about their ability to come to a satisfactory arrangement on reimbursement to municipalities for general valuation work that they do for other authorities such as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Under present arrangements the general valuations are made available at the expense of the ratepayers of the municipality which carries out the general valuations. Reimbursement for part of the cost is made only at the end of four years or six years when revaluations are done so that councils that have incurred the additional expense of revaluation are not able to obtain reimbursement for four to six years. They are not able to obtain interest on that cost.

Mr Jasper—How often do you want a valuation?

Mr LIEBERMAN—The Act says every four years to six years. The government should be aware of this matter. I have a copy of a letter from a municipality which I shall make available to the Minister. I do not wish to embarrass the Minister because I do not believe it is just his responsibility. It is the responsibility of the government as a whole.

The government has not been diligent in resolving the matter of reimbursement. The Opposition will ask the Minister to give a firm undertaking to deal with the matter and to set up a working party. It is only reasonable to ask the Minister to undertake to come back with a final decision, having arbitrated on the matter, within six months. It has dragged on too long and the municipalities are tired of waiting for the matter to be resolved.

The Minister is a straightforward gentleman. If he says that he will do something he will do it. I ask the Minister during the Committee stage to give an unqualified undertaking on the issue of reimbursement of valuation costs so that local government disquiet can be put aside and so they can get on with their difficult tasks.

As I said before, a number of other aspects of the Bill require debate, discussion, analysis, and explanation. I intend to reserve the detailed comments on those aspects until the Committee stage, by which time honourable members will have had the benefit of hearing the National Party's contributions to the second-reading debate. I also look forward to the Minister's response to the second-reading debate.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party will support the measure, but it has taken note of the comments made by the honourable member for Benambra, particularly his reference to amendments that may be forthcoming from the Liberal Party. The honourable member said that this is a Committee Bill and many aspects will be raised at that stage.

The profession of valuers is important within Victoria and wherever valuers operate throughout Australia. I pay particular tribute to those who have operated within the group recognised as valuers because of the important role they have played in valuing Victorian properties and providing valuations not only on a private basis but also on behalf of government organisations.

The profession of valuers could be broken up into two groups: those people who operate in a private capacity; and those who are employed by the government within the Valuer-General's Office or as valuers for municipalities throughout Victoria.

It is interesting to note that those who operate in a private capacity have been able to earn higher incomes. That has placed pressure on the valuers working within the public sector who receive lower salaries by working for the government. There has been a continual drain on people who have worked as valuers in government departments, and many have moved away from that area and into private work, obviously because they can earn more money as private valuers. I hope people operating as valuers within the Valuer-General's Office and in municipalities will be able to receive more appropriate remuneration in line with that received by private valuers.

The Bill also allows for the appointment of an additional member to the Valuers Qualification Board. I wonder why an additional member is required. I should like to think that there will be appropriate recognition of that additional member and that steps will be taken to ensure that he has appropriate qualifications as a valuer, as required by the board. The National Party has no complaints about the way in which the board has operated; it seeks only that the valuers receive appropriate recognition.

The National Party has received strong representations from individual valuers, from organisations such as the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.), and Land Administrators (Inc.), and from other interested parties, and it has noted their comments about the Bill.

I thank the Minister for making officers of his department available to speak with the National Party and provide information about the Bill. The Bill is really mirroring provisions that are contained in the Local Government Act.

The National Party supports the Bill and the notion of including in the Valuation of Land Act similar provisions to those included in the Local Government Act. I recognise that the Valuer-General has been operating under the control of the Department of Property and Services over the past four years and that it is intended that the provisions of the Local Government Act and the Valuation of Land Act be brought together within one Act. The National Party supports that notion.

It has been quite clear from discussions with representatives of the department that the Bill mirrors quite clearly the provisions of the Local Government Act, apart from a number of variations that have also been included, which the National Party supports, but of which it seeks some explanation from the government. Changes are proposed in the method of valuation, and a number of representations have been made to the National Party in this regard.

The National Party notes that the submissions of valuations and property rates have been sent to the owners of the properties concerned; under the measure, the submissions will be sent to the occupiers but, of course, they will be the responsibility of the actual owners. The Bill proposes changes regarding the net annual value and site value; perhaps an amendment should be made to include capital improved value as well.

The Liberal Party is faced with a dilemma, to which the honourable member for Benambra referred, regarding what would be the interpretation of a genuine farmer within an industry. The Bill provides that the person or persons should be primarily involved with primary industry or a farming activity to be able to receive concessional rates under a farm valuation.

The National Party has some criticism of the provision to allow for an additional member of the Valuers Qualification Board; there ought to be a provision to specify a qualification for that additional board member. The Bill also refers to the Freedom of Information Act and exempts valuers from the provisions of the Act. It should be recognised that a valuer needs certain protections within the Act.

The submissions of the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.) and Land Administrators (Inc.) suggested various amendments to the Bill, to which I shall refer

in Committee. I understand the Minister also proposes to move some amendments at that stage. The concerns relate to the definitions. Representations have been made to Mr Wright in the other place concerning the definitions of "farm land" and "capital improved value". The National Party supports the amendments made in the Bill and those which may be proposed by the government in relation to "farm land" and any definitions in the Bill.

Other factors are included in the submission to the National Party from the Australian Institute of Valuers. It is hoped that amendments will be introduced by the government to provide for certain interpretations, particularly in clause 8 in relation to valuations, which may be for either four or six years but can be reduced under the terms of the Bill. Concern has been expressed to the National Party about a reduction in the valuation term from six years to four years. The party awaits comments from the Minister in relation to those provisions.

Other recommendations from the institute relate to site value and the inclusion of a capital improved value provision. I presume the Minister will comment on that subject. The National Party supports the passage of the Bill and awaits comments in the House and at the Committee stage from the Minister on submissions received by the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.).

The National Party recognises the importance of the transfer of provisions from the Local Government Act to the jurisdiction of the Valuation of Land Act under the control of the Minister for Property and Services. It will make further comments during the Committee stage.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—I thank the Minister for Property and Services for the generous briefing that he afforded the Liberal Party, and I shall examine the purpose of the Valuation of Land (Amendment) Bill.

The Bill amends the Valuation of Land Act in relation to the Valuers Qualification Board, secrecy provisions and freedom of information considerations. The honourable members for Benambra and Murray Valley have made comprehensive remarks about the Bill. I support the honourable member for Benambra particularly in that there are concerns on this side of the Chamber about the definition of "farm land". Although a comprehensive list of definitions is contained on page 4 of the Bill, there appears to be concern about the actual size of acreage under the general "farm land" provision. The provision relating to the 2 hectares requires some examination as to rateability in the general farm situation.

The House will recall that control of the Valuer-General's Office was transferred to the Local Government Department in 1985. In consideration of matters relating to the Local Government Act, the process of valuation of land was to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Minister for Property and Services, and the Opposition has no argument about that.

Several aspects of the Bill cause me concern, including the provision for the extra appointment by the Minister to the Valuers Qualification Board in view of the increased powers of the Valuer-General, who now has both a deliberative and a casting vote. Why does the Minister need a Ministerial appointment in addition to an extra vote from the Valuer-General? There seems to be no need for the government to be given an extra two votes on that board. All honourable members would be interested to know why the structural change is planned.

As to appeals and valuations, the transfer of the appeals mechanism to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal is a good move in that formerly appeals to the Supreme Court were costly, although the honourable member for Benambra referred to the difficulty of having claims heard by the tribunal because of its heavy workload.

Like the Transfer of Land (Computer Register) Bill, this Bill is also important because it deals with the largest assets of the Victorian community. The system of rating and valuation is important.

I shall refer to what is said about the valuations under the Local Government Act. New Division 3A inserted by clause 8 provides, under the heading "Valuations generally":

> In every valuation for the purposes of the *Local Government Act* 1989, the rateable land must be computed at its net annual value, capital improved value and, if required by a rating authority, site value.

That gives the rateability a number of options in terms of the valuation, which can be used for a number of different purposes.

As to the secrecy provisions, the government is attempting to exempt the Valuer-General's Office from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. That intention should be closely examined. The matter of appropriate action for people seeking information should be given every consideration. The provisions of the Subordinate Legislation Act require that regulations be examined by the Subordinate Legislation Subcommittee of the Legal and Constitutional Committee; the increasing tendency of the government to rule by regulation rather than by Acts of Parliament should be carefully watched.

The Subordinate Legislation Subcommittee should exercise proper scrutiny in relation to the disallowance of any regulations that are not covered under section 6.2 of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1962 and are against the best interests of the community at large.

I thank the Minister for Property and Services for the time given to the briefing. The Opposition does not oppose the passage of this important Bill. Amendments will be proposed, and the honourable member for Benambra will have my support in the Committee stage.

It is important to remember that land is the prime focus for Victoria's economic activity. Every care must be taken to protect the interests of Victorians. I should like to hear from the Minister the reasons for the additional government member on the Valuers Qualification Board and what functions that person may perform, as well as an explanation about the deliberative and casting vote provisions.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate and support for the Bill. I believe valuers at the Valuer-General's Office are close to a settlement of the salary situation. I know the honourable member for Benambra has been concerned, as I have, about the shortages not only in this State but also throughout Australia. I am pleased that this year 20 per cent more students are attending these courses.

The honourable member for Benambra also raised the question of fees paid to municipalities. I have called for a report on the payment of fees to municipalities by agencies using valuations. I shall release the report for discussion after I have had the opportunity of perusing it; it will be made readily available to honourable members.

The honourable member for Benambra also asked about the clause relating to access by valuers to inspect premises. This issue will be checked thoroughly while the Bill is between here and another place. Either the Bill will be amended in the other place or a measure will be introduced in this House in the future to rectify the position.

Concern was also raised about the secrecy of information provision. The honourable member for Benambra supported the clause but requested an assurance that the provisions will be relaxed only to the extent of allowing proper operation of the Freedom of Information Act. I am sure the honourable member supports the minor

change proposed. After the Bill has been proclaimed, the Legal and Constitutional Committee will include this issue in its deliberations on freedom of information legislation. I hope that is satisfactory to honourable members.

I assure the honourable member for Murray Valley that no change in the valuation cycle is envisaged. The term for the city remains at four years and the term for the country remains at six years. I again thank honourable members for their contributions.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—Clause 2 provides for the Act to come into operation on a day or days to be proclaimed. I ask the Minister whether he is prepared to consider the introduction of an amendment in the Legislative Council that provides for the Act to come into effect on the same day as the Local Government Bill. That is essential. The Opposition would cooperate if such an amendment were put forward by the government. I ask the Minister to consider that while the Bill is between here and another place.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I agree with the proposition made by the honourable member for Benambra.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 3 and 4.

Clause 5

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I move:

1. Clause 5, page 4, line 40, after this line insert—

"; and

(*d*) a residential unit in respect of which a residence right in a retirement village under the *Retirement Villages Act* 1986 is in force.".

I mentioned during the second-reading debate that the Opposition feels strongly that people living in retirement villages should receive the benefit of the net annual value definition included in the Bill. Clause 5 relates to exclusive occupation rights of an owner of a house, flat or unit that is used for residential purposes. In municipalities where the net annual value is used for rating purposes, the council assumes 5 per cent of the capital improved value of the land as being the net annual value.

The current law in Victoria does not recognise a unit in a retirement village as being eligible under that definition. In striking a rate based on a net annual value, a municipality should adopt the estimated annual value of the land, which could in many cases exceed 5 per cent. That extra amount could make or break a retired senior citizen living in a retirement village. If a person occupying a house or a unit exclusively for residential purposes is entitled to a ceiling of 5 per cent of net annual value, that should also apply to a person occupying a residential unit in a retirement village. It is necessary to contain costs for senior citizens because they are on fixed incomes—either pensions or superannuation—and it is difficult for them to cope with the increasing costs of living in Australia.

The suggestion was made to me by many of my colleagues, especially the honourable member for Berwick, who told me of residential retirement villages in the electorate he represents where this is a major problem. I appreciate that in some cases retirement

villages do not give exclusive freehold or fee simple titles to occupants. This makes the issue I am raising somewhat complex.

I foreshadow to the Minister that I shall not call a division on this matter if the Minister is prepared to adopt in principle the worth of what I am saying and is prepared to consult with us while the Bill is between here and another place and to advise and, if necessary, adopt a different form of amendment when the Bill is in another place.

On that basis, I shall not call a division but I hope the Minister will give a response to this proposal, which I consider to be fair and equitable.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I am prepared to give a commitment in principle to the proposition put forward by the honourable member for Benambra. No doubt officers of my department will be happy to consult on this matter while the Bill is between here and another place.

The amendment was negatived.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I move:

1. Clause 5, page 4, lines 41 and 42, omit "unimproved capital value" and insert "site value".

This change is proposed because unimproved capital value has ceased to exist since October 1975. References to unimproved capital value in the Local Government Act are construed as references to site value. It is appropriate that site value replaces any reference to unimproved capital value. This definition has been transferred from the Local Government Act.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I move:

2. Clause 5, page 5, line 35, omit "*Victoria*" and insert "*Victorian*".

This corrects the proposed legislation to accord with the Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—As I mentioned in my second-reading speech, clause 5 transfers from the Local Government Act definitions such as "unimproved annual value" and "farm land" and so on. According to the government the definition of "farm land" follows the definition in the Land Tax Act, but it is a different set of words in this Bill from the definition contained in the existing Local Government Act. If someone can work out what that means, I will give them a prize!

In the consultative process I was remiss in not recording my appreciation to the Minister, the Valuer-General and the Minister's department for the briefings, but the Opposition has taken note of a number of submissions from institutes and bodies. There is a divergence of opinion as to the effectiveness of the "farm land" definition. I shall give some brief details and views about it because it is important. Judges will wrestle with this definition and it might be of benefit to people in the future to have it recorded. Without wanting to be too hard on the Minister, I hope the new definition will not cause a spate of new legal appeals, arguments and controversy, or cause concern in a practical way to the people in the municipalities—the valuers, the ratepayers and others who are affected by it.

The Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.) and Land Administrators (Inc.) has advised the Opposition that the new "farm land" definition should be supported. That organisation clarifies the situation and says it appears to cover all the necessary areas.

The office of the Valuer-General has indicated that the new definition appears to achieve the intention and is clear in its meaning.

The Law Institute of Victoria in its advice to me is neutral on the matter. What it has said is interesting and is worth reading into *Hansard*. It states:

> The definition of "farm land" has, on one view, been limited or restricted compared with the provisions under section 254 of the Local Government Act 1958 in that "farm land" is currently land which is wholly or mainly used or maintained for one or more of the specified businesses or industries whereas under the new definition the land, to qualify, must be used primarily for those purposes and if it is maintained for those purposes but not used it will not qualify. The practical effect of this change will depend on a case by case analysis there being a number of authorities to support the proposition that the use of land does not necessarily require physical use e.g. *Newcastle City Council* v. *Royal Newcastle Hospital* (1959) 4 LGRA 69 and 154; *Parramatta C.C.* v. *Brick Works Limited* (1971–73) 26 L. GRA 437; *Woollahra Municipal Council* v. *Banool Developments Pty. Ltd.* (1972–74) 28 LGRA 410 and *City of Nunawading* v. *Harrington* (1985) 55 LGRA 139.

Having received those comments, the Municipal Group of Valuers Victoria in its submission expresses concern over the definition, and states:

> The change in the "farm land" definition is to replace the phrase "wholly or mainly maintained or used for the time being by the occupier" with "which is used primarily".
>
> This change will require a round of board of review hearings to enable the definition, in a legal and practical sense, of the word "primarily". There is sufficient legal precedence available on the board's implementation of "wholly or mainly maintained"; but does "primarily" mean more than "wholly or mainly"—does it mean that the residential use is to be ignored?
>
> The words "for the time being" are very important, as they have sought to define "time being" as the time prior to or around which the council determines its rating of property and therefore an inspection of the property at the time of application or at the time of making a determination was sufficient for the purposes of establishing the property's eligibility for classification. The removal of the words "for the time being" will create severe problems for councils when establishing a relevant time in which to make their determination. It will cause a whole range of problems associated with the making of a partial determination—i.e. less than twelve months.

That is fuel for the fire! I should like to mention that the Municipal Association of Victoria in its submission to me has also expressed concern. In relation to the definition of "farm land", it states:

> On the advice of the Valuer-General and departmental officers it is understood that the purpose of the change in the definition of "farm land" is to emphasise that only those properties primarily used for primary production meet the definition of "farm land" and therefore qualify for any farm rate imposed by a council.
>
> The MAV supports any action which will have the effect of restricting access to the farm rate for small scale hobby type farms, however there is some concern that the amendment may not achieve this aim. It is requested that this change be reviewed so that any concessional farm rate levied will be directed to genuine farmers.

I have received a number of letters sent by colleagues and from municipalities within their electorates expressing similar views to those of the MAV and the Municipal Group of Valuers Victoria.

Will the Minister ensure when the Bill is between here and another place that the Bill will not go through the other place until he can satisfy those concerns? It is important that he does so because a spate of charges and legal challenges may take place. It is a government Bill and the government has to get it right. The Opposition has raised its concerns for the Minister to examine those issues, and those issues should be put right. We do not want to see system abuses or to see the hard work put into decided cases over many years thrown out the window because of a new set of arguments and words being introduced.

It is pleasing to see the government adopt and continue with the use of concessions being made available to historic buildings. Those concessions were inserted originally in amendments to the Historic Buildings Act some years ago when I was Minister for Planning. Those amendments have stood the test of time, and as a former Minister, I am pleased about that. Those amendments were intended to give owners of historic buildings the incentive to preserve and maintain them and, if necessary, to give relief in the form of rates based on valuation. It is true that it becomes a burden on the owners of some historic buildings to maintain them when they cannot fully use the land and the buildings because they are on the Historic Buildings Register.

The Opposition is pleased that provisions introduced when the Liberal government was in office are apparently working as well as what was intended when they were first proposed to Parliament.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I have heard what the honourable member said. I am prepared to examine the matters he raised with my officers and to have further discussion. The government believes the definitions will overcome the considerable concern that has been expressed in our society for many years. The definitions are aimed at overcoming those concerns and ensuring that genuine farms are rated at the farm rate. The government will examine the matters raised by the honourable member while the Bill is between here and another place and will have further discussions.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 6

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I note that clause 6, which is linked with clause 10, deals with the freedom of information issue I raised in the second-reading debate. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Property and Services inform the Chamber that the effect of this changing law will be referred to the current inquiry into freedom of information being conducted by the all-party Parliamentary Legal and Constitutional Committee. On that basis the Opposition is prepared to support the passage of the clause in both Chambers.

Further, the Opposition is prepared to provide an undertaking to this Committee that, in the event of the Legal and Constitutional Committee's report on freedom of information highlighting some problems with the provision, the Opposition will cooperate with the government in dealing with that problem, even if it requires amending legislation.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 7

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I move:

3. Clause 7, line 16, after ' "three" ' insert 'and for "Commonwealth Institute of Valuers" substitute "Australian Institute of Valuers and Land Administrators" '.

The amendment is to recognise a recent change in the name of that institute.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—Mr Chairman, the amendment to clause 7 circulated in my name requires some slight modification. I have not had the opportunity of informing the Minister for Property and Services, but the word "and" should be added to it. Therefore, I move:

2. Clause 7, page 7, line 19, after "Minister" insert "and who is a registered valuer holding a certificate of qualification issued by the Board".

The amendment will ensure that the new fourth person appointed to the Valuers Qualification Board is at least a qualified valuer. The board has done an excellent job in Victoria over many years. The Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.) and Land Administrators (Inc.) has written to me expressing its full satisfaction with the operation of the presently constituted Valuers Qualification Board comprising three members, one being the Valuer-General.

The board is structured to provide links with the Real Estate Institute of Victoria and the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.) and Land Administrators (Inc.), and provides professional leadership to the profession. The board has operated for almost 30 years and has formed a strong focal point or watchdog role in preserving high valuation standards which benefit the profession and the public.

The 1987–88 report of the board indicates that nineteen meetings were held throughout the year; at that time there were 998 registered valuers, 43 new registrations and 1 amended registration; 22 limited registration certificates were issued; 6 oral examinations were conducted; and 2 formal investigations were conducted.

I am informed by the institute that the proposal to appoint an additional member to the board was generated because so far in its history the respective institutes have failed to nominate female members to their panels in order for a female to be appointed. The institute says it is not discriminatory—and I accept that—in its attitude to members, but it points out that there are only 24 registered female members in Victoria. If honourable members have any daughters looking for a profession, this is the one to encourage them to enter! I point out that only one of the 24 registered females in Victoria is a fellow of the institute.

In selecting nominees for positions to the Valuers Qualification Board, the institute considered that it must select those members who would be seen by the membership to be appropriate to pass judgment on their peers. The institute suggests that is the criterion that ought to be used because it regards the board highly. It believes the appointee should be of the highest order if the board is to be accepted by the profession to pass judgment on the educational standards and conduct of valuers.

Now the good news. An increasing number of females are entering the degree course in business studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, which course will lead to qualification as a valuer. There is increasing participation by females in institute activities which will ensure that in time they will gain the necessary recognition in the procession to represent the institute.

The institute considers the appointment of an additional member without nominated purpose or function does nothing to enhance the operations of the board but simply imposes additional cost. Because of its willingness to cooperate with the government of the day, the institute is not asking that the proposal should be opposed. The Opposition certainly does not oppose this provision.

I hope that my mentioning these points will convince the Minister of the importance of ensuring that the fourth member is someone who will carry on that tradition and fulfil those criteria. The amendment simply adds one new fundamental point: whoever is appointed, whether male or female, should be a qualified valuer. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—I support the remarks made by the honourable member for Benambra. Before the Committee agrees to the clause, I ask the Minister for Property and Services why the government wants to change the number of valuers on the Valuers Qualification Board from three to four. The provision has led to some trouble. It has meant that the chairman of the original board, which is being enlarged to four, has had to be given a deliberative and casting vote.

The Minister and the government are making a lot of unnecessary trouble for themselves. Before the clause is agreed to, the Minister should provide the Committee with sufficient and good reasons why the number of members on the board should be increased.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The government has no hesitation in accepting the amendment because it wants the best people on the board. If a woman is eligible to be appointed, the government will make every effort to appoint her.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—Notwithstanding the amendment just agreed to by the Committee, the Minister for Property and Services still owes honourable members an explanation why he wants to appoint an additional person to the Valuers Qualification Board. The Minister has begged the question throughout the second-reading debate and Committee stage, and the Committee is entitled to some explanation. I ask the Minister why the number of people on the board has been increased from three to four.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—I was not going to speak on this clause as amended, but I raised the same matters during the second-reading debate.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Norris)—Order! The time for me to report progress under Sessional Orders has now arrived. The honourable member for Sandringham may continue his remarks when the matter is next before the Committee.

Progress was reported.

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

On the motion of Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment), the sitting was continued.

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

Discussion was resumed of clause 7, as amended.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—Prior to the interruption I was saying that I made a comment during the second-reading debate about the composition of the Valuers Qualification Board being increased from three to four members and the new appointee being a Ministerial appointment.

I also asked the Minister why the Valuer-General had a casting and a deliberative vote, in other words, two votes. Why does the chairman need a casting and a deliberative vote and why is the membership of the board being increased from three to four? The Minister has not answered my questions, and he has not answered the question asked by the honourable member for Narracan. I now ask him to answer the questions posed. I want to know why these strategies have been adopted.

The Minister has still not answered my questions. I reiterate that I am seeking an explanation of why the membership of the board should be increased from three to four and why the new member should be a government appointee. I also ask why the chairman should have a casting and a deliverative vote, and I ask the Minister to answer me.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I do not wish to hold up the Committee. It is commonsense; if there are four members and it is a lineball, it is better for the chairman to have a casting vote so that business can proceed.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 8

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I move:

4. Clause 8, page 8, line 24, after "Valuers" insert "and Land Administrators".
5. Clause 8, page 12, line 36, after "the" insert "capital improved value,".
6. Clause 8, page 12, line 39, omit "*Victoria*" and insert "*Victorian*".
7. Clause 8, page 13, line 2, after "the" insert "capital improved value,".
8. Clause 8, page 13, line 16, after "the" insert "capital improved value,".

The amendments were agreed to.

Dr NAPTHINE (Portland)—I speak on the clause as amended for a specific reason: I consulted with land valuers in my electorate. Mr Simon de Garis, an associate of the Australian Institute of Valuers (Inc.) and Land Administrators (Inc.), has expressed concern about the clause, and I direct that to the attention of the Minister. Proposed section 13DB states that the Municipal Valuation Fees Committee shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be the Valuer-General, who will be the chairperson, and two who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council and who shall comply with provisions in paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) of proposed subsection (1).

Mr de Garis is concerned that that membership has, in the past, lacked local knowledge of country areas, and the valuations that pertain to country areas need particular expertise. Often in setting the fees for municipal valuations, the committee is deficient in its knowledge. I seek the assurance of the Minister that, when he appoints members to the committee, appropriate provision will be made to ensure that people appointed to the committee have adequate knowledge of valuations in rural areas rather than the appointees merely having expertise in valuations in city-based areas.

A further concern is that the Valuer-General, as chairperson of the three-person committee, is an interested party in setting fees for municipal valuations. Mr de Garis states that if a low fee is set and no valuer is prepared to undertake a valuation at that fee the Valuer-General can undertake the valuation. Councils are usually reluctant to appoint valuers at above the minimum fee.

Mr de Garis is claiming that the Valuer-General has a vested interest—or could be perceived to have a vested interest—in the setting of a low fee to create work for his own department. A three-person committee is involved, and it could be easily influenced. I again seek the Minister's assurance that the Municipal Valuation Fees Committee will not be used as a de facto way of generating work and income for the Valuer-General.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—The matters raised by the honourable member for Portland are important to country areas. I ask the Minister for Property and Services to examine the comments when the Bill is between here and another place so that, if necessary, action can be taken based on the excellent submission of Mr de Garis.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 9

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I invite honourable members to vote against this clause. The effect of that will be to maintain the present law. Currently, persons who are aggrieved and wish to appeal against valuations for rating purposes have the right to take their appeals to either the Valuers Qualification Board or the Supreme Court, depending on the value of the property at issue.

The present valuation of land provisions in the Local Government Act are being transferred to this Bill, and they provide the various levels that trigger the right of appeal to the court or the board. It is not proposed that those levels be changed, therefore, they will remain at $3750, $30 000 and $75 000. They are the trigger figures presently in the Act.

The government proposes to repeal section 40 (3) of the principal Act by providing that those trigger figures hereafter be set by regulation and not by Act of Parliament. The Opposition opposes that provision and will strongly argue that Parliament should not allow jurisdictional limits of this nature to be changed other than by an amending Act of Parliament.

It can be argued that it is quicker to do it by regulation. That is one of the reasons why the Opposition says Parliament is paramount and supreme and has a responsibility, not only to itself but to the community, to ensure that jurisdictional issues should be carefully monitored and scrutinised and altered only if Parliament votes accordingly.

The clause really means that executive government becomes more powerful, and already the community has seen the ravages of executive government in this State. The Opposition signals to the government that it is watching irresponsible and unreasonable executive action by government and proposes to maintain the safeguards, not only against Labor governments but also against future conservative governments.

Parliament must assert its supremacy and protect the rights of the people, and will do so by the omission of the clause. The Opposition will insist that the present law continue and that jurisdictional changes shall be made only by Parliament and not by regulation. This government and future governments will have to sell the idea of changes to jurisdictional rights of appeal to Parliament. I commend the omission of the clause to the Committee and hope the Minister will agree to it.

It was my intention also to move an amendment providing that regulations made under the Valuation of Land Act may be disallowed by either House of Parliament. Unfortunately, I cannot move that amendment because the rules of the Committee do not allow me to move that regulations under the Valuation of Land Act be disallowed by either House.

It is for that reason that I put on the record that the Opposition, when in government, will move swiftly in its first session of government to ensure that all legislation on the statute book contains provisions that regulations can be disallowed by either House of Parliament. The Opposition will introduce an amending Act to ensure that regulations can be disallowed by either House and hopes the government will pick up that policy in the future, but it should be in place in Victoria already.

It has been in place in the Commonwealth Parliament since 1933. Federal regulations can be disallowed by either the Senate or the House of Representatives. The Liberal Party believes that ought to be the policy in Victoria, but it is not and because of the forms of the Committee in relation to this Bill I am not able to move that provision, but in government I foreshadow that the Liberal Party will introduce the amending legislation to which I have referred.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The government does not accept the omission of the clause. Honourable members should realise that section 40 (3) has not been changed for approximately ten years and currently provides that appeals against rating and taxing valuations can be heard by the full board of the Land Valuation Board of Review. The jurisdictional amounts of $75 000 for the capital improved value, $30 000 for site value and $3750 for the net annual value have not been changed since 1979.

The government is attempting to make those changes because property values have been escalating rapidly throughout Victoria, especially in the metropolitan area. The government does not want to bring in amending legislation in order to make amendments to this section.

I understand and appreciate the remarks made by honourable members opposite, that Parliament is supreme. No-one argues with that, but the government should not have to introduce amending legislation almost every day. I urge honourable members to support the Bill and reject the omission of the clause on that basis.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I am disappointed for a number of reasons. I should have thought it would have been obvious and that I would not need to spell it out in the debate, that if the government was empowered to change jurisdictional limits, in this case by regulation, it could if it wanted to increase those limits to the point where there was no practical right of appeal or objection by simply increasing the limits to the extent where the land would generally fall within that category. That is one obvious reason why Parliament ought to be diligent and supervise all proposals by requiring an amendment to an Act of Parliament.

Secondly, the government still does not propose to alter the present jurisdictional limits as contained in the law. The government's Bill adopts the same figures as are currently in vogue, which have been on the statute book for some years. That in itself indicates that the government will not have to rush back to Parliament at frequent intervals. In the current Bill the government proposes to use the same jurisdictional limits that have been on the statute book for some years, so the argument of rushing back to Parliament every day is not relevant.

The Opposition will call for a division on this clause if the Minister is not prepared to review the matter.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—I make three points in support of the honourable member for Benambra. Firstly, there is precedent for the government to introduce amending legislation in major financial matters, because the Stamps Act is amended each year when amounts are increased and those amendments affect the public. That is a precedent that the Treasurer observes each year.

Secondly, I take up the point that it is only fair and just that the impact of any valuation of land, which spans a considerable period, is examined through a regulatory impact statement so that it does not affect large sections of the community.

Thirdly, the fact that valuations are some years apart would mean that the Minister, or whoever may have responsibility for that portfolio in the years ahead, would have to introduce amending legislation only once every few years.

I urge the Minister to reconsider his position because the public will judge him on a matter that may carry unfair consequences.

The Committee divided on the clause (Mr Norris in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	35
Majority for the clause	8

AYES	NOES
Mr Andrianopoulos	Mr Austin
Mr Baker	Mr Bildstien
Mr Cain	Mr Brown
Mr Cole	Mr Clark
Mr Crabb	Mr Coleman

AYES	NOES
Mr Cunningham	Mr Cooper
Mr Dollis	Mr Delzoppo
Mr Ernst	Mr Dickinson
Mr Fordham	Mr Elder
Mr Gavin	Mr Gude
Mrs Gleeson	Mr Hayward
Mr Hamilton	Mr Heffernan
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Jasper
Mrs Hill	Mr John
Mrs Hirsh	Mr Kennett
Mr Jolly	Mr Lea
Mr Kennan	Mr Leigh
Mr Kennedy	Mr Lieberman
Ms Kirner	Mr McGrath *(Lowan)*
Mr McCutcheon	Mr Maclellan
Mr McDonald	Dr Napthine
Mr Mathews	Mr Perrin
Mr Micallef	Mr Pescott
Mr Pope	Mr Plowman
Mrs Ray	Mr Reynolds
Mr Roper	Mr Richardson
Mr Rowe	Mr Smith *(Glen Waverley)*
Mr Sandon	Mr Smith *(Polwarth)*
Mr Seitz	Mr Stockdale
Mr Sercombe	Mr Tanner
Mrs Setches	Mrs Wade
Mr Sheehan *(Ballarat South)*	Mr Weideman
Mr Sheehan *(Northcote)*	Dr Wells
Mr Shell	
Mr Simmonds	*Tellers:*
Mr Spyker	Mr Maughan
Mr Thomson	Mr Perton
Mr Trezise	
Dr Vaughan	
Mr Walsh	
Mrs Wilson	
Tellers:	
Mrs Barker	
Mr Leighton	

Clause 10 was agreed to.

Clause 11

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—I have received submissions from a number of organisations—the Municipal Association of Victoria and others—expressing concern about the clause, which, as honourable members can see, proposes to repeal certain sections of the Local Government Act.

Briefly, because it has already been discussed with the Minister, the concern is that the amendment will deprive the municipal valuer of necessary inquiry rights for further information when he inspects properties for the purposes of valuation. Those concerned simply ask that the Minister acknowledge their concern at this stage and agree that, while the Bill is between here and another place, the matter can be discussed not only with the Opposition but also with the Municipal Association of Victoria and other interested groups of valuers.

The other point of the clause is that it will affect the present system of reimbursing municipalities on a four-yearly or six-yearly basis for the cost of the general valuations when the general valuations are made available to other authorities. The Minister has

already said that he has appointed a working party. The only point I ask the Minister to consider, either now or while the Bill is between here and another place, is the giving of a further undertaking that that working party will be required to report no later than six months from this date.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—I gave a commitment that the working party will commence and after I have considered the report I hope to have a decision within a six-month period.

The clause was agreed to.

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

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (OZONE LAYER) BILL

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Appointment of member to Daylesford Water Board—Katunga Primary School—Allegation against used car dealer—Clerical assistant vacancies in schools—Grampians—Echo Foundation—Tip site at Port Melbourne—Extension of Bundoora ring-road

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr ELDER (Ballarat North)—I raise two matters of concern for the attention of the Minister for Water Resources.

The SPEAKER—Order! I am sure the honourable member does not require the assistance of the honourable member for Carrum or any other honourable member, and I advise the honourable member for Ballarat North that he may raise only one matter during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting and direct it to the attention of one Minister.

Mr ELDER—Both the issues relate to one matter, the Daylesford Water Board.

The first is the issue of the position on the board, which has not been filled for over nine months. The other is the issue of political interference by the Minister's office in attempting to fill the position with a political stooge of the Labor Party.

The Minister for Water Resources has had over nine months to make an appointment to fill a casual vacancy created by the retirement of Mr Peter Pedretti. Nothing has happened to date. After deputations to the Minister's predecessor, the Honourable Frank Wilkes, and public debating of the matter by the Minister at the recent Water Authorities Association of Victoria conference, the Minister has not responded. The Minister has advised that he is not making an appointment because he has concerns about the financial aspects of the board. This claim has no validity, as another vacancy was filled during the past financial year.

In respect of the financial aspects, it must also be noted that all capital works undertaken by the water board were approved by the Minister. The Minister has requested that the board operate in a businesslike manner and yet the members of the

board are expected to operate without one member for over nine months. This is no way to run a business.

Two local candidates have been put forward, one a local accountant and the other a local businessman. They are two fine applicants who meet the guidelines set by the Minister. Yet, after nine months, no appointment has been made. There has been a call from someone in the Minister's office to the local branch of the Australian Labor Party requesting that there be a nomination to fill the position.

Recently I have noticed that Health Department Victoria has been advertising for lesbians and feminists; perhaps they ought to advertise for card-carrying lesbians and feminists from the ALP.

An appointment must be made immediately so that the board can operate effectively. The appointment must be of the best person for the job and not a card-carrying member of the ALP. The person must be the one best able to look after the interests of the Daylesford Water Board and my constituents.

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Education two matters concerning the Katunga Primary School. Katunga is a small rural town about 10 kilometres north of Numurkah in northern Victoria.

The first matter I direct to the attention of the Minister relates to the flooding of the school grounds. Last week the school closed for two days because of excessive flooding. The toilets were unable to be used and the health and safety of the children could not be guaranteed, so the school was closed.

The other issue I direct to the attention of the Minister is far more important. It concerns what seems to me to be an inexcusable delay in proceeding with the construction of the new primary school at Katunga. I refer to the background to that project. The new school building was approved in November 1987 and scheduled for completion by the end of 1988. The first submission was lodged some ten years ago. In November 1986 the secretary of the school council, Mr Phil Grillo, wrote to the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Ian Cathie, in the following terms:

> Our school is one which is earmarked for replacement as internal walls move—toilets are old and 100 metres from the building—there is no sick bay facility—floods are common, due to school being on lowest site within the grounds—the building structure (Bristol) is totally inadequate for this northern part of the State.

The letter was responded to on behalf of the then Minister for Education. That correspondence indicated that the concerns expressed had been noted, they would be taken into account and the development of the new school building would continue.

Shortly after that a letter dated 10 November 1987 was sent to the principal of the school from the office of the Regional Director of Education. The facilities officer, who wrote the letter, indicated that the project was approved and would proceed on a stage-by-stage basis. There were seven stages and each stage was to proceed as soon as funds became available. The officer said that the repairs to the first unit would take place immediately and that it would be ready for occupation in February–March 1988. The toilet block would then be ordered so that it would also be constructed and available for use in April–May 1988. Then the new library-administration unit would be completed and the remaining works would be able to be initiated. The entire project was to be completed by the end of 1988.

What is the present situation? Four days ago, when I was at the school, there were two modules on site. The first had been in location for almost two years but with no power or water connected, so it was unable to be used. A second module was on site

but not in location. The present toilet block, as I indicated, cannot be used because it floods when it rains.

I ask the Minister for Education why advantage was not taken of the fine weather to proceed with siteworks, given that the project is so far behind schedule.

The second question I ask the Minister is whether members of the school council will be consulted about the levels of filling, as they have a legitimate concern to ensure that the work is done correctly.

Finally, can the Minister give any indication of what is the present construction schedule and can she give any indication of the proposed date of completion?

Mr LEIGHTON (Preston)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. I am requesting that he have the Ministry of Consumer Affairs investigate the activities of a used car dealer, known as Paul and Kevin Seamer, trading at 278 Burwood Highway, Upper Ferntree Gully and also at 170 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully.

The investigation should focus on the conduct of this dealership in selling a vehicle to Mr Martin Storey and in doing so dishonestly misrepresenting the situation of the warranty and the mechanical condition of the car.

In October last Mr Storey purchased a Mazda van at a cost of $9800 from the dealer. The salesman was a Mr Jimmy Middleton. Mr Storey asked Mr Middleton on several occasions whether a warranty applied and was told, "Whatever the warranty is, you'll get it." Mr Storey took the car for a test drive and found it sluggish but he was assured by the salesman that the vehicle was fine and that he had driven it on a number of occasions. In any event, the salesman said he would have it serviced.

Mr Storey took the vehicle home and found that the hazard lights did not work and that of the two spare tyres one was missing and the other was made to fit a Toyota and not the Mazda van that he had purchased. After chasing the dealers for three weeks, two cheques as refund for the cost of the tyres were provided. By their own admission, they had acknowledged that the vehicle sold to Mr Storey was unroadworthy despite having provided a roadworthy certificate.

Worse was to eventuate. After two weeks Mr Storey found oil in the water of the vehicle. It had a cracked head and the motor had seized. After much shopping around he was able to get a replacement motor for $3100. Mr Storey contacted the same salesman and this time he was much more definite. He said that it was a commercial vehicle and no warranty applied. It was a pity he had not been so honest in the first place!

I contacted the owner, Mr Kevin Seamer, who said the salesman probably did say a warranty applied. It was agreed that Mr Storey would contact him. He did so. He was also asked to provide a letter and receipts, which he did. However, all he received was an abusive phone call from the salesman who was rude and heavy-handed. I again attempted to contact the owner and I received a fairly similar nasty telephone call from the salesman. That is something I can cope with but members of the public deserve to be treated better.

After several further discussions the owner, Kevin Seamer, denied any responsibility for his salesman. He said he only employed him; he was not responsible for him. The owner offered $300 but that is nowhere near the amount needed to recompense Mr Storey.

I ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs to have his department investigate, firstly, why a roadworthy certificate was issued on a vehicle that was clearly unroadworthy;

secondly, the activities of the dealer in giving the impression that warranties applied on commercial vehicles; and, thirdly, why the dealer misrepresented the mechanical condition of the vehicle.

I also ask the Minister to have his department advise Mr Storey whether he can take any further action and whether the department can take disciplinary action under section 30 of the Act, which relates to dishonest and discreditable conduct. It is certain that this car dealer has been dishonest. In fact, I have been told by local people that the dealer has a reputation for selling bombs.

The owner, Mr Seamer, has refused to accept responsibility for employees such as Mr Jimmy Middleton, who has been dishonest and heavy-handed to customers. I certainly advise members of the public to steer clear of this firm.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I direct a matter of urgent importance to the Minister for Education and I invite her to contemplate the bureaucratic absurdity that prevails in the current process for the filling of clerical assistant vacancies at schools.

The Burwood Heights Primary School council has contacted me and expressed its frustration and bitter disappointment about the current process for the filling of clerical vacancies and the impact that is having on the school.

The background is that, due to a WorkCare claim by the former permanent clerical assistant and the subsequent using up of her sick leave entitlements prior to retirement and the period since retirement, which together total a period of thirteen months, a temporary clerical assistant has held the position for the whole of that period. This person has proved to be outstanding in all aspects and has all the qualities and experience the school council informs me it is seeking in a clerical assistant.

However, I am informed that due to the current guidelines brought in by the Ministry as part of a 4 per cent wage increase agreement, the school council feels that it has been significantly disadvantaged because the current temporary employee cannot compete against the applicants who have responded to the advertisement in the *Education Gazette* dated 7 March. The fact that the vacancy has been advertised in the *Education Gazette* suggests to the school council that no persons were currently available for redeployment and, as applicants were already in clerical assistant positions elsewhere, the employment of such a person at the Burwood Heights Primary School would simply create a vacancy in another school.

The school council has put to me the proposition that it seems to be a case of permanent clerical assistants simply changing seats and, therefore, creating other vacancies. In that situation, unless one of the applicants can demonstrate some clearly superior qualities to that of the current temporary employee, the school justifiably feels it will be disadvantaged and, not surprisingly, it does not wish that to happen.

The details given to me by the school, which I have passed on to the Minister, show the deficiencies in the processes employed in the filling of vacancies of this kind. I ask the Minister to make urgent inquiries about the procedures employed and I specifically request urgent attention to the needs of Burwood Heights Primary School, which has set out the problem in a letter to me, the essence of which I have given to the Minister in these remarks in the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

This is a matter of urgency and I ask the Minister to act in the interests of the children of the Burwood Heights Primary School and in accordance with the wishes of the school council.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—I bring to the attention of the Minister for Tourism the speculation about the change of name of the Grampians and land situated between Horsham and Stawell. The media has responded to the suggestion made by the

Minister that some Aboriginal names should be adopted for places such as the Grampians, which would be renamed Guriwurd, and other places within the surrounds of the Grampians.

A cartoon in the *Stock and Land* of 6 April showed two characters. One said, "Mr Yinga wants to change the name of the Grampians." The other said, "Yinga?! Isn't that Aboriginal for crab?" When the Minister for Property and Services visited Stawell last Friday he said that name changes were his responsibility and that there would be no change to the name of the Grampians.

I ask the Minister for Tourism whether he intends to pursue his proposal to bring in Aboriginal names for places of significance in Western Victoria, especially the Grampians.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—I raise a matter that spans three portfolios and hope that the relevant Ministers are present.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, as I understand the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, the honourable member can raise only one matter with one Minister. I ask that you rule that he can raise only one matter with one Minister.

The SPEAKER—Order! I uphold the point of order and direct the honourable member for Sunshine to raise one matter for the attention of one Minister.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—I raise for the attention of the Minister for Community Services, and hope that he may pass it on to his relevant colleagues who may be involved, a matter relating to the Echo Foundation, which I am sure honourable members are aware is a charitable organisation that is largely financed and run by funds raised by members of the bookmaking fraternity, and among its numbers and supporters it includes such august personages as the former Under-Secretary, Sir John Dillon, and Mr Herb Elliott, the former Australian miler of great distinction.

The organisation has its principal base in the electorate of Mornington but has wider effects. As a matter of courtesy I indicate that I have already discussed the matter with the honourable member for Mornington and understand that it has his basic support.

For some ten years the Echo Foundation has operated without any form of government assistance a holiday home at Mornington which offers some 30 units for elderly people in straitened circumstances. The foundation charges a minor fee in the case where people have the wherewithal to meet that minor fee, such as pensioners, but charges no fee where people can demonstrate that their circumstances are so straitened that they cannot meet that particular fee. I have inspected the organisation and its facilities. It is financed out of a Calcutta operation on the Melbourne Cup.

The foundation is open to elderly citizens, and I commend its operations to all honourable members from any electorate in Victoria. The foundation hopes to raise from the government $25 000 as a one-off item for the purchase of a bus. The bus would be used to extend the activities of the foundation to provide for the elderly the opportunity of taking trips to a herb farm, afternoon teas, Healesville and so on.

I commend it to the Minister and suggest that the $25 000 be split between his Ministry, the Office for the Aged and the Department of Sport and Recreation. That $25 000 would be parlayed into a $40 000 bus. The organisation will meet all recurrent expenditure in the future with no further cost to the government.

In this day and age, with increasing demands on the State to meet welfare costs, an organisation of this kind should be encouraged, and I hope all honourable members and, in particular, the relevant Minister and his colleagues, will support it.

Mr JOHN (Bendigo East)—I raise for the attention of the Minister for Property and Services a matter that is of concern within his electorate and also forms part of his Ministerial responsibility. It concerns a tip site in Port Melbourne adjacent to Todd Road. A few days ago, in the company of the Honourable Reg Macey, municipal officers and the Mayor of the City of Port Melbourne, I visited the tip site. The local community is concerned to ensure that when the tip site ceases to be a tip the land will be used for the benefit of Port Melbourne residents either for sporting or recreational purposes or for parkland.

The tip site comprises some 4·5 hectares of land off Todd Road, Port Melbourne. It is adjacent to an unused road, being part of Howe Parade, and is also adjacent to a triangular reserve which fronts Williamstown Road. Because the tip site adjoins Howe Parade and the reserve fronts Williamstown Road, there is a direct connection to a substantial residential part of Port Melbourne.

I understand that the tip has been used for many years and is now substantially filled. There is still evidence of some material being dumped, although the tip is, to the naked eye, very much at the end of its days. Concern has been expressed that the government has the site listed as part of its assets sale. I am informed that the land is likely to be earmarked for sale for industrial purposes.

I understand that the land was previously zoned for proposed public open space, and it is of concern to the local people that this land be preserved either for sporting and recreational purposes or for parkland. I remind the Minister of the recent publicity regarding the greenhouse effect and the need for more parkland and sportsgrounds. We have many facilities in Melbourne which cater for sports spectators but we do not have enough parkland. I am sure the Minister would agree there is a need in the electorate of Port Melbourne for additional facilities for recreation and sporting purposes and for parkland.

I seek from the Minister an assurance that he will use his best endeavours to ensure that this land is not sold for industrial purposes because of subsidence problems; it can be used only for single-storey or perhaps double-storey buildings. Will the Minister ensure that the land is turned over to the local community to enable the council to set up a committee of management, so that the local people in Port Melbourne will have an input into the purposes for which that land can be used? I seek that assurance from the Minister both in his capacity as the local member and as the Minister who will make the final decision.

Mrs GLEESON (Thomastown)—I raise with the Minister for Transport a matter that was reported in the *Whittlesea Post* on 11 April 1989, and the article is headed, "R5 put on the shelf". It refers to the arterial road being built through Greensborough. It was to be a three-stage construction going through into the electorate I represent.

Stage one is nearing completion and the Minister had guaranteed that stage two would be commenced in about the middle of this year, and this would be the Greensborough to Plenty Road section, and then that would continue through to Dalton Road in Thomastown, as part of the continuation of the R5 ring-road.

The first I knew of any delay to the plan was through an article last week in the *Whittlesea Post* where the engineer for the City of Whittlesea, Mr Jim Harrison, said that there would be a delay of the R5 both east and west of Plenty Road for more than ten years, and that the project has now been referred back to a five-year works program.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources)—The honourable member for Ballarat North raised the matter of the Daylesford Water Board being short of one member. The Daylesford Water Board is in an extremely poor financial position at present. Its debts are estimated at $12 million, and massive financial support has been given to that board by the government.

The honourable member said that at a meeting at Warrnambool of the Water Authority Association of Victoria—and that authority is doing a great job in Victoria—the financial state of the Daylesford Water Board was recognised and it asked the government to appoint an independent financial consultant to the board, which it is doing at this point.

I do not intend to appoint a member to the Daylesford Water Board while I have a consultant investigating its financial position because that would not be appropriate. I understand he also said that there had been a vacancy for nine months. I have been the Minister for Water Resources for only six months so I cannot answer for the three months before that.

He also mentioned that a branch of the Labor Party had been lobbied by someone. It certainly was not me, but I assure the honourable member that if he talked to some of his colleagues about the lobbying that goes on for some of these positions on water boards he would find that some of the people who lobby for and obtain positions on the boards do a good job, and no doubt the honourable member for Ballarat North will eventually join the queue and ask me to appoint someone for him to a board.

In relation to the matter raised by the honourable member for Bendigo East, it is nice that the Liberal Party, after 30 or 40 years, has finally discovered where Port Melbourne is. He was talking about parkland and about recreation land and two-storey buildings on the site. Last week I wrote to the Port Melbourne council about council purchasing the land at Valuer-General's valuation of that land. That is what normally happens if the Urban Land Authority does not want the land or the housing and construction industry does not want the land and it is on the market—the local council has the opportunity of buying it at the Valuer-General's valuation.

The rezoning is not up to me; it is up to my colleague, the Minister for Planning and Environment. He is the one who will have to make that decision in the future.

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—The honourable member for Rodney asked me about Katunga Primary School, which is a nice little primary school in his area with quite a reputation for providing a good rural education and long-term involvement with parents in the school.

I shall certainly have the matter of the replacement of the building investigated, but I should say that the North-East Region does an excellent job in building matters, and I am sure the officers concerned would have made every effort to assist the school.

Although I shall investigate the matter, I suggest that the honourable member talk to the region itself—as he may have already done and as the honourable member before him did. The previous honourable member for Rodney developed a good relationship with the region, and that is often the best way to get things done, but I shall investigate the matter and report back to him.

In response to the honourable member for Forest Hill on the matter of clerical assistance, in this case to Burwood Heights Primary School, the matter is a complicated one. The government has just provided another $1 million for clerical positions in schools and I have also just accepted the major report that has been done on clerical

assistance, to sort out some of the anomalies and obtain some clear directions on clerical assistance to both primary and post-primary schools.

The matter that he raises has a bearing on resources and we have agreed in the education system that in order to obtain greater equity between schools there ought to be redeployment of resources where that is appropriate. Only after that should new positions be made available to people outside the service.

I assume that the temporary person he is talking about in the Burwood Heights Primary School is, in fact, a person outside the service, not permanently in the service and applying to come into the service, in which case he or she will take second place to those currently permanently inside the service.

That is a reasonable way to manage resources. If I constantly added permanent positions to the service, I would not be in a position to balance funding for clerical assistance, and I would certainly not be matching the request of the Opposition to cut Public Service positions by 2000.

However, to ensure that I am right in that explanation, I shall have the particular matter investigated and report back to the honourable member.

Mr CRABB (Minister for Tourism)—The honourable member for Lowan raised a matter of some concern to him about what he regards as speculation—which is not speculation; it is a proposal—regarding the naming of major features of the Grampians, not of the Western District, by their original Aboriginal names.

A body of research has already indicated that appropriate names were used for 5000 years for those features in the Grampians. As well as being an attractive part of Victoria and one of our primary tourist attractions from a scenic perspective, the Grampians is also home to 80 per cent of the Aboriginal art sites in Victoria. Approximately half a dozen cave painting sites are accessible to tourists at present; many more are not, and it is the most significant place for Aboriginal art and culture near to a major city anywhere in the world.

At present the Aboriginal cultural dimension of the Grampians is significantly diminished because of the boring and stupid names that people have given to many of the features in the Grampians.

When I have been in the Grampians I have always imagined that the people who got there first, woke up in the morning and said, "Heavens! We're going to name another ten things today. What names can we think of?" Currently there are five Castle Rocks, a Mount Difficult and a thing called Elephants Hide, presumably so named because somebody thought it looked like a real elephant's hide. There is also a Lady's Hat, presumably because somebody thought it looked like a hat for ladies.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Grampians is rich and is something that could easily be lost. Unless research is undertaken now to discover what the reality is of the Aboriginal mythology that connected the mountains, streams, rivers, swamps and the very nature of the land itself with their religion, that history will be lost to us now and forever.

There is something in the Grampians that is of deep meaning to a significant number of Australians. It is something that ought to be cherished and preserved, and that is the way the government is heading. The intention is not only to provide Aboriginal names to something for the sake of it, but to rename aspects of the Grampians for which the government can establish the original names and meanings. That should then go through the proper process of consultation, which is the Place Names Committee, after having gone through other consultative mechanisms. I am

sure that when the Deputy Leader of the National Party has had time to consider the matters I have raised, he will support me.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—The honourable member for Sunshine raised with me the Echo Foundation based at Mornington which has operated for the past ten years. He informed the House that it has not requested any finance from government and seeks a $25 000 grant for a $40 000 bus for the purpose of ensuring that old people in that area and other parts of the State will have the mobility to get together in their retirement years to attend functions and to visit some of the attractive scenic sites around the State.

The honourable member also said that the Office for the Aged and the Department of Sport and Recreation indicated some positive attitudes to funding this request. I shall ask officers of Community Services Victoria to contact the other two agencies to ascertain whether the moneys can be found, how a grant can be made to ensure that the elderly people for whom they cater can have bus trips to which they can look forward.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—The honourable member for Thomastown raised with me a report concerning the R5 arterial road, and particularly the aspect of the report that suggested that the connection of the Greensborough bypass to Plenty Road had been deferred. I do not know what the substance or the providence of that report was, but there is certainly no truth in it.

The Greensborough bypass connection across to Plenty Road will commence in the next financial year. I recognise that the honourable member has been concerned for a substantial period about this matter, together with the future extension across to Dalton Road. I inform her that there is no deferral of either project.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—The honourable member for Preston raised with me the issue of a vehicle sold to a constituent of his by the firm Paul and Kevin Seamer of 278 Burwood Highway, Upper Ferntree Gully, and the sad tale of woe that followed that purchase, with one part of the vehicle after another simply falling apart or not being operable. He suggested that this firm may be selling vehicles that are not up to scratch. I would be concerned if that were the case.

I thank the honourable member for providing such detailed information to the House and to me. I shall have the Ministry of Consumer Affairs examine the matter because under motor car legislation now in place in this State there is no doubt that any people carrying out unseemly activities in the selling of motor cars will be properly dealt with.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.15 *a.m. (Wednesday).*

Wednesday, 19 April 1989

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Ken Coghill) took the chair at 2.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS

The SPEAKER—Order! I desire to advise honourable members that I have given permission to Channel ABV2 to film today's question time. The approval is on a shared basis on behalf of other channels and is given under the usual guidelines.

I have received a request from the President of the Parliamentary Press Gallery seeking approval to film question time on a permanent basis. Before responding to that request I shall consult with all the Parliamentary parties.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

VICTORIAN EQUITY TRUST

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer——

Mr Crabb interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—Are you riding shotgun for him? Can't he protect himself?

Did the Treasurer provide his letter of comfort dated 12 April 1988 to the Victorian Equity Trust only after his officers failed in repeated attempts to pressure the trust's accountants and auditors to refrain from significant qualification of the VET's accounts?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—It is to be hoped that the questions asked by the honourable member for Brighton are better than the cases he has taken before the State Industrial Relations Commission. He has a good record there! His record before the commission is equal to his record in the House; and it will be interesting to see his record when it comes to the Goldstein preselection!

So far as the Victorian Equity Trust is concerned, as I said yesterday, obviously the trustees are responsible for writing the annual report. They have said that, with respect to the authorities that are covered by the VET, there was an improved performance compared with that outlined in the prospectus. That is an important consideration not only for the people of Victoria but also for the investors in the trust because it has meant that dividends that have been paid to unit holders have been higher than the expectations raised by the prospectus.

The government is very proud of the financial performance of the authorities involved in the VET, authorities that include the Portland Smelter Unit Trust. Those authorities have performed better than was expected at the time the prospectus was written. In particular, the Portland aluminium smelter has made a significant contribution of $800 million in 1988 to export growth in Victoria.

In response to the specific points raised by the honourable member for Brighton, I repeat that the trustees requested that I provide a letter of comfort with respect to the valuation of assets.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—Members opposite are sniggering because they have not progressed further than kindergarten economics.

The reality with respect to the letter is that I gave an undertaking that the government views the valuation as being not less than $490 million. If that course of action were exercised, the effective cost of funds to the authorities would be approximately 3 per cent per annum, which is obviously a low cost.

Mr McNAMARA (Leader of the National Party)—In view of the Treasurer's artificial overvaluing of the Victorian Equity Trust's stake in the Portland aluminium smelter, and bearing in mind that a similar blatant overvaluing of assets led to huge losses for creditors in the crash of Rothwells Ltd in Western Australia, does the Attorney-General regard as acceptable the practice of Victorian registered companies following the example of the Treasurer's funny money policy?

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the National Party has asked a question that borders closely on seeking an opinion. I shall allow the question, but I again remind the Attorney-General to have regard to the traditions of the House in his answer.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—The question from the Leader of the National Party is based on an opinion or an assumption that the Victorian Equity Trust is overvalued or undervalued. In fact it is correctly valued. I do not believe this is a matter that can be dealt with by me. The valuation is the responsibility of the Treasurer and it is not a matter for an opinion of the Attorney-General.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr McCUTCHEON—The Treasurer made clear to the House the basis upon which the valuation was determined.

VICTORIAN BUSINESS CENTRE

Mr CUNNINGHAM (Derrimut)—Will the Premier inform the House of the recent advice he has received on the progress of the implementation of the small business statement launched in 1987?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I thank the honourable member for Derrimut for asking a sensible and serious question. It is the first question of that kind that has been asked thus far. The government launched a statement in 1987 entitled *Big Opportunities for Small Business*. It was a packet of initiatives that were aimed at increasing the valuable contribution that small business is making and will continue to make to the Victorian economy. Since that initiative was introduced much has been done; red tape that unnecessarily inhibited small business and added to its costs has been cut. Last September the Business Licence Centre was opened as a one-stop shop for information on licences, permits and approvals.

The positive response of the business community to the centre has been beyond all expectation. Approximately 10 000 telephone calls have been made to the centre since it opened. I note that the honourable member for Berwick, as the Opposition spokesman, has ignored this initiative, which is the usual response that we get for the positive economic policies of the government.

Mr Stockdale interjected.

Mr CAIN—I acknowledge the interjection of the honourable member for Brighton. The Liberal Party is already on the way to becoming a small business; in fact it may be two businesses, or one and a half, with the National Party.

The Federal member for Goldstein, Mr Ian Macphee, says that the Liberal Party is heading into oblivion. The honourable member is a fellow member. As the Minister for Tourism says, "Have you got his numbers?" That is what they want to know.

The Business Licence Centre is a totally professional operation and it is recognised as such by the business community. The Leader of the National Party, who recognises a totally professional operation although he does not lead one, acknowledged on country radio recently that the Labor Party is a far more professional party. I thank him very much. The Leader of the National Party did not say anything about the calibre of those who seek to get into bed with his party as coalition partners. The Leader of the National Party said that there are people of high calibre in the Labor government. The Liberal Party likes to get rid of people of high calibre such as the Federal member for Goldstein, Ian Macphee.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the National Party may laugh, but his party has been torn to bits by this matter, and he knows it. How many of those on the back bench are they going to have a go at next? The only luck they have is that they have three and a half years to go before the next election. With redistribution, I do not know what will happen to any of the Opposition members on the back bench. All the branches will be doing the same thing.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is far too much interjection, which may have been provoked by the Premier's comments. I ask the Premier to come back to the question and honourable members on both sides of the House to refrain from interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I repeat: it is a professional operation, and that is one of the reasons I believe the business community has been deserting the Opposition in droves. They even moved against the Opposition in the Greensborough by-election. We won the seat. If the Opposition could not win the Greensborough by-election, it will never win anything.

We have also produced a licence simplification program. It has been estimated that thus far the program has saved the business community in the vicinity of $4 million a year and reduced its paperwork burden by almost half. Again, I believe the business community acknowledges the success of that program and that we in this State lead the way in regulation review.

I think it is understood that most business people are thoughtful. They are prepared to consider the issues, and they obviously reject the confrontationist new right policies. They do not support you anywhere now. Small business supports the government because it knows we are leading this country in developing and delivering a targeted range of programs and processes that meet its needs. Small business sees the Opposition as doing nothing to recognise or meet those needs.

VICTORIAN EQUITY TRUST

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I refer to the fact that the Treasurer personally assigned $100 million of Victorian Equity Trust unit holders funds to an interest in the Portland Smelter Unit Trust worth $35 million and has now committed Victorian taxpayers in 1991 to buy that interest for $65 million more than it is worth. On what grounds did the Treasurer decide to allocate $100 million to a $35 million investment?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition could not pass any economics course, even in kindergarten. He is absolutely hopeless. If he had

read the Victorian Equity Trust prospectus and the government's statement in relation to the trust he would have fully understood the position. He still does not understand.

However, he should have understood at the time that the $490 million raised by the Victorian Equity Trust was in fact a collective investment. It did not have independent components. The Leader of the Opposition laughs because he has no idea. His business background was as an advertising man who dealt with cockatoos. That is about all. He parrots a question here and thinks he has some understanding of it.

As I said, the $490 million provided for the first time in respect of three authorities was privately sourced equity capital. The three authorities were the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission. The trust was very important in determining and improving the financial structure of those authorities. As I said yesterday, they received from international credit rating services the highest rating possible in Australia.

The allocation of the $490 million was always a decision separate from the valuation of the investment in the smelter, the State Electricity Commission or the other two authorities in the Victorian Equity Trust. The allocation of $100 million was based on the need to ensure that the equity position of the Portland Smelter Unit Trust was strengthened. At all times we have made it quite clear that the investment by the equity holders of the Victorian Equity Trust is in the dividend stream that flows from those four major authorities.

I know the Leader of the Opposition has no understanding of this matter. The dividend payment has, in fact, been higher than anticipated in the prospectus. In other words, the organisations have done better.

In addition, those persons investing in the Victorian Equity Trust also have the option in respect of a put option in 1992. That option still remains, and it is obviously an important part of the investment structure.

COMMUNITY SERVICES VICTORIA

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—Will the Minister for Community Services tell the House whether he has confirmed that Community Services Victoria refused to advise the principal of the school at which a single male departmental foster parent taught that the department had evidence of the foster parent sexually abusing State wards in his care; and has he confirmed that the reason given by the department for failing to give the school principal the opportunity of protecting the children in his care was simply that in doing so the department may have left itself open to charges of defamation?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—The question follows a similar question asked yesterday, and I have received some further information on the matter. I thank the honourable member for Lowan for the information he provided to me last night. I have been able to obtain some more detailed information, which I am sure the House will be pleased to hear.

It is quite clear that the person to whom the honourable member refers was a foster parent in the then Department of Community Welfare Services between 1982 and 1984. A police check was conducted, and the person was cleared before he was taken on. The House will be aware that one must have a police clearance before one is able to become a foster parent. Following allegations that were made against this person, he was not used again as a foster parent. Also, because of the concerns that the department had—I remind the House that the allegation dates back to between 1982 and 1984—it wanted to contact the school concerned. However, apparently the

department was advised very strongly that, because the allegations were unsubstantiated, it would be improper to inform other agencies such as schools about the matter. That was the advice given to the department.

In many cases where children are taken away from families, wild allegations are made by families about workers within Community Services Victoria which, after investigations, have often been found to have no substance.

The government contends that it is proper that the police inform other agencies when they are notified of allegations which result in charges being laid. Community Services Victoria consults with the Victoria Police Force and notifies other foster agencies associated with the department. The current policies of Community Services Victoria in respect of clearance of temporary staff and foster care are the tightest in the country. We check all staff, including temporary and emergency staff.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Forest Hill may not be interested in the answer, but it is a serious matter and other members are interested in hearing the Minister's answer. I ask the honourable member to refrain from interjecting.

Mr SPYKER—Careful clearance checks are conducted on all those who are about to be appointed to the staff, including foster parents and emergency staff. Yesterday the honourable member for Lowan suggested in the House that further charges were laid in 1987 and also suggested that the person concerned was still currently in contact with Community Services Victoria. The charges laid in 1987 were totally unrelated to work done for Community Services Victoria.

Today I have been advised that the person to whom the honourable member for Lowan refers has had no contact with Community Services Victoria since 1984. The honourable member also made comments to the effect that Community Services Victoria staff tried to persuade the young people involved not to give evidence to police officers. In 1987 the wards of the State involved were eighteen and fifteen years old. I think they were capable of making up their own minds. Community Services Victoria would have given them every encouragement to assist the police in their inquiries. I deny any suggestion that the police investigations were hindered by Community Services Victoria staff.

I feel strongly that maximum support must be given to the police so that those people are not around and able to influence children. I assure the House that this person has not been on the payroll of Community Services Victoria since 1984.

I also indicate that there has been an additional check because of the concerns raised by the honourable member for Lowan yesterday. Other agencies that have connections with Community Services Victoria were advised of the information we obtained.

Finally, I point out that Community Services Victoria has an enormously difficult task to perform in dealing with wards of the State and it deals with serious cases. I ask all honourable members to check their facts very carefully when making allegations from time to time because the children are left at risk while wild and unsubstantiated allegations are being made.

INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN (Northcote)—Can the Treasurer inform the House of the most recent advice he has received in relation to income generated by the investment activities of statutory authorities?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The honourable member for Northcote takes an active interest in long-term investments rather than short-term investments.

In respect of those authorities that invested in equities, it is well known that last year the Auditor-General reported that some $918 million was lost during the October 1987 stock market crash. Among the organisations involved, the actual loss incurred by those directly responsible to the State government was $867 million.

The Opposition has been obsessed with a short-term view and has failed to consider what happened in the remaining part of the 1987–88 financial year. As I emphasised when the October stock market crash occurred and had an impact not only on the public sector but also on the private sector, one needed to consider it in a medium-term perspective. In particular one had to wait and see what would happen in the financial year as a whole.

When one examines the data, one finds that, even though there was a loss of $867 million in the month of October, for the rest of the year there was an investment gain of $1075 million, which resulted in a gain of $208 million over the whole year. Despite the fact that public and private sector investors have been adversely affected by the October 1987 stock market crash, the public authorities, under the control of the State government, made $208 million for the year as a whole.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is far too much audible conversation. It is difficult for a number of honourable members to hear the Treasurer's answer and it is certainly difficult for the Chair to hear all of his answer.

Mr JOLLY—Over the year as a whole $208 million was made in addition to the improved returns that occur over the long run. The returns were far better than comparable private sector organisations over the same period.

WRITS AGAINST NEWSPAPER

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—I ask the Treasurer whether, in an attempt to prevent the *Australian* newspaper from printing stories about his financial mismangement, he has served two writs on that newspaper and whether a decision has been taken by the government to meet the costs of those actions?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Obviously I make the decision in respect of a writ alleging defamation regarding my case. Obviously I will meet the costs associated with that. If anybody defames me I seek legal advice and will take the appropriate course of action, and that is what I have done.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD BETTING

Mr SANDON (Carrum)—I direct a question to the Minister for Sport and Recreation regarding the expansion of Totalizator Agency Board betting. In the light of overseas experience, particularly in Great Britain, in expanding the forms of totalisator betting, will the Minister indicate whether consideration has been given to allowing the TAB to conduct quadrella betting on the forthcoming Liberal Party preselections in the Federal electorates of Higgins, Bruce, Goldstein and Isaacs?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question is inadmissible: it is clearly trivial and frivolous. For more than a century the well established forms of this House have been to disallow such questions.

Mr SANDON (Carrum)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, the matter is certainly not trivial. I direct your attention to the fact that, as I indicated in my question, the overseas experience in countries like Great Britain is that betting is allowed on elections. Betting is even allowed on whether Royal babies will be born male or female. Great Britain has wide-ranging betting of all forms.

All I am asking is whether the government will consider broadening the trend in Victoria in the light of overseas experience. Clearly it is in keeping with a broader framework of the operations of the Totalizator Agency Board.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Carrum raised a question which certainly in its specificity could be regarded as being frivolous. To rule on the point of order: I believe it would be in order for the Minister for Sport and Recreation to answer such a question were he to avoid the particular instance cited by the honourable member for Carrum, which could be regarded as frivolous. I do not uphold the point of order, but I ask the Minister to confine himself to the broad policy issues and not refer to the frivolous matter.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—Perhaps I should say, "No comment", but in all fairness I point out that, in England, bookmakers can bet on any event they wish, whether it be on the birth or death of a member of the Royal family or on the outcome of an election. It is not the same in Victoria because there are restrictions on what people can bet on. In recent years it has been confined to football, horses, greyhounds and harness racing, although recent legislation has given the Minister of the day the power to allow the Totalizator Agency Board and/or bookmakers to bet on any other form of competition they desire. However, it has always been my belief that we should be loath to bet on animals that talk. Although the TAB has this year enabled bets to be laid on golf and cricket, which involves a large number of competitors, in a small field of two or three——

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, it has been a longstanding rule in this House that honourable members may not make imputations against other honourable members. I direct to your attention the remarks of the Minister about a member of the government party, which are objectionable.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—With respect to the consideration of quadrella betting in this case, it is true that the animals or competitors are not talking to each other. I do not believe even their camps are talking to each other except through newspapers, radio and television, which gives a person the opportunity of seeing the form of both camps and providing assistance with the quadrella. I suppose one can classify them in the same way as is done in the horse form guides. They can be put on wet or dry tracks.

This question is a matter of significant public interest, particularly as it is being promoted by a political party that involves the public. So far I have received no submission, but if somebody is prepared to make one the government will consider a betting arrangement.

PETITIONS

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

Price marking of goods

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Australia respectfully sheweth:

That your petitioners are gravely concerned that the introduction of computerised price scanning into supermarkets has resulted in the removal of individual price marking of goods and that this will disadvantage consumers in the marketplace and severely handicap their rights as shoppers.

Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Parliament ensure that retention of individual price marking of goods in shops using price-scanning computers.

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

(By **Mrs Hill** (140 signatures)

Met Line concessions

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

The petition of the undersigned citizens in the State of Victoria respectfully showeth:

We request that the Met Line concession to Pakenham be extended to include all citizens who qualify for over-60 travel, living in the area covered by the Warragul service as follows: Nar-Nar-Goon—Tynong—Garfield—Bunyip—Longwarry—Drouin—Warragul.

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

By **Mr Delzoppo** (228 signatures)

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

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

Public liability of voluntary organisations

Mr LEA (Sandringham) presented a report from the Legal and Constitutional Committee upon the public liability of voluntary organisations, together with appendices and minutes of evidence.

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

PAPERS

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

Annual Reporting Act 1983—

Notification of extensions of time granted to Ministers under Section 8 (7) of the *Annual Reporting Act* 1983 in relation to the 1987–88 financial year.

Notification of exemptions from provisions or regulations of the Act granted to Chief Administrators under Section 8 (5) of the *Annual Reporting Act* 1983 in relation to the 1987–88 financial year.

Notification of directions or exemptions from provisions or regulations of the Act granted to public bodies under Section 15 (1) (*a*) and 15 (1) (*b*) of the *Annual Reporting Act* 1983 in relation to the 1987–88 financial year.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Fertilizers Act 1974—SR No. 55.

Margarine Act 1975—SR No. 56.

Metropolitan Fire Brigades Superannuation Act 1976—SR No. 80.

HOUSE CONTRACTS GUARANTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

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

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Extractive Industries Act 1966, to make minor amendments to the Extractive Industries (Amendment) Act 1980, the Extractive Industries (Amendment) Act 1984 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a first time.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—Will the Treasurer advise the House of the content of the Bill and whether it contains any retrospective clauses?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) *(By leave)*—As I indicated, the Bill makes changes that are regarded as minor amendments to various Acts. Certainly it is a result of detailed consultation with various organisations affected by the Bill.

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

CONSTITUTION (SUPREME COURT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part III of the Constitution Act 1975 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LEGAL PROFESSION PRACTICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Legal Profession Practice Act 1958, the Ombudsman Act 1973 and the Supreme Court Act 1986 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

SECOND-HAND DEALERS AND PAWNBROKERS BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the licensing and regulation of second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers and to facilitate and expedite the recovery of stolen goods from second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers; to repeal the Second-hand Dealers Act 1958, the Pawnbrokers Act 1958 and the Marine Stores and Old Metals Act 1958; to amend the Goods Act 1958; to make other consequential amendments and repeals; and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EGG INDUSTRY BILL

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to re-enact with amendments provisions applicable to the egg industry, to repeal the Egg Industry Stabilization Act 1983 and the Poultry Levy (Collection Arrangement) Act 1965, to amend the Marketing of Primary Products Act 1958 and the Borrowing and Investment Powers Act 1987 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987, the Land Act 1958, the Forests Act 1958, the Firearms Act 1958 and the Wildlife Act 1975 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LAND (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to revoke the permanent reservations, Crown Grants and Certificate of Title of certain lands, to add certain lands to lands permanently reserved, to amend the Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1933, the Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1958 and the Melbourne Lands Act 1987, to repeal the Moolap Salt Works Act 1896, the Wangaratta Lands Act 1933 and the Melbourne (Veterinary School) Lands Act 1970 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

RACING (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Racing Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS) BILL

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments calling attention to clerical errors in this Bill.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That such errors be corrected by omitting the expression "Local Government Act 1988" from the long title, clauses 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, and the following items in Schedule Two:

1.1, 4.6, 4.8, 4.10, 5.1, 5.3, 9.5, 9.18, 9.26, 9.39, 10.2, 10.3, 12.2, 12.6, 19.1, 21.3, 21.6, 21.8, 21.10, 22.10, 22.13, 23.4, 23.20, 23.28, 23.29, 23.32, 23.34, 23.39, 23.41, 23.46, 23.48, 23.51, 23.55, 28.3, 28.6, 28.8, 28.10, 29.1, 29.10, 32.2, 33.2, 33.11, 33.13, 37.1, 37.8, 42.1, 42.13, 42.22, 47.1, 47.2, 47.3, 47.4, 47.5, 47.6, 47.10, 49.3, 49.4, 49.5, 51.4, 51.5, 51.6, 51.7, 52.20, 52.21, 52.23, 56.2, 57.1, 57.2, 57.10, 57.49, 58.1, 59.6, 61.10, 66.1, 66.2, 66.4, 68.22, 68.24, 69.7, 69.13, 73.1, 76.1, 76.2, 77.3, 77.22, 77.46, 77.51, 77.57, 77.83, 78.1, 80.1, 80.2, 80.4, 80.7, 80.8, 80.11, 80.12, 80.13, 80.14, 82.8, 82.11, 83.1, 94.8, 94.9, 95.1, 96.1, 96.2, 96.3, 98.1, 102.2, 103.3, 104.22, 104.25, 105.1, 105.10, 107.2, 107.18, 107.23, 107.26, 107.28, 107.29, 107.30, 107.45, 112.1, 112.4, 112.21, 112.23, 112.27, 115.4, 115.8, 118.1, 120.5, 120.9, 120.32, 120.33, 120.34, 120.37, 120.45, 120.46, 122.16, 122.17, 122.20, 122.22, 122.23, 122.25, 125.1, 127.2, 130.7, 130.8, 130.57, 130.73, 130.95, 130.97, 130.98, 130.102, 130.108, 130.111, 130.112, 130.113, 130.116, 130.118, 130.126, 131.1, 131.10, 131.11, 131.12, 131.26, 131.32, 131.35, 131.38, 131.43, 131.44, 131.45, 131.46, 131.54, 131.60, 131.62, 132.3, 132.9, 132.11, 132.13 and 135.35,

and inserting the expression "Local Government Act 1989" in its stead.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that the report of the Clerk of the Parliaments be transmitted to the Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments calling attention to a clerical error in this Bill.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That such error be corrected by omitting the expression "Local Government (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988" in clause 163, page 68, line 38 and inserting the expression "Local Government (Consequential Provisions) Act 1989" in its stead.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I cannot imagine that the Opposition would oppose the proposal that has been put by the Minister but it is a disgraceful indictment of the capacity of the government to get things right that Parliament has a situation in which the government does not even know what year it is. If it were not for the long-serving officers of Parliament these errors would go undetected and the government would still not know what year it was.

Parliament now finds that the time of the House is being consumed by the Minister for Planning and Environment having to submit pages of corrections of the most elementary nature that the government has stupidly not been able to insert into the provisions when drafting its own legislation.

The House and the whole process of government is being perverted and distorted by the incapacity of the government to get it right. On behalf of the House and all the citizens of Victoria, I hope and pray that this is the last occasion on which the government finds itself in the embarrassing situation of having to admit that it did not know what year it was and yet again could not get it right. For heaven's sake I implore the government to do something right for a change!

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that the report of the Clerk of the Parliaments be transmitted to the Council.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-Reply

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr Cole (Melbourne) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was resumed.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—It is my pleasure to participate in the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech and to invite His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Dr McCaughey, as the representative of the Queen of Australia, to give Her Majesty my personal pledge of loyalty and that of her loyal constitutents in the electorate of Dromana. I note with pleasure that in my electorate the largest group of citizens not born in Australia are people from the United Kingdom and their loyality to Her Majesty is undoubted.

I spend my time on this occasion discussing, as part of the government's overall program for Victoria in the year ahead, its proposals and achievements in education, knowledge and research, because Australia is an intelligent community of very considerable achievement in these areas, and these are the bases of modern society. This group of subjects is a benchmark by any standard for any democratic government. It is also a benchmark in financial terms because the government commits billions of dollars each year to the overall development of education, knowledge and research and I believe, therefore, that those matters deserve the most careful scrutiny on a continuing basis.

The simple proposition I put is to be regretted in my view. It is that the pursuit of knowledge by the government on behalf of its citizens has failed to the point where one can say it has been downgraded by comparison with past achievement because, despite the fact that the government is in real terms spending more money than before on education, there are fewer students in our government schools, and yet the results are unsatisfactory.

I want, if I am able in the time available to me, to canvass a number of those major areas. The first is the primary-secondary school sequence. I observe as a base line that it is accepted by professional observers that approximately 50 per cent of what a human being learns in life is learnt in the first five years of that life. If that is the case there is a clear mandate for any government to place more emphasis on the education assistance required by human beings early in their lives.

There is an absolute necessity for governments to see that every child receives adequate support at the kindergarten stage in his or her very fragile life. In my

electorate the population expands by more than 5 per cent each year and we are constantly struggling to provide what has been the claimed ambition of the government, to provide at least a minimum of one year of kindergarten or preschool training for every Victorian child. Why is it then that we are constantly behind in this aim in my electorate? I am constantly receiving reports from professional people in these areas of responsibility that they do not have the bricks, mortar, staff or money to meet their responsibilities.

I move now to secondary schools. Why is it in this society that we are spending more money than ever on secondary school teachers yet each year there are fewer students in government secondary schools? It is not, I am sure, because the parents appreciate and enjoy the discomfort of having to provide an alternative, non-government school education for their children, because in Victoria that is a very expensive exercise. Once the family takes that step it comes next, I imagine, to the basic cost of living and providing a roof over their heads as the major cost and it usurps most other capacities a family may have to do other things.

However, it is a fact of history that each year an increasing number of Victorian families—approximately one-third of students in Victoria attend non-government schools—families that are not wealthy by and large, but average families, or at the very best just above average in terms of annual income, feel obliged to undertake this significant extra expenditure.

What is equally important is that their choice has proven to be acceptable to them because with the passing of the years they do not change their opinion and revert to the government school system. Where it is costing a family so dearly in money, family activities and other forms of education, cultural, physical, social and sporting pursuits, it is important that these families each year again endorse their decisons by continuing down that path.

Australian families are contributing more than $1 billion to the overall educational process in Australia. It would cost the government at least that amount should the families reverse their decisions and decide to return their children to the government school system. Without making any derogatory comment, accidental or intended, upon any of the professionals or assistant staff involved in State government schools, I believe we should be attempting to establish why this situation exists.

This is something of the utmost value which democratic Parliaments should be seeking to elucidate. The government and the Opposition should be attempting to establish why this is so. Certainly, if that could be established it ought to be possible to improve government schools, and even if society continues to educate only two-thirds of its students through that system it should mean that all students should obtain a better education. That would amount to a gain of virtually immeasurable benefit to the individual, to the family and to the whole of society.

A better education would not mean simply that these people would obtain better jobs in the future, because that is a large part of what is behind the ambitions of families in seeking the best possible education for their children. It would not simply mean a higher level of satisfaction for those adult human beings who would be better equipped to handle their daily living in this very complex and fast-moving modern society.

Very significant gains would occur in other areas such as in the expenditure of the taxpayers' dollar and in government administration, as well as in the maintenance of modern Parliamentary democracy. Better education would mean a reduction in social welfare problems, expenditure and effort. It would mean a reduction in costs and an increase in the efficiency of law and order in Victoria.

Surely those things are of the utmost front-line concern to all members of governments and oppositions in every Parliament in Australia. The question of what is wrong with the secondary school system in Victoria, perceived or real, demands more and better attention from all.

It is obvious that the current Victorian government has failed in its leadership of secondary education, and indeed primary education, in Victoria, by allowing philosophy and rhetoric to interfere far too much in the educational process. There have been too many committees of inquiry; too many changes; too frequently changing alterations in the bureaucracy; far too many attempts to institutionalise philosophy when society should be talking about straight-line education of our children and the creation of an environment in which they may obtain a set of personal moral and philosophical values which are not distorted by politics of any persuasion.

Also, it is obvious that the government, in introducing and attempting to implement the recommendations of the Blackburn committee with regard to the new Victorian certificate of education to replace the former methods of assessment at the end of secondary school, has not really done the job. It has mouthed its ambition and rhetoric, then thrown it all to the teaching body, which is already rather stressed in terms of its coalface-type responsibilities in a society where young people are at school these days not simply to acquire an education but also to be assisted with their personal problems, which are very real, emanating from the high degree of social destruction occurring today in society. This is illustrated in part by, for example, the number of single-parent families whose children, especially in primary school but also in secondary school, need much personal assistance.

In these regards our teachers are under great pressure, yet the government expects them to take on board the development of the ideas in principle in the Blackburn report, which amount to enormous reviews and revamping of subject materials, equipment and resources. Indeed, the government's other major failing in this area is not to have backed that up, even if the teaching body could have discharged the extra responsibility foisted upon it, which I do not think it is reasonable to expect it to do. Teachers have not been provided with the money to undertake the task.

The Blackburn initiative in many ways is a pale shadow of what it should have been. It provides virtually no new money; there is poor management, and our teachers are placed under increased pressure. All wait, just as the teachers wait, to see how the subject materials will be handled, yet the teachers are expected to do it virtually tomorrow. All wait to see what forms of assessment will be introduced. There is a real concern in the community that there will be a shortfall in terms of a practical secondary school system as a result of not creating an environment in which children learn, and in which they may be assessed in a practical and efficient way so that they may be further helped at that time or appropriately channelled into careers of their choice in the future.

Too little is known about other undesirable aspects of the Blackburn report, such as the Australian studies subject, which has a very strong union component. I am not attacking the unions but I attack the proposal that subjects which should not take precedence over far more basic subjects should be foisted upon young minds at that point.

I also add to my objection the strong tenor in which the idea of social justice is being promoted these days throughout the total educational system in ways that are excessive and which are unreasonable, especially with younger children. Those sorts of things should not be permitted to take precedence over far more basic matters.

An article in the *Australian* of 7 April 1989, entitled "Education Without Honour", written by Warren Clarnette, states:

> Toleration of diverse beliefs suggests breadth and humanity of spirit. It may also mask the inability to affirm that some beliefs are right and others wrong. Social justice may demonstrate lively concern for fairness and decency; it is no substitute for commitment to the institutions on which the rule of law and the security of society ultimately depend.

In a wide-ranging philosophical article, backed up by real material, the author makes a valid point. I am concerned about what may happen in the VCE to basic subjects such as English, mathematics and science. There is no question that the rhetoric uttered by the government has not explained matters or reassured citizens who may have contact with the subjects that the government has the formula right. The price will not be paid by them, or by us; it will be paid by the next generation; by the children who are the next generation of adults in Australia. Beyond there, as they leave their society, such basic errors in education in the end may take decades to correct. Throughout the total period they incur an excessive price.

I regret to say to the House that the educational process at secondary school level is far worse than what I have suggested already. There are secondary schools in this State where little more—if, indeed, any more—is achieved than keeping the children at school during the day, virtually semi-captive, in a state of attempted discipline, without any real, measurable, worthwhile degree of learning on the part of those children.

There are secondary schools in this State which, for reasons complex and diverse and through no responsibility of the teachers in my view, at this time resemble nothing like what a good secondary school should be. That is the extreme illustration of the process to which I referred earlier where families, if they can afford to take their children from government schools and place them elsewhere, are doing so.

I do not place the total responsibility for that situation at the hands of the government opposite but it is an illustration of how many of those children, some with many problems, go to schools that are unable to assist them. That failure to achieve is then reflected in all areas of society for years or decades or even the whole life of the person. Society then attempts to deal with these difficulties one way or another, to bandage them in a bandaid fashion when it is far too late to do so.

The problem needs handling back at its source. The government should be looking much more carefully at every school in Victoria to establish what must be done there so that teachers may achieve the results that are absolutely essential for the children in that school.

In terms of learning, of assessment, of the imparting of competence, of assisting the student to go on to school elsewhere, much is left to be desired by the performance of the government at the secondary school level. I regret that it is necessary to say so in this place.

I turn briefly to consider the next level of education, that of technical and further education colleges and apprenticeships. I shall cite two illustrations that I know can be multiplied across Victoria from other areas. In my area of the southern Mornington Peninsula 100 000 people are permanently domiciled yet we do not have one institution for vocational training beyond the secondary school level. There is a TAFE college at Frankston—a large establishment that is doing a good job and is more than flooded with students, as its director will confirm any day of the week. It services approximately 250 000 people without the southern Mornington Peninsula population, yet I am told that is the only place available for students from my area.

Recently, the Federal Labor government, assisted by the Victorian government, has decided that there is a need for some 13 000 TAFE places in the west of Melbourne.

Yet for these 100 000 people to the south of Melbourne nothing is proposed, despite the work I have done in nearly five years of attempting to convey to the government the urgency of this situation. I, of course, was not the first representative in this area and the government has known for a long time about the need for TAFE services in the southern Mornington Peninsula area. It has done nothing about it despite the fact that the area is growing as fast as any area in Victoria, with an annual growth rate of 5·5 per cent during the past ten or fifteen years. It is predicted to remain at least at that for the next decade.

A practical human illustration—my second illustration—is that I have been approached by one of my constituents, a young man who has been seeking a three-month training period in carpentry in a technical school or college in Melbourne to enable him to continue his apprenticeship. He cannot obtain that training. There is no place for him at the Dromana Technical School because its carpentry section has been closed. There is no place for him in the Frankston TAFE College this year or next.

A Statewide telephone exercise on his behalf has produced no offer in any technical institute in Victoria. The nearest he can get is the offer of a probable place being available in a country college in 1990. That is a case the government should take to heart because it is not the first such case of which I have been made aware, and it is a damning indictment of the government that this should be the situation in the late twentieth century when this government makes so much to-do about the need for our people to be involved in market-competitive, efficient technology for both the domestic and export markets.

I turn briefly to consider Skillshare, the Federal government's initiative, assisted by the Victorian government, designed to do something to assist the longer term unemployed to gain work. This replaced previous systems that attempted to provide more long-term training. In this case the aim of the government clearly is to get lots of figures on the board, lots and lots of short-term courses—as short as a week—shown on the board as "one training course completed". I have even been told that students might well come and learn how to pick apples for a week and then go off and work at the job during the summer. Just as with the Commonwealth Employment Service, that case shows as a job found for a person. Both propositions are spurious and of limited temporary value for a long-term unemployed person who is nearly always in such a state of depression as to be incapable of rescuing himself or herself from the situation. There is a need in that case for the administration of the day to lift up those people, give them a little vision and inspiration and then give them real, practical training that may get them a job for at least a significant period of the remainder of what is usually their young lives.

In some ways Skillshare is really an apology for an attempt to establish a system that will give real, practical, worthwhile help to some of the most needy people in our community, young as well as older, but especially young long-term unemployed people.

I point out in passing that the Federal government in particular contributes further to this morass by now making it impossible for observers to obtain accurate figures on the true state of unemployment in our society. I am repeatedly told by professional bureaucrats with that responsibility that they are no longer able to answer the questions I put to them.

I turn to consider universities and colleges, the area which is responsible for the training of a smaller percentage of our young Victorians. It is, in some senses, the peak of the educational pyramid but one that has importance far beyond its numerical size because, unless that sector works efficiently, the educational knowledge industries will

not work efficiently and, therefore, society will not work efficiently; indeed, its very democracy will be threatened.

The first thing I want to say to the Victorian government and to the Hawke government is that their mad rush to amalgamate tertiary institutions in Victoria and Australia is clearly without rationale. It appears to be based on the thesis that big is better. There should be plenty of evidence from overseas educational experiments to establish that we should not be hurtling headlong down that path but taking our time to work out that if there are cases where some of our institutions should amalgamate that should be encouraged, but others may well be living proof of small being beautiful and small being better.

This House hears far too little about the government's proposals in these areas. In the end, they are rushed into this place as a Bill and an attempt is made to rush them through the House without any real discussion of what the government has in mind.

Currently a proposal exists to create a western university and I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, share my enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of many others in this place for the creation of educational institutions at all levels because we have given much of our lives in these causes. However, I have not yet seen any evidence or explanation of the rationale behind a western university. I have heard neither an explanation of the need for it nor why, where or how it is proposed.

In terms of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, I welcome the creation in Victoria of a technological university, but what is the government proposing for RMIT—an institution which will now encompass all levels of training from apprenticeships through to doctorates? It seems to me that that is foisting upon the academics and administrators involved challenges that have not been solved elsewhere, and serious consideration should be given to what is happening there.

In this regard the Victorian government is running along behind the Commonwealth government, saying, "Yes, sir, we agree to amalgamate our institutions as you say" but why is the Victorian government not requiring of Minister Dawkins and Prime Minister Hawke and the rest of the Federal Cabinet adequate discussion of what is being proposed?

Why is it that the State is allowing the Federal government and in particular one man—certainly the flag bearer—to attempt to impose upon Australia throughout primary, secondary and tertiary training, a straitjacket of conformity and uniformity not based upon educational principles?

It seems to me that the second proposal of Minister Dawkins will extract an horrendous price from this nation for years to come. He is proposing, in every possible way, to require that education and the pursuit of knowledge be based on economic and social benefits to the society; where is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake? Virtually all of modern technology has been developed from inquisitive research—some call it basic research—conducted at a time when thought was not given to the practical gains to be achieved from it. In many senses the more basic the research eventually the bigger practical gain.

The Hawke government is attempting to reverse this process and to favour applied research. In this way these Victorian and Federal socialist governments are, for the first time in the history of the nation, attempting to establish a system that is likely to prove disastrous in the extreme, and I oppose it.

Dr VAUGHAN (Clayton)—I should like to begin by expressing the high esteem in which I hold the Governor of Victoria, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey, and his

wife, Mrs McCaughey. They are splendid Victorians and a credit to the position they hold, and I am sure that sentiment is echoed around this House.

In the Governor's Speech at the opening of the 51st Parliament mention was made of developments achieved by the Cain government in health services. This is of particular interest to people in the Clayton area, and I should like to quote briefly from that section of the Governor's Speech:

> Victoria's world class health system will continue to be supported and enhanced by this government. Hospital services have been upgraded and located close to where people live. Already a new teaching hospital—the Monash Medical Centre—has been established at Clayton. During this term, more than 900 beds will be built in suburban Melbourne.

I address my remarks to this particular section of the speech. A major hospital at Clayton was first proposed under the Bolte government in 1961. It was, in fact, wheeled out as an election promise at every subsequent State election. However, it was only on the election of the Cain government in April 1982 that things started to happen. After 21 years of promises there was some action.

At the first meeting held after the election Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to the construction of a major hospital on the Clayton Road site which was to involve the relocation of the Queen Victoria Medical Centre from its Lonsdale Street address. Work on the project commenced in 1983, and things moved along at a speedy pace. The work was finished on time and on budget, and the keys were handed over in March 1987. The first patients were admitted to the hospital on 19 July 1987. As honourable members will be aware it is proposed that there be a relocation of Prince Henry's Hospital to become another part of the Monash Medical Centre.

I should like to dwell for a moment on the relationship that has existed between the local government body—the Oakleigh City Council—and the hospital. The hospital would never have been built on time and on budget without the close cooperation and support of the Oakleigh City Council. An admirable relationship existed during the period from 1982 to 1987 and it is a credit to all concerned, and certainly to the councillors of the City of Oakleigh. However, I am sad to inform the House that the relationship between the Monash Medical Centre and the City of Oakleigh appears to have deteriorated considerably, and I would like to instance three examples, the first of which concerns attempts to construct a car park for 577 vehicles on 1·8 hectares of land, which is open space occupied by the Clayton Technical School.

The hospital has made public statements on its unsatisfactory relationship with the Oakleigh City Council in its attempts to construct the car park. The car park is required for the stage 2 development of the Monash Medical Centre at the Clayton site. In fact, construction work could not occur until the problems surrounding the car park were resolved.

I should like to quote from a letter sent to the editor of the local newspaper, the *Oakleigh-Springvale Times,* dated Wednesday, 23 November 1988. The letter, which is from Elizabeth Maddison, the project director, Monash Medical Centre stage 2 development concerns the relationship between the council and the hospital, and states:

> An impression is given by your headline and the content of your article, that Oakleigh City Council has granted a permit for the Monash Medical Centre North-East (Technical School) car park: that is not correct.
>
> Oakleigh council has not granted a permit and as recently as November 21 again deferred a decision on a determination to grant a permit.
>
> This was disappointing to the hospital as requirements laid down by Oakleigh council had been addressed by the Minister for Transport, Mr Kennan, in his letter dated October 27 to council.

Monash Medical Centre has been negotiating with Oakleigh council since March last to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution to its future car parking needs.

Officers of Monash Medical Centre and Officers and/or Oakleigh city councillors have discussed this and associated matters on 18 different occasions.

A formal town planning application was lodged on May 16 and statutory advertising requirements were fulfilled by July 4.

Following negotiation that document was not lodged until August 11.

Monash Medical Centre has a history of sensitivity to the needs of its local community and has always been happy to discuss matters of concern with interested groups to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

That letter was published on 23 November and referred to the fact that negotiations had been continuing since March of that year.

In the end, the council failed to resolve the matter and it ended up before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal—application No. 4588 and appeal No. P88/2416—and was heard on 14 February 1989. The tribunal decided that the position put by the Monash Medical Centre to the council was a fair and reasonable one. The tribunal held that the centre's application to the City of Oakleigh was a responsible one and that the local council had acted in anything but a responsible matter. The failure of the council to make a decision about the development of stage 2 of the Monash Medical Centre was not only irresponsible but also reprehensible. The local council should have made the decision promptly and efficiently.

I have received certain advice concerning the effect of the council's delay in determining the matter. That advice is that analysis of delays to the start of construction at Clayton indicated that the programmed end date has been delayed three or four months. That advice states that the effect of the delay has been to increase the total estimated end cost of the project by $2·6 million, which is a significant sum of money and which is equivalent to rate revenue that the City of Oakleigh might have spent for the benefit of its ratepayers during that time.

This estimate consists of the additional rise and fall costs anticipated plus expected claims for prolongation by consultants and front-end contractors. A breakdown of figures shows that $700 000 will have to be found for the front-end implications of that failure to make a decision, and that a further $1·88 million will have to be found at the completion of stage 2 of the construction. Obviously the Oakleigh council has a case to answer; its failure to make a decision on the matter is inexcusable.

If Oakleigh councillors wish to be portrayed as opponents of the hospital, their reputations among local ratepayers will suffer. Monash Medical Centre is the pride and joy of Oakleigh and the surrounding catchment areas. The centre is a the major public hospital for a vast area of Melbourne as well as for significant parts of Gippsland. Everyone who has had experience of the Monash Medical Centre since it opened its doors in 1987 has been impressed by the quality of the care provided by the staff and the facilities of the hospital which is a significant achievement of the Cain government.

The second matter concerning the relationship between the Oakleigh council and the Monash Medical Centre to which I shall refer relates to the use of various blocks of land—most of which are former residential sites that surround the site of the hospital—purchased prior to construction of stage 2. The hospital purchased a number of homes around its perimeter for expansion of its operations, for construction of stage 2, and for related matters such as the provision of child-care and car parking space; the hospital purchased that land and asked the Minister for Planning and Environment to amend the Oakleigh planning scheme. In amendment R33, the Minister agreed to provide for the temporary use of land for car parking and construction activities related to the contruction of stage 2.

The amendment consists of two parts. It permits construction activities and temporary car parking on the prescribed land without a permit until 31 December 1990, and with a permit from that date until 31 December 1991.

The response of the Oakleigh council to the Minister's decision bordered on the hysterical. On 5 April 1989, the following article appeared in the *Oakleigh–Springvale Times*. Under the headline "Row on planning setback", the article states:

Oakleigh council has expressed "complete and utter disappointment and disgust" at State government action which overrode its planning scheme controls.

At a meeting of the council, the following motion was adopted:

The Minister, in his so-called wisdom, has ignored the hours and hours of voluntary work put in by this council to try to overcome the problems suffered by people who live around the Monash Medical Centre.

It is the belief that this council is, day by day, getting more and more heaped upon it by the State government by being asked to carry out more and more of the functions of State government, but whenever it suits the government, council's deliberations are completely ignored.

I do not wish to identify either the mover or seconder of that motion; nor shall I identify who supported the motion and who did not. It is to be regretted that the Oakleigh City Council has behaved in such a manner and has indulged in cheap abuse. It has a very poor track record of failing to make important decisions about the hospital's development.

One councillor described herself as being absolutely livid about the Minister for Planning and Environment's decision and said:

Council spent endless hours in consultation with Monash Medical Centre and with the local residents to try to come up with a solution that was equitable as far as both groups were concerned.

That is a load of rubbish! What councillors of the City of Oakleigh describe as consultation is costing the people of Victoria $100 000 a meeting because of the delays that have occurred.

There is a need for Oakleigh councillors to return to the harmonious working relationship they had with the authorities involved in the construction of the Monash Medical Centre from 1982 to 1987. Councillors of the City of Oakleigh need to take a long, hard look at themselves if they do not wish to be portrayed publicly as opponents of the medical centre, a centre which local residents regard as the best thing to happen to the community for many years. Local councillors' reputations are at risk if they continue in this vein.

Finally I shall quote from a letter from Elizabeth Maddison, the project manager of the Monash Medical Centre, to illustrate the local council's most recent response to a request for cooperation with the hospital. On 17 February 1989 Ms Maddison wrote a letter to the Town Clerk and Councillors of the City of Oakleigh concerning future land use and the Monash Medical Centre:

The medical centre is about to initiate the formation of a group to address the strategic development of the Clayton and Moorabbin sites.

There are of course, two major issues:

(*a*) the future, beyond 1990, of the land which was the subject of Ministerial amendment to the Oakleigh planning scheme, to enable commencement of construction of stage 2; and

(*b*) the longer term and broader implications of the future planning of the interface between the medical centre and its environs.

The cooperation and participation of the City of Oakleigh in this process will be formally requested in due course, However at this stage it would assist greatly if you could advise me of:

(*a*) issues which you would desire to be included in such a study; and

(*b*) the name of your nominee to participate in the process.

What has been the response of the City of Oakleigh? I understand to date there has been deafening silence!

This is a third example of the deteriorating relationship between the Oakleigh council and the Monash Medical Centre, caused in no part by the centre or by any other agency. It is caused totally by the failure of the Oakleigh council to make decisions and to act in a professional and proper manner. The City of Oakleigh has acted in a reprehensible manner.

I have already mentioned the $2·6 million, with the $700 000 up-front payment and the $1·88 million payment to be made at the end of the project. I also refer to the delay in setting a starting date and the delay in the relocation of Prince Henry's Hospital from St Kilda Road to the Clayton complex.

I have not named any councillor. I want to continue the good working relationships that I have with all the councillors on the Oakleigh council. I work harmoniously with the councillors on a whole range of projects, and it is regrettable that I must today describe to the House the current relationship that the council has with an institution that is close to the heart of every local resident. The problem should not exist and I should not have to use this platform to request that the Oakleigh council desist.

Mr Gude—It should pick up its game.

Dr VAUGHAN—I thank the honourable member for Hawthorn for his interjection. Oakleigh council must pick up its game. It must act in the community's interest. It has said that in the past its actions have been in the interests of the local community, but that would not be my judgment. I have spoken to local residents and I do not know for whom the council is speaking.

The Oakleigh council had an excellent relationship with local residents during stage 1 of the Monash Medical Centre. The consultation with local residents was excellent. The Monash Medical Centre had an excellent relationship with the local community during that construction phase and the hospital remains a good neighbour. It has been a good neighbour since it opened. The problems that do occur from time to time are addressed happily by the hospital management.

Oakleigh council has used a beat-up issue as an excuse for delaying decision making. I cannot understand what agenda it is pursuing. It is beyond my comprehension. I ask that the City of Oakleigh reappraise its past behaviour and examine its collective conscience in an endeavour to improve its relationship with the Monash Medical Centre to facilitate construction and stop wasting taxpayers' money. It should resolve to assist the provision of health care for the people of Victoria, particularly its local community. It should act responsibly and make a decision to assist the construction of stage 2 of the centre, being mindful of the issues that have arisen and will arise in the future.

The Oakleigh council should return to the close relationship that existed between it and the centre during the construction of stage 1. The issues are too important and the squandering of public funds should cease. This is a sincere plea made by me as the honourable member for Clayton to the Oakleigh council.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I congratulate His Excellency the Governor and Mrs McCaughey on the fine way that they are carrying out their roles. They set a fine example for Victorians. I express my allegiance to the Crown and I thank the constituents of Hawthorn who were good enough to return me to the Victorian Parliament as their representative with a resounding increase in majority. I shall deal with financial management, particularly the Victorian Economic Development

Corporation and more specifically matters relating to WorkCare. If time permits I shall address a matter relevant to the Department of Labour.

A major concern of the community is the way the government and particularly the Treasurer have lost their way regarding financial management. The Treasurer's credibility and his rating, and, therefore, the government's rating, have slipped enormously since the public outcry that followed the revelations surrounding the loss of $160 million or thereabouts, through the VEDC loan scandal. That, of course, was followed by the demise of the former Deputy Premier and former Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, the honourable member for Footscray, because of his part in that exercise. The honourable member's lack of attention to duty and lack of attention to Ministerial responsibility ultimately cost him his Ministry and also his position as Deputy Premier.

It is of concern that the financial mismanagement over which the Treasurer is presiding extends much farther. In recent days serious questions have been asked regarding the ill-fated WorkCare scheme, which is in total disarray. The scheme is racing towards bankruptcy. The government's own actuaries have said the scheme will be devoid of assets by 1992. They said if the government's amendments to the Act were to be taken up the scheme would be devoid of assets by 1991.

During a recent grievance debate I directed the attention of Parliament and the Treasurer to a company known as CPS Rehabilitation Services, which is involved in a fraudulent process. It has rorted the WorkCare scheme to the extent of approximately $2 million. The grievances were acknowledged as being true in the daily media by the Accident Compensation Commission.

The Accident Compensation Commission indicated that all it would do would be to make some inquiries and ascertain whether the company would pay back the money. I put it to the House, and specifically to the Treasurer—it is a pity he is not here to take note—that he must do better than that. If fraudulent activities have taken place, and I am certain they have, when will charges be laid? What is the process for getting the money back into the system? Which people will be charged in the process? Why is the Victorian Accident Rehabilitation Council so quiet on the issue? Why has the council had consultations with the private rehabilitation companies in recent times and indicated that it does not intend to take any action unless the Treasurer directs it do so? When will the Treasurer take a stand and tell the truth on WorkCare? When will he take some action and be responsible finally, in the interests of the people of Victoria?

If honourable members think the CPS scam is bad, and it is in terms of quantum, let me inform the House of another scam which involves the same area of activity but which I find in many ways even more reprehensible. It involves a company called Comprehensive Health and Active Rehabilitation Training which is located at 665 High Street, Thornbury. The business name is registered in the names of Mr Paul Kron, Mr John Kaufmann, Mr Nando Giovannucci and a lady by the name of Tina Goldberg was on that list but she was removed from it in December 1988.

Why should I be concerned about this particular group? I should be concerned because they have associations with a number of physiotherapy groups particularly under the overriding name of Aberfeldie Physiotherapy located in Keilor Road, Essendon, High Street, Thornbury, and at Gladstone Park Drive in Tullamarine. The consultants, as they are called, the physiotherapists, the medical people who are involved and the psychiatrists employed by the group, are instructed by the proprietors of the company that anyone who attends one of the addresses as a WorkCare claimant must have eight consultations. It does not matter whether they need eight consultations; eight consultations they shall have and eight consultations they do have.

The problem is that in many instances their treatments require far less attention than eight consultations. The claimants frequently do not turn up but the charges are still levied. The company is still raising a charge against WorkCare and it is being paid. If that in itself is not bad enough, the staff of this particular company have been harassed. An office girl, a secretary, who was required to raise these accounts, knew the system was being defrauded and took up the matter with the management. Ultimately, she was sacked.

I have spoken to that young girl and she is a fine, decent Australian who did not deserve the treatment she has received from this company. At the moment she cannot find a job and I certainly will do everything I can to assist her to find a job. The price for her honesty and integrity was dismissal.

The social worker, two psychologists and a physiotherapist have also either been dismissed or have resigned because they have queried overservicing and defrauding of the system by the company. One case of unfair dismissal is before the State Industrial Relations Commission. I hope the Minister for Labour will read the *Hansard* report as he is not in the House at present. The case relates to a Cathie Andsley, a physiotherapist, and she has taken, quite properly, a case of unfair dismissal to the State Industrial Relations Commission. I hope she is successful because there is no place in any system for these types of people who are rorting the scheme.

Other things are occurring. Scales of fees are applicable for various services. There are clinics lined up next door to this group with so-called physiotherapist outlets. At present the process is that treatments by masseurs are being handed out to would-be WorkCare recipients by the head madam, Tina Goldberg, and they are charged against the fee for physiotherapy, so that is another example of a rort.

There are thousands of these outlets throughout Victoria, so why would this one be any different? I believe this particular company has received in excess of $100 000 in duplicate and quadruplicate payments from WorkCare. One would hope there would be some honesty and that the company would return the money, but I am advised that none of the money has been returned; that it has been banked. I am advised that those cards with double and quadruplicate payments have been identified in a certain way.

I am not going to mention that process in the House today but I am quite happy to assist the Treasurer if it is his will to bring these people to account. I will identify for him the process of marking and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the consultants, the psychologist, the social workers, the office girl and the physiotherapist who have been dismissed by this disgraceful group of people.

They have associated themselves with a Dr Bedi and Dr Mundae, who are also part of the scam. The concern of the Opposition is that there appears to be no end to the rorts of the beleaguered WorkCare scheme. We have a Treasurer who, having had one major rort identified, is sitting on his hands or having them sat on by somebody and is doing nothing about it. At the same time, the scheme is racing out of control.

I refer to some matters that came up in Parliament in the past couple of weeks in respect of WorkCare. I raised with the Treasurer an amount of unfunded liabilities. What the people of Victoria and the businesses of Victoria, which are paying the WorkCare premium dollar, want to know is to what extent WorkCare is unfunded. Will it collapse next year? What will the Treasurer's response be to the report of the Parliamentary WorkCare Committee of inquiry, truncated and sanitised as it was? In the course of the Treasurer's response to my question about unfunded liabilities, he said:

> Since the introduction of WorkCare, on a comparable cost basis there has been an average 50 per cent reduction in premiums, and that benefit has been spread right across the Victorian business community.

One of those many heads of Victorian business has been in touch with my office. A company known as Wild Publications Pty Ltd contacted our office in March. The letter reads:

> You will see from the enclosure that, despite never having had a claim under either workers compensation or WorkCare, our premium rate increased significantly (over the highest rate under the private system) on the introduction of WorkCare and has fluctuated wildly since that time.

This is the important part:

> But it has always remained higher than it was under the private system.

Did the Treasurer mislead the House? Does he know what is going on? He does not know what the unfunded liabilities are and does not care about the rorts that are going on. The people who are running the system do not seem to know what is going on. They do not know whether there is $10 000, $1 million, $2 million or $3 million in overpayments to government agencies, and, in particular, the police and education departments.

I was fascinated to read one of the departmental replies that a spokeswoman made, as reported in an article in the *Sun* written by Gettler:

> A spokeswoman said that the problem was compounded by the commission then not having sufficient checking procedures...

So there is an admission of guilt, and the commission still does not have those checking procedures. The article continued:

> ... but the two departments were now repaying the money.

She said, "Of course we can get the money back; we can offset the money". Have I got news for her! The fact is that the computers that operate this system have no capacity to offset, which is the very reason why there has been no offsetting of these accounts.

It is obvious that the Treasurer does not know how much is involved. It is obvious that he is not speaking to the Minister for Education or the Minister for Police and Emergency Services; or perhaps they are not speaking to him. I am not sure who is the most unpopular person on the government side. But, irrespective of who it is, the fact is that millions of dollars that came out of the system have not been repaid because the system itself is deficient. It does not have checks and balances, and the Treasurer himself is sitting on his own hands.

Secondly, the Treasurer referred to the fact that under the old workers compensation system many more people were injured and it took a long time for the process to be resolved. Again, he has not come clean in Parliament. He has not given the people of Victoria the true picture because his own reports show that the number of claims increased in the past twelve months from 13 689 to 22 942; that is more than the very worst position under the old workers compensation system.

Therefore, it appears that no matter which way one examines the Treasurer's response, he is either deliberately misleading Parliament or, alternatively, is not on top of his portfolio and he does not know what is occurring in his own administration. I can conclude only that it is the latter because of his record, which is one of hopeless administration. He has presided over the largest losses of any Treasurer in any Parliament in this country's history. His own performance in regard to the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, which is now backed up by the two scams that I have outlined to the House in the past fortnight and his lack of preparedness to move on these areas, is absolutely unbelievable.

In answer to a question the other day about unfunded liabilities—which are of the order of $4 billion, we are now told—the Treasurer said, "Do not worry too much

about all of that because we have $800 million sitting in reserves and we will be able to keep the system afloat". Anybody who went to primary school would know that $800 million is less than $1 billion, and it is certainly much less than $4 billion worth of unfunded liabilities.

If the Treasurer were prepared to invest a smidgin of time and refer to the accounts of the Accident Compensation Commission, he would find there has been a progressive, rapid, worrying and damaging decline in the amount of money that remains after the payment of claims to be invested to try to keep the fund in working order. It is that investment to which the Treasurer refers when he mentions the $800 million.

Let us examine the steady decline in funds as a consequence of the growth in claims to which I referred earlier. The amount available for investment in 1985–86 represented 60·7 per cent; in 1986–87, 22·7 per cent, and in 1987–88, 12·4 per cent. The clever person, the mug punter, also lost $83 million in the recent stock market crash. Therefore, anyone who gains comfort from the remarks of the Treasurer in that regard is deluding himself. But anyone who is interested and who knows what is occurring in workers compensation would in no way, shape or form be happy about that process.

I turn now to the Department of Labour. The House will be aware that for a long time now I have been extremely worried about the government's lack of concern about workplace safety, a subject related to workers compensation. The fact that accident claims under WorkCare have increased in the way that they have ought to be a clear indication to the community that industrial accidents are increasing rapidly. I can conclude only that the business community has miraculously and suddenly become careless, that injured workers have become careless, or both have occurred, or that there is something wrong in the processes of the department.

Recently a team of my colleagues and I visited the offices of the Department of Labour and inspected approximately 120 files on people who had been killed in industrial accidents. We found files that had obviously been cleaned up—cleansed for the process. Anybody could see that. We also found files that were deficient. We found files that did not indicate whether there had been any proceedings against people, despite the fact that there was clear evidence of negligence. We found that innumerable files had been lost, and we know of lawyers who are trying to obtain some of that material. Worse still, we found a list of deaths that was incomplete.

I shall tell the House about one of the deaths that was not on the list, which is very serious indeed. I refer to the death of a driller on an oil rig a few years ago. In that case, a person by the name of Donald Edward Radford, who was working with the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources in August 1985, gave a dispensation to a crane chaser and a dogman on the southern exploration oil rig. He gave that dispensation to unqualified people, and we all know that no-one has that right, least of all a person who, himself, has no qualifications. The departmental officer was not qualified to issue certificates for riggers or dogmen. However, in his capacity as an oil rig safety operator with the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources, Mr Radford gave dispensations.

There was a need for a Mr Stewart to go to the top of a rig and inspect a problem with the wheel. He was put into a harness and winched up. There were a dogman and a crane chaser—the people with dispensations. They were not qualified and they had no certificates to carry out the work.

For those honourable members who are not familiar with the process, what happened was that the dogman was winching the gentleman up in the harness and the crane chaser was supposed to be signalling him as to how much further he should go, whether to stop, whether there was a problem with the wind, whether he might hit the

side of the crane, and so on. Somehow or other, this person lost his attention and the man in the harness was winched into the wheel at the top of the oil rig. At that time he was probably crushed to death but, if he was not dead then, he certainly was when his harness broke and he fell to the ground.

How did Donald Edward Radford obtain the authority to carry out that function? I know he did not have the authority because, under the Freedom of Information Act, I found through the Department of Labour that Mr Radford was issued with his certificate on 11 January 1988, years after the death to which I have referred. Why is it that under the FoI legislation I am not provided with the details of that man's death? Why was his name excluded from the list made available to the State Opposition? How many more people whose deaths we have not heard about have been killed in this State? How many more files have been lost by this sloppy, hopeless and incompetent administration? How many more Donald Radfords are running around Victoria falsely issuing certificates?

What about the process of giving people the certification and authority to carry out this function? Time and again over the past three years I have criticised the Department of Labour in this House until I am sick and tired of it and blue in the face. I know that the Premier has put some of his people from the Department of the Premier and the Cabinet into the department to conduct an investigation. So he should.

I do not hold the Minister for Labour responsible for what occurred before his administration. However, he would be well advised to bring in people from outside to go through the Department of Labour very thoroughly before he—like his predecessor the Minister for Police and Emergency Services—is held responsible for the deaths of people in this State because of his negligence and failure to carry out his Ministerial responsibility. As sure as night follows day the Minister is responsible because he ignored all of the warnings and failed to put into place systems which would check the dangers.The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has allowed the cerification process to be ripped off. He has enabled people who are not properly qualified to carry out inspectorial duties.

One night recently when I was at home I watched the television show *Page One.* Any honourable member who saw the pathetic squirming response of the Minister to the question regarding lost files would have been absolutely appalled. Honourable members would want to weep if they heard the remarks of the solicitors who make representations on behalf of people who have been injured or maimed or worse—who have lost their life—and whose families or who themselves are being denied the opportunity of being represented by solicitors.

The deficiencies and failures of the government in so many areas of its responsibility is disgraceful. I shall satisfy myself in concluding my remarks——

Mr Roper interjected.

Mr GUDE—As the Minister for Planning and Environment said, before I go blue in the face. My anger will not subside in respect of these issues, although my blood pressure has gone down. The Minister would do better than to chuckle. He should be admonishing his colleague and ensuring that proper safety provisions are in place in this State. The Minister is demonstrating an attitude of neglect and total disregard for Victorians and their property.

I have given the challenge to the Minister for Labour to pick up the ball and to catch the clowns who are rorting the Workcare system. I have names which I can give him. I can identify the areas where people are rorting the system. If I had the authority I would quickly put them behind bars. The Minister for Labour should do what his predecessor did not have the guts, the decency or the integrity to do: conduct a proper

inquiry into the Department of Labour and ensure that fellow travellers from the Victorian Trades Hall Council are thrown out. He should ensure that the idiots and clowns in the Department of Labour are removed and that properly qualified people are employed instead. If the Minister for Labour seeks to preside over a system which enabled decent Victorians to go to their deaths, the State Opposition does not want to be party to that system in any way, shape or form. The Minister for Labour stands condemned, as does the government.

None of the knowledge of impropriety to which I have referred is new. What is new are some of the facts that are coming out now. I have no pleasure in pointing them out in this way. However, I shall follow them through until I draw my last breath, in an endeavour to ensure that there is decency, honesty and integrity on the government side of the House.

Mr MACLELLAN(Berwick)—First, I note that there are, apart from yourself, Mr Acting Speaker, three members of the Labor Party in the House at this stage of the debate. I shall make further reference to that later.

I express on behalf of myself and the electors of Berwick and residents of that electorate our loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen and admiration for the work of His Excellency the Governor, Dr McCaughey, and Mrs McCaughey.

There are few Parliamentary opportunities where we can have what are called wide-ranging debates, but this is one. The Opposition has recently become aware that some 30 members of the government party have refused to list to the Electoral Commissioner their personal election expenses. The government party and the Minister for Property and Services along with the Minister's chief Electoral Commissioner have apparently taken it upon themselves to suspend a section of the law. The Minister simply says, "Well, the law says that, but we are not going to bother".

This apparently is becoming endemic. Others apparently are taking upon themselves the right to suspend sections of the law. I direct attention to section 40 (1) of the Constitution Act 1975 of the State of Victoria. It provides that:

(1) The Assembly shall not proceed to the dispatch of business unless there be present exclusive of the Speaker at least twenty of the members.

(2) Subject to section 18 all questions arising in the Assembly shall be decided by a majority of members present other than the Speaker and when the votes are equal the Speaker shall have a casting vote.

(3) The Chairman of Committees shall be the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly.

Section 40 (1) provides that the quorum shall be twenty members but, when the attention of the Speaker is directed to the state of the House, he takes upon himself the power apparently to suspend the operation of that section of the Constitution Act. He says that he chooses not to act upon it, not to require a quorum. Indeed, if I understand him correctly, he said it somehow reflected on the House that an honourable member should have the temerity to rise in his place and point out to the Speaker that there was not a quorum present.

How much better the House is that it should be like this! How much more appreciated it would be by the press, the television crews, the people in the gallery — who must not be mentioned. Four government members have come into the House. The alternative to the forming of a quorum will be constant reference to the number of people in the House so that the place may be known exactly for what it is — the place where government members neither speak nor think nor deign to come, except for the purpose of asking their Dorothy Dix questions at the beginning of the proceedings and for an occasional vote. That is their role—the original rubber stamps!

The rubber stamps have a rather sickly role to play. The sickly role is emphasised by the powers of honourable members to disregard sections of the Constitution Act

and by the powers of the Electoral Commissioner who chooses not to enforce the legislation. I can understand that. The Electoral Commissioner may have some discretion as to whether to prosecute a candidate, but surely such discretion should not apply to the question of whether to excuse his own Minister, together with a substantial number of government members, from having to disclose to the electors of the State whether their electoral expenditure was or was not within the limits set by the law. It is only the law! Apparently the law is whatever the government party decides it shall be, and Parliament is to be disregarded and ignored as often as possible.

Recently my constituents and I had the strange experience of Ministers visiting my electorate. I say it was a strange experience because there was an avalanche of government members during the election campaign. They came as if to visit the cargo cult clans of Papua New Guinea: they came offering promises and bearing gifts, an avalanche of goodies which were promised in the name of the Reverend Phillip Huggins who was the Labor candidate and who is now employed by the Department of Management and Budget as an adviser to the Treasurer. Prayer is possibly the last resort in that particular area of government at this stage, given the nature of WorkCare losses, the VEDC, the VIC, and one thing and another. I can understand that the Reverend Phillip Huggins with his economic degree and his qualifications in theology is probably very busy in the Department of Management and Budget. We had a visit from the ambitious Minister for Transport, now transformed as a member of the Legislative Assembly, who is absent at this moment perhaps on more important things.

I take the opportunity of directing to the attention of the honourable member for Shepparton section 40 of the Constitution Act because he was the person who raised the quorum question. I remember when the Minister for Transport visited the Shire of Sherbrooke to announce the good news that he had additional road funds for the shire. The shire was delighted because it is a Labor council. Indeed, the shire was on the brink of announcing a No. 1 priority for additional road funds when it was crushingly told that the road funds the Minister was promising had to be spent in the electorate of Berwick; in other words, the shire was not allowed to spend the funds on its No. 1 priority in the electorate of Monbulk, but had to spend the funds in that small part of the Shire of Sherbrooke which is in the electorate of Berwick. The good burghers of Emerald are about to acquire an unwelcome, and, I have to say, unnecessary roundabout which has nothing to do with road safety and priorities within the Shire of Sherbrooke, but is to be the result of the expenditure of the road funds so charmingly delivered in the course of the election campaign as a promise by the Minister for Transport.

I am pleased to see the honourable member for Sunshine in the Chamber because I understand his electorate is the mirror image of this situation. His is not the cargo cult area; his is the area of unrequited need, whereas Berwick is the cargo cult area of the east. Through the Reverend Phillip Huggins, the Minister for Transport—and it could well be the implication of intervention from a much higher source than is normally associated with politics, but some people would regard it as a miracle—announced that the wooden bridges on Ballarto Road are to be progressively repaired and replaced. For many years the Shire of Cranbourne has asked for the bridges to be repaired or replaced. Engineers have come and gone, councillors have aged and the Minister for Transport when in another place promised to replace all bridges apparently under the misapprehension that they were in the electorate of Berwick. They are not, they are on the border of it, and I have to say that most of the credit will be snatched by my neighbour, the honourable member for Gippsland West. He probably will say that he was responsible for the fact that the bridges on Ballarto Road are to be replaced.

I turn to the Emerald school. Again, it seems strange, but the missing third section of the Emerald school, which has not previously been built and was causing some concern, appeared out of thin air and suddenly it is to be built.

The police station at Berwick was a delightful incident. The Hibernian member for Knox appeared, and he informed the newspapers of the time of his coming and told the local police a different time. I think it might have been to catch them on the job, so to speak. When the Minister arrived at the police station, the two police members were on duty in a patrol car. The police station at Berwick was open only because the police at Cranbourne had taken the precaution of sending one of their sergeants over to keep the door open so it would not be shut when the Minister arrived. The police station at Cranbourne is a very busy one.

It was highly embarrassing that when the local newspapers turned up for the Minister's arrival so that he could renew and recycle the promise of the new Berwick police station, they found that, alas and alack, there were no Berwick policemen there, and the police station would have been shut but for the presence of the sergeant from Cranbourne.

The bush nursing hospital did very well: it is to receive five public beds. It has the right to choose its patients. It will not have any long-term patients; it wants only patients who are good at keeping the hospital accounts in proper order. The first public hospital beds in the electorate of Berwick are to be provided, significantly enough, at the Berwick Bush Nursing Hospital, which is a private hospital from the government's point of view. Although the hospital is publicly owned and non-profit making, the hospital committee is to have the right to choose its patients.

I heard that the honourable member for Sunshine was lacking nursing home facilities in his electorate. I know he is delighted that the electorate of Berwick and, I understand, the electorate of the Minister for Labour, Monbulk, are the two electorates chosen to have the totally State-funded nursing homes which were approved in the last Budget. With delicious equal-handedness the government gave one to the electorate of the Minister for Labour and one to the electorate of Berwick which has a bush nursing hospital which, in fact, has $1 million tucked away in its accounts and it does not have to use that money to help with the nursing home. It will be the first totally funded nursing home in the State; it will be built long before the one in the Minister for Labour's electorate because Berwick has the land and all that has to be done is that five houses need to be knocked down and the new nursing home built. There will be nothing to pay. That is what happens when one has a representative like me in one's electorate!

Of course, all is not well in the electorate of Berwick. I have to say that I have a few items on my shopping list, and I mention them only for the purpose of the government noting them so that they can be promised at the next election, whenever that may be. We need kindergartens; the women's refuge needs funding because, at the moment, it relies on charity funding because it is not a feminist refuge—it is a women's refuge. The Narre Warren bypass, which is in the Treasurer's electorate, could be completed to the benefit of the electors because they like driving through the Treasurer's electorate on their way to the city.

A large area of land north of Hessel Road could be sold to fund numerous works in my electorate. I know the Premier is sensitive about the Opposition asking for things without indicating where the money is coming from, but I indicate clearly where the money is coming from—from the sale of the Hessel Road land, which is owned by the Urban Land Authority and is ripe for private development; it represents the cream of the market. Rather than keeping prices down for the new home buyer and the newly

established couple, the government will cream the top of the market if it sells that land now.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Silvertail land!

Mr MACLELLAN—It is silvertail land. In addition, the Pakenham Park estate which is worth $40 million could be sold. That would provide assistance to farmers affected by dieldrin and other problems.

Community health centres are now springing up within and near the Berwick electorate. These are alternative medicine-type institutions; they are alternatives to doctors. In examining the accounts of one community health centre operating near the electorate I represent, I was surprised to discover that the average cost of sessions, taking into account group counselling and so on, was more than if each patient were sent to the local general practitioner. It appears that the cost of alternative medicine is higher than the cost of traditional medicine.

I turn now to matters relating to my shadow porfolio of conservation, forests and lands. I shall not dwell on the merits or generosity of the $35 million to $40 million of promises made by the government in the course of the last State election campaign, but those funds and projects will be gratefully received by my constituents. The National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division)—one needs to be careful about confusing it with the Australian organisation—until recently was the proud owner of several helicopters which, for some strange reason, had the words "Conservation, Forests and Lands" displayed on them. I wonder whether the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, in the course of this debate, can explain to the House whether Mr John Friedrich was engaged in some trick or necromancy in arranging for the writing of "Conservation, Forests and Lands" on the largest of the helicopters purchased with moneys apparently borrowed from some of the 23 banks, including State Bank Victoria. Honourable members have not heard why those words appeared on one of the largest helicopters of the NSCA.

I have a curiosity as to whether it was the NSCA's helicopter with the words "Conservation, Forests and Lands" that landed in a paddock at Lysterfield before the last State election. Two days before the election was announced a helicopter descended on a Lysterfield paddock and out of it stepped the then Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, now the Deputy Premier, and the Treasurer and his children. This miraculous event took place in what otherwise was an undisturbed quiet rural moment in Lysterfield. To a whirr of cameras, conveniently placed there by the media, the Minister and the Treasurer announced that the land on which they had descended had been purchased for the connection of the Lysterfield and Churchill national parks.

The passage of time does terrible things. The deposit cheque that was meant to be handed over on that day has never appeared. The contract for the sale has not been signed. The owner of the land has received two acquisition notices, one of which ran out of time. What at first was a friendly, if frenzied discussion of the government's offer to purchase the land to connect these two parks, suddenly the transformation of the Minister to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education has resulted in the Minister not having the same enthusiasm for purchasing the land. Therefore, the current Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands has been left lamenting for both decisive decision making and money. Perhaps there was nothing left after the government paid for the helicopter ride!

Unfortunately, these matters are occurring too often to be coincidences. I suppose that with governments with unfunded liabilities from WorkCare amounting to thousands of millions of dollars as a result of the brilliant advice of the honourable member for Sunshine before he took on the heavy responsibilities of representing a

working-class suburb in the far west of Melbourne—and we all know how difficult that is——

Mr A. J. Sheehan—What do you mean by that?

Mr MACLELLAN—I have taught there, and I know how difficult it is. The honourable member for Ivanhoe does not have the same problems because he represents a different electorate. Perhaps he will be able to produce the same problems in the electorate of Ivanhoe.

Mr A. J. Sheehan—It's Northcote.

Mr MACLELLAN—It's all right; the honourable member does not have to be present. He is excused.

Mr Baker—Why don't you get it right?

Mr MACLELLAN—It appears that I have stirred up another one. I am surprised that my referring to WorkCare should embarrass the government. I thought it was one of the government's proud achievements. It is supposed to be one of the revolutions that the government has achieved. It is obviously a revolution producing its own magic. Apparently the magic is that the author of the WorkCare package does not want to talk about it, and his friends want to move on to other subjects, if possible.

WorkCare represents an enormous financial liability wrapped around the government. I have already told the honourable member for Sunshine that I hoped the speech he made yesterday was not what he really thought. I was disappointed with yesterday's contribution, especially after having been so impressed with him when he made his maiden speech. I sincerely congratulate the honourable member on his maiden speech because it was impressive. I hope he never repeats the type of speech he made yesterday. It did him no credit.

If the honourable member wishes to make an intellectual argument about an issue, as he did yesterday, that is fine, but what he had to say yesterday did not assist honourable members to appreciate him in this House.

I have used the debate today to list some matters that have been promised to the electors of Berwick. I assure the government that the electors of Berwick will react badly if those promises are recycled. That has occurred under the Cain government when promises were made but not kept. They were then recycled by being promised at the next election. The electors of Berwick are too shrewd to be taken in. The local newspapers report the government's promises and the electors recognise that the same promises are being made. They know that the promise of boom gates before the last election had been made before the previous election. That action does not wash any more with well-informed and shrewd electors. The government will not be able to repeat the promises made at the last election in its attempt to win its way back into office.

What is expected now, following the promises so stridently made in the State election campaign, is performance. I had an evil gleam in my eye when I read of what the Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, would do with the odd $200 million or $300 million of the State's moneys. I do not remember the Victorian government saying that its promises were subject to Commonwealth funding. If any effort is made to blame the Commonwealth government that will not wash with my constituents. The State government cannot say that the Commonwealth government has taken away the funds and, therefore, Victorians cannot have what they were promised.

The Cain Labor Government has committed itself to these promises. Minister after Minister, accompanied by Labor candidates, visited the electorates. Its promises are

recorded one after the other in local newspapers. The electors of Berwick and other electorates will know whether each and every one of those promises is not carried out. That is fair because if governments want to play politics with promises, they must also play politics with performance. Governments cannot get away with making promises on a political basis if they are not going to come up with the performance as well. The people of Berwick did not demand the goodies offered by the government; they did not tell the government to offer them. The government chose that as a deliberate course of political campaigning to try to buy the votes of the people in Berwick for the Labor Party candidate, but it did not work.

Mr Baker—One good housing estate will fix you.

Mr MACLELLAN—As the honourable member for Sunshine would know if he examined the polling booth figures for the last State election, my best results were from areas with new homes, and that is where the Labor Party lost.

Mr Baker—You're gloating.

Mr MACLELLAN—I'm gloating that members of the Labor Party were so busy with mud bricks and sensitivities that they did not have the nous to visit the new homes in the new estates where the newly planted bushes in the new gardens have not even reached the bottom of the windows, let alone the eaves. There is no worry about which party will represent the Berwick electorate while the Labor Party so misjudges its own supporters!

I notice that I have succeeded in almost doubling the Labor Party representation in the Chamber. It is a wonderful effort under difficult circumstances to have tempted the Minister for Planning and Environment and four of his colleagues to join you, Mr Acting Speaker, in the House; it is something of which I can be proud. Mr Speaker has decided to ignore section 40 (1) of the Constitution Act 1975 and take unto himself the decision as to whether it is proper to direct attention to the numbers in the House. He has decided to suspend that section of the Constitution that the government finds either embarrassing or awkward, just as the government would choose in an absolute sense to suspend any other section of the Constitution if it found it inconvenient or difficult.

Regardless of whether it is cheating in the Nunawading by-election campaign or trying to buy votes in the Berwick electorate, it is almost as if there is no step too low for a government so addicted to power that it does not have the vision to see that what it does to others will eventually be done to it. Those who like to play politics with road funding or boom barriers on dangerous railway crossings will themselves become victims of that.

While the Minister for Planning and Environment is in the Chamber, I shall take the House back to that magical day during the 1985 State election campaign when he visited the Shire of Cranbourne as the then Minister for Health. At that time he told the shire that he had come to announce with the then Labor Party candidate—he was not the candidate at the last State election; they usually operate twice in my electorate—the exciting opening of a community health centre in the shire. When the council said it should be in Hampton Park—which is now in the electorate represented by the Treasurer—the then Minister for Health said that it must be established in the electorate of Berwick.

The embarrassment of those situations occurs because even Labor Party councillors are embarrassed when Ministers make such arses of themselves by offering to put something in one shire and then saying it must be within a particular electorate for political reasons.

I am grateful for the opportunity of speaking today, of clarifying a few matters and of reminding the government about how careful the electors of Berwick will be to ensure that each and every one of the promises made by the government will be implemented to its fullest extent, to the delight and joy of the Liberal Party electors in Berwick.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—I have pleasure in speaking in the debate on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech made at the opening of Parliament on 25 October 1988. The people of South Barwon send their best wishes to the Governor and his wife in carrying out their viceregal role. I also wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the electorate of South Barwon, which I am honoured to represent.

It is an interesting electorate comprising not only city people but also farmers, labourers and industrial manufacturers. Many unionists who work in the large complexes in Geelong have their homes in the electorate of South Barwon, and thousands of people live in the new suburbs and coastal towns of Barwon Heads, Torquay, Anglesea and Airey's Inlet. The electorate covers the Shire of Barrabool and the City of South Barwon area.

This is the third occasion on which I have been returned as the electorate's representative in Parliament. While I am a member of Parliament, I intend to represent all constituents and raise their concerns, especially those of elderly people who have retired and left Melbourne to live in the electorate. I shall endeavour to bring to the notice of Ministers of the Crown many of the items that are of importance not only to the electorate but also to small groups, families, and children growing up in the area. The education institutions have tremendous demands placed on them for new facilities, and I am particularly interested in the future of Deakin University, which is making a name for itself in distance education.

The election called for 1 October last year was probably a surprise not only to members of the government but also to the citizens of Victoria. Many people were caught unawares and were travelling interstate during school holidays. The Victorian Football League grand final took place during the campaign, and other major events distracted attention from the issues.

The Labor Party made many promises with specific reference to Geelong, and I shall place them on the record. In the area of industry, technology and resources, the government promised a $5 million gas pipeline to the Drysdale-Clifton Springs area. That was to be built within eighteen months. As to conservation, forests and lands, the government promised a $20 000 study of the Swan Bay area near Queenscliff and a $30 000 management plan for Buckley Falls. Some $60 000 was promised for an increased water supply to Lake Modewarre and $15 000 was promised for weed eradication and signposting for the Portarlington flora and fauna reserve. Some $7000 was promised for fencing and other works at the St Leonards salt lagoon.

In the post-secondary education area, the government promised $10·36 million to refurbish part of the Gordon Technical College, Fenwick Street campus. The funding was to be over five years with an immediate $50 000 for sketch plans to be prepared. Also announced was the provision of $90 000 of computer equipment for the plumbing department, and $120 000 was approved for an overdraft for capital cost overruns on the already established child-care centre.

The sum of $50 000 was promised for a small business centre offering training and counselling, and $264 000 for vocational training for the Barwon regional prison being constructed at Lara to teach prisoners employment skills.

In the transport area the Geelong rail services would be upgraded. I must comment that this has been ongoing ever since the time of the Thompson government, and the Labor government has inherited many of the initiatives and has continued to upgrade facilities, especially at the Geelong railway station, for which many commuters are grateful in the Geelong region.

In the areas of law and order there has been continuing disenchantment with the facilities at the Geelong courthouse and I am pleased that announcements have been made that the problems will be addressed. The Geelong police headquarters in the City of Geelong is also being looked at. The community of Geelong is growing and extending, and areas such as Corio and South Barwon have long called for that police presence. I believe the Victoria Police Force and the Minister responsible owe it to the people of Geelong and the officers serving in that district to provide the best facilities so that police officers can do their work and carry out their operations effectively.

There is always the problem in the community of increasing crime, threats from drug abuse, housebreaking and so forth and the statistics speak for themselves. We live in a time when people are pressed for money and resort to crime sometimes to find the wherewithal to support their habits. This is being addressed not only in Geelong but throughout the State as a whole. Too many government inquiries have posed the problems but somehow the solutions have been lost. In the law and order area, therefore, the government has indicated that it will allocate $13·7 million for the long-awaited new Geelong police headquarters and $1 million has already been allocated in this State Budget.

The sum of $37 000 is being provided for a police station at Portarlingon. I know from people who have retired and live in that area their concern when police cannot readily get to them in the event of a break-in, a threat or when other people are acting suspiciously in their region. A police presence is vital. This situation occurs also in Barwon Heads, Torquay, Airey's Inlet, Anglesea and the greater suburbs of Grovedale, Highton and Belmont. The sum of $8 million has now been allocated for the law courts and that complex will be greatly appreciated not only by those in the profession but also by the people who have dealings with the courts.

In the health area $2·1 million has been provided for a new 30-bed nursing home at South Barwon on land provided by the City of South Barwon. Currently a plea is being made by the ethnic communities of Geelong for land on which to build a hostel for aged people and I have had the opportunity of making representations to the major church groups to seek assistance in this regard because sometimes churches own land that is not being used and which could be put to community use.

The Budget provides $2 million for the expansion program for the Geelong Hospital services, of which $1·4 million is for a computerised scanner, $300 000 to set up a post-acute care program and expansion of rehabilitation services and $154 000 for a community health centre at Whittington. A radio therapy unit for cancer patients in the Geelong region has been signalled for 1991. Members of Parliament in the region have been ever mindful of the needs of cancer sufferers and patients have often had to travel long distances to seek attention in Melbourne. I have always urged the government to decentralise those major facilities. I believe they should not be situated in one place because, in the event of a disaster, they could be wiped out, leaving the State without certain important facilities in health care.

I wish to examine closely the Address by the Governor. Although His Excellency said, on behalf of the government, that the government is continuing vigorous and imaginative programs and has exhibited sound management with a strong sense of compassion, sometimes the compassion aspect has received more attention than sound management, as we have now learnt with the demise of many companies that

sought funds from the Victorian Economic Development Corporation. If the people of Victoria had been conscious of the full extent of those losses, there is no doubt that the results on 1 October would have been entirely different.

As a local member, I recall placing on notice as far back as 30 April 1985 questions in relation to the VEDC when a company was loaned $40 000 and used the money for other purposes or partially for other purposes and I asked the then Minister whether the loan had been used for purposes other than originally specified under the loan application. I also asked the Minister how many other loans by the corporation since April 1982 had been used for purposes other than originally specified, indicating the names of the borrowers and the amounts.

In normal business practice banks are very conscious of the customers they deal with and like them to have a clean record. Apparently, the government, in helping many small and large projects, has failed to put checks and balances in place. I should have thought that the Minister, who has now retired from that portfolio, who was a trained accountant would have had a higher sense of duty in performing his role as a Minister, and would have been more than conscious that the checks and balances were not there to protect the taxpayers' money. The editorial in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 27 October 1988 said:

> For example it failed to disclose that the mining company to which the VEDC had lent $450 000 had been operating illegally: it had no mining licence, no Health Department approval for use of dangerous chemicals and both principals had long criminal records. Presumably, the VEDC knew it had a paid up capital of only $12 and tangible assets of only $27 000.

All people in the electorate of Geelong would agree that Victorian taxpayers deserve the courtesy of an explanation—this was given in the Fergus Ryan report which was released close to Christmas—why top-level organisations such as the VEDC had made so many poor investment decisions.

The government has prided itself on its efficiency and it disturbs members of Parliament that in one week these announcements are made and virtually in the same week other announcements are made of new initiatives being taken by the Premier, whether to cover over the railway yards in Melbourne—a wish that the Premier's father, who was a former Premier of Victoria, had for a long time—or to try to get the Olympic Games for Melbourne. This disturbs many people at a time when the Budget and monetary controls in the country do not appear to be all that we would like. We are running away with these pipedreams and ignoring the welfare of many unfortunate and disadvantaged people.

At the time of the announcement of the Olympic Games project for Melbourne, two outstanding critics in that area would have been Bishop Hollingsworth and Dame Phyllis Frost, both of whom have had a long association and involvement with disadvantaged people in our society.

The Victorian economy has been debated many times in this place. In Geelong we have seen the demise of major industries and the restructuring of some. The current troubled times are besetting some of our major industries, in particular the cement industry in Geelong. I have heard members of the government plead with the Premier to take action in this regard but to no avail. It disturbs me that the media have resorted to photographing clashes with employees and unionists tearing down fences, throwing cement on the door-steps of officials and demonstrating in Melbourne to get over their point of view, which is that people are disturbed about the dumping of cheap imports.

I understand from the industry that it is cheaper to import a tonne of cement from Japan and land it in Melbourne than it is to rail a tonne of cement from Geelong to Melbourne to sell in Melbourne. The Liberal Party believes every possible action

should be taken to assist industries that may not have updated their facilities. Industries need to be encouraged by taxation incentives at the Federal level to update their facilities.

I have examined the debates in Federal Parliament when the honourable member for Corangamite, put forward the views of industries in his electorate, as did the honourable member for Corio, who also spoke about import dumping. At the same time, one wonders how genuine the unionists are when they protest against Japanese imports but drive to the scene of protests in Japanese vehicles.

There is a need for a full and frank discussion, without violence, and the government has seen by the representations made by representatives in Geelong and the concerns obviously noted by the Premier when he visited Geelong during the election campaign how deeply the workers of Geelong feel that they have been ignored. It is possibly for that reason that those same workers resorted to strong and vocal demonstrations to get over their point of view.

The Governor's Speech emphasised the continuing rate of new employment in Victoria. That has been an ongoing process for various State governments, right back to the Hamer Liberal government, because Victoria has enjoyed greater growth in employment than have most other Australian States.

During the election campaign a major bridge project in Geelong, the Geelong flyover, was disrupted by industrial unrest to the point that no work has occurred on that project since September last year. Despite questions on notice to the Minister for Labour and the Minister for Transport, deputations by municipal officials in Geelong, including the mayors of South Barwon and the City of Geelong, and the sometimes half-hearted announcements made by officers of the Geelong Trades Hall Council that the workers involved are willing to see the project go ahead, no answers have been given about why the project stopped in the first instance, how much it will cost to get it started again and when it will proceed. The Geelong community is owed this explanation. It is a major project and is vital for the area. The Christmas and Easter holiday traffic has passed through that area and people still ask why it is that the project does not proceed.

I was surprised to hear the cynical announcement during the past fortnight of the proposed widening of Fitzsimons Lane in Templestowe, obviously made to win votes during the Greensborough by-election campaign. The people of Geelong, represented in Parliament by five Labor politicians, have not been able to obtain the assurance that their bridge in Geelong will not remain like Stonehenge, an unfinished monument to past years, but will commence again and be completed without undue delay. Anybody passing through the City of Geelong would endorse what I say.

I am particularly distressed that the Minister for Transport can come to Geelong and enjoy the hospitality of the mayor of the city, receive considerable mileage out of the refurbishment of the railway station, but not advise the Geelong community about the action or positive steps that the Ministry of Transport is taking to get the project going.

The Opposition has often mentioned the crippling effect of taxes and charges on the community and, of course, there are great milch cows like petrol taxes levied at the national level. Every time a motorist puts $20 worth of petrol into his car approximately $14 worth is for taxation. The maintenance and upkeep of roads in the municipalities throughout the Western District is of such concern that a seminar is being conducted this Friday at the municipal offices of South Barwon. That seminar will stress to the government the need for concrete and positive action.

I know that the volumes of traffic are increasing year by year in my electorate. There is a great need for the duplication of the road to Torquay, which is now the surfing capital of Australia. A significant industrial complex is situated on the outskirts of the town. Thousands of people travel to Torquay each year and time and again tragic accidents occur on that road. Just last week two unfortunate accidents occurred on the Waurn Ponds and Freshwater Creek road; in one a mother was killed when she was taking her children to school, and the other two deaths occurred at a blind spot on the road. Accidents occur on silent railway crossings not only in the Geelong and western region but throughout Victoria and valuable lives are lost. There is need for government response.

An excellent facility, which is an initiative of the Geelong East Technical School, is a training area for young drivers. This facility has helped train 1400 young drivers each year.. The facility needs additional funding and I have requested funding from the Minister for Education and asked her to examine the matter closely, because if we can save one person from ending up in a wheel-chair the $300 000 that has been requested would be well spent. There are so many things that young people may never have the opportunity of learning about until they make a mistake. If the instructors can assist those young people growing up in Geelong to be properly instructed at that centre, that benefits the whole community.

The Minister for Planning and Environment recently visited the training school for motor vehicle drivers and commented on what an impressive facility it was. I urge any Minister visiting Geelong to become acquainted with this area of activity because it is well worthwhile.

Some comment has already been made about the Geelong railway facility and one commuter recently was dismayed when the honourable member for Geelong suggested that to solve loading problems the first-class travel compartments on trains should be replaced by economy compartments. One constituent of mine wrote of her concern and I shall quote from the letter dated 17 April from Mrs Francis of 82 Bellevue Avenue, Highton, who says:

> Mr Shell should take a better look at the situation before allowing his mouth to run away in Parliament.
>
> We set out below a number of instances that should influence his opinion.
>
> One of our children travels each day to RMIT Melbourne to complete an electronic engineering degree. He and other students travel first class, as in economy it is too cramped to get any constructive work done as people are crammed in like sheep. Also it is almost impossible to study in economy as a folder or books tend to invade other people's space and cause much frustration from both parties.
>
> There are seldom any spare seats in either class at peak times (7.45 a.m. South Geelong to Melbourne). The 6.10 p.m. train from Melbourne has never had a first class carriage connected.
>
> Museum station is the closest station to RMIT—across the road—last year it was possible on the return trip to catch a metropolitan train from Museum station to North Melbourne and get a seat on the Geelong train as it passes through. (North Melbourne is the first stop after Spencer Street station).
>
> This year it is necessary to catch the 5.41 p.m. train from Melbourne to South Geelong at Spencer Street, as at North Melbourne there are seldom any seats left in either class—in first class there may be two or three which are filled at this station. Also V/Line knows that this train is often overcrowded as they have arranged a stand-by road coach to supplement this service—service? As per the article in the newspaper where people in economy are standing up with seats available in first class! I ask what about the people in first class that are sitting on the floor?
>
> V/Line should be expanding this service not reducing this service, Mr Shell!
>
> When a first-class ticket has been purchased for the full year it is not very pleasing to hear of the apparent demise of this service when it is obviously well used.
>
> When it is necessary to travel by coach no rebate is made to anyone who has paid for first-class travel. The road coach has only one class!

How does Mr Shell account for his words when he obviously has not travelled on one of the abovementioned trains at peak times.

We purchased a first-class ticket for the full school year to enable our son to use this travelling time constructively, which is near impossible in economy class.

As our member for South Barwon we would appreciate you taking the appropriate action . . .

Thousands use the services but become frustrated when their advice and suggestions are not heeded. V/Line should recognise that the travelling public, especially people travelling late at night, believe first-class travel is their only protection from molestation or being disturbed by people who have had too much to drink. I commuted daily for approximately six years before entering Parliament. The rail service then was not nearly as good as it is today, but I am aware of the thousands of people in Geelong who use the service daily. I trust the government will listen to what commuters are saying because the rail service is a vital link between Melbourne and Geelong.

As Victoria's second largest city, Geelong has much to offer to attract people to live there, with its wonderful facilities, including not only educational facilities but also the surf beaches and recreational areas that are part of the Geelong region.

I signal to the government the immediate concern of user groups of beaches, and refer particularly to the sewage outfall at Black Rock. The government has spent a great deal on monitoring activities at that location over the years, but a positive statement is called for from the Minister for Planning and Environment either confirming or denying the concerns of constituents because swimmers are being put at risk from virus diseases. Representations have been made to me by the president of the lifesaving movement of Victoria, who said that many Victorian beaches cause concern; the lifesaving movement will continue to make representations to the government and Ministers responsible.

Some days ago an interesting article in the *Herald* disclosed that the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization has done much research into sewage treatment at Bondi, New South Wales. The CSIRO is heralding new ways of handling sewage and chemicals in the form of waste products. Dr Tony Priestley said that the treatment process was very well suited to discharges as it removed oil, grease and damaging solids, as well as nutrients.

The Environment Protection Authority has much information on its files from experts in this field. I trust that the authority's actions in the weeks ahead will assist the Geelong community to put to rest some of the fears and to conclude the heated debate that has taken place in the press.

Another of my constituents from Newtown was most concerned about the government's stated intention to change names, particularly that of the Grampians National Park. The editorial in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 8 April 1989 stated:

Mr Crabb and the public servants involved should have more important things with which to occupy their time than playing with place names. Pandering to the wishes of minority groups, however, has been a trait of the Cain government and, no doubt, no expense will be spared to ensure the game of place name changes continues. But for most of us, it would appear to be a waste of both time and money, which could upset Western District communities and add to divisions among people. So why bother?

Others items have attracted editorial comment in the *Geelong Advertiser,* as has been mentioned in the other place by the Honourable Mark Birrell, when an advertisement appeared for a lesbian welfare worker. Again an editorial was critical of the government's priorities.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Richardson)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—I rise to speak on the debate in relation to the Address-in-Reply some six months after the election. On behalf of the constituents of the electorate of Sandringham I swear allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, and the constituents of Sandringham send their best wishes to His Excellency the Governor and Mrs McCaughey. I congratulate the Speaker on his appointment, and I extend good wishes to all new members of the House. May they make enjoyable and profitable contributions to the operations of the House.

I am delighted to have been re-elected by an increased majority. I pay special tribute to the Labor Party campaign coordinator, Ann Corcoran, who was a candidate in 1985; also the 1988 candidate, Ian Pugh. The election in Sandringham was fought on issues and not on personalities. It was politics in the best Westminster tradition.

I am delighted at the overall vote and margin increase of 2 per cent in Sandringham; having had last position on the ballot-paper—the No. 3 donkey vote—I could well have imagined an extra 1 to 1·5 per cent in the margin at Sandringham had the local sitting member been No. 1 on the ballot-paper.

The issues that returned the sitting candidate in Sandringham have already been alluded to by the honourable member for South Barwon. They include taxes and charges of the government increasing over the past four years at a rate greater than the consumer price index; that was a critical factor. Other issues included transport and crime. An increasing incidence of burglary is evident in the Sandringham electorate and, in spite of the good work by Neighbourhood Watch, the crime rate is increasing.

The quality of public transport in my electorate leaves something to be desired. People are critical of the condition of trains and their timetabling because trains are often late, but sometimes do not even operate, thereby hampering constituents travelling to and from work.

I shall not spend too much time discussing the outcome of the election because my constituents are very well aware of the government's shortcomings. If an election were held in the not-too-distant future, Victorian voters would register an even stronger protest. The result in the Greensborough by-election was an aberration because that electorate is atypical of Victoria and does not properly reflect the concerns of the total State electorate.

The Sandringham electorate covers part of the suburbs of Highett, Hampton, Cheltenham, and all of Beaumaris, Black Rock and Sandringham. It is a particularly fine environment, being bordered on the west by beautiful beaches, with long-serving lifesaving clubs, yacht clubs and a motor yacht squadron being prominent.

The electorate has four major golf courses—the Royal Melbourne Golf Club covering 300 acres, and the Victoria Golf Club Ltd are private clubs; splendid public courses are at Sandringham and Cheltenham. The electorate is also particularly well served by State, Catholic and independent schools. The amalgamation of schools to form the recently established Sandringham College caused much concern at the time but the college now seems to be operating most satisfactorily. The government has spent $1·1 million on college facilities and it is hoped that the college will provide for year 11 and year 12 students a wide range of options to help them further their courses to tertiary education.

The Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital has been in operation for 25 years and has a fine tradition. It provides the community with a quality of service that is unparallelled in most suburban public hospitals. It has a wonderful after-hours casualty facility provided seven days a week and well patronised by local people. I pay a compliment to the chief executive officer, the chief medical officer and the general staff for the wonderful work they do.

What is lacking in Sandringham is a community health facility. I notice that a community health centre is going ahead in Mentone. Sandringham is one of the last municipalities in Victoria without a community health centre. It is possible that one of the reasons why Sandringham electors turned away from the government was that the government viewed it as a Liberal seat and has not provided as much support to the electorate as it should have done.

Paramedical and welfare services are needed in Sandringham. Domiciliary care is needed because 23 per cent of the population in Sandringham is over 60 years of age. Many people are now retiring at 55, so, if one adds the 55-plus factor, probably one-third of the population will at some time require some kind of welfare and medical care. Both the council and the hospital have been fighting for extra nursing beds and respite care for the past three years. The Federal and State governments have ignored their plight in spite of the fact that 23 per cent of the population is over 60 years of age. I register my concern and the concern of the residents of Sandringham for that lack of support and lack of social justice. Government members are well versed in looking after their own electorates but are neglecting other people who are just as deserving of help and some of whom are not so well off.

I pay a compliment to the work done by the police in the Moorabbin district, which covers the Sandringham electorate. I was pleased that following my comments during debate on the Supply Bills a promise made by the government to build a new police station at Sandringham was recorded. The local electors were delighted that Sandringham was placed on the list of new police stations to be built. The old Sandringham police station houses 51 police with difficulty, and they are doing a tremendous job.

Police services to Black Rock and Beaumaris have been cut. No longer is a 24-hour service provided; it is a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. service. I think most Victorians miss seeing the policeman on the beat, a person who fits into the local community and knows what is going on. The police do a good job with their radio-operated cars but consideration should be given to using policemen on the beat in each electorate.

I have already made mention of beaches but I return to make the point that the bayside councils that run from Port Melbourne to Mordialloc have been pushing the government for more funding for beach cleaning.

Mr Cooper—Dromana, too.

Mr LEA—Yes, to Dromana. Eighty per cent of the visitors to the beaches at Sandringham, Black Rock, Beaumaris and Hampton do not live in the local area. They come from places like Doncaster, Oakleigh and Caulfield. The government must recognise that these beaches are not only the responsibility of the City of Sandringham or the City of Mordialloc but also the responsibility of the whole State because of the people who use them. The honourable member for Mornington would agree with that. The government is penalising Victorians at large by not recognising that fact.

Sandringham is an environmentally conscious community with an environmentally conscious council that is famous for the work it has done in that regard. If one travels around the electorate one cannot fail to see the leafy green foliage of the trees and the attractive grounds, gardens and houses in the community. The fine beach parks and gardens in the electorate are due to the efforts of a council that cares. Sandringham has good environment groups such as the Beaumaris Conservation League and the Black Rock and Sandringham Conservation Association—BRASCA—a local conservation organisation, which does a fantastic job in alerting people to their responsibility of looking after the environment.

Honourable members may be interested to hear that the City of Sandringham is reviewing its progress to the year 2010 and has been meeting with local people for that review. I am privileged to be one of those chosen to discuss the future management of Sandringham. The council is considering the environment and the quality of life in Sandringham from now until the year 2010. It is typical of the council's attitude that it involves key people in programs and financial undertakings for such a long-term project.

I pay tribute to the wonderful sporting, cultural and community facilities that are available in Sandringham. In doing so, I recognise that new needs are developing all the time. Recently I attended a meeting of a group of residents in East Beaumaris who were keen to develop a skateboard facility in the City of Mordialloc on the East Beaumaris side. A committee was formed to discuss the needs of children to have a skateboard facility and the concerns of residents about that facility. The Mayor of the City of Mordialloc, Mrs Doris Stockton, was interested in the provision of a skateboard facility because her son was interested in the activity. I am pleased to say he has now turned 25 years of age and has survived the agony and energy that goes into that sport.

I do not think I am breaching any confidence by saying that youngsters from five to twelve years of age need special consideration when skateboarding. A half drainage pipe can be placed flush on the ground and small children can skate in and out of the pipe. That seems to be the best facility to provide for littlies. I compliment the residents of East Beaumaris and the City of Mordialloc on their endeavours to provide a facility that is acceptable to all the residents in the area. Skateboarding is becoming an ever-increasingly popular sport and all municipalities will need to provide facilities for its proper enjoyment.

Recently a history of the City of Sandringham called *Bayside Reflections* was released. I pay tribute to the author, Valerie Tarrant, and the local newsagent, Graham Disney, who developed the history of the local area in photographs and in words.

In terms of unresolved problems in the area, the key problem is transport. I have argued with the previous Minister for Transport, and the current Minister, that the Beach Road traffic cannot accommodate truck transport. Those honourable members who were in this place in the mid–1970s will know that the then government, in speaking to the Transport Workers Union of Australia, said that when the connection between Westgate and St Kilda Road junction was completed the trucks would not use Beach Road.

That has not happened, and I hope reason will prevail because Beach Road should never have been a through road. I believe Nepean Highway should be the road that is used. The traffic lights should be interconnected, and where there are three intersections, there should be an underpass or an overpass to enable the traffic to flow steadily down to St Kilda. When one is in the business of trucking time is the all-important thing and, if the connection to St Kilda junction were quick and effective, I am sure the truck transporters would use it.

In terms of the fishing environment, I allude to two major problems—firstly, the problem of gill netting. It is this large and deep line which has been devastating the schnapper resources in the bay, and an angry and bitter group of people want some action and resolution by the government.

It has been suggested that the months of October, November and December should be deemed a lay season when there is no fishing and, at a recent meeting I attended, some compromise was reached. I compliment one of the former honourable members representing Chelsea Province in another place, now the honourable member for Carrum, for his action to try to resolve the situation and reduce the width and depth of lines, which is the critical factor in preserving our fish, and particularly our schnapper.

Another subject to which I alluded recently is shellfish which have been taken from beaches—a situation which is ineffectively supervised. Hostility and resentment by locals still exist about the shellfish poachers, and something has to be done before there is disagreement of a larger proportion.

I direct attention to a concern I have with WorkCare and discipline and teacher morale. I read comments by Mr Geoff Maslen in the *Age* of 18 April this year about a Mr Stewart Granger, who suffered a problem with his laryngeal muscle, resulting in loss of voice. This meant that he could not speak for very long, which took him out of full-scale teaching.

I should like to read a couple of lines from the article because it shows that the government is not handling situations where teachers lose the ability to talk and teach. Obviously one cannot teach without talking—I have tried it a couple of times and, unless the children understand a teacher, it is no good writing a direction on the blackboard and asking them to comply with it because they do not have to do it and they know the teacher cannot do anything about it. However, this situation does not stop the teacher from going on to non-teaching duties.

I now ask members of the House to judge whether the Minister handled the situation well. I am quoting from Mr Geoff Maslen in the *Age* on 18 April:

> Not by choice. Mr Granger would rather be at work at Galvin Park Secondary College in Werribee. Since the start of the school year however, Mr Granger has been told by the Ministry of Education to stay home on sick leave.

If honourable members are wondering about the authenticity of his comments, I should say that, by and large, over the past thirteen years, Geoff Maslen's comments have strongly supported the left of politics. I continue:

> In September 1987, he wrote to the Ministry pointing out that the government medical officer had stated he was unfit for teaching but fit for other employment or retraining. He has had no reply.

The picture accompanying the article is graphic. It shows Mr Granger hanging out the washing on the line and being paid $32 000 a year for doing it. If I were now a principal of a secondary school, a position I once held, I could use someone like Mr Granger in my school to do a lot of the work that the vice-principal has to do. I refer to non-teaching work, such as checking the rolls, handling the absentee notes, making sure teachers get to class on time and all manner of things that do not require the exercise of a voice.

This man wants to work and is keen to work but the government will not give him a non-teaching position and I am staggered; I cannot believe it. In the article Geoff Malsen went on to say that he had spoken to the teachers union representative, Mr Peter Rankin, and he said:

> Teachers like Mr Granger were losing their self-respect and dignity because they were being denied the right to work. Mr Rankin said there were more than 600 teachers on WorkCare who had been out of teaching for over six months. Between January and October last year, there had been 1432 WorkCare claims from teachers, 381 of these for mental disorders. The cost was up to $100 million a year.

I challenge the Minister for Education to review the Stewart Grangers of this world and to see how many such people could be used as teaching aides in the classroom, not speaking and not teaching, but assisting children. Could they not be employed as integration aides? Could he not be employed to do other work? I ask the Minister to report to the House on this situation because it is a calamity.

Mr Granger has every right to go to work, to be paid and to have some sort of discipline. If honourable members are wondering about my comments in relation to Mr Maslen, last year in this House I was most critical of some comments he made in the *Age*. He criticised the Liberal Party's position on education, so it can be seen that

in no way is Mr Maslen necessarily aligned with the Liberal Party's political position. He is reporting objectively, and I congratulate him for that.

I should like to examine another issue related to WorkCare, namely, discipline in schools. In 1982 when I was a principal in Blackburn and the Labor Government was elected, I was keen to examine its educational programs and disciplinary programs. The reason I stood for Parliament was because of its policies, programs and attitudes to discipline. If the government had not pursued the line it pursued through the previous Ministers for Education—the honourable member for Footscray and Mr Cathie—I would not be standing here tonight.

I was stirred because the government's attitude to corrections and sentencing favoured the defendant and the person who had not behaved well, to the exclusion of the person who had. I could argue that the government is humanitarian and cares for those people, and it does—there is no doubt about that—but it has to care for the mainstream people as well, not just the fly-by-nighters and the minority groups.

I challenge the government on this point because in February 1983, when the honourable member for Footscray was the Minister for Education, he abolished corporal punishment, virtually abolished suspension and made it difficult for teachers to operate in schools.

It is all right for back-bench members of the government to comment because they have not been teachers—they do not know the problems teachers face, so I can ignore them. The problem for teachers today is that there is no way one can control classes if children want to misbehave.

In that situation, teachers cannot stop children from leaving the classroom because if they do they are faced with being charged with civil assault. The government gives no support to teachers. Nothing in the Education Act provides support for teachers in those situations.

Honourable members have heard about the Glasser technique, time-out rooms, and "avoid the problem" solutions to discipline. I shall quote from an article written by Dianne Dempsey, who worked as a teacher in State schools for fifteen years. The article appears in the education report of the Melbourne *Herald* of 18 April 1989. Ms Dempsey says that Dr William Glasser has a lot to answer for. She says that the government has adopted the Glasser technique of non-confrontation, which encourages parents to support badly behaved students at the expense of teachers and principals. The article states that under the government's current policies:

> Schools may not:
>
> Use corporal punishment;
>
> Employ punishments that may harm students emotionally or physically . . .

I am not sure how they are to be assessed. Also schools may not:

> Detain a student for more than half of any recess, or for longer than three-quarters of an hour after school . . .

The article does not state that teachers have to give notice of any proposed discipline. If a teacher wants to keep young Johnny in after school he or she has to send home a notice; otherwise he or she would be breaking the rules. That is ineffectual, because young Johnny has 24 hours to get over it! The article further states:

> Schools may:
>
> Suspend a student under extreme circumstances, but the parents, the president of the school council and the regional director must be notified.

Mr Acting Speaker, I shall give you an apt example. When I was teaching at Blackburn Technical School I taught one of the most badly behaved students I met in my teaching career of 30 years. After eighteen months, and after a file of paperwork 6 centimetres thick, the school's welfare committee finally convinced the regional director to have the girl transferred to another school—and the girl lasted only four weeks in that new school and was then excluded from the system. The education system should be better than that.

Finally, the article states:

> There is no mention of expulsion in the regulations, but "exclusion". Exclusion is conditional on a stringent, special inquiry and confirmation from the director-general.

Such regional departmental inquiries often take months to complete. In the meantime, the culprit remains in the classroom.

The language of many students is unbelievable. My wife, who is a teacher, complains about this regularly. After 22 years as a teacher, my wife can just maintain discipline in the classroom. It is difficult for teachers today. There is now an increasing number of women teachers: 80 per cent of primary school teachers are women; more than 50 per cent of teachers in secondary schools are women; and the figure for technical schools is 40 per cent—and those percentages are increasing.

All honourable members want the best for schoolchildren. All of us want to serve the 90 per cent of schoolchildren who are well behaved, as well as assisting those who need help, either socially or educationally. The government must protect the interests of those mainstream schoolchildren. At present the government is letting those students down, and is contributing to the teacher absence and losses suffered by WorkCare. This is causing a major decline in teacher morale.

I challenge the Minister for Education to review the discipline regulations that were introduced in 1985 and reviewed in 1986 by a former Minister for Education, the honourable member for Footscray, because the Victorian system is breaking down. In the United States of America supervisors with guns are used in school corridors to keep students under control. The state of the education system in Victoria is such that I foresee that in the 1990s a similar situation will exist in Victoria unless the government takes action to provide support for principals, teachers and parents. I lay those cards on the table. In 1999 it will be interesting to see how this government and governments to come have dealt and will deal with those problems. If the government does not act, the education system will deteriorate and the school system may well collapse.

I am delighted to represent the views of the constituents of Sandringham, whether they voted for me or not. I look forward to a long——

Mr Maclellan—And illustrious?

Mr LEA—No, not that! I look forward to a long stay in the House.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—I am pleased to speak in the Address-in-Reply debate. I wish to convey my loyalty and the loyalty of my constituents to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth through her Victorian representative, His Excellency Dr Davis McCaughey and Mrs McCaughey, both of whom carry out their duties with dignity and responsibility. I also thank the constituents of Gisborne for electing me, with a comfortable majority, for the fourth time.

Honourable members are debating the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech that was delivered on 25 October last year, 24 days after the State election. Honourable members should not forget the circumstances surrounding the calling of that election. Indeed, the calling of the election caught even government members unaware.

Between the day the date of the election was announced and the polling day, many diversions were placed in front of Victorians, including the Royal Melbourne Show, the Commonwealth referendums, school holidays, the 1996 Olympic Games bid, and, dare I say it, the Victorian Football League grand final. The reason for those diversions is obvious: the government needed to hide the effects of its economic mismanagement, such as the problems of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the fact that the State Bank had lent money to the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division). Such examples of mismanagement show how irresponsible the government has been in acting as the custodian of the public purse—and the government deserves condemnation from all quarters for its mismanagement.

Despite the government's attempts to cover up its failures, the conservative parties gained more votes than the Labour Party. Therefore, the government can take no solace from its election victory, a victory achieved by cheating the public, which was no surprise after what it tried to do during the Nunawading Province re-election campaign.

I shall devote much of my speech to the second largest catastrophe that residents of my electorate have faced in the ten years I have been their representative in Parliament. Of course, I am referring to the problems faced by Woodend residents because of the fires that devastated the area on 1 February 1983.

I shall give honourable members some background to the situation. That year the Gisborne electorate suffered catastrophe and devastation. In early 1983 not only was there the worst drought on record but also on 8 January a bushfire started. It was known as the Greendale fire, and it burned fifteen homes to the ground creating a black swathe across the landscape between Bacchus Marsh and Bullengarook. On 1 February 1983 a bushfire approximately 35 kilometres to the north razed 25 residences. This fire was alleged to have been caused by people working under the instruction of the former Woodend Waterworks Trust.

Following those two fires, which, in total, burned down 40 homes, the infamous Ash Wednesday bushfire occurred on 16 February 1983. It had the north wind behind it and burned on an ever increasing front until it reached the Greendale bushfire, when the wind changed. That was when most of the damage was caused because the fire had a front of approximately 30 to 40 miles and, with a raging south westerly wind behind it, burned right up the face of Mount Macedon into the firebreak caused by the fire on 1 February.

All three major bushfires were joined together in one big black area. One could not tell which fire was which but there was a difference because the first fire was believed to have been started by an arsonist—that is not proven—and there was no compensation paid other than general handouts from the bushfire relief funds for those fifteen burned homes. A similar situation applied to the fire of 1 February, the one about which the now Woodend Water Board is concerned.

The Ash Wednesday fire destroyed over 600 homes. Everyone was compensated following that fire whether insured or not, because the State Electricity Commission agreed to pick up the claims and to fully compensate everyone.

After my statements at a recent public meeting, I was corrected by the SEC which informed me that the government did not pick up the tab but that the SEC had borne the full cost of $146 million, of which $75 million comprised the funds from the insurance carried by the commission and $71 million was found from its funds. In effect the $71 million has been paid by every electricity user in the State of Victoria. In other words, the whole State paid compensation for the fires that were the responsibility of the commission on Ash Wednesday.

One must remember that that was during the worst drought that had ever hit the area. Residents in the Woodend township were limited to 60 litres of water a person a day. As you, Mr Acting Speaker, as a farmer and I as a former farmer would know, on a bad day one would almost drink that much water let alone wash and cook with it. It is not a lot of water. I shall not canvass the matter of the Woodend fire except to say that a recent court case has shown that the water board should be liable.

That day was a bad day with a temperature of 40 degrees centigrade and a wind of an estimated 40 knots. The former Woodend Waterworks Trust, which was the body in control on that day, has now been replaced by the Woodend Water Board. The officers who were serving on the trust are not now part of the board and so the members of the water board were not part of the administration at that time.

The trust was insured for $5 million and, because of extenuating circumstances, a settlement of $3 million was negotiated. It is now held in trust and, with interest, it now amounts to $3·8 million. At a public meeting the board was asked: what is the extent of the board's insurance? The board, after having told the public of the 90 claims against it, which amount to $15 million, told the meeting that it is insured for only $10 million. The board is still today $5 million short.

There is an answer to the problem. There are 90 claimants seeking $15 million. The first and the largest claimant went to the Supreme Court on 30 March 1989 and received $820 000. That amount was settled two days after the case began. It comprised of an agreed settlement of $550 000 plus costs.

There are two groups to consider: firstly, the $15 million in claims that might well have to be paid for by the ratepayers of the Woodend Water Board, many of whom are the unfortunate people who have lost their properties in the fire. There are several options to fund the settlement shortfall: the first of which is that the Woodend Water Board sell up its assets and pay off the claimants. However, that would mean that the board would cease to exist. I understand that that would be a totally impractical solution because the people of Woodend must have a water board to administer their water reticulation and a statutory authority cannot be declared bankrupt.

The second option is that the Woodend Water Board could strike a special rate, which is estimated to be 482 cents in the $1 for every $1 of the valuation of properties in the area. It would mean that for the 1394 rateable properties in the Woodend water district, the average payment for each property would be $8734 and that would be on top of all normal water and sewerage charges paid by the householder.

The board has a table based on this special rate, which rates a typical house in the area valued at $45 000 with a rateable value of $2250 as having to pay $10 845 or a house on 4 acres valued at $68 000 as having to pay $16 388.

In the business sector in the commercial heart of the town a local milk bar would have to pay $13 978. A factory valued at $140 000 would have to pay $33 740 and the local hotel at the same value would have to pay $47 236.

As can be imagined, that is untenable. The threat to the community has had a tremendous influence. People are terrified of the consequences. Land values are depressed. There has been no chance to plumb the situation yet but I know of two sales that have fallen through. A young couple with five children has been forced to sell because of increases in housing interest rates. As a result of recent developments, the purchaser has pulled out of the sale. The second case concerns a young man who was about to purchase a property but got cold feet and is not proceeding with the purchase at the moment. I am sure all honourable members can understand that.

As I said, sales of property are not taking place. Fear and terror is abroad in the community. The local economy is depressed. The real estate agents are not selling land or property and the innocent people in the whole saga are the current members of the Woodend Water Board. Firstly, they were not part of the board at the time of the fire and, secondly, they would have to pay the levy or make good the shortfall. One of the problems also is the fact that of the 1394 properties in the water district, many of the occupiers on 1 February 1983 did not even own the properties.

By my estimation the public meeting was attended by between 800 and 1000 people. They passed a motion to the effect that they should not have to and will not pay any levy. It is fine for that motion to be carried but if the board says one shall pay, one must pay. In my opinion, the ratepayers are being held to ransom.

The solution rests fairly and squarely on the government. Firstly, it must provide an ex gratia payment and, secondly, it must insist that this water board and all other statutory authorities should carry adequate public liability insurance. This is a problem of State significance. It is not just a local problem. As I said, had this fire not occurred I believe the Ash Wednesday fire which devastated Mount Macedon would have finished at Coffs Harbour. I am reasonably familiar with the fire of 1 February because it finished about a mile and a half from where I live. I have lived for 28 years in the town of Romsey so I know the district well. I know what would have happened. If the fire of 1 February had not stopped the Ash Wednesday blaze that fire would have continued to the north of Victoria throughout the night. Many of the residents of Woodend who lost property, and who might have to pick up the compensation tab, are members of the Country Fire Authority and the State Emergency Service. They have saved the government millions of dollars with their voluntary labour in putting out fires, not only the three fires of 1983. At the moment it appears that the barristers and lawyers are having an absolute field day, but they always do. I take up the interjection of the honourable member for Reservoir. When did that ever change! They rarely lose, there is no doubt about that.

If no action is taken by the government to alleviate the problem, the depressed economy and the fear and trepidation throughout the community will cause another disaster in that land values will be depressed. It was suggested at the public meeting that the town would be a ghost town. It will not be a ghost town No-one will be able to afford to move out because he or she will not be able to sell their properties. It is as simple as that.

I believe a few precedents have been set. Perhaps the government did not pick up the tab for the Ash Wednesday fires but the State Electricity Commission did by virtue of the fact that it levies its charges Statewide and is levying that charge across the State. If the Woodend Water Board has to pay the total bill it cannot levy the rest to anyone other than the 1394 local water users, but the State government can levy it across the State fairly and equitably.

By way of the VEDC disaster the government has also picked up the tab for those private companies which went down the drain. The taxpayers are providing the money for the VEDC disasters. Why cannot the Woodend Water Board be assisted in the same way?

I refer to a matter that has arisen in the past couple of weeks. It follows an editorial in the *Kyneton Guardian* newspaper of 7 April written by the current editor, Mr Don Gunn, in which he says:

> I believe some advisers to the government may be urging that the matter of what to do at Woodend may be resolved in another fashion.

He suggests in the article that an enforced amalgamation could well be part of the solution because the Shire of Newham and Woodend is a small shire. I am concerned that that suggestion has been put and it should be put down now. The Shire of Newham and Woodend cooperated completely in redrawing its internal boundaries in 1987–88. Together with the shire, I believe the external boundries, if they are to be reviewed should be reviewed only for the right reasons; voluntarily and without coercion or pressure from the State government.

I also know that the Minister for Water Resources is looking at an overall water board for the area. As I understand it, the option being considered is that the water boards of Sunbury, Gisborne, Macedon—which includes Mount Macedon–Riddell's Creek, Romsey, Lancefield and Woodend be amalgamated. I am sure the honourable member for Whittlesea will agree with me that it is unworkable for people in Sunbury to administer water in towns so far away, and vice versa. What is more, the Great Dividing Range runs between these towns. The water from the rain that falls at Woodend flows north to the River Murray. The water from the rain that falls at Romsey, 12 miles away, flows south to the bay. There are totally different water supply problems, just 12 miles apart, because the Great Dividing Range is in the middle. It is impractical to have an amalgamation forced on the Woodend Water Board. Why should it be forced to amalgamate and also force the new amalgamated board to pick up the tab for the disaster of the bush fire of 1 February which may then be spread across many more innocent water users in other towns. That is not on.

Over recent times, there have been numerous requests for a meeting with the Minister for Water Resources from both the board and me, as well as from a group called the Woodend Ratepayers Association, which was formed as a result of the public meeting that was called by the board to discuss the matter. I am delighted that the Minister is in the Chamber to hear what I have to say about the matter because it affects him as well as me.

Mr Maclellan—The Minister is a generous soul.

Mr REYNOLDS—As the honourable member for Berwick says by interjection, the Minister is a generous soul. In fact, I said at the meeting that the Minister for Water Resources was a good bloke—and I hope he never does anything to make me change my mind!

As I said, there have been requests from the water board, the Woodend Ratepayers Association, and me for a meeting with the Minister for Water Resources and the Treasurer. The Minister for Water Resources says that he is unable to attend such a meeting at this stage because several matters are now before the courts. I hope that meeting can take place as soon as possible and that a solution can be found. I hope it will be possible to restore confidence to the people of Woodend, who are devastated at present. Their confidence is shattered, and fear and trepidation are rampant—and I do not use the phrase lightly.

I hope also that it will be possible to restore confidence in the economy of the town; that is needed as soon as possible. Land sales need to continue; property does not need to continue to devalue. I hope it will be possible to save the huge costs that will be paid out in fees to lawyers and barristers by the claimants, so that this barristers banquet and lawyers lunch does not continue.

There is a need to find a solution for everyone concerned, including those I have mentioned as well as the people who have lost their properties. They have waited for more than six years to receive compensation. They are just as important as the people who may have to pay a special levy or additional water rates.

The Woodend Water Board needs to have peace of mind, particularly since it comprises volunteers who are acting on behalf of the government, who were appointed by the government, who were elected by the ratepayers, and who are doing the job for nothing. They have onerous duties. If they are put under further pressure there is little doubt that the government will find that people are loath to take up honorary positions and the point may even be reached where those who are already in office will resign.

It is untenable that the people of Woodend are left in this position and fearful of the consequences. The government must intervene as soon as possible. I intend, at every opportunity, to place pressure on the government by whatever means I possibly can; by correspondence, through the forums of this House, or by rubbing shoulders with the Minister in the corridors. He will hear from me on this issue at every available oppportunity until it is resolved. I assure my constituents of that. I am sure, if the Minister could speak now, he would say that I have already been doing that. I note the Minister nods in agreement, and I am grateful for that. I assure the Minister that the pressure will continue, in the nicest possible way, and that I will not give in until the problem is fixed.

I conclude my remarks by quoting a letter from a constituent in the township of Woodend:

> We wish to voice our extreme concern at the prospect of having to pay outrageous amounts of money in a special levy or huge water rates to meet claims from the 1 February 1983 bushfires on Mount Macedon.
>
> At the time, we did our best to assist fire victims, providing short-term accommodation etc., and we feel it most unjust that now we, the innocent ratepayers, face financial devastation, and in our own case (as surely most others) we would definitely be unable to meet such payments and ask "Why should we?"

That is typical of the opinions of the people of Woodend, and I heartily endorse them. As I said, I am delighted that the Minister is in the Chamber to hear what I have to say, and I will continue to apply pressure until a solution is found.

Mr PESCOTT (Bennettswood)—I am the last speaker for the Opposition in the debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply. It gives me great pleasure to make my contribution to the debate, but I also note that, under the arrangements regarding the way in which this debate will be conducted, I have only 10 minutes or so to make my contribution.

I note also that this evening the House will debate the Supply Bills further and, again, because of those arrangements, I am not sure that every honourable member who wishes to speak on the subject will be able to do so. I know many honourable members on the government benches would like to have the opportunity of telling the elected members of their party who make up the government what is upsetting people in their electorates.

I shall return now to the Address-in-Reply. On behalf of the people of Bennettswood, I express loyalty and affection to Her Majesty the Queen through her representatives in Victoria, His Excellency the Governor and Mrs McCaughey.

If one examines the remarks of the many speakers who have spoken in this debate, one notes how very diverse Victoria is. Honourable members have just heard a speech from the honourable member for Gisborne who spoke about the problems that have affected people in his electorate as a result of bushfires. By stark contrast, the electorate of Bennettswood in suburban Melbourne is basically a dormitory area, and many families live there and work in other parts of Melbourne. It has a mix of young families and people who have lived in the area for quite some time. There is a small amount of light industry, but not much. That is in stark contrast to some of the other electorates represented in this place. The honourable member for Gisborne spoke about the difficulties and problems with which people in rural Victoria are dealing at present.

At the last election I was pleased to increase my majority in the seat of Bennettswood. That means that the people who elected me to this position are clearly unhappy with the government. There are, without doubt, more people in the electorate of Bennettswood who would rather have a Liberal government than the current Labor government, and the reasons are obvious. The reasons relate to the fact that families in Bennettswood have found in recent years that their quality of life and their opportunities in the community have diminished more and more.

As I have only a limited time in which to make my contribution to the debate, I shall speak about some specific problems in my electorate. A major issue raised by people who come to my electorate office to talk about their problems is that of housing. There is an area in my electorate that is controlled and run by the Ministry of Housing and Construction, and there are constant problems because there is simply not enough housing in that area. People trying to make ends meet are unable to find accommodation and when they are given accommodation through the Ministry of Housing and Construction they face endless problems.

Another major issue of concern in my electorate is the mergers of schools and how they have been conducted. The population of the area is declining and there are fewer people in the district who have school-age children. I refer in particular to the proposed merger of four primary schools in the Blackburn South area. The councils of the four primary schools are told one thing one year and the next year the situation is quite different. They have been told that they will have what the government describes as a "super school". Statements and announcements are made by the government time and again. The Minister for Education has said that the "super school" will be the answer to everybody's prayers for the provision of education facilities in the district.

The first time that the schools were to make a definite move towards creating the super school they were late in applying for the building. They were late in organising the tenders which would have allowed for the building to have been completed in one financial year. Instead, the children and families in Blackburn South—particularly in the area of the old Mirrabooka Primary School—have had to up sticks one year and go to a temporary school where the children will stay for two years. It would have been possible for the new school to have been constructed in one school year; instead, because of bungles within the Ministry of Education, the construction of the school will take two calendar years.

The people at Burwood Technical School were asked to discuss with neighbouring schools to the west whether they could come to some sort of agreement on a merger or amalgamation. After eighteen months of hard work and heartache to arrive at an agreed arrangement, officials of the Ministry of Education informed them that the discussions should stop. Subsequently they embarked on another merger proposal and the temporary arrangements for that proposal have been announced. When one considers other experiences in the area of education, who knows whether that merger will be effected? The students, families and others associated with the Burwood Technical School have suffered immense disruption which could easily have been avoided.

It was proposed that Ashwood College should provide education from primary school through to year 12. At the moment, Jordanville Technical School has joined with Ashwood High School as part of the proposed merger. However, Ashwood Primary School has been left out of the arrangement. The arrangements which people were told would be made have not been put in place and are unlikely to be put in place.

A vast area of land surrounding Ashwood College was to be kept for facilities for the school. Recently I saw an internal memorandum of the Ministry of Education indicating that part of the land would be put up for sale.

In respect of the mergers of schools in my electorate, the people associated with all of the schools experience enormous difficulty in ascertaining what is to happen. Many people are leaving the electorate because of uncertainties about what will happen in the mergers to which I have referred.

I refer to the question of funding for preschools. Each year in different parts of my electorate there are preschools which have a guaranteed number of over 40 children, as is required to form two full-time groups. The parents of the children who use the Benwerrin preschool and the Jordanville North preschool have had to fight hard for three to four months to obtain the funding due to them in the initial instance. The funds always come in the end, but only after much heartache and hard work. It is unacceptable that those families should be put into that position every year because the Ministry of Community Services does not abide by the rules established by it.

With time marching on, the last matter to which I refer concerns conservation and the environment in the Bennettswood electorate. There are two issues involved. Firstly, I refer to open space in the Blackburn South area. The former Healesville freeway reserve has been designated an area for open space. Over the past four or five years it has been considered an area which the people of Blackburn South will be able to use for their recreation. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works owns part of the land, as does the Ministry for Housing and Construction and the Road Construction Authority. Nobody has been able to coordinate the work in the area so that the people of Blackburn South can have what they were promised.

The government has ensured that the local council will have to purchase the land from those government instrumentalities which own it. At present the land belongs to the people through the ownership of it by the government instrumentalities. Instead of allowing the local community to enjoy the use of the land, the promised use will be put at risk because the local council is unable to find the money required to buy the land from the government.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has recently moved to rezone the area so that the value will increase and the MMBW will receive more from the council than it would have under the previous zoning. The residents of Blackburn South are concerned that they are uncertain of having the use of the area. They are also concerned that they will have to pay high rates in the future to cover the costs the council will have to meet because of the government's requirement that the council buy the land.

As the time fast approaches 6.30 p.m., I repeat that the people of Bennettswood and I express our loyalty to and faith in Her Majesty the Queen. We wish the Governor and his wife well and hope they will continue to enjoy the rest of their time in office in a pleasant and satisfactory way.

The SPEAKER—The question is: that the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Speaker, I direct your attention to section 40 (1) of the Constitution Act 1975 and seek your help. It reads:

> The Assembly shall not proceed to the dispatch of business unless there be present exclusive of the Speaker at least twenty of the members.

I direct to your attention that when the motion was put in respect of the adoption of the Address-in-Reply there were not twenty members in the House. I direct to your attention also the fact that the Constitution Act requires that in order to dispatch business there must be twenty members in the House. You should, in the circumstances, resubmit the question in respect of the adoption of the Address-in-Reply in order that a quorum be present for the motion to be put, and upon the quorum being present the motion should be put.

The matter should then be considered by yourself and the Standing Orders Committee in respect of the future application of the provisions of section 40 (1) of the Constitution Act.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—Mr Speaker, on the point of order, the honourable member for Berwick well knows that he should raise the question of the state of the House before questions are put or before any member has spoken, not after the fact.

I recall numerous instances, when the honourable member for Berwick was a Minister, when business was discharged in this place and there would have been fewer than the quorum present. If you, Mr Speaker, followed that practice, there would have to be a quorum called on every question and at every Committee stage. If that is what the honourable member is seeking, it is certainly not the custom and practice of the House.

Mr BROWN (Gippsland West)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I direct to the attention of the House that, contrary to what the Minister has indicated, the fact is—and it has been the case on many occasions in the past—that there would have been fewer than the required twenty members to constitute a quorum in this House upon the dispatch of business.

The Opposition has raised this matter only on the basis that we researched it today as a result of your ruling, Mr Speaker, on the matter of quorums. I indicated the Opposition's concern that, during a point of order, we believe you, Mr Speaker, acted a little hastily in not accepting a call by the Opposition for a quorum on only the third occasion that such a call had been made on that day.

As a result of our research, we became aware only today that the Constitution Act requires a quorum to be present for the dispatch of business. It is not a matter of what the Opposition would like or would not like to do; as we see it, the Constitution Act requires it; it is not negotiable. We see it as being non-negotiable and certainly we would have been compelled to raise the matter earlier had we realised it prior to today.

This matter has not been raised prior to today because the Opposition had no real interest in ensuring that at all times there was a quorum present in this House, as required by the Constitution Act or by Standing Orders. It has arisen directly as a result of your ruling, Mr Speaker. Today we discovered it as a result of research into the general question of quorums and, as such, I put it to you that the honourable member for Berwick is in order in raising the point of order; and I would say that you, Mr Speaker, could not rule any other way than to ensure that a quorum is present for the dispatch of business.

The SPEAKER—Order! The point raised by the honourable member for Berwick and supported by the honourable member for Gippsland West rests on an interpretation

of the provisions of the Constitution Act. I suggest that, to put the matter beyond doubt, it would be appropriate for the bells to be rung and for the question to be resubmitted. I shall listen to advice from the Leaders of the parties on whether they would prefer that I leave the Chair now and resume at 8 p.m., which seems to be appropriate.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I suggest that the ruling you have given breaks totally new ground as to the way in which this Parliament operates. It will have substantial effects on the way in which this place operates in future. If we are to deal with the matter we should deal with it now. We should certainly consider the matter further.

The SPEAKER—Order! To clarify my earlier remarks and the ruling on the point of order raised yesterday, it was made very clear that the response to a member who draws attention to the state of the House is at the discretion of the Speaker. The circumstances in which I ruled yesterday were different from the current circumstances.

Mr Speaker caused the bells to be rung.

A quorum was formed.

The SPEAKER—Order! A quorum is present. I resubmit the question, which is: that the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech be agreed to.

The motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was agreed to, and it was ordered that the Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor by the Speaker and members of the House.

The sitting was suspended at 6.36 *p.m. until* 8.8 *p.m.*

HOUSE CONTRACTS GUARANTEE (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 6, line 15, before "to" insert "under a domestic building work contract".

2. Clause 6, line 17, before "unless" insert "to complete the domestic building work under a domestic building work contract".

3. Clause 8, lines 30 to 35, omit proposed sub-section (2) and insert—

'(2) An approved builder must not carry on the business of performing a class of domestic building work for which the builder does not have an approval under sub-section (1).

Penalty applying to this sub-section: 100 penalty units.

(3) A person who is not an approved builder must not carry on the business of—

(*a*) constructing dwelling-houses; or

(*b*) performing (whether under contact or not) domestic building work of the class referred to in paragraph (*b*) or (*c*) of the definition of "domestic building work" in section 3 (1), if a contract for the performance of that work would be a domestic building work contract.

Penalty applying to this sub-section: 100 penalty units.'.

4. Insert the following new clause to follow clause 8:

New section 25A inserted.

'AA. After section 25 of the Principal Act insert—

Annual report

"25A. (1) The approved guarantor must, in respect of each financial year, prepare an annual report in relation to its operations as an approved guarantor containing all the particulars required to be laid before each annual general meeting of the company by virtue of section 275 of the *Companies (Victoria) Code* and submit the report to the Minister not later than 31 October next following the financial year.

(2) The Minister must cause each annual report submitted to the Minister under this section to be laid before the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly before the expiration of the the seventh sitting day of the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly, as the case may be, after the annual report has been received by the Minister.

(3) If the approved guarantor fails to submit an annual report to the Minister—

(*a*) if an extension has not been granted under sub-section (7)—by 31 October in any year; or

(*b*) if such an extension has been granted—by the date to which the extension was granted—

the Minister must report or cause to be reported that failure and the reasons for the failure to each House of Parliament.

(4) The approved guarantor may apply in writing to the Minister for an extension of the date by which an annual report is to be submitted to the Minister.

(5) The Minister may in writing grant to the approved guarantor an extension to such date as the Minister determines.

(6) The Minister must advise or cause to be advised each House of the Parliament of each extension granted under this section and the reasons for the extension.".'.

5. Insert the following new clause to follow clause 8:

Disallowance of regulations

'B. In section 33 of the Principal Act, for sub-section (4) substitute—

"(4) Regulations made under this Act may be disallowed in whole or in part by resolution of either House of the Parliament in accordance with the requirements of section 6 (2) of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.

(5) Disallowance under sub-section (4) is deemed to be disallowance by Parliament for the purposes of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.".'.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

When the Bill was last before the House, a number of suggestions were made, particularly on the need for reports. As a result of discussions I have had with the honourable member for Malvern, the government has agreed with the general thrust of his suggestion to ensure that the reports of the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd, or the approved guarantor, are presented before this House and the other place.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I congratulate the Minister for Consumer Affairs for accepting the amendments, particularly the amendment that requires the annual report of the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd to be presented to Parliament. When the Bill was last before the House I moved that a report should be presented as part of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs annual report. The Minister said it would be difficult for that to be done. However, in the interests of the community and the building industry I believed it was important that a workable report should be presented.

On that basis the Opposition was prepared to agree with the Minister's proposed changes so that an annual report of the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd will be presented to Parliament. I thank the Minister for that. All too often the community says that politicians do not cooperate with each other. This is an example where we have cooperated in the interests of the community and the building industry.

Some of the amendments relate specifically to the work carried out by the honourable member for Balwyn, who pointed out a number of matters.

Mr Thomson—Why didn't you do that?

Mr LEIGH—I am not going to get involved in a discussion as to why I did or did not do it. It is unfortunate that there are a few puppets on the government benches. When someone is prepared to cooperate, it is a shame that some nitwit is prepared to interject. The honourable member for Balwyn deserves congratulations for his diligence in this matter. The reporting provisions in the Bill will benefit the consumers of Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

CONSTITUTION (SUPREME COURT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Constitution (Supreme Court) Bill clarifies the occasions on which proposed legislation must be passed by an absolute majority of both Houses of Parliament.

Section 85 of the Constitution Act 1975 confers jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in all cases whatsoever and makes it the superior court of Victoria with unlimited jurisdiction. The Constitution Act 1975 section 18 (2) (*b*) requires a Bill that alters or varies section 85 of the Constitution Act to be passed on second and third readings in both Houses by an absolute majority of the whole number of members.

Since December 1975 a considerable number of Bills have been passed that contain provisions which confer judicial jurisdiction, power and/or authority on various statutory boards and tribunals. Pursuant to the Standing Orders of Parliament, some of these Bills have been endorsed as having been passed by an absolute majority and some have not been endorsed. Without the endorsement, it is difficult to establish beyond doubt that the Bill was passed by an absolute majority.

The presence or absence of the endorsement is, of course, a matter of procedure rather than substance. However, the issue which is apparently causing some confusion and argument is whether a provision which confers judicial jurisdiction, power and/or authority on a board or tribunal thereby repeals, alters or varies the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Since 1975 governments have assumed, as a matter of interpretation, that it does not. Consequently, Bills containing such provisions have not been necessarily passed by an absolute majority.

In recent weeks, doubts have been cast on that assumption as a result of applications for injunctions based on attacks on the constitutional validity of particular Acts. In order to remove any ambiguity or confusion in regard to the extent to which the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court is affected by provisions conferring judicial jurisdiction on statutory bodies, both retrospectively and prospectively, the government proposes that the Constitution be amended in the following way:

> Bills which have any provision which expressly or by implication repeals, alters or varies the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and which are passed by an absolute majority of both Houses of Parliament will have the effect of repealing, altering or varying the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to the extent stated in the provision; and
>
> Bills which have any provision which expressly or by implication repeals, alters or varies the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court but which are either not passed

by an absolute majority or are not so endorsed by the Clerks of the Parliament do not affect the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

In those instances the provision will have the effect of conferring judicial jurisdiction on the statutory body which is additional to the continuing jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Consequently, any Bill containing such provisions will not be rendered void because it was not passed by an absolute majority.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mrs WADE (Kew), the debate was adjourned.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until next day.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—On the question of time, in his second-reading speech the Attorney-General did not disclose matters that are relevant to the Bill. The Bill concerns an important matter basic to the principles of justice. There are currently two relevant cases in the Supreme Court, and I understand that the government is a codefendant in both cases. If the Bill is passed in its present form, the other parties to those cases may be adversely affected.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should confine her remarks to the question of time.

Mrs WADE—I am explaining that the Bill is extremely important and involves significant issues for the whole court system. It needs careful consideration of the law and the circumstances of the two cases I mentioned to ensure that the Bill does not take away the rights of people who are in court where the other party is the government.

If the debate is adjourned until only tomorrow, the Bill will be rushed through Parliament. Already circumstances have arisen in this case where the government appears to have tried to push the case through without proper consideration. The debate should be adjourned until Tuesday, 2 May, at the earliest.

Mr BROWN (Gippsland West)—On the question of time, it is well known and understood that the Opposition always requests a Minister to adjourn debate on Bills for two weeks. The Opposition is on record as having said—and it stands by this assertion—that where a matter is of critical importance and extreme urgency, usually of an unexpected nature, to the government itself, the Opposition would always be prepared to consider that case. If there is genuinely an urgent matter that should be rushed through Parliament in the interests of the community, the Opposition is prepared to consider it on its mertis.

In this case the situation has been known for at least a month; in fact, it was reported in the newspapers as long as a month ago. The situation honourable members are faced with is debating a Bill tomorrow that we have not had adequate time to consider. The Opposition will agree to the debate being adjourned until tomorrow but with a definite and binding agreement that further time will be granted if required. The Opposition needs to consult with a number of parties. I understand that tomorrow proper legal representation will be made available to the Opposition so that it is fully briefed and informed of the ramifications of the Bill.

The last occasion on which the Liberal Party agreed to legislation without being fully aware of the issues was in reference to the BLF (De-recognition) (Amendment) Bill. At that time, the then Minister made some statements that were subsequently proved to be wrong. We do not want a recurrence of that.

On the question of time, the Opposition is concerned that it may not be prepared to debate the matter tomorrow and, on that basis, it seeks an undertaking from the

Minister that, if the Opposition does not want to debate the Bill, debate will be adjourned until the next day of sitting.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—On the question of time, I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The matters involved in the proposed legislation are not matters of recent activity; they date back to 1975. I agree with the interjection of the honourable member for Bendigo East that urgent validating measures are required. I also agree that the proposed legislation must be dealt with so that it is correct. It is a most important matter. It affects not only the legislation about which we already know, but also many other Acts that were passed by the Hamer, Thompson and Cain governments over the succeeding fourteen years. I give the undertaking sought by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that, if additional time is required, it will be provided.

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

SUPPLY (1989–90, No. 1) BILL AND WORKS AND SERVICES (ANCILLARY PROVISIONS, 1989–90, No. 1) BILL

The debates (adjourned from April 12) on the motions of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of these Bills were resumed.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I acknowledge that I have an interest in some of the matters that are contained in the Bills because I am a Director of the Victoria State Opera. That company is a beneficiary under the provisions of the Bills, and it is important that my interest is recorded.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr RICHARDSON—I take up the interjection of the Leader of the Opposition and point out that I receive no salary as a director of the State opera company. I also point out that the Leader of the Opposition is a beneficiary under the Bills because he receives free tickets to the State opera company's performances.

I compliment the government for its continuing support of the Victoria State Opera over the years of its incumbency. I note the enthusiastic reaction of the honourable member for Footscray. I had intended to mention the honourable member for Footscray because I am genuinely concerned that it be noted that the honourable member for Footscray, as a backbencher, a frontbencher in the Labor Party and then as a Minister in successive Labor governments, has been an important supporter of the Victoria State Opera. It is also important to record that the honourable member was the first treasurer of the Victoria State Opera. He performed a most valuable function when he occupied that office. He relinquished that office and moved on to other responsibilities within his Parliamentary party to ultimately become the Deputy Leader of his party and to also, at a later time, become the Minister for the Arts.

As the Minister for the Arts, the honourable member remained a supporter of the Victoria State Opera. His contribution to the establishment of procedures are now leading to the establishment of a permanent home for the opera company in arts city in South Melbourne adjacent to the Victorian Arts Centre. His valuable contribution should be and is recognised. I convey the appreciation and the gratitude of the board and the supporters of the State opera company to the honourable member for Footscray who has made a significant contribution. The honourable member knows that I am sincere in what I say.

I compliment also the honourable member for Oakleigh on the contribution he made to the Victoria State Opera as a former Minister for the Arts. In my view and in

the view of many members on both sides of the House, the honourable member for Oakleigh was treated disgracefully and abominably by the Labor Party. He owes absolutely nothing to the Labor Party but the party owes a great deal to him. Many people appreciate the work of that honourable gentleman and, on behalf of the board of the Victoria State Opera, I thank him for his contribution and for the continuing development of the State opera company, which is now a major opera company in Australia.

The Victoria State Opera surpasses the achievements of the Australian Opera and, importantly, the State opera company has achieved eminence within the arts in Australia with the support of the Victorian government—by that I mean successive governments both Liberal and Labor. The State opera company has received no support from the Federal government through the Australia Council. Federal government support goes to the Australian Opera, which should be termed the Sydney Opera Company.

Having dealt with the arts, let me now turn to the smallest department within the government, the area of activity that occupies most of my time, the Ethnic Affairs Commission. The commission exists within the government not for the benefit of the community but for the benefit of the Australian Labor Party. The appointment of Mr McCutcheon as Minister for Ethnic Affairs shows that the extreme left wing of the Labor Party has retained its grip on a portfolio that it regards as vital.

It is important to note that all four Ministers in the portfolio since the Labor Party won office in 1982 have come from the extreme left faction of the Labor Party. The late Jack Ginifer, a close friend of mine; the Minister for Community Services, Mr Spyker; the Minister for Health, the Honourable Caroline Hogg; and now, glory upon glory, the Attorney-General, Mr McCutcheon. The ethnic affairs Ministry, although the smallest, is the most highly politicised Ministry. Because the commission is so small it is easily manipulated and is the perfect vehicle for the extreme left of the Labor Party. It is dominated by left-wing unions, particularly the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union. The union's pipeline is direct to the Cabinet room and the State Treasury.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission, as the political wing of the left-wing unions, performs three vital functions: firstly, it enables those unions to have direct influence on Cabinet decisions through a captive Minister; secondly, it is a conduit for public funds to be directed to union activities involving migrant workers and strengthen union control over those workers; and, thirdly and most importantly, although the exercise is manipulated by the unions, it is all done in the name of the government and not the unions.

Funds flow out of the State Treasury, often in relatively small amounts, to a variety of union-oriented activities ranging from small, worker-based projects to international conferences that are hosted by the Minister for Ethnic Affairs. These conferences can involve the importation of overseas left-wing politicians. I have even attended some of these conferences as a guest and it is a fascinating experience. The conferences cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. They are designed to strengthen left-wing union dominance over migrant workers in Victoria.

I give now an example of how the system works. A small and, at first glance, innocuous grant of $10 000 was made to the Trade Union Migrant Workers Centre in July 1987. Documents obtained under freedom of information revealed that on 20 June 1987 the then Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Mr Spyker, sent a cheque for $10 000 to the President of the Trade Union Migrant Workers Centre.

I have a series of documents that I intend to make available to the House at the end of my contribution. I now identify document A as the document that is relevant to

that remark. The President of the Trade Union Migrant Workers Centre is Mr John Halfpenny, the John Halfpenny of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union. The Minister for Community Services, Mr Spyker, was a member of that union—in fact, a shop steward—and is still a member of the union.

The committee of the workers centre comprises a number of well-known left-wing identities: George Zangalis, George Philopoulos, John Neil, Noel Kinniburgh, Vera Kent and Giovanni Sgro. The organisation's accounts show that its 1986 income was $78 000, the bulk of which came as grants from the Federal Labor government. Only $16 000 came from union affiliation fees. Document B illustrates that.

The stated aim of the project receiving the Ethnic Affairs Commission grant was to inform migrant workers of non-English speaking background on matters relating to superannuation. Document C relates to that. However, the stated objectives and aims of the Trade Union Migrant Workers Centre provide greater insight and include, in addition to assisting migrant workers with problems in the workplace and society, the following:

> To improve the relationship between migrant workers and the union. This would be the first step in developing a greater understanding of the Australian trade union movement and a more active participation in the affairs and struggles of the union;
>
> To improve knowledge about the trade union movement.

Document D illustrates those facts. Every activity undertaken by the organisation, no matter how it is described, is clearly directed towards furthering those trade union objectives. The superannuation project was no exception.

The special relationships between the left-wing unions, particularly the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union, the Ethnic Affairs Commission, John Halfpenny and the Minister for Community Services is demonstrated by the circumvention of established procedure. Despite a reminder letter from the Ethnic Affairs Commission in October 1986, an audited financial statement was not sent until March 1987. Document E relates to that.

It is clear from the correspondence and the notable absence of some sequential correspondence that the original application for funding was refused at public servant level, but it is equally clear that a few telephone calls that stitched up a deal were made to old mates because on 10 June 1987 Mr Halfpenny wrote to his mate, the Minister for Community Services, thanking him for "reconsidering our application". Document F refers to that.

The grant was awarded with a number of conditions, including that on completion of the project or at the latest by 30 June 1988 the following documents would be submitted to the Ethnic Affairs Commission: an audited financial statement clearly showing how the grant moneys have been spent; a completed and signed report form; and a written report giving full details of the activities that took place during the project and describing what has been achieved. These matters were agreed to by John Halfpenny on 5 June 1987. Document G contains that information.

Not one of those conditions were complied with. The financial statement was not supplied until mid-August 1988 and was not audited. The completed and signed report form was never supplied and the written report was never supplied. The cosiness of this arrangement is further evidenced by the fact that nine months after the deadline no effort had been made by the commission to find out what had happened to the public funds it handed over to the left-wing unions. Document H demonstrates that.

In 1988, the following year, the commission provided another grant, increasing the amount to $12 000. This is a perfect example of how public funds can be diverted to serve a section of the trade union movement to enable the left wing to extend its

activities among migrant workers. This exercise can be multiplied a few times and special advances from the Treasurer and the Community Employment Program can be added and then multiplied by the seven years of the Cain government. The total amount of grants syphoned off would be millions of dollars.

That is why the small and, therefore, easily politicised and easily manipulated ethnic affairs portfolio is so important to the extreme left of the Labor Party and the left-wing unions upon whom left-wing politicians depend for their endorsement. No union values its control over ethnic affairs more highly than the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union; no union has used it more effectively. No faction of the Australian Labor Party has been so clear-sighted and single-minded as the socialist left in gathering unto itself a captive Ministry with a captive and unspectacular socialist left Minister who will do as he is told.

Guess who? It is the Attorney-General and Minister for Ethnic Affairs, whose credentials for the job are unchallengeable. The winners are the left-wing unions; the losers are the majority of the migrant Victorians and Victorian taxpayers who, regrettably, are paying the bills.

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—The Supply (1989–90, No. 1) Bill provides Parliament with the opportunity of examining the government's performance and certainly of comparing that performance with the promises made by the government at successive elections since 1982.

The evidence points to the government being guilty of gross mismanagement of the economy and of callous indifference to the plight of the Victorian community. I make that charge based on the fact that the government has imposed on Victorians taxes and charges which are plainly quite horrific. The simple message to Victorians is that they pay higher taxes than other citizens in the country.

I notice that the honourable member for Derrimut is leaving the Chamber. He does not agree with me. I know, because I heard him shaking his head, but neither the honourable member for Derrimut nor any other member of the government can ignore those facts.

Every man, woman and child in Victoria in 1987–88 paid $1081 in State taxes; every man, woman and child in New South Wales—the second highest taxing State—paid $889. At the bottom of the list is Queensland, where every man, woman and child paid $525. Victorian taxpayers pay more than double the State taxes paid by those in the lowest taxing State, Queensland.

The Treasurer enters this place and, under examination by the Opposition, by using his well-known stock of fancy phrases and doublespeak tries to circumvent the charge that he is the highest-taxing Treasurer in Victoria's history and attempts to misrepresent the true position about taxation and the fiscal management of Victoria. The Treasurer cannot cover the truth. Victorians know the truth because they feel the hands of the Treasurer and the Premier in their pockets, extracting the money to a far greater extent than do the Treasurer and the Premier of any other Australian State.

Is it any wonder that taxation is at the present level in Victoria? Since 1982 expenditure by the government in Victoria has increased at an average annual rate of 3 per cent in real terms. The per capita expenditure has exploded over the same period by 14 per cent in real terms. At the same time, Victoria's Budget deficit has virtually trebled and now amounts to 8·7 per cent of the total State outlays.

The government has presided over a huge increase in State government employment and a rapid growth in the State debt. Between 1983 and 1988, government employment growth in Victoria was nearly double that in any other State or in the Commonwealth.

The State debt has more than doubled during Labor's seven years in government in Victoria. Victoria had a State debt of $11 428 million in 1981–82; the State debt will be $23 637 million in the 1988–89 financial year, representing an increase of 107 per cent in raw terms and an increase of 27 per cent in real terms, or $5519 for every Victorian man, woman and child if portrayed as debt per head of population.

State taxation over the Labor government's seven years has more than doubled. In 1981–82 Victoria had State taxation totalling $2084·2 million; the taxation total in 1988–89 will be $4977·2 million, representing a 139 per cent increase in State taxation, or in real terms, to demonstrate what the government is doing to the State, a 41·1 per cent increase over seven years.

Is it any wonder that Victorians pay higher taxes than citizens in other Australian States? The Cain government's Labor policies are so inept and callous that they guaranteed that the highest taxes were imposed on Victorians yesterday, and they guarantee that the highest taxes will be imposed today, but the real guarantee is that taxation by the government will be even higher in the months and years ahead. As long as the Labor government remains in power in Victoria the only certainty is that taxation will increase at a very rapid rate.

The Budget reveals that the per capita tax rip-off for 1988–89 by the government will be $1162, an increase of 7·5 per cent over and above the 1987–88 figure. Heaven knows what the impact of financial disasters like the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the Victorian Investment Corporation and other shambles like the $104 million loan to the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division) by the State Bank will have on State taxes and charges in the 1989–90 Budget.

Victorians can be sure that taxes will increase and that Victoria will maintain its No. 1 position on the tax ladder; that is, Victoria will continue to impose double the level of tax imposed by the lowest State in the Commonwealth.

I have referred to some of the better known and more widely advertised financial shambles and fiscal mismanagement of the government, particularly the VEDC and the VIC. In past months and years the government has presented statements to Parliament and to Victorians as part of its magic plan to rejuvenate the State, as it terms it. The government has described its significant entrepreneurial activities. Those activities are now playing a large part in Victoria's present parlous state. It is interesting to examine some of the entrepreneurial and business activities of the government to ascertain how the government ranks as a financial manager in Australia.

The March 22 edition of *Australian Business Magazine* contained an analysis of the ten best and the ten worst business enterprises in Australia. That analysis revealed just how bad the Victorian government is as a financial manager. Of the ten worst enterprises in Australia, the Victorian government had four: WorkCare; the State Transport Authority; the Metropolitan Transit Authority; and the Ministry for Housing and Construction. The losses of these four enterprises total $663 million. In the listing of negative cash flow the same four enterprises raked up $541 million. Taken together they are certainly the worst in Australia.

The Premier is fond of shouting that Victoria leads Australia and, in many respects, he is right. Victoria leads Australia as the worst performing State for business enterprise because those four enterprises are by far the worst in Australia for losses and negative cash flow.

Victoria also leads the nation in other well-recorded financial losses such as the Victorian Economic Development Corporation with a loss of $111 million, the Victorian Investment Corporation with a loss of $30 million and the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division) loan by State Bank Victoria of $104 million.

If those amounts are added to the losses of the four enterprises I have mentioned, the total financial catastrophe is $908 million. That is taxpayers' money that is being wasted by the government.

While this enormous financial disaster and gross mismanagement by the government go unchecked because the government seems to be frozen by indecision and fear, the provision of essential services continues to decline. Nothing illustrates this better than the law and order crisis in Victoria.

Between 1981 and 30 June 1988 crime in Victoria increased by 72 per cent. At the same time Victoria's population increased by only 7·3 per cent. The crime increase in the State during the years the Labor government has been in power has been ten times that of the population.

Police numbers do not match the government's promises. The Police Force is currently 1800 members under strength and the resignation rate is such that the Police Force will never get ahead in numbers let alone come remotely near the promise made by the government that it would boost police numbers by more than 1800.

Police resources would be laughable if the situation were not so serious. Fraud crime is increasing at an enormous rate. In fact, between 1981 and 30 June 1988 fraud crimes increased by 516 per cent. The Fraud Squad does not even have a computer. It has a word processor for the secretary to type reports but the Fraud Squad does not have a computer to help in its operations to fight the enormous increase in fraudulent crime, most of which is computer oriented.

Another huge increase that is worrying is in drug-related crimes. Drug substances sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory at Macleod take seven months to be analysed and returned to the police before charges can proceed in the court. Exceptions are made for big drug busts, which are rushed through in a few days, but the ordinary drug bust of small to medium-sized quantities takes seven months. One can imagine where a person on bail on a drug charge would be after seven months—that person would probably have taken off for parts unknown and be set up in the business of this filthy, disgusting and death-dealing trade in some other part of the country.

The resources of the police are low but the government seems to have no drive or determination to do anything about it. The government is frozen by fear and indecision. It seems to be in a state of decay and appears unable to provide the community with the kinds of protection it promised.

Another scandalous situation is that the government has failed to give the police the kind of authority that police forces eleswhere in this country have. Nothing demonstrates that better than the point-blank refusal of the government to address the issue of giving police the power to ask suspects for their names and addresses. When this matter is raised the Minister for Police and Emergency Services always says that if the police see someone committing a crime they have the power to arrest that person.

The Minister displays his talent for misrepresenting the situation by his failure to acknowledge the fact that the vast majority of offences for which the police need this power are offences that they are not likely to see being committed. The police need to act on information provided to them.

The police cannot charge suspects for non-indictable crimes they have not witnessed. They can talk to suspects and obtain admissions but when they ask for the suspect's name and address the suspect can answer that he or she does not have to provide it. That suspect can walk away free. The suspect cannot be arrested or searched or charged. However, if that suspect gets into a car, the policeman then has the right to

ask for his or her name and address. If that person were smoking a cigarette and drops it on the ground, the policeman has the power to ask for his or her name and address because that person has just contravened the Litter Act.

By its refusal to give the police this power, the government is ignoring the vast range of non-indictable offences that are committed each hour in this State. The government's argument is that it cannot give police this power because it would infringe on people's civil rights. The Opposition says that the greatest threat to civil liberty in this State is the increase in crime because that crime is committed against the law-abiding section of the community that deserves protection—the protection that was promised by the Labor Party when it came to power in 1982. In every economic or social situation since that time, the government has failed to deliver.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra)—In speaking on the Supply Bills I want, firstly, to register the concern of the Opposition regarding the government's approach towards the running of the water industry in Victoria and, in particular, its pricing policy.

The government has introduced a pricing policy for bulk rural water users based on a system whereby each year prices will increase by the rate of the consumer price index plus 2 per cent. The government has put forward the thesis that that is fair and reasonable, and designed to bring the pricing up to an equitable level over a period of years.

The government attempts to argue that it is reasonable because, after all, in the Melbourne and metropolitan area pricing is based on a so-called cost recovery system—which it is not—and I predict that is going to be proved in the next few weeks.

People in the water industry who use water do not object at all to paying a fair price for water. However, they object to an arbitrary approach in fixing those prices, particularly when the arbitrary approach has been discredited. For example, to continue to increase taxes and charges—in this case I am talking about water charges—by an amount equivalent to inflation plus 2 per cent is to continue to commit the sins in running the economy that are being committed by Labor governments in Australia—federally and in this State—the results of which are a frightening trade deficit, increasing inflation and a reduced standard of living.

The security of the people who have tried to be thrifty and save for their retirements is under threat, and I say to the government during the debate on the Supply Bills that its slavish commitment to increasing water charges in country Victoria by automatically saying that the rate will be inflation plus 2 per cent is erroneous, and a bad economic strategy that is causing hardship and a loss of confidence in the productive rural areas.

By reason of production efficiency, farmers are producing enormous export sales and improving the revenue growth of the nation. The government is wrong to continue to couple increases in water charges and other taxes with inflation. By following that policy the government is unfairly and artificially increasing taxes and charges. In fact, it is not enabling the departments to perform as they should because increases in prices should be based on the real costs incurred by a department in efficiently delivering a product—in this case, water.

By continuing to index charges and couple them with inflation the government is embedding inflation in the economy, because inflation is the result of a number of factors running out of control. Inflation is bad for everybody, and for a government to conveniently make itself cosy and say, "We will increase taxes and charges based on inflation" is to compound the rising costs of living for everybody in our State and in our nation.

It is even worse when one considers that, with the water industry, the government says that whatever the rate of inflation—and it makes a prediction at the beginning of the year but it does not matter if that figure runs beyond its prediction—whether it is 1 per cent, 5 per cent, 7 per cent or 8 per cent, or even—God help us—10 per cent, the figure will be automatically added each year on a compound interest rate to the charges for country Victorians using bulk water, plus 2 per cent.

The predictions of the Federal Treasurer and also those of the State Treasurer in the Budget delivered last year were that inflation in Australia would be in the vicinity of 6 per cent. In the next few days we will receive the quarterly index of inflation—the consumer price index for the quarter—and it has already been proven that the inflation estimates delivered in the last Federal and State Budgets are out of kilter.

Inflation is running ahead of estimates and, although I do not want to see this happen and I hope I am proved to be wrong, I fear that when the consumer price index as at the end of March is released there will also be an increase on the original estimate.

Therefore, the government continues each day to say that it is adhering to the policy of charging for water in country Victoria at an inflation rate plus 2 per cent when the estimates that this same government made six or eight months ago in delivering the Budget were that inflation would be at 6 per cent plus 2 per cent. Inflation is now in excess of 7 per cent, and it is likely to increase. I fear it may even go beyond double digits. Therefore, one can see that the government's policy is flawed and, by continuing to increase charges in this way, charges which must eventually be passed on in the price of food delivered to consumers and thus fuelling inflation, it will embed in our economy further inflation and higher interest rates. The whole situation is crazy.

When one thinks through what I have said the government's approach to water pricing in country Victoria does not provide any incentive to farmers to help overcome the problems of salinity and soil degradation, and also reduce the consumption of water overall as part of a strategy which all of us ought to be working to achieve.

The farmer is not being correctly recognised as the most effective potential tool in combating soil degradation and salinity. We should be assisting farmers who are willing to assist us in combating this national problem.

One of the most positive ways of achieving this aim is by incorporating in our pricing structure—that is, the charge that the taxpayer makes through the government of the day to water users—an incentive for farmers to introduce these measures.

For example, a farmer who is prepared to spend money, take out loans and make improvements to his property to reduce and combat salinity, or who is prepared to embark on a massive tree planting campaign and use all the technology available to conserve water in irrigation areas, should be given an incentive in the pricing policy which will benefit him and, at the same time, let him see that the taxpayer and everyone else in Victoria is behind him in his effort to combat the national problem.

The Murray–Darling basin produces more than 40 per cent of Australia's total food production yet, in that same area, regrettably, the salinity problem is threatening its potential productivity and could well affect the quality of life and the standard of living of all Australians. If the efforts of those people and the sale of their products both domestically and overseas is under threat and cannot continue in the future in the competitive world environment, of course, the nation's wealth will be reduced and we will all suffer.

Furthermore, we will all suffer because the price of food and basic commodities will increase at the same time. Nothing in the government's water pricing policy recognises

the fact that we all have to be in partnership, and that the taxpayer ought to be making an arrangement, through the government, with the people who are producing food. The government must be willing to take on new policies to help combat salinity and soil degradation.

Nothing in the government's policy recognises the potential of having a fair and reasonable price that the farmer is prepared to pay, but which, at the same time, does not punish him. The present water pricing policy punishes farmers and the broad-brush, academic theoretical approach embedded in our community, perpetuates rising costs and charges and produces further inflation.

I shall refer to some problems in my electorate that are indicative of problems occurring throughout the State because of the government's failure to recognise the growing crises that are occurring in many areas.

I have had a good deal of experience with health policy matters. Last week, for the first time in ten years—I have been a member of the board of the Wodonga District Hospital—that hospital had to refuse to admit patients for pain-relieving surgery, even though it is a very efficient public hospital. The Budget allocations approved by the government provide only for the treatment of a certain number of patients per annum. Once that number is exceeded, the hospital does not have authority to pay the wages of staff needed to treat certain classes of patients.

What is happening in Wodonga is typical of what is happening throughout the State. The policies of the State and Federal Labor governments are seriously flawed; Medicare is not working and increasing numbers of people are dropping out of private health insurance.

Seven years ago 70 per cent of Victorians were covered by private health insurance and so were contributing to the general cost of health. Such people were able to shop around for hospital treatment. They were able to pay for admission to hospital either in a private ward in a public hospital or in a private hospital. At present, fewer than 50 per cent of Victorians have private health insurance cover.

Increasing numbers of Victorians can no longer cope with the cost of private health insurance. Those people are being forced to join the long queues for beds in public hospitals because the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and the Premier, John Cain, assured them that, under Medicare, they were entitled to free hospital care in public hospitals whenever they needed it—and all Australians received letters from the Prime Minister to that effect.

The long public hospital waiting queues are a graphic illustration of what nonsense that is. If a person was not covered by private health insurance and went to the Wodonga District Hospital in need of pain-relieving surgery that was not emergency surgery in the opinion of either the treating doctor or the hospital, that person would be likely to be told, "You cannot have that treatment because the necessary funds have not been provided". The board of the Wodonga hospital is finding it difficult to continue to trade because it does not have authority to increase its overdraft, which is in excess of $400 000 and which attracts an interest charge of 20 per cent. The hospital has tried to keep such treatment going but has been forced to cancel it.

For example, a person who might need a biopsy—which, in most cases, is regarded as elective surgery but which might reveal a malignancy—will find that he or she cannot necessarily receive that treatment. The Wodonga hospital is endeavouring to provide such treatment for its patients. But a person who needs elective surgery, who has taken time off from work and has arranged for someone to care for the children—or, in the case of a wife needing surgery, where the husband has taken time off work while she is in hospital—risks those arrangements going awry because, on arriving at

a public hospital he or she is likely to be told, "Sorry, the hospital has cancelled your admission; we cannot treat you any more".

The Minister for Health has been helpful. Recently, together with the Honourable Bill Baxter from another place, I led a deputation from the Wodonga District Hospital to see the Minister. Some money will be provided to enable a partial reinstatement of elective surgery procedures before the end of June; but all the Minister can do is offer bandaid solutions for what is a major problem caused by the flawed policies of Federal and State Labor governments. Those policies are destroying the public health system in Australia. The cost of providing health services has gone through the roof. The government has destroyed the health care system to such an extent that I wonder whether it is possible to restore it.

I shall refer to the rising cost of housing. Public housing waiting lists are at record levels. Every day pensioners and people on low incomes visit my electorate office seeking assistance. Most of them are in desperate straits and their numbers are increasing. Honourable members have had experience of such cases and all of us try to do the best we can to help. But public housing waiting lists are growing and assistance provided through emergency housing is becoming increasingly inadequate.

Mr Micallef—The country must be ruined!

Mr LIEBERMAN—The honourable member for Springvale says by interjection that the country must be ruined. I invite the honourable member to spend a day with me in my electorate; certainly he would be most welcome. I will let him see these problems for himself. If the honourable member claims that the country is not being ruined can he explain to me why the waiting lists for public housing in north-east Victoria are more than double what they were five years ago? Can he tell me why the waiting lists for elective surgery in Victorian public hospitals have increased by almost 300 per cent since 1983?

Mrs Setches interjected.

Mr LIEBERMAN —The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands says by interjection that there are nine public hospital beds for every 1000 people. How tragic it is for a Minister to make such a claim. I also invite her to come to Wodonga.

Mrs Setches interjected.

Mr LIEBERMAN—The Minister by interjecting and mentioning the figure of nine public hospital beds per 1000 people is making a valuable contribution to my speech. I know the Minister visits my electorate in her capacity as the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, but I invite her to attend a meeting of the Wodonga District Hospital board with me. If she did so, she would discover that there are not nine beds per 1000 people in areas where they are badly needed.

The reason public hospital waiting lists are growing is that more people are dropping out of private health insurance because they cannot afford it. They are increasingly seeking admission to public hospitals because, having paid the Medicare levy, they are seeking the public hospital beds that the Prime Minister promised.

Mrs Setches interjected.

Mr LIEBERMAN—I am a former president of a public hospital; I am proud of the care that the Wodonga hospital offers. I am not knocking public hospitals, but the government must realise that those hospitals are in crisis. The Minister should open her eyes. She should support the Minister for Health when Budget funding is being allocated. If the Minister does not do so, she will be adding to the pain, inconvenience and loss of quality of life that many people are suffering.

The Supply (1989–90, No. 1) Bill is a joke. It offers bandaid solutions for problems that are more serious than many people realise; and those problems should be addressed by the government. I say to all the members of the Cain Labor government that they should face up to their responsibilities and not continue to follow slavishly the health care policies they have been following for the past six years because those policies are causing havoc. Both the State and Federal Labor governments must abandon the indexing of taxes and charges to rises in the consumer price index because those policies, too, are causing havoc by embedding inflation in the economy.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—I intended to add my voice to that of the honourable member for Benambra and list the inadequacy of the services provided by the government, but the honourable member has adequately covered that point, other than perhaps mentioning some matters that I might have missed when I was out of the Chamber, such as WorkCare for which the deficit has been calculated at somewhere between $3 billion and $5 billion.

There has been an enormous increase in the State debt during the period of the Labor government with the continuing difficulties of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Victorian Investment Corporation as well as the sale of the assets of the people of Victoria. These are matters that have been constantly called to the attention of the Treasurer and the government, but they continue to ignore them.

I decided to refer to an expert to whom the Treasurer would listen and whose view the Treasurer might find too embarrassing to call incompetent and misinformed. I, therefore, refer to what was said in the debate on the Supply Bill on 28 April 1981 by the then shadow Treasurer, now the Treasurer. They were his last comments in that role. I refer the House to page 7615 of *Hansard* where the then shadow Treasurer is reported as having said that he was extremely disappointed that the then Treasurer had not introduced a statement on the performance of the Victorian economy with the Supply Bill. I examined the Supply Bill now before the House and found that there were no economic statements supplied with it. I would have expected the Treasurer to have provided information on a number of different aspects of the economy.

I refer honourable members to the Saulwick poll in the *Age* of 12 April. The findings were that people were generally gloomy about the economy and that they did not anticipate much improvement over the next six months. Only 17 per cent believed that the economy was in good or very good shape, while 40 per cent thought it was poor or very poor.

Mr Harrowfield—Is that a Victorian poll?

Mrs WADE—Victoria is part of Australia! In a time of high and rising interest rates, Budget Paper No. 2, the macro-economic outlook, has interest rates mentioned only three times, twice on page 24 and once on page 29, all in terms of interest rates falling in 1987–88 and a small comment on page 24 about a tightening of monetary policy in 1988–89. Yet we are in the worst interest rate period in Australia and neither the Budget nor the Supply Bills mention the impact of interest rates on the people of Victoria. Furthermore, they do not mention the cost of the debt burden that has to be met by the people of Victoria.

At page 27 Budget Paper No. 2 shows that the State Budget is based on a forecast of declining inflation, yet we all know that inflation is rising. The *Age* poll shows that 59 per cent of all Australians believe inflation will be higher in the next six months. Once again, no comment was made by the Treasurer and there is nothing in the Supply Bills, in the explanatory memorandum or in the Treasurer's second-reading speech.

I looked back again to April 1981, and I refer the House to page 7616 of *Hansard* where the shadow Treasurer is reported as having said:

> When the Supply Bill is presented before the House there should be a detailed examination of the course of the State Budget in terms of both expenditure and taxation.

This comment is particularly interesting. It is something I have endeavoured to pursue in the course of hearings before the Estimates Committee. There is nothing in the explanatory memorandum that discusses the course of the 1988–89 Budget in connection with the Supply Bill for 1989–90. In fact, the 1988–89 Budget barely gets a mention in the Treasurer's second-reading speech on the Bill and that is only in the title of the Appropriation Bill.

There is one interesting matter that relates both to the economy and the performance of the Budget. Last week the famous economic statement was delivered by the Federal Treasurer. It embodied the much reported wage/tax trade off. The Supply Bill is based on wage rates only to 8 March but the Treasurer said in his second-reading speech:

> . . . wage awards handed down after 8 March 1989 . . . will be met under well established arrangements through the provisions contained in clause 4 (2) of the Bill.

Yet for recurrent purposes, the Treasurer's Advance of $44·6 million is made. His explanation for that is that this was done last year. What he has not told the House is that on page 361 of Budget Paper No. 5 he described the Advance to Treasurer in Program No. 729 in the following terms:

> The main expenditure covered by this program is the cost of wage and salary awards occurring during the financial year.

The Advance to Treasurer for recurrent purposes of $44·6 million is almost exactly pro rata the $149 million of the advance that he received in the Budget last year—around 30 per cent. The Treasurer cannot have it both ways. The appropriation of $149 million for the advance was for wage awards. Why is the Treasurer now asking for Supply at exactly the pro rata rate to that when he said that this not for wage awards because they are going to be handled under clause 4 (2)?

The only conclusion one can draw is that the Treasurer is nervous about the Supply situation because he is asking Parliament to provide an additional $45 million but he is not prepared to disclose for what it is required.

I know that the Treasurer has a bad estimating record. I ask him to inform the House why he needs the additional $45 million? Perhaps the honourable gentleman is expecting additional losses because of the VEDC or the Victorian Investment Corporation.

I was also interested to note that in 1980–81, the then shadow Treasurer took a particular interest in the former Department of Community Welfare Services. He said that the information supplied in the explanatory memorandum for that department listed only salary, general expenses and other services and there was no indication of how these things affected the department's activities. The then shadow Treasurer specifically referred to the particular breakdown and, at page 7617 of *Hansard* of 28 April 1981, he is reported as having said:

> There is no indication of how these administrative expenses are spread throughout the department's activities . . .

The then shadow Treasurer specifically referred to Division 244, called "Regional Services", stating:

> . . . no indication is given of the type of services being provided in a particular region.

I examined the Supply Bill now before the House and found the information provided in regard to Community Services Victoria is no greater than was supplied in the Supply Bill for 1981–82. The Bill includes a section entitled "Community Support" and another one entitled "Family and Children's Services". There is another section entitled "Alternative Accommodation and Care". One might ask which of these divisions was responsible for the mess that baby Kajal was involved in recently!

It is very appropriate that the Treasurer elected in 1981 to look at community services because it is demonstrated in 1989 that this is one of the major disaster areas of this government's mismanagement. Never has there been such a need for performance indicators and accountability by a Minister and his department as there is in the case of Community Services Victoria and the Minister responsible for that department. Yet the Treasurer, who demanded all this information in 1981, has done nothing to improve the information provided in the Supply Bill in 1989.

Back in 1981 the Treasurer got out his calculator and did pages of percentages on various aspects of the Supply Bill. I have not had time to do that but I looked at the transport figures which one would expect to be fairly straightforward. I looked at the recurrent expenditure which is found on page 25 of the explanatory memorandum. One can compare the recurrent Supply requests for transport with the Budget appropriation for 1988–89 for transport. One can look back to the Appropriation Bill item by item and find that the Treasurer says that transport, as a percentage of the 1988–89 Budget, is 34·6 per cent. That does not seem to be all that far out for four months of the year, but when one looks at the detail one finds that Program No. 696, ports management, is 9 per cent. Country, provincial and interstate corporate services are 19 per cent. Corporate services of the Road Construction Authority are 52·5 per cent. The Minister's head office is 32 per cent, and urban arterial roads management is 29·8 per cent. Leaving out courts at 9 per cent, the other programs vary from 29·8 per cent from Program No. 689 to 52·5 per cent for Program No. 688. That is a phenomenal variation and there is absolutely no explanation for that in the explanatory memorandum or in the second-reading speech. All we are told is that it is based on estimated cash flows.

I believe the Supply Bill is an indictment of the Treasurer's hypocrisy in relation to his claims for modern financial management techniques. All his fine words in 1981 deliver nothing of any substance in the current Supply documentation before Parliament. None of his output measures are there and we all know why that is. He does not want to publish output figures for the huge waiting lists in hospitals, the huge delays in courts, the dirty and unreliable public transport, a road system that is in chaos, for children leaving the State education system in droves and going into the private system, and the waiting lists in the housing area. It is no wonder the government, despite the Treasurer's fine words in 1981, is not prepared to focus on outputs today and is still producing the input based Supply Bill that the Treasurer so roundly criticised a few years ago.

There is no excuse for this Treasurer saying he has not had time. This will be his seventh Budget and a lot of governments could have done a lot more in that time. The Treasurer has a great habit of standing up and describing other people as incompetent and uninformed. I suggest to honourable members that never has a Treasurer been so roundly condemned by his own words and by the mess in which he has made of the Victorian financial situation.

We can argue all day about paper and what should be written on it and what is not written on it. That is not the real problem in this State. The real problem is the terrible substance behind all this paper warfare, the VEDC losses, the Victorian Investment Corporation losses, the NSCA debacle, and the huge debt the people of Victoria must carry which is reflected in the huge taxes people have to pay.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I welcome the opportunity of joining in this brief Supply debate tonight and of mentioning a few areas of concern we have in the rural electorates. Not much is heard on that subject in this place. Some 80 members of Parliament are elected and only occasionally is a little heard about country areas. I am delighted that the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands is in the Chamber tonight. I am not going to mention much about conservation, forests and lands because there will be a long debate on that subject later in the House.

It would be interesting to pay a little attention to the actual lack of funds and lack of management of Crown lands throughout the northern areas of Victoria. It would be the joke of the year if the Public Lands and Forests Division even considered handling a huge increase in the area of land in national parks. If we do not see a huge increase in the Minister's Budget, which is coming down in August or September, we know full well that the government is not interested in the management of land and that it is paying only lip service. It is looking after the feelings or the thoughts of the people of Melbourne.

We are not all that well versed in what the government is trying to do with the management of land throughout Victoria. However, tonight we might refer to the water industry. It is a pity the Minister for Water Resources is not in the Chamber but I am sure he will be listening. I hope he may join in the debate because honourable members might remember that this week we checked out the Minister for Water Resources on a couple of points. One was that for the past two years the previous Minister for Water Resources had been claiming that there is $4000 million worth of assets tied up in the rural water industry throughout Victoria.

There is a lot of value in assets, of course, with the corrupt pricing mechanism in place at the moment. That figure becomes important because of the flawed rate of return and the pricing mechanism being imposed throughout many areas of government enterprise. However, when the Minister was asked where the $4000 million of assets went, considering that since January in his own statement there has been only $2600 million of assets, he told us not to worry and that the figure itself is $2800 million and he said something about my going around the little country towns mouthing off about his inadequacies as a Minister. That is probably reasonably true.

The problem the Minister has in rural Victoria is that he has literally lost country Victoria's confidence in his administration of the portfolio. He visited Kerang this year for the annual meeting of the Rural Water Commission and did everything he possibly could to upset the 150-odd water users throughout Victoria who were at the meeting. He did it extremely well. In a matter of 5 minutes, he had everyone up in arms. Not one person supported the Minister's arguments on the pricing of water in rural Victoria. He has developed a similar attitude to the country as the Minister for Local Government adopted some years ago, with the master–servant approach.

I suggest that the Minister for Water Resources should tone down a little and try to win back the confidence of the water users. Although the National Party may use his inadequacies in the administration of his portfolio against him, the fact is that the water portfolio is extremely important to people throughout country Victoria.

Since January this year, the Minister has also been making the statement that 65 per cent of the real cost of water is being picked up by people in the metropolitan area. He has quoted that figure time and again. Yet, when he was asked this week how such a subsidy was paid and where the appropriation was that enabled that subsidy to be effected, he failed to give an adequate explanation. He did not have the faintest idea. The Minister does not have the faintest idea about this because no account and no cheque is sent for the so-called funny money to which he refers.

Mr Sandon—Are you talking about the rural subsidy?

Mr STEGGALL—No; it is called a floored pricing policy. I shall explain the policy for water pricing in rural Victoria; it is well and truly floored. It is about time some sense returned to the debate in respect of the Minister and his department.

The Minister has been speaking about the fact that only 35 per cent of the real cost of water—that is, his interpretation of the real cost—is being picked up by the water industry. That is where one notes the strange accounting procedures being put in place by the department. The Minister is saying that the price of water in rural Victoria needs to be increased to between three and four times the current rate.

Mr Sandon—Do you agree with that?

Mr STEGGALL—No, I do not agree with that, I am sure the honourable member for Carrum does not agree with it either, because he and the constituents he represents have one thing in common—they can afford to enjoy three meals a day. Australia is a lucky country; not everyone can afford that. Yet, when one looks at the honourable member of Carrum, one may believe that he has four or four and a half meals a day!

Melbourne should be extremely pleased that it has one of the best and most adequate supplies of food in the world. The quality, freshness, and availability of food for the people in Melbourne, as well as the prices, are outstanding. The cheapest food supplies in the world, particularly in the Western World, are here in Melbourne. One of the reasons why that is the case is that we have a fine irrigation industry in northern Victoria, and the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District—or the GMID, as we like to call it—is one of the best irrigation areas in the world.

The government should start to realise that the irrigation industry plays a vital role in Victoria's economy every day and in the supply of fresh fruit, vegetables and foodstuffs to the people of Melbourne. The Minister for Water Resources and members on the government benches should consider what they are doing to the water industry.

The statement of the Minister on 25 January this year was ridiculous. Everything was proceeding quite well in the irrigation industry until the Minister—or his department, which is more likely—decided that he had better have a free kick at a few political heads around Parliament. He decided to stir up all the water users in the irrigation areas and the stock and domestic areas. The latter covers the Wimmera-Mallee and quite a few other areas of Victoria that have been opened up and developed over the past 100 years since the 1880s to supply an enormous volume of exports, mainly through the wool and wheat or grain industries.

The pricing policies that are put in place for the irrigation areas are exactly the same as those for the stock and domestic markets. The Minister has upset the whole gamut of irrigators throughout Victoria. He cannot explain what he is doing, why he is doing it, or where he wants to go. One day the Minister and the government will have to enunciate the target pricing mechanism in Victoria. The Minister does not have the faintest idea. I suggest he should examine what his real future water pricing aims should be.

Does he want the rate to be four times the current rate? Would he like it to be twice the current rate? Is he aiming, as some of his departmental officers are saying, at introducing an increase of approximately 50 per cent? If the Minister is considering a 50 per cent increase in the price of water I suggest he should sit down with the Victorian Farmers Federation and water users and engage—I am sure the honourable member for Carrum would very much appreciate this—in discussions and consultations with the industry.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr STEGGALL—The Minister has taken the advisory boards throughout Victoria and thrown them out the door. They now have no value in terms of playing a positive role in the water industry in this State. That is a pity because those advisory boards created an enormous amount of goodwill and possessed much knowledge and skill.

The Minister has also argued time and again that the sole beneficiaries of the irrigation and stock and domestic services are the farmers. Everyone in this building knows that the beneficiaries from the irrigation and stock and domestic services throughout Victoria are, in fact, the people of Victoria. However, the government still argues the point that the sole beneficiaries are the farmers and that they should bear all the costs, even though the prices for food are now screwed down to such a level that the economies of farming throughout Victoria, particularly the economies of the family farm, are in deep trouble.

A restructuring process is currently going on throughout country Victoria where the family farm is under pressure. The pricing mechanisms for our foodstuffs, as a result of the government's policy of trying to reduce the price to the lowest possible, has put the cost price squeeze into the irrigation areas to the extent that an enormous amount of hardship is being experienced on family farms. The restructuring in those areas is towards either the corporate farm or the large family farm.

The Minister for Water Resources refers constantly to benefits being directed to farmers, but that does not bear scrutiny. When one considers the discussion that took place at a meeting of the Estimates Committee regarding the beneficiaries of the piping of the Wimmera stock and domestic water system, one is reminded of who are the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of that major engineering feat early in this century will be new industries—the new mining and industrial operations in the Wimmera area. It is as well that they are to be the beneficiaries. However, honourable members must bear in mind that the cost of the piping and of saving water in the area does not sit solely on the shoulders of farming families.

As this is the last evening for the debate on the Supply Bills and the time is short, I shall bring my comments to a close. The issue is more important than the Minister for Water Resources indicated. The government in general and the Premier in particular should look closely at what is happening in the water industry. The Minister and his department are directing the water users and the government into conflict which will need intervention by the Premier. There will be a need for rational discussion and participation between the water users and the Department of Water Resources and the government.

The water industry throughout Victoria has no confidence in the Minister for Water Resources. A good debate and discussion between the water users of Victoria and the government is desperately needed so that the subject is brought back to a proper level.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte)—It is easy to see that the government has thrown its much vaunted previous economic management reputation out tonight, when one surveys the government benches. Honourable members are dealing with the most important legislation introduced by the government. Whom do we have before us? The Minister for Sport and Recreation, and one of my colleagues from Nunawading. The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands left the Chamber when she saw I was about to speak; she should hang her head in shame in the face of the problems being experienced in the eastern corridor in particular and in the metropolitan area in general.

I refer to those problems. Urban growth in the eastern corridor is of massive proportions, as the honourable member for Mitcham would be well aware. Are there services to back up the growth rate? Are there public transport bus services in the new estates? There are not!

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Vaughan)—Order! Honourable members on the government side seem to be interjecting from out of their places.

Mr HONEYWOOD—For the benefit of one of the sole representatives of the government side who is here tonight and is a colleague from Nunawading, I point out that the government promised to provide a new telebus network to the Croydon Hills area, which is rapidly expanding. It is close to the electorate of the honourable member for Mitcham. The promise was made hastily in mid-September—surprise; surprise!—last year.

After six months, what do we have? Do we have any tenders going out for the bus service? No! Instead, mothers of families who cannot afford to provide a second car and who need to travel around the electorate to do their shopping and attend to other matters, are not being provided with an adequate bus service. They have to travel some distance because my predecessor refused an application to establish a shopping centre in the area on environmental grounds. He went to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and said that the shopping centre would be a terrible thing for the area.

In fact, the people in the area voted in a new member of Parliament who received a large majority of the votes. It is testimony to what has not been provided by the Labor government to the people of my electorate.

The electorate suffers from a lack of basic services for young families who have been thrust out there because of the sprawl that is Melbourne. The electorate of Warrandyte has one of the highest birth rates in the State.

Mr Sandon interjected.

Mr HONEYWOOD—The honourable member for Carrum should know that children do exist. Over the past few weeks the Minister for Community Services has certainly shown that children are not on the agenda of the government.

In this context, honourable members should examine the one and only local hospital in my electorate—the Maroondah Hospital. The electorate has one of the highest birth rates in the State, and what has the government done? It intends to increase the number of psychiatric beds, but there is not a single maternity bed in the local hospital. My wife had to go to the Mercy Maternity Hospital to have our child.

Mr Leigh interjected.

Mr HONEYWOOD—As the honourable member for Malvern interjects, all expectant mothers in the electorate of Warrandyte have to go to Box Hill, where there is a waiting list a mile long, or to the city hospitals. Expectant mothers cannot attend a prenatal class without travelling miles. Where are the services for these young families?

If honourable members consider facilities for the elderly, what do they see? Since October of last year many elderly people have come into my electorate office and waved sections of newspapers which indicate that the government will provide free security systems so that other people will know when they are in need or have been burgled. Six months after the promise was made, one jingle bell has been provided to one token elderly person!

In addition, the government made a promise in a small booklet, produced at great cost, during the last election campaign—surprise; surprise! The Victorian Government Printing Office and private enterprise printers do well from the booklets and other publications of the government.

The booklet to which I refer was directed at the over 60s. One of the promises it contained related to a private hospital rebate of $150. After six months, no time frame for the establishment of the payment of that rebate has been introduced. I have had a number of people in my electorate office who have waved the booklet and asked what the government was doing about the promise. It does not exist! I have written to the Minister for Health and she has not replied.

The honourable member for Mitcham is a very poor lieutenant to the Minister for Labour. The Minister for Labour has not given any indication that the government will establish a real package for youth in my electorate.

With regard to the honourable member for Mitcham's point, he is responsible as the loyal lieutenant to the Minister for Labour, in not coming forward with a viable youth package for the children of the State. Surprise, surprise! The seat of Ringwood is one of only four seats in the State to receive a massive injection of funds for youth facilities—$90 000. All the children in my electorate get is a privately funded skating rink. The government takes, rather than gives to electors in the electorate of Warrandyte. It takes a record level in stamp duty receipts. If it were not for that record level in stamp duty receipts, the Budget would have blown out threefold compared with its current twofold blow-out. The government takes $7000 in stamp duty from the average home in my electorate.

Where is the incentive for the young couple who want to move to Warrandyte and put a roof over their heads? There is none; they are trapped in the rent cycle.

What else does the government take? The average person in the street in my electorate would not be aware of the public authority dividend, the hidden taxation of the government. Would the average voter be aware that $86 of his yearly water rates go not to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works but straight into consolidated revenue? The same applies to the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. They are providing massive injections of funds in hidden taxation which the average Mr and Mrs Victoria would not know about because the government has managed and orchestrated hidden taxation.

My predecessor put pressure on a community group to donate land to the government. The government is so desperate to collect revenue that it has to put pressure on the frail old people, the trustees of a community trust, to donate land for public housing. The background of this issue indicated how devious the government is.

In the 1920s a quarry in my electorate collapsed and two workers died. The community of Warrandyte rallied around the deceased widows and families and donated money through a community appeal. A trust was formed and a 1-acre allotment of land was purchased in a residential street in Warrandyte. Housing materials were purchased and two cottages were erected on the land for the benefit of those two widows and their families and a community trust was established to provide for those widows and families. What do we have today? When the families die and the assets of that trust are effectively wound up, the former honourable member for Warrandyte demanded that the trustees donate that land, lock, stock and barrel, to the government to assist with the public housing waiting list problem.

A good Liberal member of Parliament would advise the electorate of Warrandyte and the trustees of that trust that they should sell that land and establish a new trust and that the $250 000 gained from the sale of that land should go into a new community trust. The interest from that of $25 000 a year should be put back into the community that donated that money in the first place to top up the discrepancy between the needs of the community and the government funding allocated to community groups and

projects such as youth groups, in the township of Warrandyte. That trust is a means of self-help for the community. That is what liberalism stands for: self-help, the community banding together and helping each other rather than being required to provide hidden taxation in the form of public authority dividend taxes and to provide the land for public housing in Victoria.

The Supply Bill takes rather than gives: it certainly does not give to the electorate that I represent.

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney)—I am pleased to participate in the debate on the Supply Bills and to express some of the concerns about the effect these Bills will have on the people of country Victoria, those who generate the bulk of the wealth of this State, the people who simply want a fair go, the people who are constantly battling to maintain, let alone improve, their basic facilities.

I shall instance some of the issues that have militated against country people in my electorate. Tongala and Rochester have lost their Rural Water Commission offices. The Kyabram community has had to fight to maintain State Electricity Commission offices. Echuca is battling to maintain the communications base of its ambulance service. Throughout the Rodney electorate there is a need for municipalities to fight for adequate road funding and for equality of educational and employment opportunities.

Why? The government stands condemned for its mismanagement of the economy, and I need only refer to the Victorian Economic Development Corporation with losses of $111 million; the Victorian Investment Corporation with losses of $20 million; the Victorian public transport system which loses $3 million a day, $1000 million a year; WorkCare which has contingent liabilities of approximately $3 billion—it is estimated that the figure will reach $4 billion by the year 1989–90; and foreign exchange losses are estimated at $700 million.

Since the Cain government has been in office, Victoria's public debt has doubled from $11 billion to $22 billion. To put that into perspective, the average person does not realise that it means a debt of $5500 for every man, woman and child living in this State. Victoria has the highest per capita debt of any Australian State.

What is the government doing to repay the debt? It has sold off our trains, and it is selling off Crown land and school houses, in many cases without consulting the school population and the school councils concerned, and I have such a case in my electorate. The government is selling off railway land, and the consequence of these measures is that Victoria has the highest-taxing government in Australia—more than $1000 a year for every man, woman and child. One has only to compare that with the lowest-taxing State of Queensland where the figure is $500 for every man, woman and child. Queensland is, of course, governed by a National Party government.

WorkCare has been mentioned several times in the debate and the performance of WorkCare is nothing short of disgraceful.

Not only has WorkCare not delivered the goods, but also it has not been able to encourage injured employees to return to work any sooner. In fact, it has taken much longer than under the previous system. WorkCare is being ripped-off, left, right and centre. Premiums have skyrocketed. Unfunded liabilities are now out of hand. The debt run up by WorkCare makes the Victorian Economic Development Corporation's losses of $111 million look like pocket money. WorkCare's disastrous debt is 50 times larger than the VEDC losses.

I do not need to remind the House that WorkCare was introduced when the government controlled the numbers in both Houses of Parliament. At that time it did not take any notice of what the opposition parties warned about its effects.

I turn briefly to agriculture because that is an important industry to the Rodney electorate and to Victoria. Agriculture is our only renewable resource. It has contributed immensely to the wealth of Australia. The wool industry is responsible for bailing Australia out of its balance of payments problems. Again, I do not need to remind the House that agriculture contributes enormously to the prosperity of Victoria. It generates 40 per cent of Victoria's export income. It is a critical industry to the prosperity of the Rodney electorate.

My constituents are greatly concerned about the steep increase in water charges that the honourable member for Swan Hill documented so well in his speech to the House this evening. The policy of consumer price index plus 2 per cent is totally unreasonable when the same principle is not applied to other government services such as the users of the metropolitan transport system.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr Vaughan)—Order! I ask the conference occurring on the Opposition front bench to take place outside the Chamber.

Mr MAUGHAN—People in the Rodney electorate wonder why the farming community is singled out to pay the total cost of services delivered to them. They do not understand why the principle of 100 per cent recovery is not applied to metropolitan consumers. Country people using the rail system to transport their grain pay close to 100 per cent of the cost of providing that service. Metropolitan commuters using the rail system pay only 35 per cent of the cost of that system. It appears to country people that this is totally inequitable.

However, I do not want to give honourable members the impression that the Supply Bills are all bad news for country people. I commend the government on its initiative in dealing with the salinity issue. Salinity is not just a problem for farmers. It creates implications for the whole of the State. The future of this generation and future generations is in jeopardy if action is not taken now to deal with the problem. I commend the government for acknowledging that fact and for commencing to deal with the problem of salinity. The government should also be commended on the amount of money it has allocated to agricultural research.

I turn now to the much vaunted social justice policy. The government has talked a lot about this policy, but country people do not see much evidence of it. Rural Victorians are being further disadvantaged as time goes on. Facilities in the country are being progressively removed. I have already referred to the inequity by comparing 100 per cent cost recovery in the country with what happens in the metropolitan area.

I shall go further and refer the House to one town in the Rodney electorate that pays $126 a year for water to fill its swimming pool. This community service is in a small town. The community has been notified that because of a change in policy of the Rural Water Commission it must now find an additional $700 a year. That is a huge amount of money for a small community to find when it is already providing an excellent service in teaching children how to swim and in providing recreational facilities and so on.

Fuel is another sore point in country Victoria. Rural Victorians are constantly paying 10 cents to 12 cents a litre more than the prices usually prevailing in Melbourne. Given the importance of fuel to people in country areas, this is totally inequitable.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! Several minutes ago I asked that the conference occurring on the Opposition front bench should take place outside the Chamber. I note that the conference has continued, so I again ask those honourable members to show due courtesy to the honourable member for Rodney and other members of the House.

Mr MAUGHAN—Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Public transport services in country areas, and certainly in the Rodney electorate, are being reduced. Railway lines are being discontinued, again to the disadvantage of country people. I refer the House to what occurred recently in the township of Girgarre. In many ways Girgarre is a disadvantaged community. It has no public transport facilities and because of its isolation it requires the services of a community car to transport the residents of Girgarre to medical appointments, to visit hospitals, and to undertake other business and social activities that most honourable members take for granted. Since 1982 a car has been provided by the community for those purposes. The car is staffed by volunteers, has been run at a modest cost, and has provided a valuable service to the people of Girgarre. Under the transport assistance scheme the community applied for a grant to replace the car. Word was received only yesterday that its application has been refused. Some 200 projects were funded under this scheme, and I cannot think of one that would have been as worthy as that service provided in Girgarre. It is ridiculous that its application has been refused. The National Party does not seek any special handouts. All it wants is a fair deal for country people.

Mr Simmonds—Just the usual ones.

Mr MAUGHAN—Yes, just the usual ones, and a fair deal. The National Party wants country people to have a fair deal in education, roads and public transport.

I refer briefly to the allocation of funding for the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. Over the years the department has done an excellent job in keeping noxious weeds under control. The farming community is concerned that the department no longer has adequate funds to provide sprays for keeping noxious weeds under control. All the good work that has been done for fifteen or twenty years is now in jeopardy because of a paucity of funds. The manpower is there, the equipment is there, everything except the money to provide funds for sprays.

Decentralisation initiatives are another aspect lacking in the Supply Bills. Country Victoria desperately requires some decentralisation initiatives to encourage industry to move to country areas to create employment.

The honourable member for Benambra spoke eloquently about the paucity of public housing in the electorate that he represents. I endorse his remarks because exactly the same position prevails in the Rodney electorate. The waiting list for public housing has increased since the government has been in power. The City of Echuca now has a waiting list of 230 families for public housing. It takes up to three years to be provided with Ministry of Housing and Construction accommodation.

The Supply Bills do little to assist people living outside the metropolitan area. They do nothing to redress the inequities existing between people living in country Victoria and those living in Melbourne.

They do absolutely nothing to address the problems country Victoria experiences in providing adequate roads, hospitals and medical facilities; they do nothing about meeting the social and recreational needs that metropolitan people take for granted.

The government has spoken long and loud about the integration program for handicapped children, and I commend the government for the scheme itself. However, in the electorate I represent, the expectations of people have been built up, but the funding has not been allocated to provide for their needs. I have seen case after case where handicapped children have been provided with aides only to find that the funding is then reduced and the time given to integrate children into the school system is totally inadequate.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—I wish to refer to Opposition concerns about health matters. Over the past six and a half years, the Opposition has spread a clear message about the lack of health services in this State. A previous Minister for Health, the present Minister for Planning and Environment, inherited what he described as one of the best health systems in the country, if not the world.

Mr Stockdale—Same old speech!

Mr WEIDEMAN—At least mine will not last three and a half hours! I shall refer to waiting lists. The Premier and the Minister for Health and his lackeys do not care about the hospital waiting lists. When the Labor Party took over the health system in this State in 1982, 8000 people were on the waiting lists. As a result of the nurses strike some two years ago, the waiting lists increased to 30 000. The government is no longer game to give the figures, and members of the government are not game to raise the issue. The Opposition knows that approximately 25 000 people in Victoria are waiting for elective surgery, and that is a shameful situation.

More than 1000 people are waiting for elective surgery at Frankston Hospital. During the 1985 and 1988 State election campaigns, I raised that issue locally, and the then Minister for Health attacked me on both occasions saying that it was untrue. However, it is a fact. During the last State election campaign, the Premier and the then Minister for Health, the present Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, visited Frankston Hospital to announce a new surgical wing comprising 100 beds. However, they did not say that, a week later, 87 beds were closed. The net gain was approximately 25 beds. Before the opening of the new wing, the hospital had 205 beds. With an additional 100 beds, it should have had 305.

Dr Wells—How many has it got?

Mr WEIDEMAN—It has 228. As a good local member, I wrote to the Minister for Health pointing out the problems. I received a letter informing me that, as from 15 April this year, the hospital had 305 beds. I knew that was untrue, so I wrote to the hospital, which told me that the Minister had been misinformed. The hospital had informed the Minister that approximately 305 beds were available. I am not sure who is paying, but I hope no extra money is allocated for the beds that are not in use. I also inquired about the proposed $14 million psychiatric ward, and that is to go ahead.

I shall now refer to private health schemes. In 1983 in Victoria more than 70 per cent of the population paid subscriptions to private health schemes, which means approximately 2·849 million people. In 1986 that figure had dropped to 55 per cent, but that is not the end of it. In 1988 only 50·4 per cent of the population contributed to private health schemes. The difference in money terms between the amount contributed in 1983 and that contributed in 1988 is $600 million.

The Opposition's health policy has been well accepted throughout the State. Critics in the medical field will agree that in private hospitals more than 50 per cent of the available space, or 2000 beds, are not being used, and that is shameful. The $600 million not being contributed to private health schemes should be allocated to private hospitals.

The Opposition's health policy is designed to help families rejoin private health schemes. In government, the Liberal Party will give $180 a year to each family unit and $90 to single persons to assist them to join health schemes. In the case of those already in private health schemes, a reduction of $90 a year for a family or $50 a year for a single person will be offered. If the current contribution rate of 50·4 per cent of the population were increased to 55 or 60 per cent, the scheme would pay for itself.

I recommend that the Treasurer and the Minister for Health consider the Opposition's policy; perhaps the government could use it because it certainly needs the money. The government has lost enormous amounts of money. WorkCare has unfunded liabilities of $2·5 billion dollars and the government has lost money through the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division). I may be able to refer to that later in my remarks.

I shall now refer to the promises made by the Labor Party with reference to health services for the people in the electorate I represent. The honourable member for Mornington will remember the promises regarding the redevelopment of the Mount Eliza Centre. The feasibility study of sites, designs and preliminary costings was to be completed in October last year with the overall plan to be approved by the end of October. The locals are still waiting. That promise was reported in the *Southern Peninsula Gazette* of 5 October 1988, with the information being provided by a letter from the then Minister for Health.

A promise was made for the provision of a 30-bed nursing home in Frankston at a cost of $2·1 million. That promise was made in a press release on 8 September last year. A 30-bed nursing home was to be established in Rosebud at a cost of $2·1 million, and the design work was to start after the election. Another $2·1 million was to be spent on a 30-bed nursing home in Mornington.

The government promised to establish a 30-bed rehabilitation unit in Rosebud. No costing was given, and I understand that land has been set aside in Frankston but the relevant committees will not give approval. I hope these projects will be funded, because the government promised them to the electors. The government promised some $40 million of works in the electorate I represent.

Last week the Minister for Police and Emergency Services issued a list of police stations that will receive capital investment for the building of new stations. I could not even find the name of Frankston in one paper. I could see the name of Mornington and other surrounding suburbs. Another paper did have the name Frankston in it.

In 1982 the then shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services, later the Speaker in the first Cain government, the Honourable C. T. Edmunds, said that a Cain government would build a police station in Frankston. The Cain government was elected in 1982 but nothing happened until 1985. The then Minister for Police and Emergency Services, now the honourable member for Oakleigh, promised that a police station would be built in Frankston. During the last election campaign a demonstration was held outside the courthouse and the police station purporting to demonstrate that a new police station would be built.

I was surprised to read in a news release from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services that a new police station would not be built for at least five years. Something else will occur before the government gets around to building a police station in Frankston.

I noted that the honourable member for Carrum interjected earlier and I place at his doorstep the problems associated with the ambulance service on the peninsula. Not one person on the Mornington Peninsula has not been affected by the lack of service and morale in the ambulance service. The local media had a front page story explaining the problems with the ambulance service.

I have been in the House for some time but I am amazed at the antics of the Minister for Transport. In answering a question recently the Minister raised the issue of development centres throughout Victoria and I imagine that he believes those centres could be built in Frankston, Box Hill and Ringwood. The Minister said he would develop railway land. What a wonderful idea!

I remind the House that a former Minister for Transport established a committee that comprised three Labor members—the former honourable member for Carrum, the Honourable Ian Cathie, and two members of the Upper House—members of the local Chamber of Commerce and railway officials for the purpose of preparing plans for the development of railway sites and proposed a multi-million dollar development. What happened? The Minister for Transport said that the land could not be developed and $1·4 million worth of plans went down the drain.

The Minister for Transport, the clown who lives in Ivanhoe, says that he will introduce new developments. The previous Minister referred to a modal interchange and said that taxis and buses would interconnect. We have come full circle. When the Minister raised his eyes skywards I thought he was seeking help from above, but I now understand that he is looking at the members of the Press Gallery.

An Honourable Member—He is a poser.

Mr WEIDEMAN—That may be so. It is incredible to see the Minister in action. I hope the Minister comes to Frankston—he may raise his eyes skywards—and completes the railway development. Approximately $1 million was spent on developing the Frankston railway station but unfortunately the design of the station was more appropriate to the 1920s than 1988. Commuters were better off with the portable toilets. Not one person is happy with the Frankston station development.

I raise an issue regarding the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division) and the way Ministers of the Crown were not honest enough to speak of their involvement in that organisation. The Premier said that Bill Suhr had sent him a letter but that he receives 200 letters a day, and that Bill Suhr raised the National Safety Council of Australia issue only in relation to his own business.

I want to read to the House what Bill Suhr wanted to put to the Premier in relation to the National Safety Council of Australia:

(1) Do you receive $54 000 annually as a government grant?

(2) Do you receive considerable tax concessions?

(3) Do you and have you received gifts of equipment from anywhere?

(4) Have you union affiliations and do you receive union money?

(5) How much have you received from CFA in the last five years and exactly how many hours flying has been done for this amount?

(6) A similar answer to (5) for other semi-government departments and large companies?

(7) Have you done charter flying?

(8) If you fly at cost where did you get $20 million of equipment in five years?

The summary to his question states:

It seems that the NSCA is a private company using heaps of government assistance using safety as a catchcry, but will literally take any flying it can lay its hands on. Latrobe Valley is a most expensive and lavish base and provides an excellent public relations for visitors.

It is a para-military type organisation including tapes on its phones and radios and is very much a closed camp to outsiders. This company has gained access to mega-bucks, which I suspect is out of all our pockets at a time when government and health departments and every citizen is on a desperate saving campaign to solve our economic problems.

Ministers who were approached in 1985 and 1986 were aware of the problems but they did not take any action.

I have several letters that I obtained under freedom of information legislation and letters I sent to the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands regarding the

National Safety Council of Australia helicopter, but I have never had a reply to my letters.

It is nonsense for the Premier and Ministers to say that nothing took place. I have a note from Bill Suhr that says, "With compliments from the Minister for Health. The correspondence was left behind after conversation with Mr Bill Suhr". I rest my case.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—The Supply (1989–90, No 1) Bill is an important Bill that concerns all Victorians and it is disappointing to see how few members of the government are present in the Chamber. It illustrates how hypocritical members of the Cain government are when they make loud protestations about the sanctity of the Supply Bill.

An Honourable Member—Boring!

Mr TANNER—The honourable member may say that it is boring but the reality is that the community is sick of the cant and hypocrisy that emanates from the Cain government, especially in relation to the Supply Bills.

Honourable members would recall the Premier's pathetic contribution to the debate a few days ago when he spoke for 12 minutes about his paranoid meanderings regarding the sanctity of the Supply Bills. It is disappointing to see how prepared honourable members opposite are to defend the sanctity of the Bills.

I have a proposal to put to the few members of the Cain Labor government who bother to stir themselves and sit in the Chamber on one of the few days that the House meets. This proposal would greatly improve the standard of living, the security and welfare of the people of Victoria. It relates to law and order and the security of the homes of the people of Victoria. Honourable members opposite ought to be aware that since 1982 there has been an increase of 76 per cent in the rate of serious crimes in this community. At the same time there has been an increase in the population of only 7 per cent. Thousands of Victorians have stampeded out of the State, heading for other States, to escape from the Cain government. Victoria has experienced a 7 per cent increase in population and a 76 per cent increase in serious crime since the Cain government's reign began in 1982. It is a pathetic situation and one that the government ought to be tackling.

Tonight I make a proposal which would involve no expenditure of funds: give the Victoria Police Force the powers it needs to enable it to tackle crime in our community. The first power needed is one so basic that it is astounding the police do not have it, namely, to enable them to ask for the name and address of someone they believe has committed a crime or who they suspect may be considering committing a crime.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Caulfield is able to make his contribution without the assistance of the honourable member for Mornington and others. I suggest to the honourable member for Whittlesea that he refrain from further interjection and that he should not provoke honourable members on the other side of the House.

Mr TANNER—Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker.

Members of this Parliament should be aware that last year the Cain government thought it important enough to pass legislation that would enable an authorised employee of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands to demand the name of a person he suspected had picked wildflowers. The Victoria Police Force is denied that right. It is a power that is considered throughout the world to be one that police should have as of right, but the Victorian government will not provide it.

Mr Norris interjected.

Mr TANNER—I inform the honourable member for Dandenong, that prior to 1982, Victoria did not have a 76 per cent increase in the rate of serious crime. The situation is now out of control and the community is demanding that the police have that right to enable them to protect members of the community. It is a power that police in other States and other countries already possess, and it is a basic power that is required in Victoria if there is to be any chance of stemming the crime rate.

Another matter concerning the Victoria Police Force and which would require financial expenditure concerns an increase in the number of police. In 1985 the former Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr Miller, said that 11 000 police were required throughout Victoria. Honourable members will understand why that vast increase in the rate of crime has occurred because Victoria now has only approximately 9000 police: that number has been decreasing during the past year. It is a pathetic situation, and one that the Cain government and its members should be addressing immediately.

Everything that has been done by the government in that regard has failed. The major feature of its activity has been its inactivity, and that accounts for the vast increase in the crime rate in recent years.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TANNER—Instead of interjecting, honourable members on the government side should throw their minds back to a statement made a number of years ago by Mr Miller when he was Chief Commissioner of Police in relation to what is occurring in our community and the increase in the crime rate. At the time he recalled an old Chinese proverb which stated that where there are too many soldiers there can be no peace; where there are too many police there can be no liberty; where there are too many lawyers there can be no justice.

Mr Norris—What did he mean?

Mr TANNER—The corollary is also true: where there are too few soldiers there will be no peace; where there are too few police there will be no liberty; where there are too few lawyers there will be no justice. The situation in Victoria has been caused because of too few police. The old Chinese proverb referred to by Mr Miller meant that if one has too many members, such as too many soldiers, they have to find a role for themselves in the community. If there are too many lawyers they have to find laws for themselves, and, therefore, there is litigation for the sake of litigation. If there are too many police, they have to find a role for themselves, and there will be intrusions into the roles of those in the community.

There are too few police in our community; the corollary referred to by Mr Miller applies to the sad situation in the community. The Victoria Police Force needs not only the basic powers such as the ability to request the name and address of someone they suspect has committed a crime or who may be in the process of committing a crime but also they need increased numbers. There can be no stemming of the increasing crime rate until the government is prepared to address the problem. The Cain government and its members cannot run away from the problem; it can produce statistics and do all the shouting and interjecting it likes, but the crime rate is increasing. If the government is serious about managing Victoria responsibly it has to address the matter. The Cain government is a bad manager.

As the honourable member for Frankston South stated earlier, the public health situation in Victoria since the Cain government came to power is such that the waiting lists for operations in public hospitals have tripled—from 8000 to more than 25 000. If one examines the number of people on the waiting lists for Ministry of Housing and

Construction accommodation since the Cain government came to office, one sees that the number has increased from 14 000 to more than 33 000.

What about WorkCare? It has an unfunded liability, if one likes to use the lawyers' term, of $2·1 billion. The Opposition suspects that the Cain government is hiding from the public and Parliament a report that the unfunded liability has risen to $3·5 billion, and that projections show that in two years time, unless the Cain government and its members address this problem, its bad management of the WorkCare scheme and of Victoria in general will lead to an unfunded debt for that scheme of $5 billion.

Bad management is the hallmark of the Cain government. It has bad management in the health, public housing, financial management and public security areas.

Mr E. R. Smith—Bad management in everything.

Mr TANNER—Yes, in everything.

Mr Spyker interjected.

Mr TANNER—What a pathetic performance by the Cain government! What about its performance in relation to community services?

The SPEAKER—Order! There are far too many interjections. I ask the Minister for Community Services to refrain from commenting, even if he does find certain comments provocative.

Mr TANNER—Victoria has bad management. If one looks at the profit and loss situation of State public trading enterprises, as found in statistics of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one discovers that Victoria has by far the worst loss ratio of any State in Australia.

Mr Micallef interjected.

Mr TANNER—For the information of the honourable member for Springvale, in 1988–89 Queensland made a profit from its State public trading enterprises of $328 million, while Tasmania made a profit of $21 million. South Australia incurred a loss of $128 million, and Western Australia lost $118 million. New South Wales lost $698 million, and the sad loss for Victorians was $946 million. Bad management is the hallmark of the Cain government. After seven years, one can examine the scoreboard in relation to every criterion, but one finds only bad management.

I shall again refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the interest payments for State governments. This refers to general sector and public trading enterprises. Once again Victoria has the worst figures because of its bad management. The interest payments for the various States for 1988–89 are: Tasmania, $389 million; South Australia, $869 million; Western Australia, $942 million; Queensland, $1832 million; New South Wales, $2574 million; and Victoria, $2813 million. Victoria has the highest figure for interest payments despite the fact that it started off from a far lower base than New South Wales. In six short years, despite having a smaller population than New South Wales, Victoria has outstripped that State and passed it, to the detriment of future generations of Victorians.

Bad management is the hallmark of the Cain government. Generations of future Victorians will suffer and it will take 20 to 30 years for the Victorian community to recover from the bad management of the Cain government.

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon)—I raise with the government some matters of urgent concern about the Bills before the House especially at a time when we have received the sad news about $111 million wasted in the Victorian Economic Development Corporation debacle. The State is also aware that approximately $2·9

billion of unfunded liabilities are attributed to the WorkCare scheme and the Victorian railway system is running at the tremendous loss of $1 billion a year or $3 million a day.

The Geelong community is amazed at the inactivity of the Premier, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources in not bringing the Barwon bridge to completion. Work on this flyover bridge ceased in September prior to the election because of the actions of some militant unionists. Lewis Construction Co. Pty Ltd has not recommenced work on the bridge and the Road Transport Authority has claimed it is not in a position to force the contractor to recommence work.

In February this year the Geelong community was so fed up with the government's inactivity that the Chamber of Commerce called on all Labor politicians to please explain and urged the government to take immediate action to restart the bridge project. I wrote to the Premier urging him to have the project started without further delay. I believe negotiations have been continuing for months and months with the unions and the construction company but to no avail.

Last week in the Greensborough by-election the government promised to widen a bridge in that area in an endeavour to win votes in Greensborough. That was a cynical attempt by the government to retain power and the government is condemned by the people of Geelong and all those who are frustrated by the lack of activity on the Barwon bridge project.

When I consider the inactivity on that project I am reminded of the lack of foresight of the Cain government in not gripping the nettle and helping the Geelong community to establish an international rowing centre. The Head of the River is only one major event on the calendar of Geelong rowing activities. Other activities on the river are water skiing, wind surfing and canoeing.

The *Geelong Advertiser* featured an excellent article on 13 October 1988. It reported that the Chamber of Commerce put forward a less radical rowing course plan with a view to developing areas of the Belmont Common. Geelong rowing and other water sports participants were continuing their battle to have improved conditions on the Barwon River. The article stated that the Geelong Chamber of Commerce had come up with a new idea for a water sports complex that would be supported by rowers, canoeists, and surf boat and Chinese dragon boat rowers. It would also affect any Associated Public Schools of Victoria decision about the Head of the River program for years to come.

It is not only the events that take place on the river that are important but also the tourists who are attracted to the major city of Geelong. Many people travel hundreds of kilometres to spend a weekend with their children who are being educated at schools in Geelong. They spend many recreational hours with their families in the Geelong tourist precinct.

I have often spoken in this place about the importance of the surf industry to my electorate and to the Geelong region. The Bells Beach Classic and other aquatic events take place in the area. I am pleased that the Minister for Sport and Recreation has been interested in some of these endeavours. In fact, when he went to the United Kingdom he visited the famous National Watersports Centre at Holme Pierrepont. That centre is unique in the world because the concept was originally thought of by a local councillor and was developed as a multi-water sports centre with facilities especially designed to meet national requirements of canoeing, water skiing and rowing. A conference centre to attract people was built alongside that magnificent facility as well as an outstanding park, a canoe slalom course and a water-ski lagoon.

As a public amenity, the country park in which the centre is located remains open throughout the year for all quiet forms of relaxation. It caters for walkers, tourists, young people, fishermen who wish to go angling, picnickers and people viewing the bird life. It has a horseriding trail around its perimeter and has cross-country running activities throughout the park.

Three Geelong politicians have visited this centre, two of them members of the Cain government. Despite that, no action has been taken on a similar amenity for Geelong. I urge the government to reassess this situation and take some immediate action.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—Because of the lateness of the hour my comments will be brief and I direct them to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. My concern is about noxious weeds and rabbits. One of the problems faced by farmers during the last spring rains was that ragwort broke out a couple of times during the season. Funds must be made available for the control of ragwort. In addition, the rabbit plague is increasing and requires immediate funds.

I am concerned that the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is buying up good agricultural land. That will place on farmers with properties adjoining that departmental land the burden of providing fencing at their own cost.

I truly believe the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, as well as the adjoining landowners, should have to foot the fencing bill, and I urge the Minister to consider this matter seriously because there will be a problem right throughout the area.

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

On the motion of Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment), the sitting was continued.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—I thank the Leader of the House for the opportunity of continuing. The other area of concern to me relates to education. The Sale continuing education centre has been looking for funding for the English language program for migrants. It has been a problem in the Gippsland area for some time. Because it is a country area migrant people are having difficulty finding places to learn English.

Unfortunately, some honourable members are not aware of what really happens in country areas, but they should take an interest. The program started two years ago and received a lot of support. It was going well until this year. Unfortunately, funding has now been completely stopped and, consequently, so has the program. A number of migrants in the area were relying on the English classes to enable them to put across their concerns on various issues, and I hope the Minister will examine the situation and ensure that the program is started up again in the next financial year.

My next point relates to a matter originally raised by the honourable member for Frankston South relating to the National Safety Council of Australia. Irrespective of what has happened with the National Safety Council of Australia, it was a great service. It may not have been running as well as it could have run and perhaps the backups were too great, but I am sure that Victoria and the whole nation will regret the day that the council ceased to operate.

Since the closing down of the National Safety Council of Australia services the Minister for Health in another place has stated that the air ambulance will continue to operate, but the service is not big enough. Just the other day there was a need for a doctor to be on board the ambulance but the air ambulance can carry only three

people including the pilot and so, with the pilot, the passenger and one other person on board, a decision had to be made as to whether the ambulance person or the doctor went along. It eventuated that the doctor stayed at home.

It is possible that one day a life will be lost because of this situation, and I call on the Minister to ensure that the air ambulance in the Gippsland region is looked after quickly, with additional aircraft being made available.

The Royal Australian Air Force is concerned about the continuation of its operations because the National Safety Council of Australia was able to supply safety aircraft when the F111s were using the bombing range at Dutson Downs, so in times to come, we will be disadvantaged because the government could not make available funding for an additional three or four weeks until it was decided what areas of the council should have been kept and looked after.

Other areas in relation to safety and rescue at sea will have to be examined, and I urge the government to examine these areas. Some personnel in these areas have the best expertise not just in Australia but in the world, and it would be a disgrace to see these people leave the State. We may never again be able to gather together people with that level of expertise as a complete unit.

There are a number of other areas on which I should like to comment, but because I have been fortunate enough to have had an extension of time, I shall leave my comments at that.

The motions were agreed to.

The Bills were read a second time and passed through their remaining stages.

CANCER (CENTRAL REGISTERS) BILL

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment), was read a first time.

CREDIT ADMINISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

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

LICENSING AUTHORITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

TAFE colleges—Anomaly in Liquor Control Act—Accommodation for the disabled—National Safety Council of Australia—Energy rebates—Grampians—Rail crossing, Westlakes Road, North Portland—Registration of occupational therapists

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—I raise a matter with the Minister for Education, representing the Minister in another place responsible for the tertiary level

of education, relating to the interests of TAFE colleges in Frankston and all TAFE colleges in this State. It concerns funding and a number of apprentices and students who cannot enter courses or receive appropriate help within those courses.

A number of my constituents have told me that their sons and daughters have not been able to commence training, despite being told by the State Training Board that spaces are available at Dandenong, Frankston and Moorabbin TAFE colleges. It appears that these colleges cannot accommodate people interested in carpentry, plumbing, tourism, cooking and other courses.

A memorandum from the plumbing department of the Frankston College of TAFE refers to one major problem other than maintenance, noise problems, time allowance for examinations, and staff development on computers in the "catch up" classes. "Catch up" classes are for students who are apprenticed to master plumbers, electricians and so on, who cannot get time off work during the day. They need to attend "catch up" classes in the evenings.

In the first semester up to four "catch up" classes were available in most years. When the matter was raised with the Frankston College of TAFE, of which I am a council member, arrangements were made for two teachers in the plumbing department to be on duty for two nights a week in the first semester, and to continue that operation for the second semester would cost $50 000 for two nights a week. These "catch up" classes have been available for a number of years, but this year many young apprentices will not be able to sit for examinations. This will create a backlog. These classes will not be available to 70 or 80 students next year and to even more students the following year.

I ask the Minister, as a matter of urgency, to examine the position of the TAFE college for the second semester to assist apprentices in the electrical, plumbing and carpentry trades.

The other issue at the same college involves cooking. The Frankston TAFE college is attempting to commence a cooking and tourism course, but it cannot start because the college, on the direction of the Ministry of Education, ordered specific cooking equipment from Canada which does not fit into the allocated area and has had to be re-ordered. The college ended up with canopies and stoves that did not fit its facilities. The design was inadequate. Therefore, the students have not been able to commence their classes.

The college also proposed to employ some cooks to teach the students, but before they took up their teaching positions they obtained better offers from outside the college. The government should examine salaries and wages paid outside the TAFE system in the private sector, particularly those of chefs who can demand salaries two or three times the salaries that are paid in the teaching profession. Perhaps it could be arranged for private enterprise to loan people on a part-time basis to assist with cooking classes. I know many restaurants, hotels and motels that are prepared to loan their staff in this way for a certain fee, but these people will not work for 40 hours in the college system when they can make two or three times their salary in the private sector.

The Frankston TAFE college has serious difficulties in the second semester that must be examined and rectified. I ask the Minister to consider the problems that I have raised.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, who is responsible for the liquor industry in this State. The Minister will be aware that when legislation establishing the Liquor Licensing Commission was debated in the House, on behalf of the National Party, I expressed my concern about

the implications and effects of the Act as a result of the increased availability of alcohol.

The legislation has allowed a proliferation of liquor licences across Victoria. The government has constantly referred to the alcohol abuse problem but it is responsible for an Act administered by the Liquor Licensing Commission which has allowed an increase in the number of liquor outlets and the availability of alcohol.

I shall refer to only one aspect because there is insufficient time in debating the motion for the adjournment of the sitting to refer to all aspects of the Act. I refer to licences that are provided to sporting clubs.

The Minister will be aware that under the former Act a restricted club permit was available. Under that permit football clubs and sporting clubs were able to apply to the commission to sell alcohol for restricted hours. Changes were made to the Act which allowed sporting clubs to apply for extended hours under a restricted club permit. The restricted club permit then became a club licence. Despite the assurance provided by the then Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources and Deputy Premier who was responsible for the liquor industry, that clubs provided with that licence were not to pay the 9 per cent licence fee, there is an anomoly in the Act.

I recognise that I cannot seek changes to legislation in debating the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, but I direct to the attention of the Minister the fact that the Liquor Licensing Commission is imposing a 9 per cent licence fee on a sporting club, which was on a restricted club permit but now has a restricted club licence. The commission is also charging fees under another provision of the Act so that the licence holder is included in the 9 per cent charge. It was never intended that sporting clubs and other small clubs provided with a restricted club licence should pay the 9 per cent licence fee. It is ridiculous that sporting clubs are being asked by the Liquor Licensing Commission to put in returns showing the actual amount of beer sold and also to pay a 9 per cent fee based on full strength beer. A fee has also to be paid by the retailer from whom the sporting clubs purchase the liquor.

I ask the Minister to review this provision of the Act. It was never intended that sporting clubs originally on a restricted club permit, now on a restricted club licence, should be charged a 9 per cent licence fee on their sales, in addition to the retailer paying that fee.

Sporting clubs are also being encouraged to sell liquor at retail prices to people who take the packaged liquor away from the club's licensed premises. This anomaly should be addressed immediately to ensure that not only is a licence fee charged for small sporting clubs but also that they restrict the sale of packaged liquor to people taking it away from the premises. The restricted club licence applies only to the consumption of liquor on the premises. In addition, there should not be a 9 per cent licence fee charged, which is really a double charge on the club and the retailer. This anomaly should be addressed immediately, and I seek a response from the Minister this evening.

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN (Ballarat South)—I raise for the attention of our hardworking Minister for Community Services a matter relating specifically to services for the disabled and to various developments that have taken place in recent years; those developments are laudable and address the needs or demands in the community.

Many services provided to the disabled have been of an accommodation nature, and that has been done with the cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Housing and Construction. The recent increase in the provision of facilities has been of a radical nature and a tribute ought to be paid to the government. The principal feature

has been the deinstitutionalising process which has been a hallmark of the government's approach to people with disabilities.

A problem has recently been brought to my attention concerning people who, despite being assessed as having reasonable intellectual capacity, suffer from profound physical disabilities. There is a lack of accommodation available for such people in Ballarat, and many of them have been placed in accommodation that is inappropriate to their needs. Some of them have been placed at the psychiatric hospital in Ballarat as well as in various other accommodation that is inappropriate. Approaches have been made to various hospice organisations in the area to try to establish suitable accommodation.

Such people often require nursing and medical assistance. One young girl named Alison, who is seventeen years of age, attends Ballarat High School even though she is profoundly physically disabled. At present she is living with her family. Although the other members of her family have decided to move from Ballarat to Geelong, Alison would like to remain in the district not only to finish her education but also to retain contact with her friends, and that is understandable.

I have been approached by Sister Margaret Morrish who works at Pennyweight Park, which is run by the Spastic Society of Victoria. She has brought to my attention the lack of suitable accommodation in Ballarat for such people. I ask the Minister to examine what is available for such people and to address their specific needs. There is a need to encourage hospice organisations to develop suitable accommodation. In the Ballarat area a number of community residential units have been developed under the auspices of the Central Highlands Regional Residential Association, and those units may provide an example of suitable accommodation.

It must be said that the government has not addressed this specific need, despite its important and well-received community service initiatives. The government should develop programs to meet that need. Perhaps financial assistance could be provided by Community Services Victoria through the hospice organisations to which I have referred.

Mr HAYWARD (Prahran)—The matter I raise for the attention of the Minister for Community Services concerns the social impact of the collapse of the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division) on people in the Gippsland area.

Honourable members will be aware that 242 jobs in the area were lost as a result of that collapse; 119 of these people live in Sale and surrounding areas, but people throughout the whole Gippsland area have been affected, as far afield as Morwell, Heyfield, Churchill and Rosedale. Problems are beginning to be experienced by people in those communities. Approximately $17 million will be lost to the area as a result of the council's collapse. The breadwinners of many families have lost their jobs; wives have had to find work; and all those affected are suffering as a result.

In some instances, families sold their homes elsewhere and moved to the area to take up employment with the council. Those families now have heavy mortgages but no income with which to pay them. An increasing number of families are seeking financial assistance and counselling. The Community Services Manager for the City of Sale told me recently that an increasing number of families are seeking assistance from the council and from other organisations such as the Sale and District Community Support Service. I have also spoken to Mrs Shirley Millard, who is a member of the Heyfield community resources group, and she has told me of a similar situation in that area.

Community Services Victoria should be equipped to deal with these problems as they arise. Because there is an increasing need for emergency funding in the area, it is

important for the department to be aware of these potential problems and to have funding available for families who are affected by the collapse of the National Safety Council of Australia. It is also important that those funds are made available through community groups rather than directly through the department. For example, the Sale and District Community Support Service provides an excellent contact for families in the area and assistance could be channelled through that organisation.

Families are now being forced to sell their homes because they cannot meet their financial commitments. Problems such as those require urgent attention. The Minister should ensure that his department is equipped to deal with these problems and that funds for emergency relief are made available through community organisations.

Mr HAMILTON (Morwell)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Community Services concerns energy concessions that are available to pensioners. Some time ago the government introduced winter energy concessions for people who held either pensioner or health cards. The introduction of the concession was well received and, over a number of years, has been of assistance to many senior citizens.

Two years ago, the level of the energy concession was reviewed and a concession of 20 per cent was made available for six months, which included the winter months. The concession originally applied to one quarter in the case of State Electricity Commission of Victoria, and two two-month periods in the case of the Gas and Fuel Corporation. Now the concession applies to two quarters in the case of the SEC and three two-month periods in the case of the corporation, and the level of the concession has been reduced to 15 per cent.

Pensioner associations in Morwell and Traralgon actively and keenly look after the interests of pensioners in the Latrobe Valley. Those two groups have raised with me the pressing need for the concession to be restored to its former level of 20 per cent, and for that concession to apply for a full six-month period.

By and large, pensioners are the most conscientious citizens in the community. They always ensure that they are able to pay their bills, but, in recent times, because of other charges and costs taken from their pensions, they have tended to save money by conserving power. In a number of cases, pensioners wrap themselves in blankets, turn their heaters down or turn them off early. That is not a good state of affairs.

If pensioners look after themselves properly, they can be encouraged to stay in their own homes for a longer period. Increasing the concession from 15 to 20 per cent and extending it over the full winter period would be of great assistance. I understand the Minister will need to have discussions with the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources in another place so that the matter can be seriously considered. I know such a move would be well received by pensioners.

The government is to be commended for extending energy concessions to people in rented accommodation, especially those living in Ministry of Housing and Construction units. They can receive concessions by way of a refund against their rents. Pensioner associations appreciate the energy concessions and have asked me to extend their gratitude to the government.

It is the government's aim to keep elderly people in their homes for a longer period, and that is commendable. I urge the government to give serious consideration to increasing the energy concessions from 15 to 20 per cent to extend over six months.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Property and Services is similar to the matter I raised last night with the Minister for Tourism. However, the Minister for Property and Services is responsible for the Place Names Committee and that is why I shall take up the matter with him.

Last night the Minister for Tourism said he was strongly committed to the proposed name changes for places in the Grampians. He said that many of the names in and around the Grampians were quite stupid.

Last Friday the Minister for Property and Services visited Stawell, and the visit was reported in the *Wimmera Mail-Times* of Monday, 17 April, which states:

> Property and Services Minister, Mr Walsh, has promised that the Grampians will keep its name.
>
> He made the promise after Stawell Labor Party member, Jack Jones, asked him whether the Grampians name would be changed to Guriwurd.
>
> Mr Jones was among a group of Labor Party supporters who met Mr Walsh's car when it pulled up at the Stawell Town Hall last Friday.

I know Jack Jones; he is a prominent figure in Wimmera football circles.

Mr Micallef—Why doesn't he change his name?

Mr W. D. McGRATH—That is a good question; he is probably happy with his name. If I had the name of the honourable member for Springvale, I would change it!

The Minister for Property and Services has given a strong commitment to a member of the Stawell branch of the Labor Party. I ask him to make that same commitment in Parliament. He is responsible for place names in Victoria, and I ask him to undertake that the name of the Grampians will not be changed to Guriwurd and that other names around the Grampians will be retained.

Dr NAPTHINE (Portland)—I wish to direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Transport, but in his absence I ask the Minister for Community Services, who is at the table, to take note. The matter relates to continuing dangers to users of Westlakes Road in North Portland. The road has an uncontrolled rail crossing that is a danger to both road and rail users.

In recent years usage of the road has increased significantly because: firstly, it acts as a link between the Princes Highway and the road to Nelson, a well-used tourist road and alternate route to Mount Gambier; secondly, on a daily basis many parents use the road to transport their children to school, particularly the Portland North Primary School; and, thirdly, the growth of Portland because of the smelter, which was placed at Portland through the hard work of the Liberal Party, especially my predecessor, the Honourable Digby Crozier, has led to housing development along Westlakes Road.

Trees located near the rail crossing pose an additional danger because they obstruct the view of drivers travelling west when they are looking north to watch for trains. This crossing has caused concern to local residents and the Shire of Heywood, which is responsible for the area. Some 106 local residents have signed a petition to the shire seeking the immediate installation of proper warning lights. I concur with the assessment of the danger posed by the railway crossing. I have inspected the site along with my colleague in the other place, Mr Chamberlain, and we have determined that the crossing is dangerous for road users because of the high volume of traffic and the fact that the trains using the line are mainly goods trains which, unfortunately, are not well lit. The rail trucks do not have reflector lights and it can be extremely dangerous when they pass the crossing. In view of the points I raised earlier about the obstruction of vision when looking north, the rail crossing is extremely dangerous.

I know that you, Mr Speaker, and the Minister for Transport are as concerned as members of the Opposition are about road safety. We want to ensure that action is taken where necessary to improve safety for road users. In that respect, I seek the Minister's assistance in taking action at this dangerous crossing, and I urge him to

direct the Road Traffic Authority to install warning lights at the crossing without delay.

Mr MICALLEF (Springvale)—I ask the Minister for Planning and Environment to direct to the attention of the Minister for Health in the other place a matter dealing with the registration of occupational therapists. Over the past few years occupational therapists have been waging a campaign to establish a proper registration board to represent their interests. Because of the explosion of the rehabilitation industry through the introduction of WorkCare, the demand for occupational therapists has increased tremendously. Because the demand cannot be met, a number of people are practising as occupational therapists without having had the appropriate training. I ask the Minister for Health to take up this issue.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—The honourable member for Murray Valley raised an issue of the Liquor Licensing Commission and current licensing arrangements, especially with reference to general sporting club licences. I shall direct his comments to the attention of the Liquor Licensing Commission and report back to him on its response.

The honourable member for Springvale referred to the registration of occupational therapists. He pointed out the important role they play. I shall direct his comments to the attention of my colleague in another place, the Minister for Health, and ask her to respond to him directly.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The honourable member for Lowan raised the matter of the changing of the name of the Grampians National Park. On Friday I spoke to a person from the Stawell area when I visited country Victoria—it was pleasant to be in that area—and that person also spoke to me about the change of name.

The name "Grampians" is popular around Victoria. I support that name. I believe the honourable member for Lowan would have heard what the Minister for Tourism said last night, that there was a fact-finding initiative ongoing to examine the areas in the Grampians that may be important to the Aboriginal people who settled in that area at one stage. I do not believe anything is wrong with naming those areas after the Aborigines who lived in the area.

It is not easy for a name to be changed. A complex process must be completed by the Place Names Committee. It must receive a proposal for a change and it must then investigate the proposed change with the relevant bodies such as the local councils, the water boards, the local historical societies and such people as Mr Jack Jones, who was a member of this House many years ago when the Cain senior government was in power. He was a fine member of Parliament for that area and for our political party.

A complicated process must be undergone before a recommendation comes to me, and it only comes to me if there is discussion in the community about a change of name.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—The honourable member for Frankston South referred to a problem with the Frankston College of TAFE placing plumber apprentices. There is a shortage of plumbers currently, as anyone who has tried to get a plumber to do some work will know.

Dr Napthine—They are all in the Upper House.

Mr SPYKER—I hope they make good Upper House members. I shall take up the matter with the Minister responsible for post-secondary education in another place and obtain a speedy response.

The honourable member for Ballarat South raised the matter of independent living facilities for people with disabilities. I was most impressed by the honourable member for Ballarat when I was to attend a Labor Day function in Ballarat and he asked me to come up early so that I could meet some of his constituents. I met a young woman who eloquently outlined her need for facilities because her family wanted to move to Geelong. Although she had a physical impairment she wanted to live independently so as not to depend on anyone. I shall investigate the matter to find out what we can do. Although we have some excellent facilities in place for people with intellectual disabilities, it is also important for those facilities to be available for those with physical disabilities. I thank the honourable member for Ballarat South for the sensitive way he handled the interview and for the sensitive way he represented his electorate.

The honourable member for Prahran referred to the recent failure of the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division) and the hardship that it is causing many families in the Sale area. I concur with the comment that the honourable member made because most of the families have financial commitments with house repayments and so forth. Obviously the shock of the sudden closure of the National Safety Council of Australia will cause hardship. I shall contact the Sale offices of Community Services Victoria to find out what additional assistance may be provided for those in need. Obviously it is more difficult to get a job in a non-metropolitan area. There is no doubt that the Sale district has been hit hard by the closure.

The honourable member for Morwell referred to energy concession for electricity and gas. He said that a 15 per cent concession was available for pensioners for six months of the year. Most people have welcomed what the government has done in this area. It has done a great deal when compared with the new government in New South Wales because it has kept the gas and electricity charges down. Those concessions are welcome because those hit hardest by energy costs are low-income earners and pensioners. There is no doubt that the honourable member for Morwell was barrelled by the local pensioner association, which asked him to make further representations in an endeavour to have the concession increased to 20 per cent. The matter should be handled by the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources. I shall raise the matter with the Minister in another place.

The honourable member for Portland referred to a dangerous rail crossing in his electorate. He made comments about the Portland smelter. I remind the honourable member that when the Cain government come to power the smelter had been shut down, but this government got it going again. The honourable member should give credit where it is due. Again, I shall take up the matter with the Minister for Transport. I have no doubt that the Minister will be concerned about a crossing that has become more dangerous because of the activities of the smelter.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.48 *p.m.*

Thursday, 20 April 1989

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Ken Coghill) took the chair at 10.33 a.m. and read the prayer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The SPEAKER—Order! On behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly I welcome to the gallery Mr Leo McLeay, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS

The SPEAKER—Order! I desire to advise the House that I have given permission to Channel ATV10 to film question time today. The approval is on a shared basis on behalf of other channels and under the usual guidelines.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

YOUTH GUARANTEE SCHEME

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—The Minister for Labour will be aware of accusations by the Auditor-General's investigator, Mr Terry Lant, that files crucial to the Auditor-General's investigation of the failed Youth Guarantee Scheme had been destroyed and re-created by officers of the Department of Labour. Will the Minister advise the House whether the files related in any way to the 76 per cent of traineeships awarded to ineligible applicants, which officers were involved and what, if any, action has been taken against those officers responsible for rewriting sensitive files requested by the Auditor-General?

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—I saw the article that appeared in a newspaper the other day and had the matter investigated. Some files at the Preston office of the department were destroyed after people were placed and had been in employment for six months. Sensitive matters relating to the applicants were contained within the files and if honourable members wish to listen I will tell them what the files contained.

The sensitive matters related to incest within the families of young people who had been placed into positions and matters relating to abuse. It was decided, after six months, that officers at the Preston office would destroy the case files with respect to those details.

No files have been re-created. There is a standard format that is on a computer print-out with respect to each and every one of those placements under the Youth Guarantee Scheme. The computer files, containing the names, addresses and other details were available prior to the Auditor-General's investigations and after the Auditor-General had examined that matter.

It was not a matter of files being re-created. The files were destroyed only for the reasons I have detailed to the House. I give an assurance that in future no files will be destroyed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs would be aware that the former Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, now the Minister for the Arts in another place, following the Small Towns Study, was to announce the appointment of six development officers or facilitators for regional Victoria on 14 March this year. Can the Minister advise the House why he has failed to make these appointments on time and whether he is seeking to save the $300 000 allocated for this purpose for the current financial year?

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—The first part of the question is correct: the government did take a major initiative regarding the Small Towns Study, which was well received throughout rural Victoria. It was the first time any government had focused on the needs of small towns throughout Victoria and had developed a strategy to deal with the economic and social needs of small communities.

The Small Towns Study was well received throughout Victoria and arising from it the government resolved to appoint six regional employment facilitators throughout Victoria. Those facilitators' positions were advertised widely throughout rural Victoria. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs received approximately 100 applications for the six facilitator positions. Some 25 groups met, representing 100 shires throughout Victoria. Committees were organised on a local basis and they submitted very worthwhile submissions to the government relating to the employment of regional facilitators.

The government has allocated approximately $330 000 for the employment of the regional employment facilitators. I shall be making an announcement shortly with respect to the successful applicants.

The strategy will encompass all regions of Victoria; in some cases full-time facilitators will be employed and in other cases the government will employ part-time facilitators. The process has been exhaustive and has involved the community. It has not been a situation where the department has drawn up the initiative; consultation has taken place with communities. The strategy involves a wide cross-section of the agricultural sectors and the small business people in small towns throughout Victoria. The initiatives are very much community based.

Because of the large number of applications received, the department had to give consideration to ranking applicants and determining priorities. That has now been concluded; the ranking and priorities have been completed by a committee——

Mr W. D. McGrath interjected.

Mr ROWE—I shall be making the announcement. The priority listing involves a committee comprising representatives from the Commonwealth Development Bank of Australia, the Office of Rural Affairs and the Municipal Association of Victoria. That committee has prioritised the list of regional employment facilitators. I shall be making an announcement in the next few weeks.

METAL TRADES INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION SURVEY

Mr SEITZ (Keilor)—Will the Premier advise the House whether he has had the Metal Trades Industry Association 1989 national survey examined to determine its implications for Victoria? If so, will he outline to the House the results of that examination?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—In March this year the Metal Trades Industry Association released the results of its 1989 survey of the metals and engineering industry. The survey covered 1000 firms across Australia, including 291 in Victoria—a rather good sample.

Victorian companies were reported to be performing particularly well on all fronts. The survey respondents reported a large increase in total nation-wide sales of 15·2 per cent. Victorian companies did even better, with 18·8 per cent. They did rather better than the Liberal Party last Saturday, because it could not sell anything to anybody.

Mr Leigh—Get back to government administration.

Mr CAIN—You should look after your own party. There is a lesson about misleading advertising and about having your product right before you put it on the market.

Mr Leigh interjected.

Mr CAIN—It has led to a resignation of one of your members—was it Mr Tony Kennett speaking about lobotomies, comparing Mrs Brown's candidature with a lobotomy? It looks as though she has been practising on some of you; the Kroger clones! I think he meant the Liberals, she has been practising on them!

The MTIA survey found that almost 85 per cent of Victorian companies reported that they were very busy, although probably not as busy as the Liberal Party that seems to spend 100 per cent of its time on internal brawls. That is all you spend your time on, fighting among yourselves about preselections.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I refer you to Standing Order No. 84; a member has to address you, and not anyone else. The Premier is addressing the Opposition. He should address his remarks through you.

The SPEAKER—Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the Premier to direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—Before I was interrupted by interjection, I was saying that Victorian companies reported a 35·9 per cent increase in investment in plant and equipment, which was well above the national average of 30·6 per cent. During 1987–88 the value of investment in buildings rose by 146 per cent in Victoria; again, that was well above the national average increase of 130 per cent.

There was a significant increase in production employment in Victoria of 5·5 per cent, compared with the national average of 3·8 per cent. The national average was held back by a very poor performance in New South Wales. The Metal Trades Industry Association representatives remarked that employment levels seemed to have remained static in New South Wales. They will be even more static after the announcement of an increase in petrol tax in New South Wales.

Mr Jolly interjected.

Mr CAIN—New South Wales takes the lead, as the Treasurer interjects. The MTIA report contains the comment that Victorian companies are especially active in company restructuring and it forecasts that Victoria will again lead the way in 1989.

The results of the MTIA survey were the subject of discussion between the government, employer groups and unions at the meeting of the Manufacturing Advisory Council held on Monday of this week. The council is an example of how successfully the forces of management, labour and government can combine to achieve things. The previous Liberal government scrapped the Manufacturing Advisory

Council and the Labor government restored it in 1982. The council meets six or seven times a year. Its members sit down in a room without having a brawl——

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—There are no brawls! The members of the council talk things through, just as the government has for seven years. Members of the government have talked and reasoned through issues. We have gone through issues in an empirical fashion. All that they do over there is fight among themselves! As John Howard said: if there is one way to ensure you do not get elected, go on fighting! As Michelle Grattan has said, you do not know how to control conflict; that is one of your great weaknesses. You stand for nothing—for nothing at all! Nobody out there knows what you mean—except fights!

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I put it to you that you have already ruled on my previous point of order. I put it to you that the Premier is defying your previous ruling. I ask you to bring him back to order.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I was telling the House that the excellent results achieved in the manufacturing industry are the result of an approach——

The SPEAKER—Order! On the point of order?

Mr CAIN—Yes, Mr Speaker. The results have been achieved because of the policy of the government to conciliate and discuss. It is in contrast to the approach of those opposite. I believe I am entitled to develop the point.

The SPEAKER—Order! On the point of order, there were times during the Premier's answer when he appeared not to be addressing the Chair directly. I believe that was an inadvertent slip. I ask the Premier to address the Chair and to refer to any honourable members or group of honourable members in the third person.

Mr CAIN—Mr Speaker, I understand your ruling. I want to make the point that was made last Monday by the representatives of the Metal Trades Industry Association: that Victoria has a lot to be pleased about in the report. It is the product of a long-term approach to industry, growth and development problems by talking them through and it is in marked contrast to the philosophy enunciated and practised by those opposite. The government will continue to work in that way and it is important for the long-term benefit of the State that the government does.

WORKERS COMPENSATION SUPPLEMENTATION FUND

Mr BROWN (Gippsland West)—I direct the second question from the Opposition in a quarter of an hour to the Treasurer: is he aware of a recent High Court case which has resulted in the court effectively giving the insurance industry access to money in the workers compensation supplementation fund that was being withheld by him? Is he aware that the insurance industry is claiming some $300 million owed to its companies by the fund? Will the Treasurer now reverse his previous position of 1984 and 1987 and instruct the Accident Compensation Commission to comply with the High Court ruling?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The Liberal Party is an expert loser. It lost the last State election and it lost the Greensborough by-election last Saturday. Its only winner is Ian Macphee, who is about to get the chop. The Liberal Party is an expert and experienced loser. It has no idea how to manage the complicated affairs of the State. It has no policies, Mr Speaker.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question was clear and concise. So far the answer has no relevance to the question. I ask that you insist that answers from the government side be relevant to the questions asked.

The SPEAKER—Order! On the point of order, Ministers have a discretion in the manner in which they answer questions. The question was specific and the answer should be relevant to the question. I uphold the point of order.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I notice no denial of the facts was made. However, in relation to the question asked by the honourable member for Gippsland West about the supplementation fund, provisions are made in the Accident Compensation Commission's accounts to meet its obligations under that fund. I and the commission want to be sure about the precise amounts that are owing to the insurance industry. Certainly I would not follow a direction or a recommendation from the honourable member for Gippsland West that one simply gives the insurance industry $300 million. That would be absurd and economically irresponsibility.

The Accident Compensation Commission is adopting the appropriate approach to the supplementation fund and is making sure precise amounts are determined before payments are made.

LIQUOR INDUSTRY

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I direct a question to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, who is responsible for the liquor industry. Given the government's express concern about the problems of alcohol abuse in the community, can the Minister explain why he is taking no action about the massive explosion in the number of liquor licences being approved by the revamped Liquor Licensing Commission which is resulting in an enormous increase in the availability of liquor to the most susceptible groups in the community?

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—Honourable members would be aware that Parliament—with the exception of the corner party—overwhelmingly endorsed new provisions for the liquor licensing legislation, which have improved in many areas the ways in which liquor can be sold in this State. However, that does not mean that honourable members are not concerned about issues of alcohol abuse.

A consultative committee, chaired by Mr Mick Miller, has been set up specifically to examine the problem of alcohol abuse and the important issue of under-age drinking, which I know is of concern to honourable members. I hope the committee will be in a position to provide reports on the terms of reference I set that will assist in dealing with the problem of alcohol abuse. However, I reiterate that the Liquor Licensing Commission exercises powers specifically provided by Parliament and, for the majority of the industry, is doing its job most effectively.

PETROL TAX

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—I direct to the attention of the Treasurer yesterday's announcement by the Premier of New South Wales of an additional 3 cents a litre tax on petrol. Is any such measure contemplated in Victoria?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Twelve months ago the Premier of New South Wales was hailed as the economic saviour of the Liberal Party; the political saviour also. Today he is ripping the economic heart out of New South Wales and fuelling inflation.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—The Opposition says that it is a legacy. In fact, the Premier of New South Wales is on record as saying that the only promise he has broken is the tax promise. He has no integrity whatsoever.

I make it crystal clear that the government and I have no intention of following the economic policies of the New South Wales Liberal Party. That party is an absolute disgrace! I also make it clear that I support the comments made by the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, in relation to the New South Wales allocation. The New South Wales Premier announced a massive increase in petrol prices prior to the Premiers Conference and just after the Australian Grants Commission report; trying to get in between the two stools to boost revenue and rip off motorists. It is no wonder that the New South Wales consumer price index movement over the past twelve months was 9·2 per cent—an outrage. It is the highest of any capital city in Australia and compares with 6·7 per cent in Victoria.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is becoming very difficult to hear the Treasurer's reply between the interjections on my right from the honourable member for Sunshine and certain honourable members on my left. I ask all honourable members to refrain from interjecting.

Mr JOLLY—By way of interjection, the honourable member for Gippsland West said, "They haven't caught up with Victoria". With regard to the Australian Grants Commission, Victoria, subsidises every other State by more than New South Wales—and the honourable member for Gippsland West should listen to my answer to his interjection. Taxation per head in 1988–89 in New South Wales is about $100 per head ahead of Victoria. In other words, New South Wales is taxing more per capita than Victoria. That is a fact of life.

Mr Brown—Not right.

Mr JOLLY—By way of interjection, the honourable member says, "Not right". One has only to examine the figures provided by the Australian Statistician. Obviously the honourable member does not take the facts into account. Motor registration and third-party insurance charges in New South Wales are well in excess of $500—approximately $540—for a private motor vehicle. In Victoria the charges are about half that rate. The New South Wales government has ripped everybody off.

There are two fundamental issues, the first being what has happened to employment in New South Wales as compared with Victoria over the past twelve months. Employment is one of the fundamental economic indicators and also a fundamental determinant of living standards. Over the past twelve months there has been an increase of 75 000 jobs in Victoria compared with 28 000 in New South Wales.

I have no intention of ripping off consumers and families in the way that the New South Wales government has. The government totally rejects the Liberal Party policies in New South Wales, and it is about time the Liberal leadership here did so as well.

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—Further to his answer to the previous question from the honourable member for Gippsland West, will the Treasurer confirm that the Accident Compensation Commission has made no allowance for liabilities which have arisen from the High Court decision?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Obviously the leader of the reserves makes a poor attempt at leadership. Government members would like to see the current Leader of the

Opposition become the longest serving Leader of the Opposition this State has ever seen, and they wish him well.

Firstly, I have made it clear that the Accident Compensation Commission has made provision for the supplementation fund. Secondly, a number of legal matters are still to be determined and the Chief Executive of the Accident Compensation Commission and I will ensure that the insurance industry is paid only its obligation and not 1 cent more.

Certainly, I do not support the recommendation of the Deputy Leader of the National Party. I am sorry; I have that wrong, but it will be the National Party one day when the coalition is formed. I do not support the recommendation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that $300 million should be paid to the insurance industry immediately.

PROPOSED PULP MILL

Mr EVANS (Gippsland East)—I ask the Minister for Planning and Environment whether guidelines have been established for emissions and effluents from the proposed pulp or paper mill that is currently under investigation in East Gippsland? If those standards have been established, is it the intention of the government to seek the agreement of the Commonwealth Minister on those standards?

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—Unlike what might occur in States such as Tasmania, which has absolutely ruined parts of its environment and has no capacity to reach adequate decisions in these areas, the Victorian government has established a most detailed process for dealing with the timber industry.

Currently, as the honourable member would be aware although other honourable members probably are not, a panel is considering the value added strategy that has been put forward, and over recent weeks that panel has been hearing various views of industry and others such as conservation groups in both Melbourne and Gippsland. I expect the report of the panel shortly and I will then make an assessment on the report, under the legislation, and provide advice to my colleague, the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

In determining guidelines and controls for any pulp mill in Victoria a number of issues would have to be dealt with. There would have to be a proper environment effects study and public hearings to ensure that both the industry and the community had full and proper input.

The government is currently working with other government agencies to develop appropriate guidelines for any such major initiative. The Victorian government has also been asked by the Commonwealth government to assist it in its work in that area. We have made it clear that we wish to have a cooperative approach with our Federal colleagues and will provide the advice and assistance that they have sought.

60-PLUS CONCESSION CARD

Mrs HILL (Frankston North)—I ask the Minister for Transport whether an assessment has been made of the 60-plus transport concession, and, if so, will he provide the House with the results of the assessment?

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—The 60-plus concession has been a great success for the government. It is an example of the government successfully pursuing policy issues.

I am sure Mr Kennett would agree with me, and I refer to the Mr Kennett of Greensborough. I am sure that Mrs Brown and even Mr Brown of Greensborough would also agree with this assessment. It is becoming confusing for the government because it is receiving a lot of support from Kennetts and Browns all over the place! We are never quite sure who is speaking but, as the Minister for Sport and Recreation said yesterday, possibly it is just as well that at this stage there is no betting on animals that talk.

There has been a continual growth in the number of people applying for 60-plus concession cards. Some 185 000 people over 60 years of age have applied for these cards. It is estimated that approximately 50 000 tickets are sold each month to the holders of the cards. That demonstrates the tremendous success the scheme has been. Indeed, there has been some growth in patronage as a result of this initiative.

I contrast that with proposals put by the Liberal Party at the last State election that this sort of initiative should effectively be means tested. Under its policy the Opposition promised that only pensioners would be provided with the card; they would be able to use it only off-peak; and they would not be able to use it system-wide all day long. The Liberal Party wanted this card to be means tested and to be used only off peak.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr KENNAN—As I am reminded by the Opposition, the government has extended this to all people over 60 years of age to be used all day long and it is provided without a means test. The government is not discriminating against people by saying that they can use it only off peak, which is what the Opposition was proposing. The Liberal Party said its card would apply only to people in the country who would be provided with the opportunity of one or two free trips a year.

The government's scheme is much more generous. It is not means tested as is the scheme proposed by the Liberal Party and it applies system-wide. It is not limited to off peak. In this House last week the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that he was now supporting——

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question was clear. The Minister was asked: has there been a survey; if so, what are the results of the survey? The Minister is now debating the question and I ask you, Sir, to bring him back to answering the question and not to debate what the Liberal Party is doing by comparison and so on. If the Minister wants to make a Ministerial statement, the Opposition is happy to accommodate him.

The SPEAKER—Order! I uphold the point of order and I ask the Minister to come back to the question.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I understand the embarrassment of the Liberal Party on this issue. I feel for both Mr Kennett and Mrs Brown for the way that they were let down.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On a further point of order, Mr Speaker, since you upheld the point of order raised by the honourable member for Evelyn, the Minister has not said one word on the subject about which he was questioned. With great respect, Mr Speaker, either you restrain the honourable member or the Opposition will have to take points of order to direct your attention to it.

The SPEAKER—Order! On the further point of order raised by the honourable member for Berwick, I advise the House that the Minister had scarcely had time to resume his answer. There is no point of order. I remind the Minister of my ruling on the earlier point of order, and ask him in his reply to refer to the question that was asked.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—The government's assessment shows that there is absolutely no support for the Liberal Party's proposal that this initiative should be limited to off peak only, and there is no support for the proposal that it be means tested. Our assessment shows overwhelming support for the government's policy of system-wide benefits, for the card to be used off peak and during peak periods for all retired people over 60 years of age.

I well understand the embarrassment of the Liberal Party. The National Party is aware of the benefits that the government's policy is delivering throughout country Victoria, in contradistinction to its would-be coalition partner, which is offering only one or two lousy trips a year.

PETITION

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

Child maltreatment

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

The humble petition of the members of the Association of Apex Clubs and citizens of the State of Victoria sheweth that:

1. Child maltreatment is a serious social problem in the Victorian community;

2. The existing mechanisms are failing to adequately address the prevention, identification and treatment of child maltreatment; and

3. There is a gross under-reporting of child maltreatment.

And your petitioners therefore humbly pray that:

1. A higher priority is accorded to programs destined to prevent, identify and treat child maltreatment; and

2. That legislation be enacted to make it mandatory for designated categories of professionally trained people to report any suspected case of child maltreatment to the appropriate investigating authority.

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

By **Mr Dickinson** (4638 signatures)

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

GOVERNMENT FAMILY PLEDGE

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I move:

That this House calls on the Premier to put his family pledge into a legislative form and so honour the commitments he made during the 1988 election campaign, namely, that for the typical Victorian family the payment of the education expense allowance and the abolition of motor registration fees, together with the commitment to hold down the cost of basic household budget items such as gas, electricity, MMBW water and sewerage rates, third-party insurance, drivers' licences and transport fares means that for the next four years, the typical Victorian family will not pay a dollar more in total than was paid for these items as at 20 September 1988.

Not since 1961 has the average Victorian family been subjected to such a vicious attack by the policies of governments either Federal or State as it now is by these Labor governments. Never before have interest rates been so high and living standards so crippled because of the "Laurie Connell" approach now adopted by the Treasurer.

The commitments given by the Premier during the recent State election campaign, which were part of his pledge to the people of Victoria, resulted in the government receiving a majority of seats despite not receiving a popular mandate. But those commitments are vital to the health of the economy and, in particular, to the living standards of Victorian families. Never before has there been such a need for the pledge the Premier made to be encompassed in legislation. During the election campaign the Premier said:

> My family budget pledge is not just a promise; it's a pledge to protect the living standards of Victorian families, a pledge for the future. Remember it. I will; I am putting my name to it.

In his policy speech the Premier said:

> This is no promise to be broken.

But the Premier has broken so many promises in his political career that the Opposition now challenges him to put that pledge into legislative form. The Premier also said:

> It is a pledge which can be measured, audited and delivered.

The Opposition fears that the pledge represents another con by the Labor Party and is evidence of its desperate pursuit of political support; and because of that the Opposition fears the pledge will not be honoured. Members of the Opposition believe the only way the Premier can prove the genuineness of his pledge is to express it in legislation.

Only legislation will bind the Premier to his pledge and serve as a measure of his commitment to it. Only legislation will enable his pledge to be audited and serve as a measure of its delivery. The people of Victoria, particularly those in the low and middle-income group, desperately need that pledge to be delivered.

But the pledge given by the Premier during the election campaign guarantees that there will be increases in the costs of services mentioned within it. It guarantees that there will be increases in the costs of electricity, gas, Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rates and public transport. It guarantees that electricity charges will rise by a minimum of 3 per cent this year, 3·7 per cent next year, 2·9 per cent in 1990–91 and 3·6 per cent in 1991–92.

If honourable members are to believe the Labor government's projections about inflation, those particular increases will occur. The Premier's pledge will mean that gas charges will also rise: they will increase by 4·1 per cent this year, 4·7 per cent next year, 3·9 per cent in 1990–91 and 4·6 per cent in 1991–92—and that is only if honourable members accept the forecasts for the level of the increase in inflation.

The pledge guarantees that MMBW charges will rise by 5·9 per cent this year, 5·7 per cent next year, 4·9 per cent in 1990–91 and 5·6 per cent in 1991–92—again, if the government's forecasts are to be believed.

Public transport charges will also rise—by 5·9 per cent next year, 4·9 per cent in 1990–91, and 5·6 per cent in 1991–92—and I emphasise that those increases are based on the government's forecast for rises in the level of inflation.

The Premier pledged that the average Victorian family will not pay $1 more for the cost of those services. But as a result of the pledge the Premier made, the average Victorian family will have to pay an extra $153 per annum for electricity, $129 for gas, $214 for water rates and charges and $65 for public transport. For the Premier, the average Victorian family consists of a husband, a wife and two school-age children and owns one car; and in 1991–92 that family will pay $561 more for the services to which I have referred than it did in September 1988.

Many families do not fit in with the Premier's definition of a typical family, and those families will not benefit from the education expense allowance that was

introduced in the 1988–89 Budget. Those families will pay heavily for the commitment given in the pledge to increase the cost of basic services. If the Labor government's forecasts about the level of inflation are incorrect—and when one examines the tragic state of the Australian economy there is no doubt that those forecasts will prove to be incorrect—then Victorian families will pay more for those services than the Premier promises.

The pledge must be put in legislative form because it would be a true test of the Premier's credibility; and if the costs of those services exceed the Premier's forecasts his credibility would then be on the line. Not only the Premier's credibility but also the strength of the government's social justice policy would be tested, and the way that was used to appeal to the average Victorian family would also be put under the microscope.

The Opposition has had many reasons to doubt the Premier's credibility. For a long time, the Premier and the Labor Party have claimed that they have a strong and effective social justice policy; but to date, that social justice policy is forcing more people to become dependent on the government's social services network than ever before, and many families that are now independent of the need for government services are more likely to become dependent on those services.

The introduction of proposed legislation is not about credibility alone; more importantly, it is a measure of the compassion the government has for the people the Premier was appealing to before the last State election. The government must put in place proposed legislation to protect people from spiralling inflation rates and, unfortunately, spiralling costs.

The way the education expense allowance has been used must be carefully considered. The allowance was the key to the Premier's promises made during the election campaign. The Premier said that costs would be offset by the payment to families of the education expense allowance. It was first introduced in the 1987–88 Budget where $60 was granted for each eligible child and in the 1988–89 Budget it was increased to $100 a child.

What was the Premier's objective? In the government's own advertisements issued in February 1988, the Premier and the then Minister for Education, Mrs Hogg, said that added costs were incurred in sending children back to school. All of us appreciate, especially those with schoolchildren, that that is a reality. The then Minister for Education said that costs included school uniforms, sports uniforms, shoes and books, which adds up to a burden on the family budget. She said:

> So, this year, for the first time, the Victorian government is introducing direct help on the cost of these "extras" for nearly all families.

This year government advertisements advised the community generally that families are feeling the pinch and that back-to-school costs place strain on family budgets. The advertisements state:

> The Victorian government recognised the need for extra help at this time by introducing the education expense allowance.

In July last year the Premier reiterated his commitment to the allowance being a measure to help families meet school costs. Only last month the Premier explained the purpose of the allowance when he said in this House:

> Honourable members will recall it was introduced in 1988 to assist families with the costs associated with educating their children.

It is honest to say that the government intends the money to be used for costs incurred when children go back to school. This year it is estimated that it will cost $150 to

outfit the average primary schoolgirl, and that does not include sports equipment or stationery. The costs for an older girl at secondary school increase to $186, and for an older boy a cost of $280 is imposed on the family budget.

Where are the benefits provided by the education expense allowance? The money has already been committed; it is simply not available to help families pay those educational expenses because it must be used to pay the higher costs of electricity, gas, water rates and public transport that the Premier has pledged to impose on the typical Victorian family. In other words, the education expense allowance is not an allowance but a tax subsidy. It is a device to pay off bills charged by the Labor Party. It is the only give-away in the Premier's pledge, but it is now being argued by the government itself, having committed itself to increasing charges for services, that the average family should use the education expense allowance to pay off additional charges.

For years honourable members have heard the government argue that the education expense allowance should be spent on assisting families to educate their children. Does the Premier expect the people of Victoria to accept the view that the abolition of renewal fees for motor registration will offset the additional $561 in costs that the typical Victorian family will have to find by 1992? All honourable members know that that is simply not possible. The calculations do not take into account increases that will affect low-income families who will pay an additional $350, pensioners who will pay an additional $319 or single people who will pay an additional $457. Under the Premier's pledge, all Victorians will pay, and no-one doubts that.

The people of Victoria already pay the highest taxes of any community in Australia. This year Victorians will pay $1162 a head in State taxes, and that is more than in any other Australian State. The Treasurer has come into this place and argued about what he claims to be recent changes. However, when the Treasurer tries to once again mislead the public, he does not take into account the dividend taxes paid by the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the State Electricity Commission and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. That is a tax on the community that ultimately ends up in the coffers of the State government.

Under the Labor Party administration, State taxation has more than doubled. Honourable members know that the State debt has more than doubled from $11 billion to $24 billion. It is the combination of tax and debt that prevents the Premier from achieving his pledge. In addition, as I said before, the Treasurer is overseeing financial ruin.

It gives members of the Opposition no pleasure—and I mean this sincerely—to see current and future generations of Victorians inheriting massive debts. It does not matter whether it is WorkCare, the Victorian Economic Development Corporation or the Victorian Investment Corporation, everything the Treasurer is touching is ultimately imposing a huge additional cost on the community and future communities. The Treasurer cannot dissociate himself from the additional burdens. They will have to be passed on to the Victorian community because, if they are not, Victoria will be bankrupt, and that is not an understatement.

As I said, it is a combination of tax and debt that prevents the Premier from achieving his pledge. For every $1 Victorian families now pay for gas, water and electricity, most goes to pay State taxes to the Treasurer and interest on the debt incurred by the Labor Party. I shall highlight three major areas: for every $1 paid for gas, 43 cents goes on taxes and interest. I shall use the analogy of when the Liberal Party was last in power because that is what the Premier continually uses. Even after seven years in government, he claims he is still not responsible for the economic position of this State or for his own policies in terms of WorkCare or the Victorian

Economic Development Corporation. I do not use this example simply to prove a point from my side of politics; I use it because it is the comparison the Premier uses.

As I said, for every $1 paid for gas, 43 cents goes on taxes and interest. When the Liberal Party left office seven years ago, 18 cents was taken from every $1. It has more than doubled. For every $1 paid for electricity, 52 cents goes to pay taxes and interest, which has increased from 40 cents when the Liberal Party was in power. For every $1 paid for water and other services offered by the Board of Works, 63 cents is taken from it, which compares with 45 cents when the Liberal Party was in government.

Honourable members should consider the figures: for every $1 spent on gas, electricity and Board of Works bills, 43 cents, 52 cents and 63 cents respectively is used to pay taxes and interest. Those household charges are increased every year by the Labor Party. In his pledge made last year the Premier has committed those authorities to increase the charges, not just once but every year, based on the figures I have already given.

The charges are being driven up by Labor's savage hidden taxes and the interest on debt. The high taxing and high debt policies of the Labor government prevent the Premier from putting his pledge into action.

My motive for moving the motion is to ensure that the Premier and his government honour the pledge. The only way that can be done is to ensure that the public interest is protected and that families are protected by a government prepared to show compassion by framing its so-called social justice policy in legislation.

The average family is enormously affected by the high level of interest rates. A pincer movement of taxes and charges is surrounding the average Victorian family. In 1981 the then shadow Premier, now the Premier, said that high interest rates were the result of the policies of the State and Federal governments, but the Premier will not admit that today.

Interest rates are at a record high; it is not a small growth, it is a massive growth. It has been caused by the bad economic management of the Labor Party. The average Victorian family is now under pressure that has not been experienced since 1961.

I hope the experience of New Zealand some years ago will not be repeated in Victoria. I hope that we will not move into a recession but, on all the economic advice I have before me, I believe that will be the case. Interest rates are an important part of the Premier's pledge and, because of that, it is unlikely that the inflation rate will be reduced. The figures I have mentioned today are the minimum figures. They are not those most likely to occur.

Only sixteen months ago on 1 January 1988, housing interest rates were running between 12·5 per cent and 13·5 per cent, but now they are generally running at 16 per cent. One bank has a lower interest rate than that, although I suspect that will be increased and an announcement will be made on Friday. There is a small bank with higher interest rates but the trade figures will apply more pressure on those.

The average family has had its mortgage repayments increased by more than $160 a month. That has imposed a huge additional cost on the average family. Although the Liberal Party has given the Premier the opportunity of protecting home owners with mortgages he has refused to do so. The Premier is protecting the Keating line.

It is a fallacy to speak only about housing interest rates because they are not the only guide to family living standards. High interest rates severely affect small business, which is having higher costs imposed on it. Ultimately those costs will flow on to the community. Small business has high costs imposed on it because, if it is necessary to borrow money, small business is lucky to obtain those funds at 18·5 per cent.

The cost of money for an average family using Bankcard is now running at approximately 23 per cent. The sad fact is that higher inflation rates generate a higher cost of living, as do high government charges, and the people who can afford this least are using their Bankcards even more. They are using their Bankcards to live; they do not use them to buy luxury items. They are paying 23 per cent interest; that is if they are not falling behind in their repayments. The Labor government is developing a new poor in our society. An increasing number of families are the victims of the cruel hoax of the Federal and State Labor government policies.

The Premier and the government have introduced the Prices Bill, which my colleague the honourable member for Malvern will be addressing later. The government seeks to control prices but not to control interest rates or taxes and charges. The burden falls heavily also on business people and, if the proposed legislation is passed, it will ultimately drive them to the wall. The Labor government is leaving a legacy to all Victorians because of its high taxes and high debt. The government is completely indifferent not only to the plight of new home buyers but also the average Victorian family.

There are measures that the government can and should take. We have said it before and I say it again; the Liberal Party is prepared to carry the fight against home interest rates straight to the Prime Minister. Its credibility has been consistent over many years. In leading up to the 1982 election, when there were high interest rates—they were low when compared with those now—I, on behalf of my constituents, and as the then Minister of Housing strongly advocated a better deal for low-income earners to secure the option of private housing at interest rates they could afford and recognised that other needs should be addressed though government sponsored housing.

Today, seven years later, interest rates are substantially higher. The pressures on families are greater but the Labor government has fouled up the provision of housing for low-income earners and the waiting lists have more than doubled. The Liberal Party is prepared to lobby against a Federal government of any persuasion, Liberal or Labor which, through its policies, increases the burden on families. The Liberal Party is prepared to offer home owners real relief from stamp duty and it is prepared to remove that tax from family homes. It is prepared to give meaningful relief for the spiralling costs of basic household costs by freezing electricity and gas charges and ensuring that they do not increase above the rate of inflation.

The Liberal Party will ensure that it does not play a game of loaves and fishes with the education expense allowance which was designed to assist with the educational costs but which is now being used for increased guarantees that the Premier made in his pledge. Obviously further changes will occur if the predicted inflation rate is wrong.

The Liberal Party will ensure that adequate land is available for housing so that the price of land does not escalate and so force up the cost of housing beyond the ability of the people of Victoria to pay. The Liberal Party is prepared to introduce proposed legislation on the Premier's pledge if the Premier does not make a commitment to do so.

The government put the pledge together and the public responded to the pledge. It is time the public's interests were protected. If there is to be social justice in the world, the Premier should have no compunction about introducing the relevant measures.

If the Premier does not put his pledge into legislative form one can only assume that he has no intention of keeping the pledge and knows that he cannot keep it. The Liberal Party is committed to real measures that give relief to all Victorians and calls on the Premier to give reality to his campaign rhetoric. The Liberal Party calls upon

the Premier to introduce legislation to ensure that his pledge is not just another of his promises to be used and then broken.

Mr Premier, if you have concern for the people of Victoria and a belief in your own pledge, I challenge you to introduce legislation that will implement the family pledge that you have made. If you are not prepared to do so the Liberal Party will introduce legislation in the Upper House, ensure that it is passed in the Upper House and then challenge you, Mr Premier, in this Chamber, to accept and support that legislation.

It was your pledge stated for electoral purposes—it was given simply for the expediency of winning elections, but there is something more important than winning elections and that is to ensure that those the Australian Labor Party seeks to represent will be protected from the failure of the government's policies, policies that impose greater costs on and, in many cases, destroy the living standards of many Victorian families.

Mr Premier, the pledge was yours, the challenge is for you. The real question remains: have you the commitment to put that pledge into legislative form?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—This of course is the speech and the motion that the House should have debated last week, and I wish that the House had debated this issue last week because had that been the case the government would have had an even better result at the Greensborough by-election. The government did superbly anyway. If the Liberal Party could not win that by-election at that time it will never win anything.

If this speech by the Leader of the Opposition and this motion had been debated last week the government would have increased its vote at the by-election beyond what it achieved.

The Leader of the Opposition, in moving the motion, is accusing the government of operating by the standards that operated at the time of the last Liberal government. I suppose that is understandable because it has been apparent over the years that the Liberal Party does not operate on the basis of truth or integrity, but rather the political expediency of the time.

Mr Weideman—Oh no!

Mr CAIN—The honourable member for Frankston South says "Oh no!" If he is saying that is not correct, I ask him what his approach is on Supply. The Liberal Party has a flexible approach to that question. The Leader of the Opposition has said that the Liberal Party will not block Supply, but that promise has been on again, off again and so on since 1982. I mention that as an example of the flexible promises of the Opposition. The Opposition adopts the view that the principle that a government elected for a four-year term should be allowed to serve that term is a promise that can be discarded at its whim. The Opposition has never been prepared, in the party room or elsewhere, to entrench that promise in a party decision.

The Australian Labor Party keeps its commitments. The family budget pledge will be kept.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I know that honourable members opposite do not want to hear the truth. The House heard the Leader of the Opposition in almost total silence. I know the Opposition does not want to hear how well the government is performing; it probably already knows because the Labor Party continues rolling the Liberal Party at every State election.

The family budget pledge is a firm public commitment by the government; a commitment made to assist families who are struggling to pay their household bills

from week to week and month to month. As the Leader of the Opposition says, the government made and campaigned on that pledge during the last State election and made the commitment that if elected it would implement that pledge, among other things, and it will keep that commitment.

If ever there were a commitment on the public record, this is it, and it will be kept. The family pledge was detailed in the policy speech at the commencement of the State election campaign. It was canvassed widely in the media and was advertised by the Labor Party on television. No legislation is required to implement the pledge. It will be kept and will be honoured.

The total proportion of the cost of those basic items provided by the government will be the same in June 1992 as it was in June 1988 for the typical Victorian family.

I am pleased to inform the House that for the period up to July 1990 the total cost of the basket of household services covered by the family pledge will be lower than the level it was at in July 1988, and that July 1990 will mark the halfway point of the pledge. On that date a family with two children and a car, the typical Victorian family to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, will pay on average less than they did at the outset of the pledge. Had these charges increased with inflation such a family would, on average, be spending $227 extra. It represents extra money in their pockets.

I repeat: the family pledge is on target and will be honoured. I understand that the Opposition, which had 27 years in office up to 1982, cannot conceive of a government keeping its word. The reason for that, I suppose, is very simple: the opposition parties are always ready to negotiate on anything, particularly a point of principle.

The Opposition's stated concern about people to whom the pledge applies and whom it affects is at best transitory because the Leader of the Opposition feigns concern and says that the government will not keep its pledge and will abandon its solid record of moderation with taxes and charges. I ask the House to consider this: where were the Leader of the Opposition and other members of the Liberal government in 1981 when the Thompson Liberal government, the last Liberal government, increased household taxes and charges by 22·4 per cent? The cost of household electricity increased by 19·7 per cent.

I well remember that during the first month after the Australian Labor Party came to office in 1982, Sir David Zeidler had been commissioned to examine the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. I recall the moment almost seven years ago when he came to my office and said that he would be recommending that electricity charges should be increased by approximately 25 per cent to 30 per cent. That was the position faced by the new Labor government. The government rejected that advice and the result is there for all to see.

The government has put some commercial stability and good management practices into agencies like the State Electricity Commission to ensure that the trend continues. If the government had accepted Sir David Zeidler's advice electricity charges would have increased in that two-year period, 1981 and 1982, by 22 per cent and, let us say, 25 per cent—the lower range of his recommendations—a total increase of 47 per cent. That is the situation the government found itself in. In the same year, 1981, water charges had increased; public transport charges increased by 18 per cent and third-party insurance charges increased by 15 per cent.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—Who are the people who lose on these sorts of increased charges? The consumers, as the honourable member for Sunshine says by interjection, and the

Liberal Party does not give a damn about them. Year after year when the Liberal Party was in office various State government charges increased by 10, 15 or 25 per cent.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition was heard in virtual silence. The reason for that is for others to judge. There are far too many interjections that do not add anything to the debate. I ask honourable members to refrain from interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the Opposition was a member of a government that unashamedly sent household charges through the roof. The Opposition has the gall to come to this place and accuse the government after seven years in office of not being concerned about taxes and charges. The previous Liberal government demonstrated that the Liberal Party is the party of high taxes and charges.

The people took the opportunity in 1982 of rejecting the Liberal Party, and it was left to my government to restore some sanity and moderation into taxes and charges, and to give some chance to those grappling with family budgets. The Opposition does not like it but I shall compare the 1981 record, which I mentioned before, with what has occurred since.

In 1988–89, electricity prices in Victoria increased by 2·9 per cent and, in the same year, they increased by 9·8 per cent under the policies of the New South Wales Liberal government—even that could not match the hefty 19·7 per cent increase under the former Victorian Liberal government in its final year.

In 1988–89, gas prices in Victoria increased by 3·5 per cent while the increase in New South Wales was 10·1 per cent. The 22·4 per cent price rise in 1981 in Victoria under the former Liberal government makes those free marketeers north of the River Murray look like amateurs!

In public transport, Victoria had a zero increase in 1988–89 and, with the new concessions for the elderly and off-peak travel, public transport users are immeasurably better off. In 1981 the Liberal government increase in public transport charges was 18 per cent. The 1988–89 increase in New South Wales was 12·5 per cent.

The government made a commitment some time ago about taxes and charges. Families know that the figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics prove that over the past seven years that commitment has been kept, in marked contrast to what occurred previously. The bureau says that Victoria has had by far the lowest tax increases since 1982–83.

The bureau's figures show that in the past five years to 1987–88, Victoria's increase in taxation was 67·5 per cent—some 17 percentage points less than the Queensland figure for the same period which was 84·9 per cent.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The figures are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; they are not mine. The Commonwealth's increase in taxation revenue over the same period was 82·1 per cent—about 15 percentage points higher than that for Victoria.

Mr Stockdale—What is your source?

Mr CAIN—The Australian Bureau of Statistics is the source. The Opposition may not like to hear that Victoria is the only State that has had an increase in taxes below the 72 per cent.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier does not seem to be aware that the ABS publishes more than one series of statistics. I understand him to be referring to the selected State and local government charges

component of the consumer price index. I ask him to please properly identify his source by citing the name of the statistical series to which he is referring.

Mr Cooper—He doesn't know.

The SPEAKER—Order! In cases such as this, it is up to the honourable member who is speaking to identify his sources in the manner in which the member believes is appropriate and fit in the particular case. The Premier has identified the source in this case and it is up to the Premier whether he wishes to give any more precise detail as to the origin of the figures he is citing. There is no point of order.

Mr STOCKDALE—On a further point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier has virtually admitted he does not know what he is quoting from. Obviously he is quoting from a document, and I ask whether he will make the document available to the House.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Premier whether he is prepared to make the document—if, indeed, he is quoting from a document—available to the House?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I am quoting from copious notes and I shall go on using them, as did the Leader of the Opposition in making his remarks.

The figures I have quoted demonstrate that Victoria is faring better than anywhere else so far as taxes and charges are concerned. Opposition members do not like to acknowledge that fact. The Leader of the Opposition also ran out the old myths about State debt. Allow me to tell the House about State debt. It is nonsense to suggest, as the Leader of the Opposition suggests, that the level of State debt in Victoria is other than responsible and appropriate.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I shall advise the Opposition of the actual position. It continues to quote all that rubbish and does not want to hear the facts.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN—I did not learn anything, but the Leader of the Opposition does not want to listen to the facts in silence.

In 1982–83 the 1983–84 Budget sector capital expenditure was increased to pull the economy out of a deep recession. As a proportion of Victorian non-farm gross domestic product—GDP—the level of State debt fell to 28·5 per cent, and it will fall even further. In the halcyon days of the Bolte government, the State debt was more than 40 per cent of the GDP. That is the figure that matters; the debt in Victoria at the moment is far lower than it was under the Bolte government. The facts cannot be disputed, and the Opposition does not like to acknowledge those facts. It is an increasingly frantic claim that the House hears from the Opposition.

While in opposition the Liberal Party speaks of its concern about high taxation; while in office it was expert in high taxation—taxation went through the roof. The Liberal Party did not care about anybody. There was no education expense allowance and no abolition of motor vehicle registration renewal fees to assist people. It did not give a damn! The Liberal government treated families as though they did not matter, and the Opposition now has the gall to come here and speak about high taxation.

The Opposition does not like to hear that since 1982 my government has worked tirelessly to solve the problems of Victoria's major public authorities that had accumulated over 27 years of Liberal mismanagement. The government has substantially reduced the costs of services provided by those authorities. The family budget pledge, to which the Leader of the Opposition referred, will build on the record

over the next four years, thereby protecting families against any escalation of service costs or charges for households.

I shall explain for the Opposition—and particularly for the honourable member for Brighton, who appears to have great difficulty in understanding—how that will occur. Charges by the commercial authorities will be kept below inflation. Major State Budget charges will increase by figures less than the inflation rate, and private motor registration renewal fees will be entirely abolished from 1 July this year.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—You keep interjecting! There were no initiatives of this kind by the previous Liberal government. The reason is that the Opposition members have no vision about anything. All they want to do is get into office and look after their mates.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The government has a vision and shows concern about families. The government has been returned in three general elections and has won a controversial and difficult by-election. The Liberal Party feels hopeless and it should feel hopeless, because it is hopeless! The electorate has said three times in general elections that it is hopeless! I understand how its members feel. Do not let all those personal feelings well over and prevent you from understanding what is happening.

The society has moved ahead of those opposite. That is their problem; the people think and have aspirations and visions of the kind the government represents and matches. The people do not know what you think or what you stand for; you have been left for dead! That is why the new right is taking over in some of your branches and running your show, threatening all of you. That is your problem.

What I am saying about taxes and charges today and what the Leader of the Opposition has said is a small example of a wider problem. When did you think about a family budget pledge; when did you think about strategy or philosophy that helped families? Never! That is your problem. You can criticise the pledge as much as you like, but the pledge recognises——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Springvale; the honourable member for Derrimut; the honourable member for Niddrie.

Mr BILDSTIEN (Mildura)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, if you have been listening to the Premier over the past couple of minutes, you will have heard him not addressing his remarks through the Chair but consistently referring to "you", "you", and "you". I ask you to call on the Premier to address his remarks through the Chair.

The SPEAKER—Order! I must admit that I would be somewhat concerned if the Premier had intended some of his remarks to be directed at me. There seemed to be reflections in the remarks which I may not have viewed favourably. I uphold the point of order and ask the Premier to address his remarks through the Chair and to refer to honourable members in the third person.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—Mr Speaker, I understand your proper admonishment of me. The point I was making is that the family budget pledge is a manifestation of a political party that has some vision, some strategy and a plan for a four-year term of office and beyond.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the Opposition missed the point. He says, "Put it into legislation".

Mr Kennett interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order!

Mr KENNETT (Leader of the Opposition)—I withdraw.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The point I make is that the problems the Liberal Party is facing currently are problems that go deeper than leadership. I recall the problems that the Labor Party faced in the 1960s and they were similar. The problems are not just about leadership; they are about political philosophy and about being seen to stand for something. The kinds of utterances honourable members heard from the Leader of the Opposition after the Greensborough by-election are exactly the same as the utterances of Bill Hartley in the 1960s. He said, "We will win on the basis of the swing in the by-election". The Labor Party did not look like winning and it did not win. Do honourable members know why? Because in the 1960s the Labor Party was like you are now: it did not stand for anything.

The government has captured the middle ground because it is seen to stand for something. I have never said we are perfect.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I can understand some members being unable to contain exclamations, but they have gone on just a little too long.

Mr CAIN—I have said we have made mistakes. One makes mistakes when one does things. If one sits back and does nothing one makes fewer mistakes, I suppose.

The reason I oppose the motion is that the people who have returned the government three times believe the government is trying to do the kinds of things it has done and, most importantly, the people recognise that we stand for something. That is why there is no call to introduce legislation or anything else. The electors have heard the government make a promise, as it has made promises before and has honoured them; the people have seen the government presenting the family budget pledge in the context of a vision for this State over the next four years and beyond.

It is not just the family budget pledge that the electors have recognised. The economic strategy is acknowledged as being the way of achieving the pledge. People recognise the government's social justice strategy and conservation strategy as identifying the areas which the government will address to provide the people of Victoria with the kind of lifestyle they want.

As I said, the problems faced by those opposite are greater than the leadership issue. You can pick up bits of paper and make applications for information under the Freedom of Information Act; the facts are that in the last general election and in the elections conducted in 1985 and 1982, the electors saw a political party that they wanted and so put it into government.

The members of the back bench will have to wake up to the problems at some stage. You have to stir the Liberal Party to have some vision as well. It might not be about a family pledge and it might not be about the philosophies of the new right. If you want to make an improvement you have to stand up and look after people like Ian Macphee. You turn your eyes to the sky when I say that, but Ian Macphee represents and stands for more than any of the six of you on the back bench.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—Mr Speaker, far be it for me to give the Premier a lesson in grammar, but he must address his remarks in the third person. When he addresses his remarks in the second person, he is breaching Standing Orders. The Premier must make his remarks through the Chair. You have already ruled on my

previous point of order. I ask you to bring the Premier to order and require him to address his remarks through the Chair.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Premier to address the Chair.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The family budget pledge will be implemented within the constraints of the economic strategy. The government's concern about the environment——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable members for Warrandyte and Springvale are interjecting to a quite unreasonable degree and adding nothing whatsoever to the proceedings of the House.

Mr CAIN—The government's strategies do not need any legislative enactment or entrenchment to be honoured or to be introduced. For six years the government has been introducing and honouring new strategies, and the people recognise that. The government has not done everything the people want because it has not been able to in an atmosphere of lack of resources.

I repeat what I have said on previous occasions: I should have enjoyed being in power in the 1960s and 1970s when enormous growth was occurring day after day and week after week. Governments had to do nothing but manage the traffic—and you could not do even that! We are in difficult times and what the Hawke government and the Victorian government are doing is making up for the sins of omission and commission in the 1960s when the Liberal Party did nothing about restructuring manufacturing industry and nothing about the long-term economic structure and base of the country. It did not give a damn!

The only thing the Liberal Party did was to look after its mates. It gave them leases to dig holes and send minerals overseas. It had no concern about anything else. Planning is a dirty word to most Opposition members.

The family pledge is part of an overall plan, an overall vision, for this State. That is a plan the Labor Party has that the Liberal Party does not have. So long as the electors recognise that, they will continue rejecting the Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party will go on having brawls about who will win what blue ribbon seat and whose mate will get in. That is the kind of introspective, narrow thinking the Opposition does. The problem is that the Opposition has only one ideological stream that is acceptable.

I do not know whether the Opposition will form a coalition with the National Party. I know the letter must be in by 26 April for a meeting to be held. That will be a better meeting than the preselection ballot and better than any I can think about having with any of our political opponents. It will make Jeff Fenech's last fight look like a picnic!

The measure before the House is a nonsense motion. The government has a proven track record over the past seven years of implementing its policies. That is what the Opposition does not have.

Mr Weideman interjected.

Mr CAIN—It is not a miracle government, as interjected by the honourable member for Frankston South. It is a darn good government in meeting its commitments.

Mr Brown—Says who?

Mr CAIN—The electorate says. If I had been in opposition for the past seven years and I had been part of a party that in the Greensborough by-election lost 5·7 per cent

of its primary vote, I do not know what I would do. If a political party cannot hold its vote in that climate, something is radically wrong with it. The honourable member for Narracan smiled when I said that.

I know the government has problems, I recognise them and I address them. The government will go on governing for the remainder of its term and it will implement the family pledge. As the honourable member for Bendigo East interjects, the government is already ahead of schedule.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr CAIN—I said the government is ahead on the family budget pledge. The government will meet that pledge and the people of Victoria know that it will meet it. If the people of Victoria had any doubts about it they would not continue to return the government to office.

Opposition members should have a good look at themselves. As I said when I started my remarks, the problem with the Opposition—and the reason for this motion—is that it does not understand that when the government says it will do something, it does it. The Opposition does not understand because it is judging the government on its own standards.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the Opposition says that that is not true. The fact is that the Opposition would not have introduced this motion unless it believed the government would not carry out its pledge. That belief is based on its own standard.

The pledge will be kept and the government will continue to honour its promises and the policies that it was elected to deliver. I repeat for the benefit of Opposition members that the reason the electorate accepts that the government will honour its promises is because it sees the government, in marked contrast to the Opposition, as a government that has a vision, knows where it is going and has as its philosophy the growth and development of this State. The family pledge is part of that philosophy and families recognise that the government is determined to help them.

If the Opposition had been concerned about families it would not have ripped them off in 1981 and early 1982 when prices were going through the roof. The Opposition, then in government, did nothing to help those families. The result is that nobody in the community accepts that the Opposition is genuinely concerned about families because it did nothing for them when it was in government.

If the electors were in any doubt about what Liberal governments would do, they have only to look at the situation in New South Wales. State petrol tax in New South Wales is now 3·5 cents a litre. It is about to go up another 3 cents, which will take it to 6·53 cents a litre. That will mean an increase of 5 per cent in the price of petrol.

I pick up the interjection made by the honourable member for Gippsland West that the tax in Victoria is 3·9 cents a litre. In New South Wales it will be 6·5 cents a litre. I estimate that New South Wales motorists will each pay an additional $45 a year. In Tasmania, under a Liberal government, the tax is something like 7·1 cents a litre. The electorate cannot look to a Liberal government for lower costs.

The Leader of the Opposition has been rabbiting on—I think that is the right word—about interest rates, and they are of concern to the government also. I have said before that if the Liberal Party is genuinely concerned about interest rates it should have something to say about what the banks in this country are doing.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr CAIN—I am not being selective. I shall give the profits of all the banks. State Bank Victoria has ensured that increases are moderate and that its customers pay a lower interest rate than they would elsewhere. I must say that I find the manner in which spokespersons or managers of some of the private banks say they calculate their interest rates is thoroughly bad and should be rejected by everyone. A case can be made for banks bearing the blame for some of the difficulties that are occurring; they should be able to differentiate between commercial customers and people buying houses.

The pre-tax profits for 1988 are: Westpac, $1131 million; ANZ Bank, $962 million; National Australia Bank, $1009 million; Commonwealth Bank, $622 million; and State Bank Victoria, $197 million.

Nobby Clarke talks almost daily about the bank's profit performance; I do not know who runs the bank when he is away. In 1987, the National Australia Bank Ltd made a pre-tax profit of $605 million and this year its pre-tax profit was $1009 million.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Mr CAIN—The Leader of the Opposition is back to his old ways. He was more moderate when he was trying to impress his backbench.

If the banks cannot curb some of the costs that they incessantly want to pass on to the home buyer and house owner, something is wrong with them. If they are not better corporate citizens than that with regard to the interest rates charged to and paid by home buyers, there is something wrong with them. The figures I have quoted point out that the banks can show more moderation and be better corporate citizens than they are in regard to interest rates.

I know the Opposition bleeds about State Bank Victoria. The State Bank has led the way by providing more home loans than any other bank. It is able to show the way more effectively because the government has given it competitive powers which the Opposition refused it when in government. The State Bank is competitive and it is a good commercial operation because it has those powers.

Mr Maclellan interjected.

Mr CAIN—Judging by the way he is talking, the honourable member for Berwick has a problem so far as the leadership is concerned. He is trying to impress people. I can think of no other reason. Why does the honourable member go on with such senseless chatter that does not mean anything?

I believe the Opposition is genuinely concerned about interest rates. The Opposition should follow the lead of the government and indicate its concern about the private banks' profits and do something about it. That, I believe, would say more about the Opposition than anything else.

The family budget pledge is part of an overall government program to ensure that Victoria continues to be the best place in Australia in which to live. It is the place where most growth is occurring and where a person is more certain of getting a job. Some Opposition members will be looking for jobs soon if the Kroger plan marches on and demands its clones everywhere. That is what will happen. It is an ideological purge that is going through the Liberal Party; they will all have to be clones to survive. Maybe Opposition members will be looking for jobs and, if they are, they will have more chance of getting a job in Victoria than anywhere else. The government will continue providing job opportunities, even for them.

Over the next three and half years the State will have the same stable, solid government that has led to it leading the way, and it will continue to do so.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—I am always delighted to hear the Premier extolling the virtues of the former Unsworth government in New South Wales. Even in Brighton there are misguided individuals, and opposite my home is a Labor voter who every Thursday night puts out the big bins which have environmental pollution stickers on a massive scale plastered on them. They are Labor Party bumper stickers. I have three sons aged 8, 10 and 12 years who always like to have a look at those bumper stickers. One of my sons gets a real kick out of it because plastered across one bin is the sticker, "Barrie Unsworth on the right track". The Opposition believes that is right; he was on the right track—right into oblivion, and never to be seen again—and the Premier is on exactly the same track.

The family pledge is a fraud on families by playing on their most heartfelt fears and pain. Why do we have this pledge? Because the pledge tries to deal with the things families know are hurting them. Why does not the Premier look at the cost of sending children to a State school? Because he knows that families are unhappy about that and because it is costing too much. We do not have free education any more in government schools, and families are paying for a second-rate education.

The government has destroyed the work of thousands of dedicated teachers who are trying to give children a good education, and their efforts are being undermined by a government which is wasting thousands of millions of dollars on other things and is not properly funding our education system; it is allowing the standards to run down.

Why does the pledge go to motor registration fees; to gas, electricity and water bills; and to third-party insurance, licence and transport fees? It goes to all those things because the Premier knows, and his Labor Party advisers and the hacks in the party machine know, that they are the things that are hurting people.

Last night when I went home my wife had received her registration renewal bill. She said to me, "John Cain told me that I wasn't going to pay motor registration fees, but here I have a bill of $24 for motor registration and $257 for third-party insurance. Why am I getting this bill when we have a Premier who told us that we were not going to have to pay for registration?" I said, "Well, darling, the difficulty is that you believed what he told you. He said that you would not pay registration fees, but you did not read the fine print. What he actually said was that you would not pay motor registration renewal fees next year. He has only reduced your motor registration renewal fee by half this time".

What is interesting is that my wife bought the motor car only six months ago and paid a motor registration fee when she bought it. She had to register the car, but the Premier only talked about renewals. Twice in the space of six months one motorist in Victoria has learnt that what the Premier said and what was in the ALP advertisements was not true: the ALP lied and the ALP advertisements lied. The Trade Practices Commission should investigate why the ALP had television, newspaper and magazine advertisements which said in black and white, "You will not pay motor registration fees". That was not true, has never been true and is being proved untrue every time a Victorian receives a motor registration renewal notice.

The Premier gave the game away when he set up the con and said, "We'll make a family pledge". Firstly, he and the ALP tacticians were aware that these were the areas where people knew the government had hurt them. It was an attempt to con them into believing the government was going to stop hurting them. Secondly, the advertisements said, "This is a pledge; this is not a promise to be broken, this is a pledge". The Premier said that there was a difference between a promise and a pledge. For example, he has broken the promise every year to increase police strength, but he said that he would not break a pledge. He said that he does not have to pretend about keeping promises but that he would pretend to keep the pledge.

The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition puts the Premier to the test. Will the Premier honour the pledge? If he has nothing to hide and if he is an honest, decent citizen he will support the motion. He should say, "Okay, we will take the Liberal Party at its word and be prepared to honour the pledge". The reason the Premier will not support the motion is that he has no intention of honouring the pledge, he never had any intention of honouring the pledge and he knows that he will not keep it.

Indeed, the Premier knows the pledge is a con and a fraud in its own terms, yet he stands up in this place and tells us that the education expense allowance will be used to meet gas, water, and electricity bills. That is the only way the figures balance. The Premier says, "We gave you the education expense allowance"—which the Deputy Premier says is to meet the costs of sending children to school for free education—"We will give you $100 a year a child provided you are not over the income test". That point needs to be made; not everybody receives the allowance, only people who receive the family allowance receive the education expense allowance in the first place.

Therefore, all the people who do not receive the family allowance or the education expense allowance because they do not qualify for the income test will pay more. They will not pay only $1 more; even on the Premier's test they will pay $561 more over the next four years. The people who do not have children in school, or if their children have left school or if they never had children at school receive nothing from the education expense allowance and, even on the Premier's own definition, those people will pay more.

The most cruel part is that the only reason for the pledge was that the Premier wanted to trade on the fears and the pains of average families. He knew they were hurting; yet families have been prepared to shoulder their share of national responsibility.

The Premier, the Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister have been telling families that Australia faces difficult times and that we have to tighten our belts and exercise income restraints and cut our expenditure so our incomes fall. The Federal government's policies have been directed at securing a fall in real family incomes over the past five years and they have achieved that result. Families are complaining that living standards are falling, that times are tough, and that prices are rising in the supermarkets.

The family income does not go so far as it used to go, and that is not surprising. I feel that way also. But Victorians are prepared to bear their share of the national responsibility and turn this country around from the ramshackle mess into which both the government and the industrial wing of the Labor Party have placed it.

Families recognise that these are tough times and that we have to make sacrifices, but families are hurting and they want the government to take steps to protect them. However, the government is not bearing its share of responsibility. It is not tightening its belt the way it is asking families to tighten their belts.

The government is not acting in the national interest or bearing its share of responsibility. It has increased government expenditure in real terms every year that it has been in office. Every Labor Budget has increased State government expenditure in real terms; it has spent more every year. It has plundered family assets more every year and taken more family income out of the pockets of Victorian families every year.

After seven Labor Budgets, on average, expenditure has increased by 3 per cent in real terms. The government is not bearing its share of the national responsibility. What is it doing for families? Families look to State governments for fundamental

household and family services—not esoteric international relations or high-flying activities of international moment.

The business of State government is gas, water, electricity, housing, and road services. These are the basic family services that every Victorian household needs, and Victorians are being forced to pay more for all those things. Indeed, Board of Works services, electricity, gas and other fuels have increased every year under the Labor government.

This morning the Premier went through the rhetoric he has developed about what the previous Liberal government did. I shall now examine the record of the Labor government: in 1982–83, its first year in office, it increased water charges by 11·6 per cent; electricity charges by 15 per cent; and gas charges by 16·6 per cent. In the following year, for contract gas users—the people who provide the great bulk of our manufacturing work force—the gas charge was increased by 22 per cent in one year.

So this has been a high taxing, high charging government over seven Labor Budgets. It has increased State taxation by 100 per cent; the figure has doubled in the space of only six years. Victorians look to a government for basic household services, but they are being simply ripped off by the government.

The impact of State government policies on family budgets is more than it has ever been before. The government has done more than any other government in Victoria's history to damage family living standards in the fundamental requirements of running a family and, in the meantime, we pay more for various items than families anywhere else in the country, and there has been a drastic decline in basic services.

The community has simply lost confidence in the education system. Enrolments in State schools are plummeting year after year. The transport system is more expensive than it has ever been before; it loses more money that it has ever lost before—more than $1 billion a year—and yet still it does not provide decent standards of transport. In the electorate of Brighton, which I have the honour of representing, public transport services are in actual decline. The government is actually reducing the services in that electorate, and throughout Victoria it is reducing public transport services.

In terms of health services, four times as many people are waiting in pain for surgery in public hospitals as were waiting when Labor came to office. In the meantime, hospital beds are actually closing because of the incompetence of the administration of successive health Ministers under this failed government. The burden on the public health system is being increased because demand is excessive and because more and more families cannot afford to maintain their private health insurance.

Under the previous Liberal government approximately 70 per cent of the community had private health insurance whereas now the figure is barely 50 per cent. We are not getting value for money but we are paying more than ever before, and we pay more than anyone else in Australia.

The most important aspect about the debate and about the family pledge, and the most cruel fraud of all is that it most affects the weakest in the community. Over nearly 100 years the Labor Party has a long and proud tradition of standing for the poor and disadvantaged. Modern Labor has repudiated that commitment.

The Labor Party ought to be proud of the fact that the union movement and the Labor movement achieved a great deal for ordinary Australians over many decades; but modern Labor is a vicious government which is in league with the powerful union officials and big business. The very people the Premier attacks are the bedfellows of the modern Labor Party.

Who are the enemies and the victims of the Labor Party? The victims are the poor, the disadvantaged, the disabled, the people who cannot fend for themselves, and those with intellectual and physical disabilities. I am speaking about people who have always struggled in our society, and this is not just my point of view. The Premier stood in this House less than two years ago and said, "The big problem in our society now is that we have a new cycle of poverty, a new poor". The new victims of this big, high spending, high taxing, inefficient, managerially incompetent government are the people who have always struggled.

Last Saturday morning I was having a cup of coffee in the Dendy Centre in Brighton, which is a lovely spot and I highly recommend it to you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was surprised that in the course of fifteen minutes of having a cappuccino in my local shopping centre, two people approached me and complained about the difficulties they face in running their lives.

These women were not Rhodes scholars. I suggest they were unfortunates in the community who suffered from mental disabilities and compounded, as they so often are, with physical disabilities. These women were living in rental accommodation. One was a WorkCare victim—a lady with a genuine disability who had been struggling for many years working in a mail room. She was not in an exulted position in the community, like a bank manager, a public servant or a trade union bureaucrat. She was an ordinary person who suffered with enormous dignity in overcoming significant obstacles that were put in front of her throughout her life.

This woman obviously had come from a poor background, had suffered in the early years of her life and had not had the educational opportunities that were available to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to the Premier or to me. This woman was a battler who wanted to work. She had earned her living in a menial task but had the satisfaction and dignity of knowing that she was providing for herself. This woman on WorkCare was desperate to get into a rehabilitation program. She was not one of the bludgers or one of the cronies of the government in the union movement. She was a real honest to goodness Australian who wanted to work. She can no longer work in the job she had and wants to be retrained. She is anxious to return to the work force but cannot get onto a rehabilitation program because of the failure of WorkCare which has been administered by modern Labor. The government does not help the people who need it the most yet the WorkCare scheme is open to abuse by bludgers.

The other lady, a social security beneficiary, said she could not live in dignity on the pension that she was being paid by a Labor government. The costs incurred in paying electricity, gas and water rates on her house were too much. This lady tried to provide for herself while living on community support to the disabled. She suffered severe disadvantages that honourable members could never understand. She has battled all her life, but her living standard now is being destroyed by the failure of the Labor governments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you and I are hurting. Despite the remuneration we receive from this place, our purchasing power has declined over the past decade. It has been a massive decline. The Federal Liberal Party has estimated that it has fallen by as much as $50 a week in purchasing power. Fortunately, we can handle that. Our families may be hurting; there may be things we would like them to have and we cannot give them, but they get by. Honourable members live in good houses in comfortable areas. They drive good cars and are able to renew them when they are no longer economical to run them. Honourable members do not have to battle for a job, and have secure employment. Honourable members do not have nervous tension clawing at their guts because they do not know whether they will have sufficient money to buy food or pay the rent next week. We are secure from all that, but the poor and disadvantaged are not.

Mr Micallef interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—The honourable member for Springvale claims to speak for these people, but the policies of the government of which he is a member are killing them.

In another debate I referred the House to a lady I met when I was doorknocking in Highett during an election campaign. There is a large Ministry of Housing and Construction area in Highett, and it is a poor part of the Brighton electorate.

On opening her door, I could see that this lady had around her what looked like a dozen children under school age. There was washing and ironing everywhere. It was clear that this lady was taking in washing and ironing for her neighbours and also appeared to be looking after her neighbours' children. No doubt she was paid a small amount of money for doing that. I talked to her on her doorstep for about 20 minutes. It gave me an understanding of just how much the honest people in Highett and in other suburbs and towns in Victoria are suffering as a result of the failure of Labor governments. These high taxing, high spending governments that are delivering inadequate services are doing the most to hurt the weakest in our society.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STOCKDALE—Members of the government claim to represent these people. At the end of our discussion that lady told me, "My family have always voted Labor. My father voted Labor and passed his values down to me. But when I get my electricity bill every three months and my gas bill every two months; when I am unhappy about the standard of education my children are receiving at the local high school; and when I realise that my children are being locked into the poverty and disadvantaged lifestyle in which I grew up, I cannot accept that Labor governments are helping me".

Why is all this money being squandered on the failures of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and other areas in which the government has simply burnt the money it has collected from taxpayers? Why does 60 cents in every $1 that Victorians pay in electricity bills go towards servicing the borrowings of the government and in paying taxes to the government? Why is it that in 1981–82 Victorians paid only $111 million through all statutory authorities to the Liberal government and are now paying $607 million to a Labor government for the same taxes? That is an increase of 447 per cent in only seven Budgets.

Why should that poor but honest, battling lady in Highett, who cares about her family and her neighbours, have to struggle in providing a service when other bludgers are allowed to abuse the system?

Mr Roper—Are you saying people on WorkCare are bludgers?

Mr STOCKDALE—No, I am not saying that, but some people are bludging on WorkCare and on the health system. I am distinguishing between them and the honest people, the people not bludging on the system who really need the support of the rest of society. Do government members say that the single mothers who have been deserted by uncaring men——

Mrs Hirsh interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—The honourable member should just listen to my question. She will have her chance when she receives the next call. What do government members say about single mothers living in Highett and in the Brighton electorate who receive only a pittance by way of social security benefits, when more than half of what they get is ripped-off by a State government in high taxes and charges? What do

they say when their families are burdened down because of high spending, high taxing, inefficient Labor governments? Are these people well off?

Would it not be better if Victoria had a government that identified the people who need the support of the community and could give them a decent standard of living? Should not benefits be increased for single mothers and deserted wives and husbands, struggling to bring up families and to hold households together under great difficulty? Should not they be provided with enough to allow them to live in dignity? The Labor government simply rips off these people by savage taxes and charges which it then loses in unsuccessful ventures. These honest people have been deprived of a dignified standard of living because their inadequate social security benefits have been destroyed by high taxing Labor governments. The Victorian Labor government is at the head of the list.

The lady in Highett was not on social welfare. She was struggling to bring up a family. Her husband had been in and out of work and was desperately seeking a job. She was taking in and doing other people's washing, and looking after their children to get some money to pay the bills being sent to her by this high taxing government every two or three months. These are the people who are the victims of the Labor government. These people are the ones who have been most hurt.

It has not been the people living in $700 000 houses on the beach front in Brighton. Those people are certainly not being hurt by the government. The ones hurting the most are the battlers in Highett and people in the Brighton electorate who have retired on a fixed income. The government is hurting the poor, the new poor as the Premier said. The new poor have been created by the failure of Labor governments. The new poor have been driven into the ground by Labor governments.

The government's pledge is a fraud on these people. It is a dishonest pledge because it double counts. The Deputy Premier told these people that they would receive the education expense allowance to pay the costs of sending their children to school. The Premier's pledge simply takes money from these people through gas, electricity and water bills which will have to be paid with the education expense allowance.

Families should not have to spend the money in that way. Parents should not have to turn their childrens' bedroom lights off at night while they are doing their homework to ensure that they have the money to pay the so-called voluntary school fees—which have increased.

The education expense allowance is a fraud, because schools are taking the extra money. There is nothing left to pay for school uniforms and books; and because the schools are taking the money it cannot be used to pay the water, gas, and electricity bills. The Victorian Federation of State School Parents Clubs has discovered that schools are increasing the so-called voluntary fees; and if parents do not pay them their children are often ostracised.

Mrs Hirsh interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—The honourable member for Wantirna should do the same research. If she did so, she would discover that parents are being stood over and forced to pay fees that are not voluntary in the true sense of the word. Parents have to pay; if they do not their children are victimised and often lose access to the facilities provided by the school.

The Liberal Party is not making that claim. Twice last year the Victorian Federation of State School Parents Clubs issued statements drawing attention to the fact that government schools were appropriating that money. The government is aware of that and is being dishonest by not admitting that extra money is not available to pay gas,

electricity, and water bills. That money is being ripped off by government schools and the government is not maintaining the real value of the education expense allowance. The $60 million that has been paid out to parents for students is being ripped off and, as the government is aware, is being used to augment the education budget. This represents a fraudulent money-go-round, and members opposite know that.

My electorate borders that of the honourable member for Bentleigh. Many people in the honourable member's electorate are among the Premier's new poor, who are being disadvantaged by this high-taxing, high-spending government. The phoney compassion and phoney hearts-on-their-sleeves attitudes of members opposite show their complete lack of appreciation of what government policies are doing to honest, decent people in the community whose living standards are being destroyed and whose kids are not being given a decent start in life.

Many students coming out of government schools are unable to either read or write properly. They are disadvantaged in comparison with the children of most honourable members who, because of their comfortable circumstances, are able to send their children to private schools. I have two children in private schools and one in a government school. As high as the standard is in that State school, my child would receive a better education at a non-government school. All honourable members are aware that the standards are higher in non-government schools; and honourable members who claim otherwise are kidding themselves and attempting to delude the House.

Mr E. R. Smith interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—As the honourable member for Glen Waverley says by interjection, government members know that is true because they send their children to private schools. Indeed, most government members attended private schools; certainly the Premier did so. I do not criticise his father for that; he was very wise to make that choice.

What other alternative policies are offered by this decent, caring government? For twenty months, the government has implemented a so-called prices freeze on gas and electricity prices.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs HIRSH (Wantirna)—I vigorously refute the frivolous motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Such action is not necessary because Victorians support the promises made by the government. The Cain government's family budget pledge does not need to be expressed in legislation.

Despite the protestations of Opposition members that they do not believe the Premier, the Victorian people have elected the Cain Labor government for the third time. The standards that the Liberal Party is using to judge the Premier's pledge are the same promise-breaking standards it applied for many years when it was in government.

The people of Victoria elected Labor governments in 1982, 1985 and 1988—and expressed their support for the government in the Greensborough by-election last Saturday. Victorians are saying clearly that the family budget pledge is what they want. The honourable member for Brighton had the temerity to cite the problems being faced by single mothers—and although he used the term "single mother" I prefer the term "sole parent". As a sole parent with three children, if it were not for the policies of the Whitlam, Cain and Hawke Labor governments I would still be living in the type of poverty that single parents lived through in the 1960s because of

the policies of the Menzies and Bolte Liberal governments. It is only since the election of the State and Federal Labor governments that sole parents have had a fair go.

There is no justification whatsoever for the way the honourable member for Brighton cited the problems being faced by sole parents. Perhaps he should offer them his second job! The Liberal Party thinks it has a monopoly on caring for the interests of families. Perhaps in the old days of true Liberalism and because of policies advocated by the Federal member for Goldstein, Mr Macphee, and the former State member for Doncaster, Morrie Williams, that may have been the case. But with the new right in the ascendency in the Liberal Party, as exemplified by Mr Kroger, Professor Kemp and Mr Costello, the Liberal Party can no longer make such a claim. It is a pity that the Liberal Party is abandoning people who espouse the interests of families.

The family budget pledge that was made by the Premier last year has been appreciated by many families in my electorate. I have received telephone calls and letters from my constituents expressing their support for the pledge. On Saturday mornings people often stop me in the street and tell me how much they appreciated the increase in the education expense allowance that was paid in February this year, which enabled them to buy shoes and school books for their children.

As a sole parent, I appreciated the timing of that increase because I had school books and three pairs of school shoes to buy. People such as the honourable member for Brighton never have to worry about buying school shoes—although perhaps he is doing extra work to raise the money! But such people cannot appreciate the boost the increased allowance gave to sole parents, expecially at a time of the year when children were starting school.

The phasing out of car registration fees is particularly valuable for those people who live in the outer suburbs of Melbourne and who, because of inadequate transport services, have had to rely on their cars to travel to work. The government is taking steps to increase those people's access to public transport but at present such people have a long way to drive to work and are faced with the considerable expense of running a car. The phasing out of car registration fees is another component of the family budget pledge that is appreciated by those people who live in the outer metropolitan area. Whatever members opposite say does not matter, because the people of Victoria are the ones who count and they continue to vote for the Labor Party—and will continue to do so.

In accordance with Sessional Orders, the debate was interrupted.

The SPEAKER—Order! The time appointed for me to interrupt the business of the House has now arrived. The honourable member for Wantirna may continue her remarks when the motion is next before the Chair.

The sitting was suspended at 1 *p.m. until* 2.4 *p.m.*

CREDIT (ADMINISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 6, page 4, line 19, after "office" insert "if, in the opinion of the Governor in Council—

   (*a*) the member is unable, by reason of physical or mental illness, to perform the duties of the office; or

   (*b*) the member is incompetent; or

(*c*) the member has misbehaved.".

2. Clause 6, page 8, lines 5 and 6, omit proposed sub-section (7).
3. Clause 6, page 11, lines 34 to 37, omit proposed sub-section (3).
4. Clause 6, page 11, line 38, omit "(4)" and insert "(3)".
5. Clause 6, page 12, line 1, omit "(5)" and insert "(4)".
6. Clause 6, page 12, line 1, omit "or (4)".
7. Clause 6, page 12, line 3, omit "Tribunal or".
8. Clause 6, page 12, lines 3 and 4, omit ", as the case may be".
9. Clause 6, page 12, line 5, omit "(6)" and insert "(5)".
10. Clause 6, page 12, line 9, omit "(7)" and insert "(6)".
11. Clause 6, page 12, line 12, omit "(8)" and insert "(7)".

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr CLARK (Balwyn)—An omission appears to have been made in the amendments made by the other place. When the Bill was before this Chamber previously, I raised the matter of the limitation on the rights of appeal from decisions of the Credit Licensing Authority. At that stage, I advanced several arguments that, in my opinion, pointed to the conclusion that a full right of appeal to the Supreme Court should continue to exist, whereas that right was being confined by the amendments made in the Bill.

During debate in this place on the last occasion, the Minister for Consumer Affairs said he would consider the issues I raised while the Bill was between here and another place. I am disappointed that he did not take up the points that I made. Of all the points I raised on that occasion, one was particularly serious, namely, the fact that once the Supreme Court hears an appeal it does not have the ability to take into consideration evidence except of matters arising prior to the date of the original hearing before the Credit Licensing Authority. As a consequence, if the essence of an appeal to the Supreme Court is that circumstances have changed since the original hearing, and that, although originally the appellant was not considered a fit and proper person, nonetheless, he should now be granted a licence. Because such an amendment has not been made——

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member that the Standing Orders provide for debate only on matters that are before the House and not on matters that are not before it. Even though the honourable member may wish to canvass them, he cannot refer to them other than in passing.

Mr CLARK—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I conclude my remarks by saying that I am disappointed that the matters I raised have not been dealt with, and I hope the Minister will explain to the House why that has not occurred.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I make it clear to the Minister for Consumer Affairs that in future when minor amendments to Assembly amendments are made by the Legislative Council that differ from those made in this Chamber, my instructions to the Upper House Opposition spokespersons on these matters will be not to accept them unless I am aware of them.

As I understand it, a minor amendment was dealt with in the Council, with which the President, along with Mr Connard, was able to help at the time.

I request that in future the Minister ensures that copies of amendments proposed to be moved in the Upper House by the government are provided to all members of the

opposition parties. It is my responsibility on behalf of the Opposition to ensure that honourable members are aware of the amendments, and I suggest the Minister should make copies of them available in future.

It would appear that members of the National Party in the Upper House were not given the information at the appropriate time and that an honourable member for Western Province, Mr Hallam, was extremely concerned about not receiving certain information. If that is true, it does not reflect well on the Minister.

I also raise an issue with you, Mr Speaker, regarding the availability of daily *Hansard.* I have attempted to obtain copies of the record of the debate on the Bill that took place in the Legislative Council and have been unable to do so because of some problem that is occurring at the Victorian Government Printing Office.

It seems to me that, over the six years that I have been a member of this place, the performance of the Victorian Government Printing Office in providing copies of *Hansard* to this Parliament has become somewhat dreadful.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member has made his point and he is now straying far and wide beyond the amendments now before the House.

Mr LEIGH—I am simply saying that our inability to obtain copies of the record of the debate that took place in the other Chamber makes it extremely difficult for the Opposition to do its job, particularly when it is quite clear that the Minister for Local Government in the other place did not know what she was doing.

Mr Crabb interjected.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister for Police and Emergency Services did not know what the Minister for Local Government was doing. The big mouth on the other side of the Chamber, who is a bit of a cowboy himself——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should ignore interjections.

Mr LEIGH—I am simply saying, Mr Speaker——

Mr Crabb interjected.

Mr LEIGH—I am not interested in Aboriginal names.

I am saying that the Opposition does not believe the Minister for Consumer Affairs has handled the amendments as well as they could have been handled, and I hope he will improve his performance in the future.

The motion was agreed to.

LICENSING AUTHORITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Council's amendments:

1. Clause 5, page 3, line 27, after "office" insert "if, in the opinion of the Governor in Council—
   (*a*) the member is unable, by reason of physical or mental illness, to perform the duties of the office; or
   (*b*) the member is incompetent; or
   (*c*) the member has misbehaved.".
2. Clause 5, page 9, line 15, after "Authority" insert "who must be a duly qualified legal practitioner".
3. Clause 7, line 19, omit "85L" and insert "85M".

4. Clause 9, line 39, omit "9. In" and insert "9. (1) In".

5. Clause 9, line 40, after this line insert—

'(2) After section 95 (3) of the Principal Act insert—

"(4) Regulations made under this Act may be disallowed in whole or in part by resolution of either House of the Parliament in accordance with the requirements of section 6 (2) of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.

"(5) Disallowance under sub-section (4) is deemed to be disallowance by Parliament for the purposes of the *Subordinate Legislation Act* 1962.".'.

6. Clause 14, line 32, before "is" insert "that".

7. Clause 14, line 37, after "(iii)" insert "is a body corporate".

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I shall make a point about the amendment the Opposition moved in the other place with regard to the disallowance of regulations. When the Leader of the House is wearing his Minister for Consumer Affairs hat, he instructs his Upper House colleagues to disagree to a proposed amendment dealing with the disallowance of regulations but not to call for a division. However, when he is wearing his Minister for Planning and Environment hat and the Opposition proposes exactly the same amendment, the Minister instructs his Upper House colleagues to call for a division. The Minister made a lot of noise about how the Opposition was not interested in the ozone layer.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member should confine himself to matters before the House.

Mr LEIGH—I am confining myself to them, because one of the proposed amendments the House is discussing is exactly the same as another one proposed in the other place. The government appears to be adopting different attitudes. On the one hand, when the honourable gentleman is wearing his Minister for Consumer Affairs hat he is happy to oblige, but when he is wearing his Minister for Planning and Environment hat and thinks he can score a few points he is happy to get stuck into some good political head kicking. It is disinformation from the bunch up in the Press Gallery called the Victorian Government Media Unit or the "Ministry of Truth".

The Opposition has been responsible; it has moved a proposed amendment regarding disallowance of regulations for this Bill but did not suggest it to be included in the Credit (Administration) (Amendment) Bill because it realised it could have damaged the Bill. The Opposition has taken the interests of the community into consideration.

Mr CLARK (Balwyn)—I refer to amendment No. 2, which provides that the Registrar of the Credit Licensing Authority must be a person who is a duly qualified legal practitioner. That does not seem to be of any great substance. It appears that the Minister for Consumer Affairs, in agreeing to this amendment, is overlooking a far more serious matter raised previously in this House by the honourable member for Murray Valley, namely, the question of whether the Chairperson of the Credit Licensing Authority should be a duly qualified legal practitioner.

During the debate on the Bill in this House, the argument was advanced that the chairperson should be a duly qualified legal practitioner because of the significance of the matters coming before the authority. I wonder whether amendment No. 2 is the amendment the Minister really intended to make or whether instead or in addition he also intended to accept the point made by the honourable member for Murray Valley and require that the chairperson of the authority be a duly qualified legal practitioner. I hope the Minister will clarify that point.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—It appears that the Minister for Consumer Affairs has not listened to the comments made by the honourable member for Balwyn when the Bill was debated in this House. When I raised the matter with the Minister, he said that when the Bill was between here and the other place he would analyse a particular proposed amendment to ensure that the Chairperson of the Credit Licensing Authority had a minimum number of years' experience of legal training.

Amendment No. 2 requires that the registrar of the authority will be the person to have that qualification. I seek comment from the Minister about the original point made by the honourable member for Balwyn and the further comments of members of the National Party.

The motion was agreed to.

POLICE REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. 2)

The debate (adjourned from March 16) on the motion of Mr Crabb (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) for the second reading of the Bill was resumed.

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—The Bill makes changes to the Police Regulation Act, the Corrections Act, the Pensions Supplementation Act, the Community Services Act and the Ombudsman Act. In his second-reading speech the Minister for Police and Emergency Services said the Bill reflected the government's ongoing concern to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the efforts against crime by the Victoria Police Force.

One of the main thrusts of the measure is to provide offsets for the second-tier wage increases to the Police Force. It would be wise for the government to recognise that currently there is considerable unrest among members of the Police Force about some of the so-called offsets contained in the Bill. The government may be able to claim—as it does—that the offsets have the approval of the Victoria Police Force and the Police Association. However, the fact remains—as I am sure the Minister and other honourable members will be aware—that many police officers are not happy with some of the offsets.

The unhappiness centres around the requirement that police officers will have to give three months' notice of resignation rather than the present one month. That requirement is focused on by members of the force as an area of resentment and frustration. That has been reflected in the recent public statements of many serving police officers and in the meeting a couple of weeks ago that was called by members of the Police Association. That type of requirement heightens the awareness of the police about matters about which they feel resentment and frustration and it increases their concern about the government's ability to produce on its promises.

The Bill requires that serving members of the Police Force wishing to resign will have to give three months' notice. If they do not, they will be subject to a financial penalty of not more than twenty penalty units, which is $2000. Most serving police officers to whom I have spoken and who have contacted me regard that requirement as onerous, unfair and discriminatory.

Why has the Police Force been singled out? Why are members required to give three months' notice of resignation, or if they fail to do so, pay a heavy fine, when employees elsewhere in the Public Service do not have that requirement?

Mr Sandon—Where else do you get such magnificent early superannuation?

Mr COOPER—I take up the interjection of the honourable member for Carrum although I know it is unruly. I am happy to acknowledge that fact, but I have been

speaking about members of the Police Force whose frustration is causing a drop in morale, and much of that results from the threat to their superannuation benefits.

The honourable member for Carrum will be aware that this is a threat to a superannuation scheme that was put in place by Parliament. I shall return to the early retirement aspect of the superannuation scheme, but the fact is that nowhere else in the Public Service are employees required to give three months' notice of resignation or required to pay a heavy financial penalty if they fail to do so.

Serving police officers and retired police officers believe this requirement is onerous. It is unfair and discriminatory. The matter should be addressed by the government because, despite the fact that the Police Association has told the government that it agrees with the requirement, it must be recognised and understood by the government that many serving police officers are unhappy about it. They want to know why they have been singled out in such a way.

Much has been said about the drop in police morale. Many are asking themselves whether it is worth while continuing their careers in the Police Force. It is a sad reflection on the earning capacity, conditions and retirement package within the Police Force. In 1987–88, 811 sworn police officers resigned from the force. Between 1 July 1988 and February this year, 626 officers have already resigned from the force. If that resignation rate is maintained the resignations for the year ending 30 June will be in excess of 900—approximately 100 resignations more than those in the previous financial year.

Unless some changes are made and definite statements of support emanate from the governments in Victoria and Canberra there will be a resignation rate increase rather than a decrease this year. It appears to me and to other observers that the prospect of the resignation rate decreasing is minimal. The present resignation rate is unacceptable and an increase in that rate will be intolerable.

Members of the Police Force resign for two reasons. Firstly, police in this State more than ever before feel the failure of the government to back up the force with greater manpower and resources. I shall not detail those matters more than to suggest that it is a matter of importance to the community. It is a matter that the community takes seriously and it expects the government to address that matter. It is a perception held by the police and it is important that the government recognises and addresses the matter.

The other matter raised by the honourable member for Carrum by way of interjection was the well-founded perception held by the Police Force, and also by members of the ambulance service and the fire brigade, that the full benefits of the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme are under threat, not because of the actions of the Victorian government, but because of the actions of the Commonwealth government. These agencies understand that the policies of the Federal government threaten to impact severely upon the benefits accruing from lump sum payments.

The agencies, by deputations to Canberra, and in a number of other ways, have sought to obtain a statement from the Federal Treasurer that the Federal government's policies will not impact upon their accrued benefits in the way they fear will occur. They have not received assurances from the Federal Treasurer that have placated and eased their concerns. Their concerns have been heightened rather than lessened by the threats on superannuation benefits from Canberra.

With increasing resignations and lower morale in the Police Force it is a matter of such gravity that the government should take urgent action. I am aware that concern has been expressed about the impact on superannuation benefits for the recipients not

only of the police superannuation scheme but also of those of the fire brigade and ambulance personnel.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade is worried about the impact this provision may have. We cannot afford the situation to deteriorate. The government should use its good offices and its influence in every possible way to obtain from the Federal Treasurer an assurance that he will not take action that will dramatically affect the staffing of the Victoria Police Force. It is under strength and nothing should be done that would cause the situation to deteriorate even more.

Other matters in the Bill that deserve recognition are the changes to the Police Regulation Act which provide the Governor in Council with the ability to appoint acting deputy commissioners or acting assistant commissioners. It also provides for the control of the protective services officers by the Chief Commissioner of Police and provides for changes to the composition of the Police Discipline Board.

I direct the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to clause 6, proposed new section 6A, which does not include the existing section 6A (2) power in the principal Act that allows the Chief Commissioner of Police to revoke any delegation of powers or functions at will. The amendment does not appear to give the chief commissioner that ability and I ask the Minister to respond to my comment and indicate whether it would be necessary for a further amendment to be moved to ensure that the chief commissioner has the power to revoke the delegation of his powers at will or whether it is implied in the Bill.

It may be that it is an oversight or that the Minister does not believe it is necessary for the chief commissioner to have that power. If it is the latter, that may require further debate between the Opposition and the government, because the Opposition believes that where the Chief Commissioner of Police does delegate powers he should have the authority to revoke and remove that delegation of powers without going through any lengthy procedure.

The Opposition believes the chief commissioner should have that authority and if it is an oversight in the Bill it can be corrected. It could be that the point I make has been addressed by the government; if that is so I want to know what the government has in mind in regard to that matter.

Clause 30 amends the Corrections Act 1986 to enable regulations to be made to control the actions of people detained in police gaols and to ensure that those people sentenced by the court can carry out their sentences in police gaols. It is an interesting provision because it signals the permanency of police cells being used as gaols. I do not believe the government or the Opposition would regard this as a desirable practice.

The Opposition recognises the realities of today regarding cells and prisons and the fact that the number of prisons, even with the opening of new prisons at Lara and Castlemaine, is not sufficient to cater for the prison population. It is on that basis that certain prisoners will be held in places other than recognised gaols. That is a matter of concern to the Opposition.

Information I received approximately four weeks ago suggests that there are between 160 and 180 convicted persons being held in police cells because there is no room for them in any of Victoria's goals. I understand when people are convicted in Magistrates Courts an assessment is made and if it is a short sentence of two months or so and those convicted persons are regarded as reasonably normal—they do not have psychiatric problems or do not appear likely to be subject to self-mutilation or to be violent—they will be left in police cells to serve their sentences. That information came to me from the Office of Corrections and I thank the office for it.

Mr Maclellan interjected.

Mr COOPER—The honourable member for Berwick says by way of interjection that these prisoners are given a motel-type sentence. I understand the honourable member means by that that prisoners are moved around from one police cell to another police cell. The accommodation in police cells can hardly be regarded as motel-type accommodation. I recognise that you, Mr Speaker, have in your electorate one of the most modern police stations, the station at Werribee, which has recently been opened, but even the cells in the Werribee police station were not designed to accommodate prisoners for any lengthy period.

The cells in many police stations throughout the State are less than desirable. A visit to the Fitzroy or Geelong police stations would show people the kind of cell accommodation that is available and no-one would want to leave a convicted person in one of those cells for an extended period, certainly not for more than a couple of days.

In many instances short-term prisoners who have been sentenced for two or three months are completing their sentences in police cells. That is not satisfactory. Those prisoners remain locked up for most of the time with only short periods of recreation outside the cell because there are no recreation facilities in the police cells. The prisoners become bored and when that occurs they become resentful and often violent. In many cases they are not even able to have normal visitation rights because of the security problems within the police station.

Apart from all those things the prisoners tie up the valuable resources of police officers who are required, because prisoners are being held for lengthy periods, to act as gaolers. That takes the police officer away from the duties he should be doing, protecting the public on the streets and upholding the law. Rather than doing the duty for which they are trained, a number of police officers have been turned into gaolers. It is not a job for which they have been trained and, having regard to the shortage of police officers in Victoria, is not satisfactory so far as the community is concerned.

The government is now seeking to make all of these problems disappear by this amendment to the Corrections Act! I know that the Minister would agree with everything I have said thus far because the situation is less than satisfactory and is undesirable, but the reality of life and the ever-increasing crime rate means that the many people facing the courts and being convicted have to be placed somewhere and this is the only way they can be dealt with.

I should like the situation to be addressed. Perhaps when the House debates the Corrections (Amendment) Bill some of those issues can be addressed, because it is obviously unsatisfactory to have people who have been sentenced being held in custody in police cells.

Part 3 of the Bill amends the Ombudsman Act. I note that the Ombudsman has had input into most of the changes proposed to the Act and that many of the amendments result from his request to the government. The government should pay careful attention to the concerns expressed by the Ombudsman about the way these amendments have been dealt with.

On 23 March 1989 the Ombudsman wrote to me, after I asked him for some response to the Bill. His letter says, in part:

> I am told that the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services does not want to relinquish any control it may have over the manner in which the oversight or review of police investigations is made and this is the reason for not following my request that those sections dealing with the Ombudsman should be incorporated in the Ombudsman Act. I am of the view that it is better to completely divorce the investigation of complaints against the police from the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services . . .

I have quite strong views that the Ombudsman's Office should be seen to be completely independent and responsible to Parliament or a Committee of Parliament. It would seem to me to be inconsistent that if my office is investigating complaints against police it has to follow an Act which is under the control of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services but when investigating complaints against the Office of Corrections, which also has an internal investigation unit, there is not the requirement for this to be covered by the Act which is the responsibility of the Minister for Corrections . . .

The words of the Ombudsman are fair, and should be considered. To ensure the total impartiality of the Ombudsman's office is preserved and just as importantly, if not more importantly, is seen to be preserved, the views of the Ombudsman deserve more than a passing acknowledgment. The government's proclivity for politicising the Public Service is well known and provides a lasting stench that attaches itself to every Bill introduced by the government.

This Bill is regarded as a step towards political interference in the Ombudsman's office. It will be a further blow to the already severely-dented credibility of the government. I urge the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to take on board with some seriousness the concerns of the Ombudsman and the concerns I have expressed today. He should not only regard them seriously but should also address them without partisanship or political bile because they deserve nothing less.

All the matters I have referred to in relation to the Bill are important and should be noted by the government. I hope the Minister responds accordingly. However, in general terms, the Bill will not be opposed by the Opposition.

Mr McNAMARA (Leader of the National Party)—The Police Regulation (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) makes a number of amendments to the Police Regulation Act 1958 to reflect offsets for the second-tier wage increases and improves internal efficiency within the Victoria Police Force. The Bill also removes certain anomalies in the provisions governing management of the force and the functions of the Deputy Ombudsman (Police Complaints).

The Bill effectively makes the Chief Commissioner of Police head of the police department as opposed to head of the Victoria Police Force. That clarifies the situation of public servants within the department who are theoretically answerable to the Chief Administrator but who have been actually under the command of the Chief Commissioner of Police.

The Bill will allow the Chief Commissioner of Police to delegate responsibilities to members of the force below the rank of inspector. The National Party has received representations from the Police Association and other groups. There is a general acceptance of that provision, but the Victorian Public Service Association has raised a concern about the change in the role of the Chief Commissioner of Police. The Chief Commissioner of Police should be in command of all areas of the police department, not merely those of the uniformed section.

Changes are made regarding the provision of protective services officers. Clause 32 amends the Community Services Act 1970 to ensure that protective services officers have complete indemnity when transporting youth detainees to and from courts. Provision is also made for a rank structure to be established for the protective services officers. Every officer would consider that he or she has a capability to improve in that occupation. The provision will improve the retention rates of those officers.

The Bill clarifies some anomalies resulting from the establishment of the office of the Deputy Ombudsman (Police Complaints). The Deputy Ombudsman inherited his powers from the former Police Complaints Board and has powers not available to the Ombudsman, and vice versa. The Bill brings those powers into line; most importantly, it ensures that the Deputy Ombudsman cannot be called before the Police Service

Board or the Police Discipline Board, bolstering the necessity for his impartiality, and improving his perceived trustworthiness and consequent ability to gather information.

The Bill makes a number of other changes. Clause 8 provides that three months' notice must be given instead of the present one months' notice on resignation. That is a trade-off for the second-tier wage deal, and for a variety of reasons disadvantages employees who wish to resign. Members of the force certainly will not wait for three months; they will use other avenues such as taking sick leave, long service leave, or annual leave to achieve the same result, effectively removing themselves from their units with no replacements until the members in question have finished those periods of leave.

It is important that the Minister gives an assurance that, in the case of an officer who decides to use those avenues, by taking, for example, extended long service leave, sick leave, or annual leave to cover the three months, another officer is appointed to fill the position. That provision could create problems where small concentrations of police are evident, particularly in rural areas where an inspector, superintendent or senior officer gives notice, but is effectively not available to the force because the option has been exercised.

Clause 9 provides that if a member resigns within six months of promotion, his superannuation is paid on the previous rank level. Apparently, that is acceptable to the Police Association but the National Party is concerned about why that provision is not applicable in other emergency services particularly for ambulance and fire officers.

The National Party does not intend to move an amendment, but asks the Minister to consider clarifying the anomaly so that it applies to all officers in the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme. The government should not be selective in giving preference to members of the Victoria Police Force.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned the government's policy statement *Building a Law-Abiding Society.*

Mr Crabb interjected.

Mr McNAMARA—Yes, it also said "Together". The Minister reflected on the government's on-going concern to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Victoria Police Force.

With that in mind, I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to seriously examine the amendments to clause 8 because officers will use long service leave and other leave to cover that three-month requirement. Will the Minister assure the House that if that happens in the work place, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Victoria Police Force, as he said in his statement, will not be affected, and that positions will be swiftly filled, rather than being vacant for the three months?

Apart from the main concerns of the National Party, as I have outlined them, the National Party does not oppose the Bill.

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—As previous speakers have said, this Bill is mechanical; in some ways the police themselves are pleased with the way the government has proceeded. However, the concerns expressed by the honourable member for Mornington and the Leader of the National Party epitomise the shortfalls felt by the Opposition. I refer particularly to clause 29 (3), which refers to the Ombudsman Act 1973, and to the "opening of letters in accordance with" the provisions of that Act.

The work of the Ombudsman should have been considered before, particularly in administration. Recently I was approached by an unusual source about the

inadequacies in the administration area relating to the opening of prisoners' correspondence.

As most honourable members would be aware, prisoners in Victoria's gaols can send letters at government expense and on government paper to anyone they like. The regulations effected during the term of office of the former Attorney-General, now the Minister for Transport, provide that the letters can be sent uncensored. Prisoners at Pentridge Prison are also allowed to make three approved telephone calls through the switchboard; in other gaols in Victoria they can make any number of telephone calls provided they pay for them.

Honourable members will have read in newspapers that the victims of crimes committed by prisoners in Pentridge Prison and other gaols are contacted by prisoners. Prisoners also contact witnesses and allegations have been made that police officers involved in cases have been contacted.

The government must consider with seriousness the newest group who are being harassed and intimidated by prisoners—prosecutors. The Police Regulation (Amendment) Bill (No. 2) will probably help to rectify the difficulties associated with this matter.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services must take action to stop prisoners writing threatening letters to law-abiding citizens. He is probably aware of the problems. I know that letters have been sent to him requesting that he ensure that all people in the four classifications to which I have referred—the victims, the witnesses, the police, and particularly the prosecutors—are not intimidated by prisoners. Urgent action should be taken if any person from those four classes of people informs the Minister or his representatives that he or she is being intimidated. The Minister should ensure that mail from those prisoners is opened and perused.

Recently I gave examples of letters I have in my possession which were written by a prisoner in Pentridge Prison who was convicted and gaoled last October. He is corresponding on almost a weekly basis—sometimes more often—in a threatening way with the prosecutor responsible for his being incarcerated.

Honourable members should try to put themselves into the position of the prosecutor, the police officers, the witnesses to the event, or even the victims of crime and allow their minds to imagine the fear these people might experience.

The prosecutor whom I mentioned has a thick file of letters from the prisoner to whom I referred. The letters contain threats to be carried out unless the prosecutor takes certain legal steps, all of which are nonsense. Consideration has been given to the case and the proper procedures have been carried out as required by due legal process. The prisoner is attempting to intimidate the prosecutor and his personal life is being interfered with.

The Bill seeks to rectify such areas of difficulty. I urge the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to give urgent attention to any correspondence he may have received from prosecutors or from any member of the other classes of people to whom I have referred. Unless he does, Victoria's gaols will be viewed by reasonable citizens as nothing more than holiday homes for prisoners.

Any honourable member who has been into a gaol is aware of the conditions the prisoners have to endure. If one walks through Pentridge Prison, for example, one can see prisoners lying on their bunks watching television. The crimes that many of them have committed require more serious occupation of their time, such as hard labour. The government has not taken that on board although it is what the community expects.

Mr Bildstien—The community demands!

Mr E. R. SMITH—As the honourable member for Mildura interjects, the community demands such a response.

Clause 30 should be given the most urgent attention by the Minister and prison officials. Sometimes I worry about the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

The morale of the Victoria Police Force is continually under pressure and yet the Minister seems to be following his normal path of delving into trivia. While the provisions of the Bill highlight the state of morale of the Victoria Police Force, the Minister is wanting to rename mountains! The people of Victoria do not see him in the role of someone who cares about the Police Force he should be administering but rather as someone who devotes his time to such issues as the renaming of the Grampians! Those issues are not creating cohesion in the community but are causing unnecessary dissension. The Minister by pursuing trivia is diverting attention away from serious matters such as the state of morale among police officers in Victoria.

As I said, morale is very low among the members of the Victoria Police Force. One need only examine articles written by those qualified to speak about the police. I refer to such an article written by the former Deputy Commissioner of the Victoria Police Force, Paul Delianis. The article is a feature article on the morale of police officers and appeared in the *Age* of 16 March this year. Mr Delianis points out three areas that are contributing to low morale. One is the shortage of police officers and the effect of this shortage on currently serving members of the force, and the excessive workloads they have while working in particularly dangerous environments. He refers to morale being affected by insufficient funding which does not allow for efficient police operations. The third area highlighted by Mr Delianis is the overcrowding of police cells with all classes of prisoners.

While the Bill addresses the area of administration of the police cells, it does not provide solutions to the morale problems confronted by police officers. Members of the force consider the work in that area to be one of the most demeaning jobs they must perform. Most young people who join a police force do so for the very simple reason that they see the job as a good career prospect and as providing a community service by which they can contribute to enforcing law and order in the community. Police officers see themselves in the operational role of enforcing law and order, whether on the beat, in traffic operations, or in the criminal investigation area.

Police officers are frequently used as gaolers who ferry people from one police gaol within the metropolitan area to another. The role is a morale deflator, particularly for younger members.

Mr Delianis said that the police can put up with bad working conditions and lack of facilities but it is the uncertainty about the future that is the hardest aspect to cope with. The government must rectify this situation to alleviate the serious morale problem it has created. Mr Delianis is reported in the *Age* of 16 March as saying:

> I believe there is an atmosphere of frustration and hopelessness among many members, including some of senior rank. They feel the police function is not being properly carried out because of the shortages of police and resources on the one hand and the abundance of crime and disorder on the other. The future is seen, at best, as more of the same.

Turning to another part of the Bill, the Leader of the National Party and the honourable member for Mornington spoke about the issue of police needing to give the three months' notice of resignation. I have received a number of calls from police on this issue. Their attitudes have varied and I shall outline those to honourable members. On one hand senior police believe that making people work through a three month notice of resignation period has a detrimental effect because if a police officer has

made the decision to leave the force he or she usually wants to get out quickly and will, therefore, not put much effort into the job during that time. That is likely to have a disruptive effect and would be counterproductive to the efficiency of the force. They say it is an issue that the Liberal Party and National Party should rectify.

Another argument is that losing experienced police officers before new officers have a chance to learn the job has a detrimental effect on the force. Although we direct the government's attention to the concerns of serving police, we have decided in the best interests of the Police Force and because of the attitude of the Police Association to allow this provision to remain in the Bill. However, we put the government on notice that provision should be made for allowing a shorter period than three months' notice of resignation to alleviate any disruptive effect that would have on the force when such a situation arises.

The police have also expressed concern about integration. This is causing incredible morale deflation within the force. For the benefit of honourable members I must explain that integration is effected by the command of divisions of police, such as the Traffic Operations Group, the Criminal Investigation Branch and other specialised areas, being passed from central control to control at a divisional level. This new restructuring was brought in last October. Integration is contributing to the falling morale of the Police Force.

Mr Delianis also said in the *Age* article:

> At a time when criminals know no boundaries and crime is international, control of most of the detectives is being handed over to area commanders for use as they see fit. Centralised command and control of all suburbs and country detectives is removed though some commanders may not have had any experience in the investigation of crime.

Integration has allowed petty rivalry to come into the running of the force and the detection of criminals in the community has suffered as a result. Integration is still only in the early stages of implementation but I am told by the police that it is already having a detrimental effect on the force that will worsen in the future.

I urge the government to re-examine the Police Force at the working level and reconsider any steps it has taken to decentralise control. If urgent action is not taken, Victoria will no longer have the best Police Force in Australia. The government should take the example set by the New South Wales Police Force, which integrated its Criminal Investigation Branch, albeit for a different reason. The Criminal Investigation Branch in New South Wales was corrupt and it was integrated in an attempt to give it a new beginning. Victoria has an efficient Criminal Investigation Branch, one that has worked extremely well in the past; it was controlled from the top and it looked after Victoria very well. It has deteriorated to a branch that thinks only in terms of local divisions and that is causing considerable concern to senior police who believe they no longer have control and it is not as efficient as they would wish to be.

This is a machinery Bill that the Opposition supports in the main. The Police Force recognises that, by this measure, the government is trying to give police support on the beat and in the courts. That is something the police feel they have not been given by this administration since 1982. However, the police want personnel shortages and lack of funding to be rectified because they are aware of other areas of government where money has been blatantly squandered, such as the $111 million lost by the VEDC and the enormous losses incurred by the Ministry of Transport. The Police Force asks the government to give it the resources needed and the police in return will provide the law enforcement services that the people of Victoria deserve.

Mr CRABB (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I thank honourable members for their support of the Bill. The honourable member for Mornington raised

a number of matters, the first relating to the three months' notice issue, which was also raised by the Leader of the National Party.

The provision relating to one months' notice and a penalty for early resignation has always been in the Police Regulation Act. The reason that the one months' notice requirement has been extended to three months was not only by way of penalty but also because of the police system of filling vacancies, which is complex and time-consuming. Not only are promotions advertised but so also are vacancies. If a police officer transfers to another job at the same rank, it is necessary for that person to apply for the job and go through the panel hearing and be subject to appeal, as in the promotion processes; so that when a vacancy occurs it takes some time to fill. The provision has been in the Act for a long time—since long before any of us present were concerned with the governing of the State. The provisions are there as safeguards. It takes two to three months to fill a vacancy and one months' notice is not adequate to allow the system to operate.

There was some concern about too many vacancies and people either acting in those vacancies or, alternatively, those vacancies not being filled. As I understand it, the concept by the Police Association was to extend that requirement to three months' notice, not to try to hold people in the Police Force for longer than they intended but, rather, for them to formalise their intention to retire early. What happens with most resignations from the Police Force has a lot to do with the nature of the superannuation scheme. A member of the Police Force who decides to retire on his or her 50th birthday or whatever does not have to formally tender his or her notice until one month before the event, and the vacancy that will occur cannot be advertised and proceed through the normal process until that member retires. The requirement of three months' notice is intended to enable the process of filling that vacancy to proceed so that the job can be filled immediately the retirement becomes effective.

Mr E. R. Smith interjected.

Mr CRABB—These are situations where people may wish to retire for pressing reasons of one sort or another. It is not that they will be forced to stay. There are certain circumstances where people resign early from the Police Force with the consent of the chief commissioner; therefore, no penalty should apply. If a member of the Police Force genuinely does not fit in any more, no-one will try to keep that member there just for the sake of it. The three months' notice and the penalties do not apply in other sections of the Public Service in the same way because the system of promotion and transfer is different. Nowhere else does the process of advertisement of a vacancy occur every time one wants to move.

Mr Cooper—What about the fire brigade?

Mr CRABB—People are transferred from one spot to the other, the same as they are in the Public Service at large, just as the Leader of the Opposition can move honourable members around from one portfolio to another, just as the Premier can move me from one portfolio to another. In the Police Force, that is not the case.

Police command does not have the capacity to move police personnel from one station to another in Victoria. It takes some time to fill vacancies, and that is why a vacancy in the Police Force is different from other Public Service vacancies. There is nothing in the Bill that should cause any difficulty.

The honourable member for Mornington raised the issue of the proposed changes to the Federal taxation system on superannuation. Indeed, a number of services in Australia are concerned about that, namely, the armed services, police forces, fire brigades and those people who retire earlier than in most other occupations. It is said that members of Parliament should have some concern about the same provisions.

No doubt Federal members of Parliament should have some concern about it! I assure honourable members that I have given the measure every attention.

A number of concerns expressed by organisations are unfounded. The provisions hinge upon the interpretation of the guideline concerning the entitlements of persons who resign before reaching 65 years of age. The State government argues that the normal retirement date in the emergency services fund is after 30 years service. I do not think it is the intention of the Federal government to severely limit the benefits paid out under funds, such as the Emergency Services Superannuation Fund and, indeed, the Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Fund.

Mr E. R. Smith—One cannot understand the concern for wanting to retire early.

Mr CRABB—The fire brigade has been vociferous in its concern. I am concerned because I have put a lot of effort and time into putting the emergency services superannuation scheme together. I believe it is the best superannuation scheme of its kind, not only for its generosity but also in terms of structure and equity. I would be angry if somebody tried to dismantle it. I assure honourable members that every endeavour is being made to ensure that the outcome of the discussions between the States and the Federal government will produce a rational approach.

I do not deny that the Federal government has every right to tax people according to its desires. One can have a view, but the Federal government has the right to cut taxes and increase taxes—that is its business, not ours. Funds such as this are based on the presumption that people in some occupations should not continue to 65 years—I refer, for example, to firemen, and policemen—and that should be reflected in the superannuation and taxation arrangements.

The honourable member for Mornington raised the matter of the power to delegate. That provision is expanded considerably in the Bill, and the existing provision is deleted. Part of the provision gives explicit power to the chief commissioner to revoke a delegation and exercise powers himself, notwithstanding that he had delegated them. I am assured that that is tautological, and occurs anyway. If one can give a delegation, one can revoke a delegation and, in fact, the fact that one has given a delegation does not remove one's capacity to exercise the power.

The issue of police cells was raised because of other provisions in the Bill. Police cells are not merely places where the overflow from the prisons are housed; they are also used to accommodate people who have been arrested that day as well as those who have to appear for trial. There will always be some prisoners in police cells. Of late the number has been higher than one would have liked; however, the number has been reduced by some measures the government took in the corrections system to bring the number down to fewer than 100 at the end of the day. The number of persons in police cells tends to be higher in the morning and as they are processed during the day the number decreases, but during the evening it increases again. If the courts know there is room in police cells, the tendency is to fill them. That is not done in any organised fashion. It is a worldwide phenomenon that the discretion exercised by magistrates or the judiciary is tempered somewhat by the availability of resources.

No-one in the world has ever been able to maintain a lot of empty cells except the Italians. They have a regular amnesty which I believe is connected with religious festivals. They release large numbers of prisoners at certain times. I do not think that idea is entirely acceptable in most countries of the world, and certainly not in Australia. It has more to do with holy days and certain Saints days, but neither I nor anyone else is advocating it for Australia.

The nature of the process means that whatever one tries to do with one's police cells, they fill up again. It is a constant battle to keep them partially occupied, but we

are reasonably well on top of the situation. The provisions in the Bill enable a better regulation of people who are in police cells for any length of time.

The provisions in the Bill relating to the Ombudsman have been raised. Honourable members should recognise that the provisions provide a replacement for the Police Complaints Authority which, as will be recalled, was abolished last year. Provision was made in the Police Regulation Act, instead, that the Deputy Ombudsman (Police Complaints) should carry out the functions previously carried out by the Police Complaints Authority.

It has always been the view of the current Ombudsman, Mr Norman Geschke, that he ought to have that function. I recognise his right to that view and I respect him for his views, but it is fair to say that not everyone agrees with his position on these matters and it is considered that the Bill, being part of the Police Regulation Act, more clearly mirrors the intent of Parliament in relation to police complaints.

It is not a case of there being any great difference between one and the other because my involvement is minimal in the extreme. In fact, hypothetically, the only situation in which I would become involved is where the Deputy Ombudsman (Police Complaints) reports to me a disagreement on some matter of process between himself and the Chief Commissioner of Police. That is the only responsibility I have; so there is substantial consensus between the police, the Ombudsman's office, the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services and various voices of civil liberty in the community.

The Leader of the National Party raised an issue about pay. A provision was included in the Bill providing that superannuation benefits are not based on the pay that the employee receives immediately, but that he has to have been on that substantive rank for three months. That does not apply to other authorities because nowhere else are employees promoted within three months of retirement.

Because of the provisions within the Police Force that guarantee people who apply for jobs, it is possible to be promoted a few weeks before retirement when one cannot apply anywhere else and that is why it is different for the police.

The honourable member for Glen Waverley raised a number of matters. One concerned intimidation of witnesses through the mail. He should have mentioned politicians being intimidated in the same fashion, particularly if his mailbox looks anything like mine. One cannot expect us to open every letter that goes anywhere, but the provisions in the Bill will go a long way towards improving the situation.

The motion was agreed to.

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

CANCER (CENTRAL REGISTERS) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The primary purpose of this small but important Bill is to improve the effectiveness of the Pap smear program in Victoria.

Pap smears are a relatively simple method of detecting cervical cancer in women, particularly in its initial stages. Cervical cancer is mostly preventable and, if detected and treated early, 100 per cent curable. Yet, each year in this State, 250 women are diagnosed with such an advanced state of the disease that a hysterectomy becomes a necessary part of treatment.

Even more tragically, two out of every five will subsequently die because the cancer has spread too far for an effective cure. It follows, that if all women had regular Pap smears, and received appropriate treatment for abnormalities which were discovered, cancer of the cervix would become a rarity in this country.

One of the prerequisites for an effective screening program for cervical cancer is a central focus for the reporting and monitoring of test results. Access to previous Pap smears, for example, is essential if pathology services are to provide the most useful and accurate reports, especially if it is necessary to determine whether there is any change to an earlier abnormality.

Likewise, a fail-safe mechanism is desirable if women are to have confidence that any serious abnormality noted by a laboratory will be reported, to enable follow up by the practitioner who took the smear.

A central register could also serve as the basis for sending reminder notices to women when their next Pap smear is due. The advantages of a central register have been generally recognised for some time.

I am, therefore, pleased to inform the House that, as a result of extensive discussions undertaken by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, the various pathology laboratories that report on Pap smears have agreed to pool their results provided that legislation is in place to allow them to do so.

Moreover, the Commonwealth has agreed to finance the establishment of a central register of Pap smear results through its women's health initiatives program.

The Bill is primarily designed to facilitate the development of the Registry for Cervical Cytology, as the proposed central register will be known. It is proposed that this registry will be under the auspices of the Victorian Cytology (Gynaecological) Service which currently reports on about 75 per cent of all Pap smears taken in Victoria. However, the registry will be overseen by a board of management drawn from the relevant professional and interest groups.

The role of the proposed register will be different from, but complementary to, the Victorian Cancer Registry established under Part III of the Cancer Act and managed by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

Unlike the existing registry, the cervical cytology registry will record all test results, whether negative or positve, rather than just the incidence of cancer, and reporting will be voluntary instead of compulsory.

The thrust of the legislation is to protect the confidentiality of information supplied to the registry. A key safeguard is the express right those who have been tested will have to refuse their test results being sent to the registry or to have identifying information deleted from the register. The proposed establishment of the Registry for Cervical Cytology has been widely canvassed within the community, especially among women's interest groups.

The government has been gratified by the overwhelming support that the proposal has received. The proposed legislation also contains an important inbuilt capacity for the development of other central registries in the future.

Although no other registries are planned immediately, this ability could be used to establish similar registries for recording, say, the results of examination for breast cancer as mammography testing becomes more advanced.

I might add that the opportunity is being taken in the Bill of making several unrelated amendments to the provisions of the Cancer Act as they relate to the

operation of the existing Victorian Cancer Registry managed by the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria.

Rather than take up the time of the House, details of the amendments concerned have been incorporated into the notes which accompany the Bill.

The measures contained in the proposed legislation represent a major step forward in improving the quality of preventative health services in this State as well as making a significant contribution towards the government's women's health programs.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South), the debate was adjourned.

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

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill seeks to provide improved regulation-making powers and more efficient administration of the industry by amalgamating two statutory boards into a single body with additional responsibility for providing high level advice with respect to the overall planning for the future development and protection of the State's stone resources.

The extractive industries regulations were remade in June 1988 in accordance with the sunset provisions of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1962. However, during the process of remaking the regulations, a number of deficiencies in the legislative base were identified which meant that the 1988 regulations were unable to fully provide the necessary discretion, delegation and enforcement provisions for the carrying out of quarry inspections, largely on work practices and safety and health issues.

Similar reviews of regulation-making powers in the Pipelines Act 1967 and the State Electricity Commission Act 1958 resulted in amendments to those Acts during the autumn 1988 Parliamentary sitting. Regulations under those Acts have now been made and are operating effectively. It is the same type of regulatory model that is being adopted by this Bill.

As a result of the legislative deficiencies, the 1988 regulations have been given a limited life and are due to sunset on 30 June 1989, by which time new regulations using the regulation-making powers proposed in the Bill will be put in place. This process has been well supported by industry and the Law Reform Commission which have made valuable contributions to the formulation of the Bill and to the proposed regulatory format.

The other significant aspect of the Bill is the establishment of a broadly representative Extractive Industries Board to replace the Extractive Industries Advisory Committee and the Quarry Managers Board. It is not proposed to vary the existing functions of these two bodies. However, a broader range of representation is to be made available to the board and some additional responsibility for planning the future direction and regulation of the quarrying industry is to be included.

The board's representation is to be improved in particular by providing for greater industry involvement to create a mechanism for the implementation of up-to-date quarrying techniques and by the inclusion of union representation to reflect the concerns of the work force in the industry.

The ability to appoint highly specialised advisers from areas such as education, environment protection and urban planning to assist the board is to be maintained.

The new board will have power to review work practices in the industry and to establish and review codes of practice for the operation of quarries to ensure that the best possible level of efficiency is balanced with a sensitive approach to the environment and observation of sound occupational safety and health practices.

In conclusion, the Bill will provide a more flexible regulatory model in which innovation and advancements in this most valuable industry can be encouraged and reflected, while ensuring that quarries are managed and planned in a responsible and sensitive manner.

The Bill will further enhance the government's commitment to the appropriate use and development of the State's natural resources and secure a sensible balance between the essential extraction of non-renewable resources and the protection of the environment.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

SECOND-HAND DEALERS AND PAWNBROKERS BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is a substantial reform of the law governing the regulation of second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers. It has the twin objectives of replacing unnecessary regulatory controls with a more efficient scheme of licensing and providing effective measures to combat dealings in stolen goods. The Bill fulfils a substantial commitment made by the government last year in its criminal justice policy, *Building a Law-Abiding Society—Together.*

Existing regulation of these industries is contained in three Acts: the Second-Hand Dealers Act 1958, the Pawnbrokers Act 1958 and the Marine Stores and Old Metals Act 1958. These Acts have been the subject of a discussion paper issued jointly by the Victorian Law Reform Commission—VLRC—and the Regulation Review Unit—RRU—as part of the reference the government has given them to inquire into occupational regulation. The discussion paper, issued in May 1988, described the existing legislation as archaic and anachronistic. It proposed that the legislation be consolidated into one enactment with a substantially streamlined system of regulation. In essence, the VLRC and the RRU proposed that only those controls justifiable by reference to the need for effective crime control or consumer protection be retained.

The Bill implements the thrust of those proposals. In particular, it removes a number of obsolete restrictions. For example, under existing laws there are special restrictions on the trading hours of pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers; the Bill will allow second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers to operate like any other traders under the Shop Trading Act. Other unnecessary restrictions, such as the requirement that metal collectors wear badges and not use "insulting language", will also be removed. The government does not, however, accept the VLRC and RRU suggestion that the requirement to obtain a licence to operate as a second-hand dealer or pawnbroker be removed. The government believes a licensing scheme is necessary to ensure that only appropriate people act as second-hand dealers or pawnbrokers and to prevent criminal elements from moving into the industry.

However, the Bill effects important changes from the current cumbersome system of licensing. At present, licences can only be issued by a Magistrates Court. An applicant must pay a nominal fee and satisfy the court of his or her good character. In 1986, Magistrates Courts issued about 8400 licences to second-hand dealers, 550 to collectors of old metals and 30 to pawnbrokers. The cost of processing these applications exceeds the revenue gained and diverts courts from their proper functions. The Bill, therefore, vests the licensing function in local councils. The police will have power to object to a licence being granted or renewed, if they believe the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold a licence. This scheme will allow both local control and police input into the licensing process. A licence fee will be payable to the council; the maximum fees will be fixed by regulation at a level allowing the recovery of administrative costs. Local councils will be able to set conditions on the grant of a licence in appropriate cases. In addition, licences will be subject to revocation by the council either on its own motion or that of the police. A licence may be revoked if the holder has committed an offence of dishonesty, breached the requirements of the Act or a licence condition, or is otherwise no longer a fit and proper person to hold a licence. A right of appeal from any licensing decision will lie with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The Bill contains other provisions designed to prevent the sale of stolen goods through second-hand dealers and pawnbrokers and to allow the tracing and recovery of those goods. A second-hand dealer will be required to verify the identity of a person selling goods to the dealer and to keep records of that identification. Second-hand dealers will also be required to keep accurate and complete records of goods obtained by them. After buying goods, a second-hand dealer will be required to keep them for seven days before selling them. In addition, the police will be able to prohibit sale of the goods for a further 21 days. In appropriate cases, the police may extend this quarantine period for a further 21 days. The police consider that these measures are essential to effective law enforcement. They will ensure that dealers exercise appropriate care before buying goods as well as providing an opportunity to trace and recover stolen goods.

The Bill also provides a simple procedure by which the owner of stolen goods can recover them from a second-hand dealer or pawnbroker. At present, a full and complicated legal action is required. Under the Bill, however, a simple procedure is available enabling the owner to obtain a order from a clerk of a Magistrates Court if there are reasonable grounds to believe that stolen goods are in the possession of a dealer. Upon the making of such an order, the dealer will be required to satisfy the court that they were not stolen or were otherwise rightly the property of the dealer. If the dealer or pawnbroker fails to lodge an objection within 21 days, the goods must be returned to the applicant. If an objection is lodged, the question of ownership must be resolved by the court. This procedure will allow an inexpensive and quick mechanism by which title to goods can be resolved.

The Bill also removes an archaic rule which facilitates the sale of stolen goods in markets. The general rule governing the sale of goods is very simple and very sensible: no-one can sell what he or she does not own. So, for example, if a thief sells goods to a second-hand dealer the dealer does not get good title to them. The goods remain the property of the original owner. There are, however, a number of exceptions to this rule. One of them concerns "markets overt". If a person buys goods in good faith in a public open market between sunrise and sunset without notice of any defect in the title to them, he or she acquires good title to them even though they are not owned by the seller. The rule does not apply to the sale of cattle but it does apply to the sale of any other livestock. This rule dates from at least 1472. Whatever the historical justification for the rule it is plainly no longer appropriate. The rule has the potential to operate as a thieves' charter, an invitation to the fencing of goods in markets. The

rules governing the market overt exception does not apply in New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory, New Zealand, Scotland or Wales, and it is high time that it was removed in Victoria. The Bill does this by repealing section 28 of the Goods Act 1958.

The Bill provides an important package of changes in relation to the sale of second-hand goods. These changes will allow more effective measures to prevent stolen goods being disposed of through second-hand dealers or pawnbrokers while providing those industries with a measure of deregulation. The Bill, therefore, meets two important government objectives: to allow business to operate more efficiently and to provide more effective crime control.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mrs WADE (Kew), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to make several unrelated amendments to various Acts administered within the conservation, forests and lands portfolio.

APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

The Bill amends sections 83 and 84 of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987 to alter the method of appointment of authorised officers for the enforcement of relevant laws. Instead of executing an instrument of appointment and also signing a certificate of appointment, the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands will appoint authorised officers by signing a certificate only.

SUBSTITUTION OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS IN PROCEEDINGS

The Bill also amends section 96 of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987 to enable the substitution of another authorised officer for the informant in taking proceedings under relevant laws. This is necessary in cases where the informant is unavailable or insufficiently experienced to conduct prosecutions.

Similar provisions previously existed under the Forests Act 1958, the Fisheries Act 1967, and the Wildlife Act 1975, but were inadvertently repealed by the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987. Similar provisions also exist in the Marine Act 1988, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and the Magistrates' Courts Act 1971.

STRATA LICENCES

The Bill amends the Land Act 1958 to enable the grant of licences for strata or air space above Crown land or strata of the soil below the surface. The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands is occasionally requested to authorise the construction of aerial crossings over or underground crossings below the surface of Crown land. Applicants of this nature have included the construction of pedestrian walkways or tunnels, pipelines or overhead conveyors to provide access between various parcels of land in the same ownership which are divided by Crown land, usually a proclaimed road.

Legal advice has recently been received to the effect that a stratum of airspace above Crown land or a stratum of the soil below the surface of Crown land cannot be demised or licensed. This position arises because current legislation provides that a Crown grant, lease or licence of Crown land, other than for mining or mineral extraction, must include the surface of the subject land. As the interests of all parties, particularly those of the users of Crown land, should be safeguarded, it is essential that the installation of improvements over or under the surface of Crown land be properly authorised and supervised.

SALE OF LAND TO LESSEES

The Bill also amends the Land Act to empower the Minister to sell Crown land to lessees where the land is used for purposes other than amusement and recreation. At present the Minister is empowered to sell Crown land to lessees only in the metropolitan area. This provision was made some years ago to enable the sale to lessees of commercial and industrial land, primarily at South Melbourne. There is now no reason why this provision should not be extended to the rest of the State.

FOREST LICENCES

The Bill amends section 52 of the Forests Act 1958 to remove doubts that forest licences can only be for the separate purposes mentioned in that section. Recent legal opinion has brought to attention some inadequacies in the provisions of section 52 of the Forests Act 1958 which authorises the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands to grant licences for various purposes over areas of reserved forest or protected forest. The existing provisions authorise the granting of some licences for a combination of a number of purposes—for example, to "cut dig and take away" any specified forest produce, and also for other separate purposes.

The legal opinion contends that the statutory expression "cut dig and take away" may not be capable of severance. Therefore, it is arguable that the only licence that may be granted under that power is to do all three things, or at least two of those things. The proposed amendment will enable licences to be granted for any or all of the purposes mentioned in section 52.

GAME LICENCES

This Bill amends the Wildlife Act 1975 to provide for the issue of a game licence by the Director-General of Conservation, Forests and Lands. Shooters in Victoria are currently authorised to take game—duck, quail and deer—by purchasing an authority to hunt. Because of their link with shooters licences, authorities to hunt were issued, in the past, under the Firearms Act 1958. That Act contains no other references to hunting or wildlife and is administered by the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services. Also, the Firearms Act does not enable the control of hunting with weapons other than with firearms.

The number of people authorised to hunt game in Victoria has doubled over the past decade. The increasing pressure on the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services has resulted in the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands assuming responsibility for the sale of authorities to hunt. This has split the administration of the system and resulted in some confusion among hunters.

The Bill addresses these inconsistencies through the development of a game licence under the Wildlife Act 1975, to replace the authority-to-hunt system, and to also control hunting with weapons other than firearms, such as bows. References to authorities to hunt in the Firearms Act 1958 are revoked. Penalty provisions, including seizure of game, guns, other weapons and equipment, will be under the Wildlife Act and will follow similar penalties for hunting protected, notable or endangered wildlife.

Game licences will be subject to a fee which will be prescribed by regulation, as will other measures for the control of hunting through the game licensing system. The latter will include provision to allow restricted hunting in areas that would otherwise be subject to closure.

The need for this legislation has been discussed with major hunting organisations, including the Victorian Field and Game Association, the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia and the Australian Deer Association, along with the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services. All these organisations support the game licensing provisions. The fee structure and conditions of the game licence will be fully discussed with the public and representative bodies through the regulatory impact statement process.

The Bill represents a significant improvement on the existing system. It will simplify the procedures associated with legitimate hunting, while linking the process more closely to the department which has reponsibility for management of game species and their habitat.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE NOTICES

Finally, the Bill amends the Wildlife Act 1975 to provide for emergency closure notices to immediately prohibit hunting where protected wildlife move from one area to another during the hunting season. An example of this problem occurred recently at Cullens Lake, near Kerang, where a flock of freckled ducks arrived the day before the opening of the duck season. The existing provisions of the Wildlife Act, in section 86 were inadequate in this situation, as 72 hours prior notice has to be given before closure. As a result, 154 protected birds, including 87 rare freckled ducks, were shot. Accordingly, it is proposed that, where the Minister is satisfied of such a threat to protected wildlife, he or she may, by notice published in the *Government Gazette*, prohibit hunting in the area concerned for up to seven days.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am reading the Minister's second-reading notes, copies of which are in the hands of honourable members. The notes say "she or he" but the Minister said "he or she"!

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order!

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I assure the House that this power will be used only as a last resort, where necessary, to protect endangered, notable or significant numbers of other protected wildlife. The maximum possible notice, usually more than 24 hours, will be given and all reasonable steps will be taken to inform hunters of emergency closures prior to any enforcement action. These steps will include publicity on radio, television and in newspapers; signposting and patrolling of access roads; notification to hunting organisations; and announcements via the hunter education telephone service. The existing provisions of section 86 of the Act will remain for longer term closures, mainly to protect breeding populations.

I commend the Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This small Bill has two major purposes, namely:

1. To increase the penalties that may be included in Board of Works by-laws for the illegal dumping of wastes into sewers; and

2. To delete references in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act to positions in the Board of Works organisational structure that are now redundant and to provide the board with greater administrative flexibility.

In 1988 Parliament enacted the Environment Protection (Amendment) Act, which protected the environment by a general increase in penalties to ensure that environment protection legislation had adequate teeth to be a deterrent.

It was intended that the Act would increase the Board of Works by-law penalties in respect of the illegal dumping of wastes into sewers. However, the penalties were not increased. The Bill contains provisions to rectify this position.

The government, in accordance with its policy of creating a more efficient and effective public sector, has always insisted that bodies such as the Board of Works constantly review their organisational structures to ensure the most effective provision of services at the best possible saving to the public. In line with this policy, the organisational structure of the Board of Works has, over a number of years, undergone changes to make it more responsive and cost effective.

Recently the structure was further refined, and the Bill contains provisions to increase the administrative flexibility of the board by deleting references in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act to the offices of deputy general manager and director of administration which are now redundant.

I commend the Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

RACING (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide reforms for the more efficient administration of the greyhound industry.

The Bill provides that the Greyhound Racing Control Board be reconstituted by substituting a four-person board in place of the current six-person board. The primary functions of the board are to control the sport of greyhound racing, to carry out research into aspects of greyhound racing, and to promote the sport of greyhound racing.

The proposed four-person board will comprise:

chairman, one who has no connection with or financial interest in any greyhound racing course or in any racing greyhound;

deputy chairman, who shall be a person experienced in business or marketing;

executive director; and

member, a person who has experience in the greyhound racing industry.

None of the four persons on the board will be appointed on the basis of, or be seen as having, any direct connection with sectional interests in the industry. Decision making can, therefore, be undertaken on a fully professional basis.

This concept of an independent professional board is consistent with modern business thinking and is in line with the views expressed by Mr Philippe Chatrier,

President of the International Tennis Federation at the sports marketing seminar conducted by my department earlier this year. At that seminar, Mr Chatrier emphasised the need for sports administration to be placed on a more professional basis. A further good example of this move to a professional basis can be seen with the Victorian Football League, which has also recently moved from a board representative of each club to an independent professional board.

A feature of the structure of the new board is the position of executive director. The executive director, in addition to being a board member, will be a full-time officer and have responsibility for the day-to-day operations and the staff of the board. In this way the executive director can ensure that the policy decisions determined by the board are smoothly and efficiently implemented. The position of secretary will accordingly be abolished.

The government has consulted with the major industry organisations—the metropolitan racing clubs, the Victorian Country Greyhound Racing Association, the National Coursing Association, and the Greyhound Owners, Trainers and Breeders Association—on this proposal. Although it is fair to say that a number of those organisations put the view that they wished to see a "representative" board, after carefully weighing the situation, the government is convinced that a "representative" board is not appropriate for the greyhound industry in the 1990s. This proposal for a professional board gives proper recognition to the fact that greyhound racing is an industry and not just a part-time sport.

As a consequence of the restructure of the control board, the Bill also provides for a restructure of the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board. The function of this board is to consider applications for assistance to the greyhound industry from the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Fund and to make recommendations to the Minister. This board is now to be restructured in line with the format that exists in the thoroughbred and harness racing areas with the Racecourses Licences Board. Accordingly, it is proposed that the new structure of the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board should be:

independent chairman;

member, chairman of the Greyhound Racing Control Board; and

member, a person appointed by the Minister as representing, in his opinion, the interests of country greyhound racing.

In this way, greyhound racing will be put on the same level as the other codes.

As with the Racecourses Licences Board, recommendations of the Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Board will continue to be submitted to the Minister, through the department, for independent analysis and comment before approval is given to its recommendations.

The government believes the greyhound industry has potential for further development but, to achieve this potential, it needs to be handled on a proper, professional basis.

The Bill also includes a number of minor statute law revision amendments which have been recommended by Parliamentary Counsel.

I commend the Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

EGG INDUSTRY BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—On behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

THE VICTORIAN EGG INDUSTRY

The egg industry is an important rural industry. In 1987–88 more than 50 million dozen eggs were produced in Victoria with a gross value of production of more than $70 million.

The Victorian Egg Marketing Board was established in 1937 and recently celebrated its golden jubilee. In 1937 things were different; transport was difficult, refrigeration was limited, production was highly seasonal with gluts in the spring and shortages in winter. Thousands of small egg producers had suffered during the depression and felt that their industry was in the hands of middlemen. It was in that environment that the Victorian Egg Marketing Board came into existence.

In the past 50 years there have been enormous changes. There have been improvements in poultry husbandry, nutrition, housing and breeding. Artificial lighting and more control of the birds' environment have reduced the seasonality in production. Average annual egg production has increased steadily from 12 dozen in 1954 to 21 dozen a hen in 1988. Egg handling and packing is now almost entirely automated. The number of farms has fallen steadily, and there are now about 370 licensed egg producers in Victoria. Of these, 132 large farms produce more than 90 per cent of Victoria's eggs. They are sophisticated modern businesses.

The egg industry is probably the most highly regulated of all Victoria's agricultural industries. All eggs are vested in the Victorian Egg Marketing Board, that is to say, they are compulsorily acquired and marketed under the control of the egg board. It is illegal for a producer to sell his eggs except through the board. Producers receive an average or "pool" price for their eggs, irrespective of whether they go to the premium fresh egg market or whether they are exported at a loss. That may have been appropriate in 1937, but it strikes me as a paternalistic approach to marketing as we move into the 1990s.

Egg production is also constrained by quotas. Except for backyard producers who own fewer than twenty hens, all egg producers are subject to quota restrictions. Quota currently trades for about $11·50 a hen, but quota transfer is subject to very restrictive regulations and must go through the quota tender pool. Farm size is also restricted. The maximum farm size is 10 000 birds a person, or 40 000 for a family farm. There is good evidence that this is less than the minimum efficient scale for modern, fully-integrated egg production. The maximum quota limit in New South Wales is 100 000.

The effect of this excessive regulation is to reduce the efficiency of the industry. Production costs are increased by the restrictions on farm size. Investment and industry adjustment are made more difficult by the restrictions on quota transfer. Vesting and revenue pooling prevent accurate price signals reaching producers, and this had led to persistent problems with surplus production in the industry.

These problems are illustrated by the current situation in New South Wales, where surplus production has got out of hand. Disposal of the surplus is subsidised by a levy, which is currently around 27 cents a dozen in New South Wales. As a result the consumer price of eggs has risen in that State while producer returns have fallen. In addition, the New South Wales Egg Corporation has accumulated debts of $30 million and has encountered a great deal of difficulty and controversy in enforcing the law. New South Wales is currently contemplating total deregulation of its egg industry.

The government is determined that the Victorian egg industry will not run into the same problems and that it will be in the best possible condition to meet competition from New South Wales if the egg marketing system in that State is deregulated or collapses under its own weight.

PREVIOUS INQUIRIES INTO THE EGG INDUSTRY

There have been numerous official inquiries into egg marketing arrangements both nationally and in this State. The most recent have been the two reports of the Prices Commissioner on egg prices and the reports of the Public Bodies Review Committee.

The Prices Commissioner found in both his reports that the current egg industry regulations caused inefficiency and artificially increased the price of eggs. He estimated that egg prices were too high by at least 20 cents a dozen in 1986 and by 12 cents a dozen in 1988. That confirmed the findings of a number of earlier reports that egg prices were unjustifiably high.

The Public Bodies Review Committee was highly critical of Victoria's egg marketing arrangements and of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board. It found that the legislation granted monopoly powers to a vested interest group that has acted with scant consideration of the public interest. It found that the marketing arrangements have raised prices, reduced efficiency, inhibited investment and placed the Victorian industry at a competitive disadvantage to New South Wales. These regulations had also resulted in an income transfer from consumers to producers of at least $6 million a year.

Furthermore, the Public Bodies Review Committee criticised the administration, accountability and reporting of both the Egg Marketing Board and the licensing committee. It found that the narrow and selective interpretation of surpluses by the licensing committee gave a totally false impression of the level of unprofitable excess production to both egg producers and the Victorian public. Those losses were concealed in an elaborate price equalisation arrangement, an accounting practice devised and administered by the Victorian Egg Marketing Board. The committee also found serious inaccuracies in the quota transfer recording system. The records could not account for more than 6 per cent of the current issued quota.

The government is concerned about the findings of the Public Bodies Review Committee and about the continuing dissatisfaction that has been expressed by the industry about the performance of the egg board. The industry is entitled to better administration of its marketing bodies. The government agrees with many of the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee, but at this stage there is not the need for wholesale deregulation of the industry. There is, however, a need to free up the industry and remove excessive and unnecessary regulation.

IMPACT AT THE FARM LEVEL

The maximum farm quota will be increased to 80 000 hens. Safeguards will be included to ensure that the farm size limit cannot be evaded by multiple ownership or artificial business structures. At present producers keeping less than twenty hens are exempt from licensing and quota requirements. After consideration of industry representations, it has been decided to set the exemption level at 50 laying hens.

The hen quota tender pool was seen by the Public Bodies Review Committee as unnecessary and irrelevant. It has also been strongly criticised by producers. The tender pool will be abolished and free trading in quota will be allowed. Leasing of quota will also be permitted. The Public Bodies Review Committee was of the belief that private sales agreements provide a more efficient system for transferring quota than the tender system.

RESTRUCTURING THE VICTORIAN EGG MARKETING BOARD

The size of the egg board will be enlarged from six to eight. In addition to the chairman, who will have a casting vote, there will be three producer representatives, one employee representative, one representative of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, one person with expertise in finance and one with expertise in marketing. Accountability to both industry and government will be improved. The board will be subject to strict reporting requirements under the Annual Reporting Act 1983.

The board will continue to have a role in quality control. Egg quality standards will be set by regulation and will be enforced by the board, through the courts. The board will finance its operations from charges for services provided to producers whose eggs it handles. This means that the operations of the board will not be cross-subsidised by general industry levies on producers who do not use its services. In particular, the board will no longer cross-subsidise the disposal of unprofitable surplus eggs by an industry-wide equalisation levy. To assist the board in its management of surplus production and to improve price signals to producers, the board will be able to pay producers different prices according to the end use of their eggs.

Separate provision will be made, using the vesting powers of the board, to finance industry-wide services such as quality control, research and development, generic advertising, quota and licensing administration and general administration costs of the board. Measures will be taken to ensure a high level of accountability and consultation with the industry regarding the use of these funds.

CHANGES TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Poultry Farmer Licensing Committee will be renamed the Egg Industry Licensing Committee. The new licensing committee will continue to administer quota and license producers and will comprise four persons appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The chairperson will be appointed by the Minister. The licensing committee will normally have some overlap with the membership of the egg board. However there will be at most one egg producer on the licensing committee and it will be chaired by someone other than the chairperson of the egg board.

There has been for some time now a growing public awareness of the animal welfare aspects of poultry husbandry. Compliance with the relevant code of practice under the prevention of cruelty to animals will now be a condition of licence.

The Poultry Farmer Licensing Review Committee will be disbanded, as recommended by the Public Bodies Review Committee, and the responsibilities transferred to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

THE EGG PRICES REVIEW PANEL

Egg prices will no longer be set soley by the board as in the past. The price review process which has worked successfully in the milk industry will be adapted so that prices are set fairly for both efficient producers and consumers.

The proposed legislation will establish an Egg Prices Review Panel, comprised of the Prices Commissioner—who will be chairman—and two people with commercial expertise. The Victorian Egg Marketing Board has the right to determine the wholesale price of eggs, but this determination will be effective only once it is ratified by the Egg Prices Review Panel. The review panel will also have the independent right to review egg prices and make a determination if it considers it necessary.

MORE COMPETITION IN EGG MARKETING

The government sees the introduction of more competition in egg marketing as an important step in the freeing up of the egg industry. This will be done by expanding the role of producer agents.

A producer agent licence will be issued by the board and be available to any applicant on similar conditions to those which operate successfully in the dairy industry. The only grounds for refusing a licence will be that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold a licence. If a licence is refused, reasons will have to be given in writing. Provision will be made for appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Eggs delivered to producer agents for sale will be deemed to have been delivered to the egg board for the purposes of the vesting rule.

Within the terms of their licence producer agents will be free to grade, pack and market their own and other producers' eggs. They will be free to undertake commercial initiatives and to develop their own brands, packaging, marketing strategies and advertising methods. They will be able to sell their eggs to whomever they choose, including supermarkets and manufacturers of egg products. They will also be able to manufacture on their own behalf.

Producer agents must operate within any pricing guidelines set for the industry. Producers will be able to market their own eggs if they hold a producer agent licence. Producers who do not wish to do so can always consign their eggs to the egg board as at present.

REVIEW OF THE INDUSTRY IN 1994

I see the proposed legislation as a step in the direction of a more flexible, efficient and market oriented industry. It creates the environment in which the industry can modernise, invest and restructure and I look forward to seeing the industry take up this opportunity.

However, there remains a considerable degree of regulation which I do not consider to be in the industry's long-term interest. In particular, I should like to see progress towards the eventual abolition of quotas. I believe if we do not move in this direction it will be forced on us by our competitors.

Accordingly, the proposed legislation provides that there will be a review of Victorian egg marketing arrangements and of the progress towards liberalisation in 1994. Unless this inquiry recommends otherwise, all quota provisions will sunset in 1996.

THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

I see a positive outcome for the industry from these changes. Victorian producers are eager to invest and modernise, but have been discouraged by farm size limitations, by restrictions on quota transfer, and by uncertainty about the future of the industry. Over the years there have been repeated inquiries and public controversy which have made any business planning or large scale investment very difficult. The industry should now have the opportunity of undertaking the modernisation which it desires. The result should be an efficient, low-cost industry which can compete favourably with those of other States. However, the threat of potential competition should assist the board to maintain and increase its efficiency and to reduce costs.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr AUSTIN (Ripon), the debate was adjourned.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—On the question of time, it is obvious to the House that this is an important and significant Bill. It has been expected for some time and, because the matters contained in it are complex, it has taken months to prepare. The industry has been informed of some of the changes that the Bill was to propose but, obviously, other changes have been made recently and the Bill differs from the instructions that went out to industry. Industry will need to examine the Bill carefully as well as the changes that are being made on similar matters in New South Wales. The two States should move together in this matter.

I suggest that the Minister gives an undertaking for an extension of time, if so required, to have those discussions and possibly it might be necessary to negotiate the debate on the Bill being postponed until the spring sessional period.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment) (*By leave*)—I understand the concerns of the honourable member for Ripon. This deregulating Bill is large. I give an undertaking on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs that, if additional time is required for discussion, that will be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the consideration of Orders of the Day, Government Business, Nos 12 to 15 inclusive, be postponed until later this day.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I am anxious that there be a little cooperation between the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the National Party so that suitable arrangements can be made. I was told that leave would be sought to consider Orders of the Day, Government Business, No. 12. I presented myself so that I could give that leave when asked for it. All is well in that matter but now I find that matter will be dealt with after the debate on Road Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill at approximately 6 o'clock.

I ask that there be some understanding provided as to how the program will proceed so that it is not necessary for honourable members to sit on the edges of their seats awaiting the outcome of the juggling of the program.

The motion was agreed to.

ROAD SAFETY (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from November 3, 1988) on the motion of Mr Kennan (Minister for Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr BROWN (Gippsland West)—The Bill is important because it makes a large number of changes to road law in Victoria. When in government the Liberal Party had a proud record for the implementation of road safety measures and it led the world in many respects.

Mr Reynolds—Hear, hear!

Mr BROWN—I know, as does my colleague the honourable member for Gisborne, and as do all other members on this side of the House, that the Liberal Party continues

to have a close interest in all matters relating to road safety. It is true that, for the full seven years it has been in opposition in this State, the Liberal Party has taken a bipartisan approach towards all matters involving road safety. It has supported, almost without reservation, every road safety measure undertaken by the government.

The Minister for Transport is well known for a wide variety of things. Certainly he is keen to have continuing publicity and self-promotion. He is also known as an excellent kite flyer because one thing that he promoted some months ago was that the government was considering implementing a provision for zero blood alcohol level for all drivers in the State. Although I indicate a certain determination on this side of the House to continue with a bipartisan approach to road safety, that approach should not be anticipated to go too far on measures being considered for road safety.

The feedback that the Opposition received from the kite flying exercise undertaken by the Minister for Transport regarding the introduction of zero blood alcohol level for all drivers in Victoria was that the Minister had gone too far. There was a massive reaction to that exercise by the Minister.

I say at the outset that, although the Opposition wants to ensure that sensible measures are implemented to increase road safety, the Opposition must ensure that any legislation is not prejudiced against drivers. The feedback to the Opposition on that proposal of the Minister was that it was draconian to an unacceptable degree.

It is well known that the Minister is anti-motorist. It is a matter of regret that that is so and that he is perceived, rightly, to have that attitude. However, even though the Bill may be seen to be anti-motorist by some people, the truth is that the proposed legislation is trying to save as many lives as possible in the years ahead and to reduce the extent of injuries to citizens as much as is possible. To that degree the provisions in the Bill should not be seen as an attack on the motorists of Victoria.

I note that the former chief of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria was among those who rapped the Minister's suggestion for a zero blood alcohol level for all drivers and even a County Court judge, Judge Howse, said that in his view all drivers should not be penalised for the sins of a few.

It has been pointed out to me that a person who is a non-drinker but who may have eaten a wine trifle at a function, a plum pudding with brandy sauce, a chocolate liquer, certain cough mixtures, some cakes and even apples, which are known to ferment when they are eaten, may not have a zero blood alcohol level. So the suggestion of a zero blood alcohol level for all drivers should be reconsidered by the Minister.

The former Liberal government established an all-party Parliamentary committee that worked on all aspects of road safety and adopted a bipartisan approach to the issue. The Opposition believes the best thing the government could do as a single step would be to reconstitute that all-party Parliamentary committee on road safety. I notice that most other States in Australia have committees of this nature. Tasmania has a Select Committee that deals with road safety matters. New South Wales has a joint Standing Committee on road safety. South Australia has conducted inquiries into road safety and it is a continuing issue in that State, as it is in all other States. All Australians are concerned about reducing the maiming that continues on our roads, virtually unabated.

I notice that even the Federal Parliament has a Select Committee on Road Safety comprising members of all parties. The safety issue is not something that exercises the minds of just members of Parliament. It is a nationwide problem and it is incumbent on all of us to do what we can, sensibly, without going overboard, to reduce the road toll.

It is disturbing to note that Victoria had a bad Christmas accident-wise, with an increase statistically in the number of deaths. It raises the question of whether we are doing enough to address the road toll. The government, by introducing this measure, is signalling that it wants to do more and I shall outline in some detail the proposals and the attitude of the Opposition to them.

I have three tables that I should like to incorporate in *Hansard.* I showed the tables to the Minister for Transport some time ago, in fact, last year when the Bill was expected to be debated. Mr Speaker has seen the tables and has approved of their insertion in *Hansard.* The source of the tables is the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Road Trauma Committee, a committee known to all members of the House. The college of surgeons has a definite commitment to search for new ideas that will, it is hoped, reduce the carnage on our roads.

The first document I table, table 1, shows the Victorian road fatalities for the calendar year 1988 and I seek leave to have the table incorporated in *Hansard.*

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

TABLE 1
Victorian Road Fatalities—1988

Month		Drivers	Passengers	Pedestrians	Motor Cyclists	Pedal Cyclists	Monthly Total	Progressive Monthly Totals 1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
January	Male	17	3	3	5	3	31						
	Female	4	6	7	1	—	18						
	Total	21(25)	9(22)	10(8)	6(5)	3(3)	49(62)	49	62	56	56	64	41
February	M	17	11	7	5	2	42						
	F	6	6	1	0	1	14						
	T	23(16)	17(12)	8(6)	5(5)	3(4)	56(43)	105	105	106	103	112	100
March	M	27	3	8	5	2	45						
	F	7	7	7	0	1	22						
	T	34(17)	10(18)	15(14)	5(7)	3(1)	67(57)	172	162	176	153	170	153
April	M	13	14	6	4	—	37						
	F	8	5	4	—	—	17						
	T	21(26)	19(11)	10(7)	4(7)	—(1)	54(52)	226	214	245	218	221	215
May	M	22	9	16	8	—	55						
	F	8	8	8	—	—	24						
	T	30(26)	17(14)	24(13)	8(7)	—(3)	79(63)	305	277	303	293	276	279
June	M	15	4	7	2	3	31						
	F	3	8	5	—	—	16						
	T	18(28)	12(9)	12(14)	2(5)	3(3)	47(59)	352	336	355	343	323	339
July	M	13	7	13	1	1	35						
	F	3	6	5	—	—	14						
	T	16(24)	13(13)	18(17)	1(5)	1(3)	49(62)	401	398	397	394	367	404
August	M	20	6	7	5	1	39						
	F	2	8	6	—	—	16						
	T	22(23)	14(7)	13(13)	5(4)	1(2)	55(49)	456	447	449	444	416	455
September	M	22	7	11	8	1	49						
	F	5	4	5	1	1	16						
	T	27(28)	11(18)	16(12)	9(4)	2(—)	65(62)	521	509	503	501	486	513
October	M	19	8	5	6	1	39						
	F	8	10	2	—	—	20						
	T	27(32)	18(17)	7(10)	6(2)	1(—)	59(61)	580	570	553	562	534	556
November	M	18	4	2	3	—	27						
	F	5	6	2	—	—	13						
	T	23(26)	10(7)	4(10)	3(8)	—(4)	40(55)	620	625	614	616	589	609
December	M	19	10	11	5	—	45						
	F	8	15	2	—	—	25						
	T	27(39)	25(18)	13(13)	5(8)	—(2)	70(80)	690	705	664	681	658	662
Total	M	222(239)	86(89)	96(77)	57(65)	14(21)	475(489)			Trends			
	F	67(71)	89(77)	54(60)	2(2)	3(4)	215(216)	Down	Up	Down	Up	Down	
	T	289(310)	175(166)	150(137)	59(67)	17(25)	690(705)	15	41	17	23	4	
% of Total Deaths		41·9(44·0)	25·3(23·6)	21·7(19·4)	8.6(9·5)	2·5(3·5)	100(100)	2·1	6·2	2·5	3·5	0·6	

Note: 1987 figures are in brackets

Mr BROWN—The table shows that since 1983 there has been an increase in the total number of deaths on the roads each year. In 1983 the total number of deaths on the road was 662; in 1984 it was 658; in 1985 the total number of deaths on the road was 681; and in 1986 it was 664. In 1987 the total number of deaths on the road peaked to 705 and in the following year there was a slight reduction to 690. That is a tragic loss of life. It is a catastrophe of major proportions when 690 people are killed on roads throughout Victoria.

I do not believe there would be a person in Victoria who has not at some time been touched, either within his own family or among friends or neighbours by the death of a relative caused by a road accident. It is a problem with modern societies and the modern motor vehicles. So long as people drive motor vehicles powered by combustion engines along Victoria's roads people will be killed.

The advancements of the modern motor vehicle, with its increased speed, means that more people are being killed today than 50 years ago. When a road accident happens today people are travelling at such a speed that there is little hope of saving them. That is also the case when motorists go to sleep at the wheel. They are travelling at high speed and nothing can be done to save them. Fifty years ago drivers travelled down the road in T-model Fords and if they ran off the road they may have been travelling only at 40 miles an hour, so deaths were significantly fewer. There is no doubt that speed is a killer, and there is also no doubt that many parents do not take what is undoubtedly their responsibility with their children.

I noticed that the police statistics from last year showed that 27 children under the age of sixteen years, eight of whom were aged four years or less, were killed when passengers in motor vehicles. It hits home when the life lost is that of a very young child. That seems to be more tragic in the eyes of most people. The tragedy is that the great majority of those of whom I have referred were not wearing seat belts or restrained by other means at the time of the accident.

In recent times, the law was changed to require that all people travelling in the rear of motor vehicles are restrained by approved devices, which are, for most, seat belts or, if infants, some other approved items such as baby capsules. All honourable members would have seen cars travelling the roads with the parents strapped in by seat belts but with children unrestrained in the back seats. They can be seen playing games, and jumping up and down in an unrestrained fashion. I admit that the majority of parents care about their children and would not consider moving their vehicles from the kerb until the children are restrained by seat belts but, for those who continue to offend, the harder the arm of the law is brought down upon them, the more I would be prepared to accept it as fair and reasonable, because parents have a definite responsibility particularly to very young infants and children who do not understand the danger. I think a $135 fine is imposed on motorists apprehended for not having children secured in the rear of vehicles. That is acceptable. A common argument is that the fine should be heavier.

A Victorian organisation known as the Police and Lawyers Road Trauma Committee wrote to all members of Parliament in December 1988 pointing out that the committee had been formed in 1985 and that the membership of the committee includes senior officers of the Victoria Police Force and solicitors experienced in road traffic law and personal injuries litigation.

In April 1986 the committee released its first strategy plan designed to reduce the incidence and effect of road trauma in the Victorian community. The strategy plan contained proposals relating to the drinking driver, to speed, the probationary driver, the compulsory wearing of helmets, education, support for victims, and research. I

am pleased to note that several of the recommendations in the first strategy plan have received the attention of the government.

Late last year the committee finalised a second strategy plan. I shall refer to some of its suggestions which need to be addressed, preferably by the re-establishment of the all-party Parliamentary committee into road safety but, failing that, by the present method used by the government, which is an adjunct to the Social Development Committee. Some of the ideas should be examined in the not-too-distant future.

Included in the summary of the committee's recommendations is a finding that all primary and secondary school councils should require traffic safety education to be part of the curriculum for all students. I realise there is pressure upon our education system for a wide range of programs to be introduced, but, acknowledging the fact that nearly all students will drive motor cars in the years ahead, the road safety subject is not an unreasonable suggestion.

It is also suggested that motorists who have successfully completed their driving tests in automatic vehicles should not be permitted to drive manual vehicles for the period during which they are probationary licence holders. This issue raises some passion among many people in the community. It is a cause of concern among the proprietors of driving schools that people attend for driver education, and who are then taken by the schools to the authorities to obtain driving licences. I share their view that if one learns to drive a motor vehicle that has automatic gears, one is not trained or adequately equipped—without any further education—to then drive a car that has manual gears. I accept that. I do not know how a person who has learnt to drive a vehicle only with automatic gears—and even in the case of an emergency—can drive a car with manual gears without being adequately tutored. The car is completely different to operate and, unless that person has received even basic tuition, I am unaware how the car could be moved from the kerb.

However, as a result of changes introduced by the government some years ago, if one is tested in an automatic vehicle, one can drive a vehicle with either manual or automatic gears. The committee has recommended that the provision should be examined, and I agree with its recommendation. I do not know how such a driver could move a car from the kerb without proper tuition; in some cases, the driver must constitute a danger on Victoria's roads.

The committee also recommends that driving tests should be revised to include the examination of an applicant's ability to handle a vehicle under difficult driving conditions. It is suggested that there should be more advanced courses required before people are able to obtain driving licences. There is valid argument for that. I suggest that nearly every member in the House would have experienced difficult driving conditions, usually in inclement weather. If drivers were better educated to handle vehicles, for example when they skid, the incidence of road trauma in Victoria would be lessened.

Another suggestion of the committee is that motorists aged 72 years of age and more should be periodically retested. I have mixed feelings about that suggestion because, particularly in rural Victoria, to take away a person's driving licence because he may not be able to meaure up to the test in one respect—usually eyesight—would be tantamount to saying, "We will take away your ability to get your food".

I am aware of the occasional situation in country areas where a person lives alone on a farm, and where the wife is deceased. I understand that usually the male dies first, but in my electorate I am aware of two examples, including the case of two elderly male residents living on their family farm who, if deprived of their motor vehicles, would not be able to continue to live in the only place where they want to live and die,

on their farm. Under those circumstances, if they were tested periodically they would be required to forfeit their licences; it would be tantamount to taking them out and shooting them!

Another recommendation is that the Road Traffic Authority should include information about traffic laws and changes to the law with motor registration and licence renewal notices. That is a good suggestion. Apart from the printing costs, no extra funds would be expended posting the notices. The Minister should give some consideration to that suggestion. Every motorist is contacted every year by means of a motor registration renewal form. A pro forma, bringing motorists up to date with changes in the laws affecting road safety and other requirements, could be enclosed.

Many other recommendations of that committee should be considered in future. The best way of implementing that would be by the re-establishment of the all-party Parliamentary committee to which I referred earlier.

The main purpose of the Bill is to provide new measures to combat drink-driving and to curb excessive speed. It provides a streamlined procedure for dealing with first offenders—that is, persons who have not been previously convicted in Australia of any drink-driving offence. During briefings on the Bill, I was surprised to learn that when an unlicensed driver is apprehended, such a person may never have had a licence in his life. In those circumstances, the licence cannot be taken from him. However, penalties should accrue against his name when he becomes licensed, so that he would then have a deficit tally; namely, the infringement obtained prior to receiving the licence. Licensed drivers should not be the only ones to suffer penalties. If an unlicensed driver obtains a licence, his misdemeanour while unlicensed should be taken into account.

A provision in the Bill provides that if a blood alcohol reading is below 0·15, the police have the ability to issue a drink-driving infringement notice on the sopt. The person would have the option of giving the police an objection notice that required the matter to be dealt with by a court, or of paying the on-the-spot fine and accepting a period of licence disqualification. The proposed measure will streamline what is presently required which is that if the blood alcohol level is below 0.15 on the breathalyser reading, a drink-driving infringement notice can be issued on the spot and the person can elect to pay it. The person will automatically be disqualified from holding his or her licence for a period of three months. People's rights are protected on the basis that they have up to 28 days to notify the authorities—the Road Traffic Authority in this case—whether they wish to have the matter dealt with by a court. It is not a matter of being obliged to pay the fine.

The present situation is if one is apprehended on a drink-driving charge the matter is heard in a Magistrates Court; if one is apprehended and wishes to pay the fine, one can choose that course. The Opposition considers the provision reasonable and is prepared to support it.

Excessive speed is another major area addressed by the Bill. The Road Safety Act currently requires the courts to suspend a driver's licence for at least one month if the driver exceeds the speed limit by 10 kilometres or more. I am advised that 30 000 such cases are dealt with each year in the Magistrates Courts in Victoria.

Under the measures proposed by the Bill, the traffic infringement notice system will be adapted to enable excessive speeding cases to be dealt with under procedures similar to those applied to drink-driving infringements. In other words, on-the-spot fines may be issued. Again, the person will have the right either to pay the fine and cop it sweet or to have the matter heard in a Magistrates Court. The Opposition does not argue with that provision and will support it.

The government's desire to provide for the removal of one's licence if one is detected travelling in excess of 30 kilometres above the posted speed limit has been the cause for some conjecture. If one is travelling along an open freeway 30 kilometres in excess of a posted speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour, the Bill provides for the mandatory loss of one's licence. It is somewhat a draconian measure but it is something the Opposition is prepared to support.

I highlight the fact that if the posted speed limit on the freeway is 110 kilometres an hour—as it is on a number of freeways—a driver will not be able to travel at 140 kilometres an hour with impunity. The Bill deals with this singular aspect. If one is travelling in an area with a speed limit of 110 kilometres an hour and exceeds the speed of 130 kilometres an hour, one risks losing one's licence. So that in a 110 kilometre an hour zone one could not exceed the speed limit by more than 20 kilometres an hour without risking the loss of one's licence. Again, the Opposition has considered the matter at great length and supports the measure.

A number of other issues are of concern. One relates to the concern felt generally in the community about the use of drugs. The Bill proposes that it will be compulsory for everybody over the age of fourteen years who is involved in a motor vehicle accident to have a blood test. The test will determine not only the blood alcohol level—as at present—but also the level of drugs, if any. Drugs are an increasing problem in our community; the Opposition is prepared to support the proposed widening of the blood test.

If a person driving a motor vehicle is affected or adversely impaired through the effects of alcohol or drugs of any kind, the full force of the law should be brought to bear on him or her. If a person kills or maims somebody in circumstances where he or she is driving a motor vehicle and is affected or impaired in that way, he or she should be penalised. I note that there is consensus on this matter throughout the nation and that all State governments have agreed to implement the general provisions of the Bill being debated today.

The Bill makes an interesting change in respect of accident victims admitted to hospital. Apparently there was a court case on the point to which I refer. A blood sample was taken in the grounds of a hospital, not in the hospital. It was argued successfully that, therefore, the provisions of the Road Safety Act had not been complied with. As the blood sample was not taken in the hospital, the person walked away scot-free although he had a high alcohol reading. The Bill provides that a doctor may take a blood sample in the grounds or environs of a hospital; the present loophole will be removed. Again, the Opposition does not argue with that provision and will support it.

The Opposition has a particular concern which I ask the Minister for Transport to note. It is proposed that in some circumstances a person will not have the right of objection when an on-the-spot notice has been issued. As I am advised by the Minister's staff—I thank the Minister for making his staff available—if one receives an on-the-spot notice and does not notify the authorities within 28 days of one's intention to object to the implementation of the provisions—which will be mandatory loss of licence plus a fine—on the 29th day one is convicted and there is no redress thereafter.

In other words, if the person driving the car gave a false name—say your own, Mr Speaker—you would face the risk of being prosecuted without your knowledge. If a person is driving a car illegally—after having stolen it, perhaps—and is asked who he or she is when stopped by a police officer and indicates that he or she is a person other than him or herself, that other person could be convicted. The illegal driver might even give the name of the true owner of the vehicle and produce a driver's licence which might be in the glove box. If the person is given an on-the-spot traffic

infringement notice and there is no response from the person identified as the driver, after the expiry of 28 days the innocent owner of the car will be convicted. The provisions of the Bill allow for no redress in those circumstances.

Another provision worthy of consideration relates to another aspect of on-the-spot notices. If one is issued with such a notice and then suffers an accident at work a few days later and is hospitalised in a serious state of ill health as a result of that accident, after one had planned to have the traffic matter heard in court to establish one's innocence, the matter would be taken out of one's control.

I ask the Minister for Transport to consider the matters to which I have referred while the Bill is between here and another place. The Opposition supports the Bill in general and the concept of infringement notices being issued on the spot in particular. However, redress should be available if one is convicted without one's knowledge. I am sure every honourable member would agree with that principle. I ask the Minister to negotiate on this matter while the Bill is between here and another place.

Part of the road safety issue unquestionably is the state of Victorian roads, and there is no doubt that the reason for some accidents—I certainly do not claim the majority of accidents—is the condition of our roads. It is often the case on rural roads, especially in municipalities that have been starved of funds, that unsuspecting motorists, usually not from the local area, drive on to a particular part of a road that is in such a hazardous state that an accident is caused. I know that bad head-on collisions have occurred on roads with rutted surfaces. I am also aware of situations, not only in rural Victoria but also in other places, where dangerous corners and intersections have caused major accidents and often loss of life.

Much more should be done by the present government with road funding. The road funding crisis in this State is a result of the government's low priority for road funding. I have received many representations about that. Organisations such as the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria highlight the road funding crisis in this State. I am often asked, "Where are the roads our petrol taxes pay for?" I know that motorists consider they are being ripped off. The vast bulk of the money raised by government from excise on fuel does not go back into roads; it goes to many other areas of government administration. The road funding crisis in this State is starting to really bite. Many roads in rural Victoria are falling apart and there is no hope in the foreseeable future—at least prior to the return of the Liberal government—of having that situation redressed.

During a recent visit to rural Victoria I was informed that Mr John Brumby, a Federal member of Parliament, had met with some municipalities only the week before my visit. Councils raised with Mr Brumby their concerns about road funding and he informed them that in many places road closures would have to be considered. I would never have expected to have heard a suggestion from any member of Parliament on any side of the House that road closures were a viable option. However, the present Federal government is considering that some roads in rural Victoria will simply have to be closed.

Councillors at that meeting with Mr Brumby pressed the question, "What would happen to the residents who live in the houses abutting these roads?" I am told that the words he used were to the effect, "They would have to be relocated back into towns". What a scandalous indictment of the Federal government and of that member of Parliament! The Federal government has made road funding such a pathetically low priority that it is prepared to have roads closed. It is well known that many roads are reverting to dirt but at least people with four-wheel drive vehicles can use them. The roads are not being closed in that instance.

The Minister for Transport has on many occasions claimed that the Victorian government has a reasonable commitment to road funding. I shall read into the record the truth of the matter. In 1983–84 the total amount provided by the present Labor State government for roads from State sources was $365·6 million. The following year, 1984–85, it went down markedly. I suppose the government having won the election was not so worried about the following year. It went down to $304·9 million. In 1985–86 it increased marginally to $326·1 million; in 1986–87 it again increased slightly to $348·2 million; in 1987–88 it increased marginally to $369·2 million; and in the current financial year the total amount from State sources was $380·3 million.

The truth is, as is borne out by those figures, that the government has an abysmal commitment to road funding. Six years ago it contributed $365·6 million and this year it is contributing only $380 million. That is in real terms a dramatic decrease and that has been the pattern for the whole time the government has been in office. I suppose it is part of the government's high-flying modern management technique to juggle statistics in an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of Victorians. The figures I have mentioned are accurate. They show graphically the government's abysmal commitment to road funding.

In that same six years the government has doubled its take from Victorians. State taxes and charges have doubled! The revenue has doubled and yet there has been a dramatic decrease in real terms by holding static the amount of money the government has made available for Victorian roads over that six-year period. It is no wonder municipalities here in Melbourne, in the provincial cities and throughout the length and breadth of Victoria are screaming about this government's pathetic attitude to road funding—or, should I say, lack of it.

It was no surprise when the present Minister sidled up with his Federal counterpart, Mr Bob Brown, to "knock out the media by announcing a Federal–State road-funding agreement recently". I shall quote directly from the *Sun* of 25 February this year:

> Transport Minister Jim Kennan led with his chin when he summonsed reporters for a "good news" conference this week.

That report must be accurate because that is the way the Minister operates.

> The fight plan was simple—he and his Federal counterpart, Mr Bob Brown, were to knock out the media by announcing a Federal–State road funding agreement.
>
> But when reporters didn't do as they were told and questioned his news judgment, Mr Kennan bounced off the ropes and charged straight in, battering certain journalists with a flurry of verbal lefts and rights and sarcastically belittling them for their lack of depth and sophistication.

That would be an accurate report because honourable members in this House know how this Minister acts. With regard to verbal lefts and rights, the Minister would be more proficient with the left jabs than with right jabs because he has been manipulated and controlled by the left in his own party.

This is a Bill about roads and I want to highlight the government's commitment to an outer ring-road in Melbourne. The House has heard me read a press release from the Minister dated 14 September last year when he said he was proud to be part of a government that had taken the initiative and turned what may have been a grand and distant vision into a reality. He was talking about a ring-road around the City of Melbourne. The press release stated:

> This initial section of the ring-road represents the first stage of a strategy to progressively link our existing freeway network developed as a radial pattern from inner Melbourne, with a circumferential arterial route.

Honourable members also know I previously read into the record a letter from the present Director-General of Transport that the Opposition obtained under the Freedom

of Information Act that referred in detail to the R5 route, which, as the director-general said only last year, is now seen to be part of the metropolitan ring-road stretching from Altona to Frankston.

Of course, it was denied profusely by the Minister for Transport prior to the Greensborough by-election. The Minister also knows that for just on a year I had been seeking information from his department regarding the financial details of the proposed outer ring-road. I have been bemused by the fact that it has taken a year to obtain that information which was available and in the hands of the Minister's officers so long ago.

However, I am pleased to announce that on the Tuesday after the Greensborough by-election, the material was supplied. I can only assume that the Minister withheld that material for political reasons. There is no other reason one could assert. Obviously I was not to have this information prior to the recent Greensborough by-election. I will not say that it would have made the difference but, had the electorate of Greensborough known what I now know, it would have made a big difference to the constituents of Greensborough. They would have known that the government has a fully-funded and costed proposal for all stages of the Melbourne outer ring-road, and the proposal is as follows:

1. Princes Freeway to Western Highway	6·2 km Existing MMPS Option	$90 M	Commencement within 6 Years
	9·5 km for western alternative	$110 M	

I am quoting from material I received this week from the Ministry of Transport after the Greensborough by-election. The government said it had no proposal to build a ring-road, but I have the costings for all the sections of the ring-road. It continues:

2. Western Highway to Calder Freeway	7·1 km	$110 M	Commencement within 4 years
3. Calder Freeway to Tullamarine Freeway	3·5 km	$70 M	Commencement within 7 years
4. Tullamarine Freeway to Mahoneys Road (near Hume Highway)	7·2 km	$135	Under Construction
5. Mahoneys Road to Dalton Road	5·2 km	$50 M	Commencement within 8 years

The Minister is right on the last one because the Liberal Party will go ahead with that. The document continues:

6. Dalton Road to Plenty Road	3·5 km	$40 M	Commencement within 4 years

These are the figures for constructing the non-existent ring-road! It is a miracle that the government has been able to work on the costing since the Greensborough by-election. Prior to the by-election, the government said that there was no proposal to build a ring-road. I shall not misquote the Minister; I shall read the lot, including the notes about the gap in the middle of the proposed ring-road within the Minister's own electorate. The document continues:

7. Plenty Road to Greensborough Bypass	2·3 km	$15 m	Commencement in next financial year
8. Bell–Banksia Link	1·2 km	$29 M	Under contruction
9. Eastern Arterial, Doncaster Road to Springvale Road	8 km	$100 M	Commencement within 2 years

10	Eastern Arterial, Springvale Road to Maroondah Highway	3·5 km	$60 M	Commencement within 8 years

The SPEAKER—Order! I have some difficulty with the honourable member's comments.

Mr BROWN—The Bill is about road safety.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member is talking about road construction, not road safety.

Mr BROWN—I am making the point that if we do not have safe roads more people will be killed, and I have given examples where motorists have gone off roads, have had head-on collisions and so on, because of the rutting that occurs as a result of the lack of road funding; also intersection accidents—traffic black spots as they are called by the Road Traffic Authority—and other accidents. They could be addressed by the Minister, but the government, although it has the money available, squanders it on other things and refuses to make the funds available in this area. My comments are relevant to the Bill.

I make it clear that the Minister misled the House once again. The government has a proposal to build a ring-road and was able to produce the information which I had been chasing for a year. The Minister denied that he had a proposal for an outer ring-road.

Mr Kennan interjected.

Mr BROWN—On his own admission, the Minister has a proposal for a ring-road. He is quoted as saying that there is a proposal for a ring-road around the whole of Melbourne but it stops at Greensborough. What will the Minister do to that community? He will ruin it. The ecology of that community is finished because the Minister has a program which the Opposition will make clear in the months, weeks, days and hours ahead. Every truck or car driver who wants to bypass Melbourne—which is most of them—from the Latrobe Valley, Dandenong, Frankston and the peninsula will drive from that side of Melbourne to Greensborough, and so will motorists from the Warrandyte area. On the other side motorists will drive to Greensborough from Geelong and from the Hume Highway; and I have those costings for the ring-road in my hand.

Mr Maclellan—But the Minister is to build a bridge in Fitzsimons Lane.

Mr BROWN—The Minister will not finish the bridge at Geelong that has been sitting idle for eight months. He has taken Geelong's money to pork-barrel some votes in Greensborough. I am pleased that he is implementing Liberal Party policy on road safety by upgrading that killer bridge in Fitzsimons Lane. I certainly hope that is one undertaking he will honour. The Minister does not have a good track record.

I will not read the rest of the proposal now. I shall do it in another debate. Clearly the Minister on his own admission has produced costings for a ring-road and here they are, chapter and verse, including the costings which are totally in line with Liberal policy on the ring-road announced by the Opposition. One thing the Minister has right is that the Opposition costed its policy correctly.

The government's proposal for an outer ring-road will stop at two points: on one side of Greensborough and on the other side of Greensborough. God help Greensborough! That is all I can say.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BROWN—I do not know why the Minister wanted to mislead the community. Why was he not honest? These matters always bounce back. The Minister misled the community of Greensborough as late as last week by saying that there was no proposal for an outer ring-road. Why? Because he was told that this debate would not proceed until the Liberal Party received this information.

The Minister knew that he had to come up with the goods. He also knew that I knew this information was available in the department. As I have indicated, I talk with staff more than he does, and I know that his departmental officers are not allowed to say anything in an open manner. That is scandalous! When the Liberal Party was in government it made staff available at all times to the Opposition. The former Liberal Minister for Health, Mr Borthwick, made staff available to the then shadow Minister for Health, the present Minister for Planning and Environment. When I led a delegation in Geelong some time ago, the Minister had the audacity to bar the delegation from entering port land. I am straying a little from the Bill, but it shows the reckless manner in which the government operates.

The honourable member for Bulleen takes a very active interest in road safety matters and he has circulated in his area material that quotes directly from a recent paper by the Federal government's Office of Road Safety which shows that:

> There is up to a 70 per cent reduction in crashes on urban freeways compared to urban arterial roads.

That is quite a dramatic statement by his Federal counterparts. I shall say it again:

> There is up to a 70 per cent reduction in crashes on urban freeways compared to urban arterial roads.

Another quote states:

> Replacement of rural arterial roads with a rural freeway leads to a 70 per cent reduction in crashes.

Yet the Minister persists with a policy of insanity, a policy of lunacy, a policy of danger. Arterial roads degrade living standards in the areas they pass through. The Minister for Transport persists with these piecemeal, half-baked proposals not to build freeways and to undertake works such as the South-Eastern arterial "car park" which, rather than carrying traffic, clogs up and brings cars to a standstill.

Recently the Minister announced the extension of the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster to Ringwood. He said this would be in the form of an arterial road. I should like to state publicly, on record, that the policy of the Liberal Party announced prior to the State election was that it would build that freeway to full freeway status. That point needs to be made clear when discussing the Bill because it will mean lives will be lost through the dangerous roads that the Minister is building. The roads will maim adults and children.

The Liberal Party will be obliged to come along, after the demise of the present incompetent government, and remove these dangerous traffic light-controlled intersections. It will have no option but to do it. The Liberal Party has no dispute with the Minister for Transport about where he would put the arterial road, but he should do away with the dangerous intersections as part of the original construction. It is not as though he is speaking about some lightly trafficked route; tens of thousands of motorists use these roads, including motorists from the Greensborough area.

Mr Perton—Seventy-five thousand a day!

Mr BROWN—The figure is well in excess of 100 000 people a day who will be sitting at these flaming traffic lights with traffic snarled up and cars parked, not being able to move because of the government's insane policy.

I am pleased to say that even the Minister for Planning and Environment supports the Liberal Party on this issue. Perhaps I should say that if he does not, he certainly

does not agree with the advice he receives from the excellent committees he has established. I thank the Minister's office for forwarding to me the assessment report named, "Recommendations on the Eastern Arterial Road and Ringwood By-pass Project". This is the Minister's own report from a panel he appointed in his own department. One paragraph states:

> In some respects the existing policy of building such major roads to arterial road standards as opposed to freeway standards may be considered short-sighted, especially in circumstances where an obvious need exists and is shown.

Seventy-five thousand cars a day, more than 100 000 people a day, will be sitting at those traffic lights. If that is not an obvious need that exists and is demonstrated, I do not know what "Basil" will ever see in that regard.

I know the Minister is known as Basil Fawlty now and, although I do not watch much televison, I am told there could not be a more appropriate name for the Minister and I want to make it clear that when Basil Fawlty invites——

The SPEAKER—Order! If the honourable member is referring to another honourable member, he should use the correct term.

Mr BROWN—Mr Speaker, do you mean I must refer to him as "the Honourable Basil Fawlty"? I certainly would not want to do anything out of order. When the Minister has another sausage sizzle at Geelong, at the taxpayers expense, I do not want him to deny me the opportunity of attending. I should be proud to be there in my role as the shadow Minister for Transport, and I will join with "Basil" in any sausage sizzle he wants to hold in the community, so long as it is not in a by-election because that would be breaching the Act, and I would not want to get involved in anything like a picnic where they give away free food and breach the Act!

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will return to the Bill.

Mr BROWN—I shall finish the quotation from the panel report of the Ministry of Transport:

> Although the costs of final construction are obviously higher than those of the staged construction, nevertheless considerable long-term savings would be made and further disruption during construction would be avoided.

Here is the punch line:

> Reconsideration of existing government policy may be desirable in such circumstances.

I should like the Minister to respond to those points in the report. Will the government, after it has been shamed into it, adopt the recommendations of that report? Will it change the policy and adopt some other areas? I commend the government on some of those policies, such as its 60-plus scheme for the travellers on public transport. You have implemented Liberal policy, but you charge $1, whereas we are free——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr BROWN—The government charges $1 whereas the Liberal Party will be giving pensioners non-means tested, free travel. The Minister for Transport likes to mislead the House, and he did so on the details of this concession, but he always gets pulled up on it.

Will the Minister undertake a reversal of policies that are dangerous? When we speak about road safety, we speak about everybody. The Liberal Party has concern for all members of the community, and I do not want to see the continuing nightmare for residents and users of the roads such as has developed with the South-Eastern artierial "car park". I do not want the government to do the same thing out in the eastern suburbs on the extension of the Doncaster Freeway; that would be lunacy, and I plead

with the Minister because nothing else seems to get through. He does not understand commonsense.

I ask the Minister to reconsider the policy of lunacy where he intends to build arterial roads where proper freeways are warranted; indeed, where proper freeways are the only way to go. Of course, where an arterial road makes sense—and there are cases where they make obvious sense—the Liberal Party does not argue with it; but where a freeway is the only way to go, I ask the Minister to cut the strings of Sibberas and not remain a pliable puppet, being told what to do with the money put into public transport.

The Opposition agrees that public transport needs to be supported, but so do the roads which so many Victorians use. The Minister for Transport is biased against motorists. I cannot comprehend why.

Mr E. R. Smith—He is one himself!

Mr BROWN—He is one himself in the sense that he is driven! He should have a policy that includes adequate sensible road funding undertakings. The government, which has doubled State taxes and charges in seven years, should have a policy of increasing road funding at least in line with inflation, other than the present government's local, pathetic and abysmal commitment to road funding where, in real terms, it has been cut back each year by the rate of inflation.

In terms of the recent announcement—I suppose I should not call it an announcement because I announced it; I speak to the Minister's staff more than he does—I became aware of a proposal—and it asks for documentation that was supplied—to put concrete kerbing on most of Melbourne's major roads leading out of the central business district. This would narrow the width of the roadway surface. Rather than kerb and channel down the side of the road and run water into the gutter, the government wants to place concrete kerbing on the side of the tram tracks between where the motor vehicles pass and the tracks.

The government wants to narrow every major road leading into and out of Melbourne by the width of a concrete kerb. Even if no tram is on the tracks at the time, motorists will not be able to diverge on to the tram track area under the government's proposal. That is a dangerous proposition. All road users, but particularly those on motor cycles, pushbikes and pedestrians, will have horrific and constant accidents as a result of this measure.

The Opposition accepts that a penalty should be applied if someone transgresses on to the tram tracks and stops a tram from travelling along its route. But the Opposition sees nothing wrong in diverging on to the tram track area if there is a valid reason for doing so. In other words, if a car is illegally parked in a clearway, which happens every day on every road in Melbourne, motorists have to drive around that car. I regularly experience this on a clearway when I travel in to Parliament House. There is always one vehicle, often more, illegally parked and the three lanes of traffic must narrow down to two lanes because of the illegally parked vehicle or vehicles. At present, if there is no tram on the track, motorists can move out and travel around the illegally parked vehicle and so the traffic continues to flow. Under the government's proposal, every major road leading out of Melbourne will have a concrete kerb and channel that will prevent motorists from moving around illegally parked or broken down vehicles. That is absolute lunacy.

The basis of the Bill is to implement new measures which should assist in road safety. At the outset of my speech I said that honourable members should take a bipartisan approach whenever lives can be saved by the implementation of sensible laws. If the number of accidents can be reduced, and the number of fatalities or people

seriously injured as a result of accidents can be reduced in large or small measure, the Liberal Party will support such measures.

If the government has a proper commitment to road safety it must also have a reasonable commitment to road funding. That is something the government currently lacks. It is too important to wait for the return of the Liberal government at the next State election. The government has the money—it is in the system. It is just wasting it, like State Bank Victoria does when it lends to people without security. The government is throwing our money down the drain in many respects, but that can remain the subject of other debates.

If the government has a genuine commitment to road safety, it should urgently take two initiatives. Firstly, it should re-establish the all-party Parliamentary committee, a policy of the Liberal Party that will be implemented as a matter of high priority when it returns to office if the government does not do it first. Secondly, the government should have a much higher priority Statewide for road funding.

The former Liberal government injected a dramatic flow of cash into the system to allow roads to be markedly upgraded and to allow major projects to take place; and it will do so again. I hope the mess I shall inherit—and it will be a mess—will be nowhere near as bad as that which my New South Wales Liberal Party colleague has been lumbered with by the idiotic Unsworth and foolish Wran governments. Certainly the Victorian government is of the same ilk and is doing its best to join its colleagues.

The next Liberal government will not increase taxes and charges. It will simply get rid of the sloth that this mob has created and implemented. The Liberal Party will do away with unnecessary staff members the government has hanging from the rafters. I am referring now to Ministerial advisers, the Government Media Unit and people like Barry Donovan who have been picked up along the way.

The Liberal Party will not borrow thousands of millions of dollars. Somehow it will retrieve Victoria's transport system from the Japanese owners but it will not do that by increasing taxes and charges. The Liberal government will undertake sensible policies that will efficiently and economically run the State. It will ensure that its actions are in the interests of Victorians who use our roads.

Subject to the qualifications I have expressed in the debate on a few points, which I ask the Minister for Transport to take on board while the Bill is between here and the other place, the Liberal Party supports the Bill.

The SPEAKER—Order! I seek clarification from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the three tables he discussed with me. There is some doubt as to whether he sought leave of the House for tables 2 and 3. Can he clarify that for the benefit of *Hansard* and the House?

Mr BROWN—I desire that the three tables I made available to the House and to the Minister for Transport be incorporated.

Leave was granted, and tables 2 and 3 were as follows:

Table 2

VICTORIAN FATALITIES BY AGE GROUP—YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 1988

Age Group in Years	*Drivers*	*Passengers*	*Pedestrians*	*Motor Cyclists*	*Pedal Cyclists*	*Total*
0–4	— ( )	9 (5)	5 (6)	— (—)	— (—)	14 (11)
5–16	3 (4)	25 (24)	17 (22)	1 (2)	6 (7)	52 (59)
17–20	43 (51)	36 (30)	6 (10)	18 (22)	2 (4)	105 (117)
21–25	55 (55)	24 (19)	13 (6)	22 (19)	1 (4)	115 (103)

Age Group in Years	*Drivers*	*Passengers*	*Pedestrians*	*Motor Cyclists*	*Pedal Cyclists*	*Total*
26–29	30 (33)	10 (12)	12 (4)	6 (8)	— (1)	58 (58)
30–39	53 (54)	16 (21)	5 (9)	7 (11)	4 (2)	85 (97)
40–49	37 (42)	13 (10)	12 (9)	2 (2)	2 (3)	66 (66)
50–59	26 (21)	9 (13)	12 (12)	1 (1)	1 (1)	49 (48)
60 and over	42 (46)	33 (29)	68 (59)	2 (1)	1 (3)	146 (138)
N/K	— (4)	— (3)	— (—)	— (—)	— (1)	— (8)
Total	289 (310)	175 (166)	150 (137)	59 (67)	17 (25)	690 (705)
% of Total	41·9 (44·0)	25·3 (23·6)	21·7 (19·4)	8·6 (9·5)	2·5 (3·5)	

Comment: 286 out of 690 persons killed or 41·9% (last year 41·1%) were aged 25 years or under.

The 17–25 year age group accounted for 220 deaths including 98 or 33·9% of the 289 drivers killed and 60 or 34·3% of the 175 passengers killed—the equivalent percentages for 1987 being 34·2% and 29·5%.

40 or 67·8 % of the 59 motor cyclists killed were aged 17–25 years—in 1987, this age group comprised 61·2%. Only 66 (9·6%) of the total fatalities 690 were children aged 16 years or under as against 9·9% in 1987.

Note: Figures in brackets relate to 1987.

Table 3

VICTORIAN ROAD FATALITIES

1988

CHILDREN ONLY

Age Group in Years	*Driver*	*Pedestrians*	*Passengers*	*Pedal Cyclists*	*Motor Cyclists*	*Total*
0–4	- (-)	5 (6)	9 (5)	- (-)	- (-)	14 (11)
5–16	3 (4)	17 (22)	25 (24)	6 (7)	1 (2)	52 (59)
Total	3 (4)	22 (28)	34 (29)	6 (7)	1 (2)	66 (70)

Note: Figures in brackets relate to 1987

Comment: 66 out 690 (9·6%) road deaths for the year were children aged sixteen years or less—14 of those killed were aged 4 years or less and they included 5 pedestrians.

Thus children comprised 22 out of 150 pedestrians killed (i.e. 14·7%) 34 out of 175 passengers (19·4%) and 6 out of 17 pedal cyclists (35·3%).

By way of comparison, children comprised 20·4% of pedestrian, 17·5% of passenger and 28% of pedal cycle deaths in 1987. Expressed as a percentage of the total child pedestrian, passenger and pedal cycle deaths—passengers and cyclists are up whilst pedestrians are considerably lower.

It is now apparent that the increased attention to the safety of children as pedestrians and cyclists is slowly but surely paying off. Taking the figures for the past five years we find:

% of Total Fatalities	*Year*	*Pedestrians*	*Passengers*	*Pedal Cyclists*	*Motor Cyclists*	*Drivers*	*Total*
12·6%	1984	28	29	16	4	4	81
12·2%	1985	28	41	11	2	-	82

% of Total Fatalities	*Year*	*Pedestrians*	*Passengers*	*Pedal Cyclists*	*Motor Cyclists*	*Drivers*	*Total*
9·2%	1986	19	28	10	4	–	61
9·9%	1987	29	28	7	3	3	70
9·6%	1988	22	34	6	1	3	66

On the motion of Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, May 2.

This is a procedural matter to avoid honourable members being required to be here next Tuesday.

The motion was agreed to.

LAND (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The second-reading speech has been prepared in two sections in the interest of saving time. I propose to read the first section which gives a brief outline of the provisions of the Bill. The second section provides detailed information and is incorporated in the copies of the speech circulated for the information of honourable members. As I do not propose to read the second section of the speech to this House, I seek leave to have that section incorporated in *Hansard* as part of the second-reading speech to the Bill.

Leave was granted, and the second section will follow section one.

Mrs SETCHES—As stated earlier, I will now give a brief outline of the provisions of the Bill. It provides for the revocation of permanent reservations in respect of certain parcels of land, the particulars of which are described in the schedules to the Bill. Use of the parcels of land for the purpose for which they are reserved is no longer required or the land is more urgently required for other purposes.

The Bill also amends the Melbourne Lands Act 1987 simply to correct an error in the land description in the schedule to that Act. It amends the Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1933, the Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1958 and repeals three Acts which no longer serve any useful purpose.

RICHMOND LANDS—PART 2

This land is referred to in Items 1 and 2 of Schedule 1 to the Bill. The revocation of the reservations for the purpose of an abattoir and of the relevant land titles will enable this surplus land to be sold.

BALLARAT LANDS—PART 3

The land referred to in Items 3 and 4 of Schedule 1 to the Bill is the Ballarat City Baths Reserve in Armstrong Street, Ballarat. The reserve is not used for the purpose for which it is reserved and revocation of it and of the relevant land titles will enable the land to be sold or used for other purposes.

PARKVILLE LANDS—PART 4

The land referred to in Item 5 of Schedule 1 to the Bill is the Veterinary Science Institute Reserve at the corner of Flemington Road and Park Street, Parkville. The institute, now known as the Veterinary Research Institute, will soon vacate its area within the reserve and revocation of the reservation and relevant land title will enable this surplus land to be sold.

POMONAL LANDS—PART 5

The Pomonal public hall reserve is the land referred to in Item 1 of Schedule 2 to the Bill. The site has not been used for the purpose of the reservation since its creation in 1933 and, as it is not required for that purpose, the reservation should be revoked.

QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL LANDS—PART 6

The land referred to in Item 2 of Schedule 2 to the Bill is the Queen Victoria hospital reserve in Melbourne. The hospital has been closed and the land is no longer required for hospital purposes. Revocation of the reservation will enable the land to be sold.

MALVERN LANDS—PART 7

The land referred to in Item 3 of Schedule 2 to the Bill is a handicapped children's reserve in Malvern Road, Toorak. The site has not been used for the purpose for which it was reserved since 1978 and revocation of the reservation will enable the land to be sold.

FRANKSTON LANDS—PART 8

The land referred to in Item 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 3 is known as Frankston Park which is the home ground of Victorian Football Association club Frankston. The land forms part of a public park and public recreation reserve and reservation and re-reservation of Frankston Park for public recreation will enable that land to be leased by Frankston City Council to the club.

KANIVA LANDS—PART 9

The land referred to in Item 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 3 to the Bill is a portion of a recreation and public gardens reserve in Progress Street, Kaniva. The site is used for the purpose of a Country Fire Authority—CFA—fire station and revocation of the reservation as to that portion will enable sale to the CFA.

HEIDELBERG LANDS—PART 10

The land referred to in Item 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 3 to the Bill is a portion of a plantation purposes reserve in Warringal Place, Heidelberg. Revocation of the reservation in respect of that land will enable the land to be used as part of the Bell Street–Banksia Street road link.

YARRA BEND PARK LANDS—PART 11

This Part of the Bill will establish a new boundary between Yarra Bend Park and the former Willsmere Hospital reserve land. The land referred to in Part 1 of Schedule 4 to the Bill is a portion of Yarra Bend Park. Revocation of the park reservation in

respect of that land will enable the land to be sold together with adjoining land of the former Willsmere Hospital reserve. Two portions of the former Willsmere Hospital reserve will become part of Yarra Bend Park.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—PART 12

This Part contains the usual provisions of a measure of this type to ensure that the Crown is not liable for compensation for anything done under or arising out of this proposed legislation and to direct the Registrar of Titles to amend records kept under the Transfer of Land Act 1958. It also contains an amendment of the Melbourne Lands Act 1987 to correct an error in the description of land in the schedule to the Act and provides for the repeal of three obsolete Acts.

The second section, for which leave to incorporate in *Hansard* was granted, was as follows:

Second Section

RICHMOND LANDS—PART 2

Richmond abattoir is situated on 3·03 hectares of Crown land at the corner of Barkly Avenue and Burnley Street, Richmond and is permanently reserved by Order in Council of 30 June 1890 for an abattoir and general municipal purposes. Land titles restricted as to the purpose for which the land can be used are held in the name of the municipality. As there is a doubt as to whether the earlier reservation of 1862 was revoked, the Bill also revokes that reservation. Until April 1987, the site had been used as an abattoir by its most recent tenant, Smorgon Consolidated Industries. The site is now disused and the Richmond City Council is deriving no revenue from it, by way of either rates or rent. However, council uses an area of 0·3 hectares as a depot.

The council and the local residents are not in favour of the site being continued to be used as an abattoir and council only wishes to retain use of the small depot site. It is not considered to be appropriate to have an abattoir in an inner city area. Until the permanent reservation and land titles are revoked the site cannot be sold or used for any other purpose. To leave the land idle would be an inefficient use of a valuable inner city site. The site has been assessed as government land in the land classification process and will be disposed of or used in accordance with the government's asset management policies.

BALLARAT LANDS—PART 3

In 1880, an area of 1682 square metres of Crown land in Armstrong Street, Ballarat, was permanently reserved as a site for public baths and was granted later in the same year to the City of Ballaarat for the purposes of the reservation. In 1885, an area of 607 square metres in Armstrong Street adjoining the north of the previous area was also permanently reserved and granted to the city for the same purpose.

The baths operated for nearly a century as the city baths until a shift in population and the development of better facilities elsewhere made them redundant. The baths have not operated since about 1970. The site has been assessed as government land in the land classification process and will be disposed of or used in accordance with government asset management policies. The buildings remaining on the site are the property of the City of Ballaarat, but are virtually worthless. The City of Ballaarat supports the proposed revocation.

PARKVILLE LANDS—PART 4

The site on the corner of Flemington Road and Park Street, Parkville, was permanently reserved by Order in Council in 1913. It was reserved for a school of veterinary science at the University of Melbourne.

Since the initial reservation, other occupants have joined the Veterinary Research Institute on the site. These other occupants are the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research. To ensure the legality of the occupations, legislation was passed in 1970 to extend the purposes of the reservation.

The Melbourne (Veterinary School) Land Act 1970 extended the reservation for the purposes of carrying on veterinary research and veterinary services by the State Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and for such other university purposes as may be agreed to by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the University of Melbourne. The Veterinary Research Institute is to move soon from this site to its new accommodation at Werribee. The reason for the initial reservation will no longer exist. In addition, a large portion of the site will be unoccupied following the revocation.

The University of Melbourne has agreed to the reservation over the site being removed. The rights of other occupants are protected by the provisions of clause 8 of the Bill. The 1970 Act no longer serves any useful purpose and the Bill provides for its repeal. The site has been assessed as government land in the land classification process and will be used or disposed of in accordance with the government's asset management policies.

POMONAL LANDS—PART 5

An area of 9030 square metres on the Ararat–Hall's Gap Road at Pomonal was permanently reserved as a site for a public hall and public recreation on 25 January 1933 and placed under the control of a local committee of management. Although this land was made available for a public hall at the instigation of the Pomonal progress committee and fruit growers association, the hall was actually erected on freehold land opposite, as were recreational facilities.

The reserve has not been used for the purpose of the reservation since its creation and there has been little public use of the reserve, except for some occasional tree planting and nature study over the years by the students of the adjoining State school. The appointment of the committee of management has lapsed. In view of the facilities for public meetings and recreation developed nearby on freehold land owned by the Shire of Ararat, the current reservation of this area is now inappropriate. The area, together with a further parcel of Crown land to the west will be re-reserved as a site for the conservation of an area of natural interest in accordance with the recommendation of the Land Conservation Council which has been approved by the government. The tree planting and nature study activities of the school will be allowed to continue.

QUEEN VICTORIA HOSPITAL LANDS—PART 6

In a press release of 24 August 1988, the Minister for Major Projects announced the plans for the State Library, a new site for the Museum and the sale of the Queen Victoria hospital site. The proceeds of the sale of the hospital site are to be used towards funding refurbishment of the State Library and the building of the new Musuem. The Queen Victoria hospital site is Crown land permanently reserved for hospital purposes. In order to sell the site, the permanent reservation needs to be revoked. Revocation of the reservation will not pre-empt any planning decisions which may be taken in respect of the site. The land has been assessed as government land in the land classification process.

MALVERN LANDS—PART 7

This property known as 795 Malvern Road, Toorak, was purchased by the Victorian government in 1949 to enable the establishment of a centre for the treatment of handicapped children. The site was permanently reserved for the purpose of a training and treatment centre for handicapped children in 1978. The Spastic Society of Victoria was appointed as the committee of management in April 1978. The buildings located on the site became unsuited to the needs of the society and were demolished in 1978. The site has remained vacant since that time.

No future development for the purpose of the reserve is envisaged for the site as the Ministry of Education considers that existing educational facilities would be able to cater adequately for these requirements. The site has been assessed as government land in the land classification process and will be used or disposed of in accordance with the government's asset management policies.

FRANKSTON LANDS—PART 8

Frankston Park containing 3·140 hectares is part of an area of about 7 hectares within the City of Frankston permanently reserved as a site for a public park and other purposes of public recreation in 1929. Frankston Park is fully enclosed and developed for a specific recreation use and has been occupied by the Frankston Football Club for more than twenty years.

The existing facilities are substandard and the football club has applied to the City of Frankston, as the committee of management of the area, for a permit to undertake substantial redevelopment of the area. Proposed works include the erection of new clubrooms, extension of the playing arena, new spectator standing areas and general landscaping works. The estimated cost of these improvements is in the vicinity of $450 000.

Before the redevelopment program can proceed it is necessary that the club obtain a lease over the area so that the cost can be financed by subletting existing clubroom facilities. The City of Frankston fully supports this proposition and is prepared to negotiate an appropriate lease with the football club. However, section 17D of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 prevents the granting of such a lease while the land is permanently reserved for a public park. Revocation of the permanent reservation for Frankston Park,

which is shown by hatching on the plan in Part 2 of Schedule 3, and re-reservation of that land for recreational purposes only will enable those provisions to be used for the granting of the desired lease.

KANIVA LANDS—PART 9

The site comprising 294 square metres is part of an area permanently reserved in 1931 for recreation and public gardens purposes. The Country Fire Authority owns adjoining Crown allotment 9, which was one part of the original reservation prior to 1931. However, that land is too small to allow for future extensions to the fire station. With the agreement of the Shire of Kaniva, the authority is currently using a portion of the adjoining reserve and has built a sheet-iron radio shed on the land and uses an existing fibrocement building that was once a band hall. Revocation of the relevant portion of the reserve shown by hatching on the plan in Part 3 of Schedule 3 will enable it to be sold to the authority.

HEIDELBERG LANDS—PART 10

In 1963, an area of 7942 square metres at the intersection of Warringal Place and Banksia Streets, Heidelberg, was permanently reserved as a site for an ornamental plantation. The City of Heidelberg as a committee of management has controlled the reserve since 1969. The government has designated the proposed Bell–Banksia streets link as one of the highest priority for road works in the metropolitan area following the metropolitan arterial road access study—METRAS.

As a result of an environment effects statement in 1979, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Planning Scheme was amended to provide for an improved road link between Bell and Banksia streets. The project requires the excision from the reserve of 2154 square metres, shown by hatching on the plan in Part 4 of Schedule 3, of which about 1769 square metres will be needed for the road, leaving 385 square metres isolated from the remainder of the plantation reserve. Proposals for the disposal of surplus land will be developed in conjunction with Heidelberg council and the Austin Hospital to ensure compatibility with adjacent land use and planning initiatives proposed by council.

By way of compensation, the Road Construction Authority—RCA—has agreed to provide replacement open space and will enter into a formal agreement under section 45 of the Transport Act. The RCA will engage a consultant to advise on landscaping the reserve and replacement of the 24 trees of non-local species that will need to be removed. Some council-owned parkland will also be required for the project and it will be replaced as well.

YARRA BEND PARK LANDS—PART 11

These provisions of the Bill are an important step in facilitating the government's sale of the former Willsmere psychogeriatric hospital to the private sector for sensitive and imaginative redevelopment. Consistent with the November 1985 recommendation of the Social Development Committee the government has decommissioned Willsmere Hospital, which had for many decades been recognised as obsolete and unsafe for human service provision. The government is selling the Willsmere property to pay for modern psychogeriatric replacement facilities. More than $37 million has been spent to date on providing seventeen new facilities throughout the metropolitan area, and the refurbishment of four existing facilities.

The Yarra Bend Park boundary, defined by legislation in 1933, has always been inappropriate at its interface with the Willsmere property. It cuts across the main arrival precinct of the hospital site. As a result, the park trustees and hospital management effectively ignored the legal boundary and operated under a so-called management boundary. With the sale of the Willsmere property imminent, the legal and management boundaries were reviewed and a community consensus was quickly reached that neither was in the best long-term interests of the park or the Willsmere property.

A proposed new boundary, consistent with the State conservation strategy provision that there should be no net loss in quantity or quality of land in the park, was tested for public reaction by the Minister for Planning and Environment through a planning scheme process. The new boundary proposed in this Bill reflects public input through that process and some of the subsequent comments on an independent review panel appointed under the Planning and Environment Act.

Public input highlighted two particularly significant areas of the Willsmere property—the so-called nurses home site and the north-west shoulder. This Bill ensures retention of a substantial part of each of those sites for future use by the public. It achieves a sensible balance between providing for the addition of key areas of the Willsmere property to the park, and allowing sensitive redevelopment of the balance of the Willsmere site. Its alignment in the area of the former nurses homesite, for instance, provides for a very significant addition of land to the park offering spectacular views to the city skyline. It also allows for limited residential redevelopment of a portion of the same site.

The Bill presents a practical and responsible approach to realignment of the park boundary. Although there are those who seek transfer of much more of the hospital property to the park, the Bill recognises that the Kew area is already well endowed with public parkland, and also meets the objective of facilitating funding of long overdue modern psychogeriatric facilities which have replaced the Willsmere Hospital operations through sale of the hospital property.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

By leave, I ask the Minister to consider an adjournment of longer than two weeks, in view of the number of parcels of land——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member may not raise the matter of time at this stage.

Mr MACLELLAN—I tried to, by leave, Mr Speaker. I thought I was given that leave.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest to the honourable member for Berwick that he simply move for the adjournment of the debate at this stage; and on a subsequent motion the House will deal with the matter of time.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to.

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

I shall consider extending that, if required.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—Mr Speaker, I take it I am now entitled to speak to the House.

On the question of time, which I now understand is before the House, Mr Speaker, what I wish to put to you and to the House is the need for additional time. I do that because of the extensive number of reservations referred to in the Bill. The House has no indication from the second-reading speech whether local members have been consulted about the parcels of land in the various electorates that they represent.

I should have thought such consultations would have at least provided a short cut for both the Opposition and the National Party spokespersons in deciding whether they needed to approach individual members representing the areas referred to in the Bill. The opposition parties do not know whether that work has been done in advance or whether members in another place have been approached. That is one aspect of the question of time.

The time question extends beyond that because it will be necessary to discover whether the municipalities concerned have been consulted. There is no reference in the second-reading notes to whether contact has been made with the municipalities concerned. I should have thought that was fundamental—although I do not know whether it was assumed to be fundamental. Again, that question has been left at large.

I am sure the Minister will prove agreeable and helpful and will assist the opposition parties so far as she can. I am also sure that the forms of the House will not get in her way as they so often seem to get in the way of other people around the place!

On the question of time, Mr Speaker, I am asking the Minister whether she will offer additional time if the opposition parties request it. I ask the Minister to provide briefings for both the National Party and the Liberal Party—again this is on the

question of time—because those briefings may hasten the matter and obviate the need for an extension of time.

I must be sure that what I am saying is of particular relevance to the motion, in view of the particularity of the hour—26 minutes to 6 on Thursday evening. I ask the Minister for joint briefings in an effort to save time. Where consultations have been had with local members, I ask her to provide a list of them, if that is available; and where municipalities have been contacted and have agreed to the measures, a list of those municipalities would also shorten the procedure enormously.

I have much pleasure in saying that the Opposition will not oppose the motion moved by the Minister on the question of time, Sir, because it knows that she is reasonable, even if other people become a bit testy!

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) (*By leave*)—I shall keep to the two-week adjournment that I moved, but if further time is required I shall grant it; and I shall be happy to provide the briefings as requested.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, May 4.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Presentation of Address-in-Reply

The SPEAKER—Order! I wish to advise honourable members that the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech on the opening of Parliament will be presented at Government House on Wednesday, 3 May 1989, at 10.30 a.m.

Transport will be available on the front steps and will leave at 10.15 a.m. It is requested that as many members as possible accompany me to the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Proposed adventure games park—Financial institutions duty on war service home loan payments—Compatibility of telephones and hearing aids—Fulton Road reserve in Blackburn South—Entertainment Access Service—Daily "Hansard"—Child-care facilities

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Polwarth)—One of my constituents, Leigh-Anne McKay, wrote to me on behalf of her parents, and I shall paraphrase the letter. I am asking the Minister for Planning and Environment to investigate this matter and to advise me particularly in relation to the government's policy on the matter that I shall raise.

The parents of this constituent own some land at Bellbrae and, about two years ago, they subdivided it and sold part of it to a young family who established a home there. The other part is now apparently in the hands of people who trade under the name of Hense Consultants Pty Ltd, who have made application for a permit for an adventure games park. It turns out that this adventure games park is to be used for the purpose of war games.

My constituent states:

I must make mention that this land is zoned as rural natural features and is not to be cleared. There is an abundance of wildlife, including kangaroos, wallabies, snakes, possums, native birds and there is strong evidence supporting the fact that a panther may exist in the area as there have been firm sightings within a kilometre of this particular land.

My main grievance, and the reason I am writing to you is that, while the government is adopting a non-violence attitude and trying to prohibit the use of guns, they are allowing games played with guns to be promoted in Victoria. By allowing these so-called adventure games to be established they are actually giving people permission to point an armed weapon at another human being and pull the trigger. Whether the weapon has a dye substance, water or ammunition in it is really immaterial as be it play acting or not, the aim of the game is to "kill" the opposition. I cannot see as to how these games can be described as anything other than war games and I do not see how they are going to encourage people other than undesirables into a lovely residential bushland setting. The only people wanting to play these war games are people who have an inane and warped sense of play.

The people who live in the area have paid large sums of money to purchase their bushland retreats so as to escape city life and find serenity. Most of the people in the area are very affluent and none of them want this type of establishment to be erected on their doorsteps. To encourage men, who desire to become "Rambos" into the area is asking for trouble as the basic seclusion of the homes in the area leaves open a way for terrorism, vandalism and destruction of these people's lives and properties.

This is the real point:

If the Victorian government is serious about their stand on violence and gun laws, and in respect to the "crazies" that already exist in our community as illustrated by the Hoddle and Queen street massacres, they would not allow these establishments to exist at all in Victoria.

On behalf of my constituent, who wrote to me on behalf of her parents who own this land, I should like the Minister to take the material that I have and study it to determine whether the use of land for this sort of application is in line with current government policy. I believe our community deserves to know from the government whether it is prepared not only to condone but also to encourage these people.

I have obtained a copy of the planning application made by Hense Consultants Pty Ltd, which contains advice that, so long as the particular weaponry is used by people over the age of sixteen years, it can be imported without restriction and it can be bought and used without registration. I call on the Minister to clarify the government's policy in relation to these matters.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte)—The Treasurer will be well aware that some months ago—in an overt attempt at applying a privatisation policy—the Commonwealth government sold to the Westpac Banking Corporation its right to collect defence war service home loan repayments.

One of my constituents has explained to me—with some distress, I might add—that now that she must make her loan repayments at the Westpac bank on a monthly basis, another hidden form of taxation has been introduced by the government in that she is required to pay financial institutions duty on her repayments.

Given that some time ago the State government exempted pension payments from this onerous financial institutions duty, which all Victorians except pensioners have to pay, and given the large number of pensioners who have defence war service home loans—my constituent is a war widow—I call upon the Treasurer to advise the House whether the government will consider exempting these types of loan repayments from this onerous tax, which my constituent has already been forced to pay.

Mr SEITZ (Keilor)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Community Services a matter concerning the hearing impaired people of Victoria who need hearing aids to be able to communicate over the telephone. I refer to the compatibility of telephones and hearing aids. Currently not every telephone is compatible with hearing aids. Someone suffering from hearing loss who has an old telephone must purchase a new telephone that is compatible with a hearing aid. I have staying in my home an overseas exchange student who has a hearing impediment, and that has brought to my attention the difficulties experienced by people with such problems.

Public telephones should all be compatible with hearing aids so that people with hearing problems can easily use them. If one suffers from a hearing impediment, whether through age or for some other reason, one should not have the additional burden of having to purchase a telephone or pay for the existing telephone to be changed so it is compatible with a hearing aid. That should be free, and I ask the Minister to examine this situation on behalf of the hearing impaired people in Victoria.

I ask the Minister to take up the matter with his Federal counterpart so that the problem can be overcome. Legislation has been passed in other countries requiring all telephones to be compatible with hearing aids. With the electronic equipment that is now available, people with hearing defects can live normal lives. I urge the Minister and Telecom Australia to take up this matter as an issue of social justice.

The Minister should consider not only people who need hearing aids to communicate but also those who need TTY machines. They are similar to a facsimile machine where a message is printed which enables a deaf person to read it. By using that machine, deaf people can use the communications system. I ask the Minister to ensure that telephones are also compatible with those machines. Such machines must be purchased or hired at large expense, but the handpieces of modern telephones do not fit the machines.

The government should assist people with hearing difficulties rather than leaving it to private enterprise to carry the burden or allowing the individuals themselves to suffer an extra burden.

Mr PESCOTT (Bennettswood)—I wish to direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands but, in her absence, I ask the Minister for Planning and Environment, who is at the table, to pass on my comments. I notice that a number of Ministers are absent from the Chamber tonight, and that is a disgrace.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Bennettswood should refer to the matter he wishes to raise with the Minister.

Mr PESCOTT—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands the Fulton Road reserve in Blackburn South. More than a month ago I wrote to the Minister and also to the Minister for Water Resources requesting that they receive a deputation about a matter that has troubled the residents of Blackburn South for approximately five years.

During that period there has been a constant battle with the residents of Blackburn who wish to preserve an area that is situated on Fulton Road as open space but the government instrumentalities are under instruction from the government to sell off that land because the government is short of cash. The government has no way of extricating itself from its economic difficulties without the most massive sell-off in Victoria's history and, in the process, it is not interested, for example, in the wishes of the residents of Blackburn South who use the land for recreational purposes.

The land belongs to the Road Construction Authority, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Ministry of Housing and Construction. The instrumentalities and the Ministry have been asked to raise extra money so that the government can use it to solve its financial difficulties. In the process of so doing, the government is not concerned about the use of the land as open space. Although we hear from the government about its concern for conservation, it is only concerned with rural conservation and not the issues of urban conservation.

I ask the Minister to examine the matter; the residents of Blackburn South already own the land because they are part of the community. The land belongs to the people

but the government is endeavouring to sell the land to the council so that it can keep it as open space. That land already belongs to the community and it should not have to be paid for again by the community.

Approximately six months ago the Mayor of Nunawading said that the price for the land was such that the rates would have to be increased to pay for it. Recently the MMBW rezoned the land so that more rates would be paid for it after it is sold to the council. Will the Minister ensure that the area is kept as urban open space because, if the council is unable to purchase the land, it will be lost forever to the people of Nunawading.

This type of urban environment is finite because there are houses on all sides. The Minister should address the matter and intervene so that she does not then have to say that it is for other departments to decide because they have control of and responsibility for that land. The Minister has the responsibility to ensure that the residents can keep the land as open space. I ask that the Minister for Planning and Environment convey this matter to the Minister and ask that she will agree to see a group of residents who can explain the problem at first hand.

Mr NORRIS (Dandenong)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation Entertainment Access Service—EASE—which is a ticketing service for disabled and disadvantaged people. It is an organisation which began in 1978 and it provides access to the arts for people who are intellectually and physically disabled. It also provides that service for disadvantaged people.

EASE is committed to providing access to the arts for those groups of individuals who are disadvantaged by physical, intellectual or financial circumstances because the organisation believes every person has the potential to be creative and that the arts have the potential to provide experience and skills to assist people to understand and change the conditions under which they live.

EASE is a unique and splendid organisation in many ways. It has been my pleasure over the past few years to be involved in much of the workings and administration of that organisation. Its patrons include people in institutions, remand centres and special accommodation homes. The work is stimulating to both the clients and the residents of those places and is extremely rewarding to the professionals who present the programs.

EASE is an idea that originated in the United States of America. It started a ticketing service for particular groups in New York and later this year it will be my pleasure to visit that service in New York and I hope to bring back some of its ideas to the Melbourne organisation. The Melbourne EASE organisation provides concession tickets, sometimes free tickets, to theatres, art galleries and sporting functions.

The promoters of many theatrical and sporting functions have been extremely cooperative and provide excellent concession rates to the EASE ticketing service. The service has a phone number and patrons can ring up and inquire about activities and tickets can be arranged. EASE is a non-profit organisation. Tickets are arranged for people who often have particular disabilities, some of whom may not have been out of their homes for a long period. The organisation provides transport and, in some circumstances, a person or a partner to accompany the patron.

It is a marvellous organisation and it is particularly indebted to the Minister because he has been very generous by approving several grants to assist the service to continue its operation.

My request to the Minister is this: many of the members of EASE are sports lovers who do not necessarily want to go to the theatre, art shows or the opera, but who want

to see a game of Australian Rules football. Up to now it has been difficult for the organisation to persuade the Victorian Football League to donate tickets to football matches, which EASE would like to have.

I know that the Minister has excellent contacts with Alan Schwab and others in the VFL and I ask him to use his good offices to persuade the administrators of the VFL to provide some tickets to the EASE organisation. I assure the VFL that many of the people who would use those tickets are the most needy in our society and it would make them extremely happy to see a football match.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Property and Services and, in his absence, the Minister for Planning and Environment. It concerns an issue I raised earlier during the debate on the Credit (Administration) (Amendment) Bill regarding the operation of the Victorian Government Printing Office and the way that office handles the production of the daily *Hansard.*

At the outset I indicate that the staff of the *Hansard* office work extremely hard in their endeavours to produce *Hansard.* However, I believe it is ridiculous that Parliament has received an eight-page daily *Hansard,* which is the initial part of the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly yesterday.

In the six years that I have been a member of this place the output of the VGPO in the printing of *Hansard* has deteriorated.

I am informed that the problem has been caused by a number of issues and I shall outline some of those issues. The shadow Minister for Property and Services, the honourable member for Benambra, has informed me that the staff of the Victorian Government Printing Office at a meeting yesterday passed a motion of no confidence in Jean Gordon, the Government Printer, and the government-appointed administration. That is a serious occurrence.

There is a problem with lack of morale at the Victorian Government Printing Office. I understand that people with no knowledge or experience in the printing industry are operating the office, and under-qualified and non-specialist staff are being appointed to run its operations. No wonder there is a problem!

Several other factors are involved. Industrial unrest revolves around some sort of wages deal that the government has supposedly done but has not kept with the employees. An ambit claim is being served on the government, including the establishment of a new dining room for staff, and the provision of free food.

Mr Roper interjected.

Mr LEIGH—The Minister asks whether I support the supply of free food—no, because no-one in this House has free food, nor should any member. Honourable members pay proper rates these days, as indeed they should. In any company operation or, indeed, in other government departments, no free food is available.

The Victorian Government Printing Office is endangering the operations of Parliament when members are not able to obtain the previous day's *Hansard* to establish what has occurred in Parliament, particularly in relation to Bills being returned from one Chamber to another. The information does not exist. The situation has become worse and worse.

The people who work in Parliament House often work late into the evening to produce the information to be sent to the Victorian Government Printing Office, but the result is that members one day later receive an eight-page *Hansard.* Enough is enough! It is the responsibility of the Minister for Property and Services to stop the

bungling in his department, and to say, "You are not going to have free food; you will get the same sort of conditions to which everyone else in the Public Service is entitled".

I also suggest that the time has arrived when the government should consider selling off the Victorian Government Printing Office, and having someone else undertake the operations. Much money has been spent in recent years on the provision of new technology, but for what purpose? Members are receiving a worse service than under the old system. Enough is enough!

Either those employees should be prepared to properly do their jobs or the government should seriously consider getting rid of the Victorian Government Printing Office. The office is threatening the operations of this and the other Chamber. I want to know what has happened in the other Chamber in relation to proposed legislation, but I cannot find out because of a bunch of union dopes at the Victorian Government Printing Office who are using their positions for their own benefit, and not in the community interest. It is time the Minister did something about it.

Mrs HIRSH (Wantirna)—I raise for the attention of the Minister for Community Services the very important issue of child-care in our community.

Child-care centres that have been commercially operated for many years are in need of some basic regulation. To argue, as has been done, that no-one needs any training or qualifications to provide proper child-care for young children is totally irresponsible.

Children in our society are the most precious commodity. If our children are cared for, and if we want to go into the work force or use child-care facilities for any other reason, an alternative available is the commercial child-care centre.

For many years no training or qualifications were required of people who worked in commercial child-care centres. In recent years, since the election of Labor governments, governments have adopted a policy on the provision of child-care. Federal and State governments provide child-care throughout the country for preschool children and infants as a right of parents.

Nevertheless, the private sector has a broad range and great number of child-care centres, some of which offer extremely good quality care; others leave something to be desired.

People are trained to care for motor cars; no one takes his or her car up the road to a totally unqualified person to have a car cared for. Yet, when it comes to our children, I have heard arguments that it is unnecessary for the people who care for the children to be trained or qualified. That attitude is not responsible.

The government has noted that regulations must be introduced to govern the private commercial child-care area. Regulations have been developed after broad consultation with child-care providers and consumers. The regulations are fair and provide for a long phase-in period of five years. As well, they ensure that no-one will lose his or her job. People will have plenty of time to undertake whatever training is required.

Mr Leigh interjected.

Mrs HIRSH—The honourable member for Malvern suggests that undesirable people are working in private child-care centres. It could well be the case. That is why the regulations have been formulated and put in place by the government. The government seeks to ensure that those caring for our young children—preschool children and infants—are properly trained and qualified and are suitable people to do the job they are paid to do.

It is inappropriate that a 19-year-old be in charge of 45 children or that a 15-year-old be in charge of children under twelve months of age, yet this happens in some centres. The regulations provide for one trained person to be employed for every 30 children——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired and the time for raising matters on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting has expired.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—The honourable member for Keilor raised a matter concerning the use of telephones by people with hearing difficulties. I declare my interest in the matter as my mother uses this type of equipment, so I have some knowledge about the needs of people with hearing disabilities, the shortcomings of the equipment and the problems with which they are confronted.

The government's policy is to ensure that people can remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. The telephone is the vital link with the outside community. It becomes difficult to ring a person with a hearing difficulty and to shout down the telephone as well.

Again, it is important with new technology that the government ensures that the equipment is such that it can be adjusted for the required extra volume without a high expense being incurred.

Television sets are now fitted with a device that allows people with hearing impairments to listen to the television without turning the volume on to a high level and disturbing everyone around.

As the honourable member for Keilor is aware, legislation introduced in 1988 in the United States of America required that after an effective date all telephones manufactured and imported into the United States of America must be hearing aid compatible.

I am most concerned because I know that manufacturers of new technology sometimes do not consider people with disabilities and those people are then forced to buy equipment at a high cost or, in some cases, buy equipment that does not fit.

Mr Leigh interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! If the honourable member for Malvern cannot control himself inside the Chamber he should leave.

Mr SPYKER—After the Greensborough by-election last Saturday, the honourable member for Malvern needs more than emergency aids and controls.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I point out to the Minister that the government did not keep its promise made at the last State election.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order. I again advise the honourable member for Malvern that he should absent himself from the Chamber if he cannot be quiet.

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—I thank the honourable member for Keilor for raising the matter with me. I shall ask Community Services Victoria to take it up with Telecom and some telephone manufacturers to ensure that new equipment can be manufactured as cheaply as possible to enable these people to lead as normal a life as possible without being disadvantaged by their hearing disabilities.

The honourable member for Wantirna raised the issue of the new child-care regulations. I thank honourable members on all sides of the House for supporting this measure. I know all honourable members are concerned about proper child-care

facilities. This is especially important nowadays because a large section of the work force are women and more child-care facilities are needed.

I congratulate the Federal government for creating more facilities in the past four years than have been created in the rest of this century. Child-care facilities give both parents the choice to work if they so wish. Children are our most precious commodity. If they are to spend many hours a day in a child-care centre, it is important that the facilities are the best available.

As the honourable member for Wantirna said, Parliament has a responsibility to protect the children of this State. I am concerned about the scaremongering and rumours being put around that an extra $50 a week will be charged for child-care services which will result in half the centres being closed.

I shall place a few facts before Parliament on this matter. The government has received more requests for registration of new child-care centres this year than in any other year. The regulations that came into force late last year obviously have not been a deterrent. It has been stated that some child-care centres employ mainly fifteen-year-old girls who come straight from school; that they pay the lowest possible wage and then sack the girls when they turn seventeen so that they do not have to pay the full rate.

The new regulations will not come into force until 1992. That gives ample time to ensure that centres can hire qualified staff who can then manage the other staff and ensure the protection of the children.

The government has done everything possible to ensure that the regulations are introduced smoothly. I have indicated to the private child-care associations that if they have problems in 1992 the government will examine the position then. I am pleased that the regulations have been introduced smoothly and condemn in the strongest terms the scaremongering that suggests that staff will be sacked after 1992 when the measure is implemented. Staff training programs have been set up and the increase in cost should be no more than 5 to 7 per cent. If the suggestion is that the fees will increase by $50 a week, I, as the Minister for Prices, will immediately investigate the matter because it will be a total rip-off.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—The honourable member for Dandenong raised the matter of EASE—Entertainment Access Service—and, I must say it has been a great idea. It will allow people who do not normally go to major art occasions because the prices are too high, to attend the theatre or sporting events. It has been helped by the cooperation of various theatres and sporting groups. The National Tennis Centre has a practice whereby, if the promoters have not sold all the tickets, they provide some free or at a reduced rate for various elderly citizens groups and the disabled. A request was made that I approach the Victorian Football League. To be fair, some of the league games do not attract a large attendance and I think the VFL would be prepared to examine the matter.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—The honourable member for Polwarth raised the issue of correspondence he received last month concerning the proposed war games in his area and the suggestion that war games would be played on land reserved as rural natural features set aside basically for people who want the quiet enjoyment of attractive bushland in that area. I recall that an application for this or a similar use in that area has been appropriately dealt with and was found to be a non-conforming use. However, I shall check with my department and with the local council. I do not encourage these activities, and I am sure most honourable members have a similar view.

The honourable member for Warrandyte raised the issue of defence service home loans and the financial arrangements with the Commonwealth government. I shall direct that matter to the attention of the Treasurer.

The honourable member for Bennettswood raised with me for the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands a matter concerning Fulton Road reserve. Over the past four or five years there has been a 10 to 20 per cent increase in open space in the greater metropolitan area, and that increase is continuing as part of the government's open space policy. I shall direct that matter to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands and request that there be a direct reply.

The honourable member for Malvern raised the issue of daily *Hansard.* He began by vigorously attacking the Minister for Property and Services and finished by vigorously attacking the union. I am unsure exactly where the honourable member fits so far as this particular dispute is concerned. It is difficult to attack an employer and at the same time attack an employee because of an industrial dispute.

The daily *Hansard* started only in April 1985; prior to that *Hansard* was published weekly. Most honourable members, particularly those living in country areas, did not receive *Hansard* until the Monday or Tuesday after Parliament had adjourned. The honourable member for Malvern says that there has been a deterioration in the delivery of the *Hansard* since he arrived. One wonders what he thought about it during his first three years in this Chamber.

I know that at the time he tried to break new ground by having his photograph inserted in *Hansard,* and it would not have made any difference whether it was a daily, weekly or monthly *Hansard*—there was no space for that.

I will discuss with the Minister for Property and Services the problems that are obviously occurring with the Victorian Government Printing Office. I know the Minister has a commitment to upgrade and modernise and make more efficient the operations of the office, and often when that is occurring one finds that entrenched practices are defended by work forces—not just workers, but managers as well who have long-standing habits of practice. I will see what can be done in this area and report back to the honourable member.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.21 *p.m. until Tuesday, May* 2.