Tuesday, 10 October 1989

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Ken Coghill) took the chair at 2.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

TURNER GROUP OF COMPANIES

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—I refer to the Treasurer the recent appointments of receivers, managers and liquidators to companies associated with Mr William Turner, including Braemar Ltd, Crestwin Corporation Ltd and W. & B. Turner Pty Ltd. Will the Treasurer advise the House of the total exposure, direct and contingent, of State Bank Victoria and the Victorian Economic Development Corporation as a result of these actions?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As I have indicated on a number of occasions, the Rural Finance Corporation and State Bank Victoria are responsible for making decisions about specific loans. However, inasmuch as the organisations referred to by the Leader of the Opposition may have an impact on either the State Bank or the Rural Finance Corporation, I shall certainly seek advice from them.

USE OF OFFICE OF MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Mr McNAMARA (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Minister for Education to an administration report by Linda Smith, as recorded in the minutes of the ALP Green Network Coordinating Committee meeting held on 23 August 1989, which states:

> Linda has written to green network member and Deputy Premier Joan Kirner to thank her for the use of her office, envelopes and franking facilities for the August newsletter, collating and mailout.

Is it a fact that the Minister's office was used for that purpose?

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—Honourable members recognise the absolute commitment of the National Party to conservation issues, not only in Victoria but also nationally! There is no doubt that members of the National Party would not support anything like a green network. They are more likely to support a bare ground network, as is evident by their support for principles such as cutting down every tree and mining every piece of ground they can see.

The green network is an important part of the Labor government's extension of the understanding of green policies, conservation policies and its action programs, which programs lead Victoria and Australia. Victoria plays an important part in showing leadership on conservation issues. I am sorry the Leader of the National Party cannot support such policies.

Mr McNamara—Did you pay for it? Answer the question!

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the National Party has asked his question. Standing Orders do not provide for him to repeat it or to ask supplementary questions by way of interjection. I ask him to cease interjecting and allow the Minister to complete her reply.

Ms KIRNER—I understand that the Leader of the National Party would be very sensitive about issues such as conservation, having supported——

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—On a point of order, I remind you, Mr Speaker, of Standing Order No. 127, and I put it to you that the Minister is debating and not answering the question. I ask you to bring her back to order.

The SPEAKER—Order! I do not uphold the point of order. However, I ask the Minister to keep her remarks relevant to the question and to come to its point.

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—I understand the sensitivity of the Leader of the National Party on conservation issues. After all, he supports a government in Queensland that is about to cut down thousands of hectares of native bush and undermine the quality of that State's environment.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest the Minister's answer is not relevant to the question asked by the Leader of the National Party and I ask her to return to the question that was asked.

Ms KIRNER—I am proud to be a longstanding member of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Mr McNamara interjected.

Ms KIRNER—The Leader of the National Party would not know what its address was. I am also proud to be a member of the green network and of the People for Nuclear Disarmament movement, and to offer these groups my support.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES

Mr NORRIS (Dandenong)—Can the Premier advise the House what progress is being made to implement the government's policy of encouraging a greater exchange of employment between the government and the private sector, and can he also inform the House whether there is a loss to the public sector in these exchanges or a loss of public servants moving to other States?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Executive Development and Interchange Program is one of many schemes introduced by the Victorian government to ensure the ongoing professional administration of the public sector. The objective of that scheme, which was launched in December 1987, was to provide an opportunity, through specially selected work placements, in both public and private sectors to extend and broaden management experience.

Its aim is to improve both individual performance and performance at organisational level. There is also the question of movement between public sector organisations—an example of which is the movement of Deputy Commissioner (Administration) Newnham of the Victoria Police to Queensland. Consultation takes place between public sectors. I imagine the Deputy Leader of the National Party consulted with the Deputy Leader of the National Party in Queensland, Mr Bill Gunn, about how to be a loyal deputy. The appointment of deputy commissioner Newnham emphasised again that Victoria has the reputation for the cleanest Police Force in the country.

Of course, the National Party in Queensland has spent three decades destroying, corrupting and politicising its Police Force and justice system.

Mr Coleman—What has this to do with the question?

Mr CAIN—It has a lot to do with it. When Queensland finally was forced to make some appointments to clean up the system it turned to Victoria. All three persons on

the short list were Victorians and that is interesting because the culture of the National Party in government in that State is characterised by corruption, disunity, years of cronyism and the politicisation of bureaucracy. The National Party in Queensland has denied that State a democratic process of government.

It is interesting to note that when Tony Fitzgerald wanted to say something about the Queensland system he came to Victoria to do it. I suppose if the National Party's bid to stifle reform in Queensland fails, the next thing it will do is to want Victoria to supply it with decent electoral commissioners to advise it on how to run that State's electoral system.

The work placements under the interchange program have been selected to meet the needs of the individuals who are placed. They are part of the government's desire and determination to ensure we have a vigorous, energetic public sector that is capable of meeting the needs of the State. It has been demonstrated that, unlike other States, Victoria has provided leadership that is respected and sought in other States.

Mr Leigh—What a load of rubbish!

Mr CAIN—It is about time that individuals in both the Liberal Party and the National Party condemned the Queensland National Party instead of lionising it. That is what has happened in Victoria for years. In fact, the National Party has embraced Joh as a model. The current Leader of the National Party embraced Joh as a model and the National Party took the former Leader off its ticket at the Central Highlands Province by-election and put Joh on it.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, questions and answers are supposed to relate to government administration and, in this case, to the responsibilities of the Premier. The Premier has strayed away from that and is debating the question. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to bring him back to the point of the question, which relates to government administration in this State.

The SPEAKER—Order! The question asked of the Premier related to the benefits to Victoria and other States of the interchange of personnel between the Victorian public sector and other public sectors and the private sector. I believe the Premier's answer has generally been relevant to that. However, I ask the Premier to return to the point of the question and to maintain the relevancy of his answer to the question.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I understand the point you make, Mr Speaker, and I shall do so. We are confident that public sector programs such as this one will ensure the enhancement of the management and professionalism of the Victorian public sector. That is necessary in resisting the kind of comprehensive, blatant corruption and prostitution of democracy that has occurred in Australia and has been institutionalised for more than 30 years. Unless a public sector is capable of resisting that, the same thing will happen again.

At the North Melbourne football breakfast two weeks ago, Tony Fitzgerald said that everything is back to normal in Queensland with Mike Ahern being thrown out. The kind of public sector we have created here, with competent people and a proper exchange between the public and the private sectors and between governments, protects us from the kind of corruption that Queensland was blighted by.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier is simply ignoring your ruling and debating the question. Should the Premier like to make a Ministerial statement, we should be happy to debate the issue with him rather than having to listen to him debating the issue in question time.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, the question was about strengthening the public sector by exchange between public and private sectors and by

movement between public sectors. I am giving an example of a lack of capacity in the public sector as is demonstrable in Queensland. What we are doing is ensuring that what has happened in Queensland does not happen in Victoria.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Premier's answer has been providing information——

Mr Leigh—For government members.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Premier's answer has been providing information in respect of the matter raised in the question. To that extent, the Premier's answer is in order. However, I ask the Premier to round off his answer and to keep it within the general terms of the practices of this House and to keep it relevant to the question asked.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I conclude by saying that the Leader of the National Party going to Queensland and lionising Joh is an indication of what could happen here if there were a coalition between the Liberals and the Nationals.

Our strengthening of the public sector ensures that the public sector in Victoria continues to meet the demands placed upon it and ensures that it will not be corrupted by that kind of conduct.

USE OF OFFICE OF MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—I refer the Minister for Education to the Australian Labor Party green network. Will the Deputy Premier confirm that her office was used for ALP political purposes—namely, for the preparation of propaganda through the supply of envelopes and the use of a franking machine—at taxpayers' expense? I ask: what is the approximate cost to Victorian taxpayers of this exercise and how many times has such a blatant misuse of taxpayers' funds occurred?

The SPEAKER—Order! Before calling the Deputy Premier, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to clarify whether he is asking his question in respect of the Deputy Premier's Ministerial responsibilities or whether he is referring to her in her capacity as a local member.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BROWN—I am quite happy either way. The fact is——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! In order for the question to be admissible it must relate to a Minister's portfolio responsibilities. If the Leader of the Opposition is seeking an answer from the Minister in respect of her portfolio responsibilities, the question is in order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to clarify that.

Mr BROWN—Mr Speaker, I shall redirect the question to the Minister for Property and Services who, as I understand it, is responsible for the allocation of office supplies to members of Parliament at the Crown's expense. Is the Minister aware of an allegation outlined in an ALP green network committee document——

The SPEAKER—Order! Before the Leader of the Opposition continues, I remind him that the administration of electorate offices and entitlements of honourable members is a matter for Parliament and not for a Minister.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest to honourable members that they should remain silent if they wish question time to proceed. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition would not be in order in redirecting his question to the Minister for Property and Services. I suggest that if he wishes to persist with his question he should direct it to the attention of the Deputy Premier.

Mr BROWN—Mr Speaker, I shall direct my question to the Deputy Premier. I again refer to an ALP document headed "ALP Green Network Coordinating Committee", which clearly states that the Deputy Premier's office has been used for party political purposes—and quite blatantly so—in that it supplied envelopes and allowed the use of a franking machine, all at taxpayers' expense. What is the approximate cost to Victorian taxpayers of this blatant misuse of public moneys supplied by long-suffering taxpayers; and how many times has this blatant misuse of taxpayers' funds occurred?

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—It is indicative of the total lack of coordination of the Opposition that it took the Leader of the Opposition three attempts to find the right way to ask the question, and even then it is doubtful. The House should have seen the Leader of the Opposition's eyes light up when the Leader of the National Party—perhaps he should be the Leader of the Opposition; he could do justice to the job—came in with a piece of paper—pieces of paper are floating around at the moment—and showed it to the Leader of the Opposition, who said, "Can I have it, can I have it for a question?" It shows how little the Leader of the Opposition has got to do with his time that he is not concerned about the big issues of government in this State—education, public transport and so on.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Premier should confine herself to the matters raised with her, in particular, the matters for which she has Ministerial responsibility.

Ms KIRNER—My commitment and the government's commitment to conservation issues and to ensuring the State has a proper conservation position are well established. The government would much rather be green than be associated with National Party governments in other States.

FOOTSCRAY FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation the recent handing in of the Footscray Football Club's Victorian Football League licence to Victorian Football League commissioners without reference to members of that club.

Is it a fact that any VFL club could be forced out of existence without reference to members of the club simply by a majority of the directors of the club voting for that to occur? Will the Minister use his best endeavours to ensure that what has happened at the Footscray Football Club will not happen again without the members of the respective clubs being conferred with?

The SPEAKER—Order! I remind the House that the administration of the Victorian Football League is not a matter for Ministerial responsibility. However, the honourable member, in the second part of his question, sought particular action by the Minister and that part of the question is in order.

Mr TREZISE (Minister for Sport and Recreation)—I, the government and I am sure all members of Parliament will take every action to ensure that the Footscray Football Club, if possible, can remain within the Victorian Football League.

I am not aware of the rules of the VFL concerning participation in the decisions made by the various clubs. I am a lay person and have no legal training. However, I

agree that it is morally wrong that members of any organisation are not told about the problems within that organisation.

The members of the Footscray Football Club should have been informed of the problems within that club and the alternatives. No-one wants to see that club become extinct, like the old South Melbourne Football Club.

The members of the Footscray Football Club have a challenge in front of them. The commissioners of the VFL have said that the club must raise a certain amount of money by a certain date, and I hope that challenge can be met by the members of the club.

Criticism has been directed at the government in that it has not helped the Footscray Football Club. It is a delicate situation. The South Melbourne Football Club no longer exists and other VFL clubs are in financial difficulties. Some clubs in the Victorian Football Association competition have gone out of existence. Members of the Footscray Football Club have not appreciated that the government has assisted the club through various departments. During the past two seasons the club received $320 000 from the Ministry of Transport as part of the ·05 campaign. That has been of great assistance to the club and, in that sense, I suppose the government is the major sponsor of the club. I do not think the Ministry of Transport has put a cent into the Geelong Football Club.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TREZISE—The Minister for Transport is supposed to be a Geelong supporter!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TREZISE—As long as you don't bring in legislation to give them Ablett for twelve months!

Back to where we were: to be realistic, the members of the Footscray Football Club have known for two or three years that their position was precarious. About two years ago a meeting was held after which somebody addressed the crowd during the half-time break in a match. At that time the challenge was issued to raise finance but there was not sufficient support forthcoming.

The supporters of the club have let it down. Other football clubs are receiving a good deal of sponsorship but the Footscray Football Club has not had enough backing from business houses or other potential sponsors in the area. Neither has it had enough backing from its rank and file supporters.

It was reported that 15 000 club members attended the meeting held on Sunday. Where were they when the Footscray Football Club played at the Western Oval? Even at the last home and away match played at the Western Oval, when the Footscray team played the West Coast Eagles, although it had been stated regularly in the newspapers that that might be the last game played there, the crowd was very small.

I trust that the members of the Footscray Football Club will face the challenge strongly. I am supported in this hope by the honourable member for Sunshine. The government and all concerned are prepared to work with the club and consult with the Victorian Football League on whether the present system can be used to ensure a benefit in the future for the Footscray Football Club.

VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

Mrs BARKER (Bentleigh)—I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Education.

Mr Steggall—Will she answer this one?

Mrs BARKER—Of course she will.

Will the Minister for Education indicate to the House what steps she is currently taking to ensure that the public is fully informed about the ongoing implementation of the Victorian certificate of education?

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—I thank the honourable member for Bentleigh for her question and her considerable contribution to the development of the Victorian certificate of education as a member of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms KIRNER—I should thank the National Party for its continuing contribution through Mr Evans in another place. I look forward to a contribution eventually from the honourable member for Sandringham when he takes up his position on the board.

There are four important constituent groups who need to be part of the understanding and further development of the VCE; that is, teachers, industry, students and parents.

So far as teachers are concerned, by the end of 1990 all non-government and government post-primary teachers in Victoria will have undertaken some six days of professional development training as well as having received their courses of studies and appropriate support materials if they are teaching the VCE courses.

In keeping with this change being one of the most important educational reforms in Victoria in the past ten years, the professional development activities reflect one of the largest projects undertaken.

The second important group is industry which, I am pleased to inform the House—despite some of the uninformed comments made by some honourable members opposite—has supported the introduction of the VCE, with industry being represented through membership on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board. In particular, representatives of industry have taken part in the development of the Australian studies course as well as in the staging of seminars around Victoria. The seminars on the VCE to be conducted for employers over the next few months will be co-sponsored by the Victorian Employers Federation and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board.

The third group of people who need the most information and support is the students who will be undertaking the full VCE in years 11 and 12. The students who are most interested are those who are now in year 10 and in the next few weeks they will receive copies of *A Guide for year 10,* for years 11 and 12. It will assist them in the choices they will need to make, the assessment procedures and the general support that they will receive.

It is important for students to understand that this is the first time in Victoria—indeed in Australia—where one common certificate has been offered to all students who complete years 11 and 12.

Mr Delzoppo interjected.

Ms KIRNER—The honourable member for Narracan has a considerable interest in education and he should sit there and listen so that he can take an understanding of the VCE back to his groups.

The fourth group is parents. It is important to work with parents to allow them to ask the questions that are closest to their interests on these issues. That cannot always be done simply by sending out the parent pamphlets that we have been sending out. Over the next two months the Ministry of Education will be conducting parent

forums, one in each region of the State, and in other areas after the Christmas break. Those forums will be attended by me as Minister——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! If honourable members are concerned about the length of the answer, they should note that the length of the answer has been accentuated by the number of interjections. In fact, the answer has not been exceptionally long. I ask honourable members on both sides of the House to allow the Minister to complete her reply without interruption.

Ms KIRNER—The forums that will be held across the State will be chaired by me and will have representatives of employers, teachers and members of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board to give answers to the many questions that will be asked by parents on this issue.

I am disappointed about the misinformation that is being spread about the VCE. I find it difficult to believe that a person with as much knowledge of the Victorian education system as the honourable member for Burwood should take the liberty in the *Sun* newspaper of saying that there is to be no external assessment for the VCE. That is wrong and he should withdraw it. It is inappropriate for people in positions of authority and responsibility, like honourable members in this Chamber—I am sorry, the honourable member for Burwood said he had no authority; I had forgotten about the leadership change; but he has a certain responsibility—to tell lies about the future——

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest that the Minister for Education is commencing to debate the question. I ask her to return to the question and to round off her answer.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Minister for Education has suggested that I lied and I find that offensive. It is incorrect and I ask her to withdraw it.

The SPEAKER—Order! I think that the Minister for Education was referring to statements made by the honourable member for Burwood. I suggest that it would expedite the business of question time if the Minister for Education were to withdraw the words she used.

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not regard the honourable member for Burwood as a liar.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the procedures for a matter such as this are clear. I have asked for a withdrawal; the Minister for Education clearly said that I had lied, and I ask you, Sir, to uphold the forms of this House and ask the Minister to withdraw without any explanation.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the Minister whether or not she will make an unqualified withdrawal.

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—I will be pleased in this House to make an unqualified withdrawal.

It is fine to have a debate about the Victorian certificate of education; in fact, it is important to have a debate about it. However, it is important that the debate is held on the facts. When anyone is making a statement about the VCE, it is important to get it clear that there is external assessment for every subject within the VCE, which is externally set and externally tested.

Mr Kennett—Make time for debate here.

The SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member for Burwood to cease interjecting. It is his interjections that are prolonging the answer. I also ask the Minister for Education to round off her reply.

Ms KIRNER—The important issues of assessment, testing, career opportunities and verification will be part of the regional seminars. I urge all honourable members to ensure that they and representatives of their communities attend.

TURNER GROUP OF COMPANIES

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—Will the Treasurer confirm that the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and State Bank Victoria stand to lose at least $9·5 million originally lent to Braemar Ltd, which is now in receivership, and that as a result of the failure of its parent company, Crestwin Corporation Ltd, a share-put arrangement designed to protect VEDC funds will now be useless?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As I indicated to the Leader of Opposition, the matter of loans from both State Bank Victoria and the Rural Finance Corporation are matters for the respective boards of management. I shall ensure that they are made aware of the information that has been provided by the Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Brighton. I shall ascertain whether or not it is misinformation.

SECURITY AT RAILWAY STATIONS

Mr McDONALD (Whittlesea)—Will the Minister for Transport advise the House of recent measures he has taken to improve security at railway stations, particularly Flinders Street railway station?

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I thank the honourable member for Whittlesea for his question and his continuing interest in transport, which, in his case, includes helicopters.

In the current financial year the government is taking measures at a range of stations to improve security, including improved lighting, the installation of video cameras and the employment of additional Transit Police. The government has also launched a new initiative at Flinders Street station that will do a great deal to improve the perception in relation to safety as well as security at stations. I refer to the Help Phone, with which the honourable member for Burwood would be familiar. It is a device under continual video monitoring and a traveller can press a button and speak into the telephone. The person is recorded and can be spoken to by an officer situated upstairs at the station.

It is a matter to be taken seriously. It is not the sort of device for someone with an identity crisis to stop and say, "Who am I?" It is not for someone who stumbles over an old sporting trophy from the Australian National University asking, "Whom does it belong to?" It ought not to be something for someone who runs out of kerosene, for instance, and needs more supplies for the heating of halls in Surrey Hills.

The Help Phone is meant for people who feel under some physical threat. They know they can use this telephone, be videoed while they are speaking and get help immediately from a person at the station complex.

This system has been installed at a cost of some $5000 and the government intends to expand the program of Help Phones to some eleven or twelve stations in the next twelve months.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is far too much interjection. I ask the honourable members for Swan Hill, Frankston South and Malvern to cease interjecting and remind the honourable member for Malvern that I have had to caution him a number of times today.

Mr KENNAN—The work of the Transit Police has already had a noticeable impact on security and the statistics of assaults and so on around the railway system. I am sure the installation of this Help Phone and the expansion of the program around the metropolitan railway system will add to that success.

ISLAMIC ABATTOIRS OF AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

Mr PERTON (Doncaster)—I ask the Treasurer whether he will confirm that Islamic Abattoirs of Australia Pty Ltd was purchased by a company known as Clovervale Pty Ltd, a shell company half-owned by the Elkhishin Brothers, the original owners of the abattoir, and that the Rural Finance Corporation and/or the VEDC contracted to sell the abattoir back to the very people who lost $11 million of taxpayers' money for a sale price of a mere $3·9 million and, further, that the settlement sum——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is far too much interjection. I ask the honourable member for Wantirna to cease interjecting.

Mr PERTON—Further, I ask the Treasurer to confirm that the settlement sum due from Clovervale Pty Ltd was not paid on the due date, which was last Wednesday, 4 October.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! If honourable members are interested in the question and the Treasurer's reply, I suggest they remain silent.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As I have indicated on every occasion when there has been a decision about an individual loan relating to either the VEDC or the Rural Finance Corporation, they are matters handled at arm's length by the Rural Finance Corporation and that position applies in the case of Islamic Abattoirs of Australia Pty Ltd.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! A request from the Chair suggesting that honourable members cease interjecting is not an invitation to ask further questions or attempt to debate the question by way of interjection. I ask the honourable member for Brighton to contain himself. If he wishes to ask a further question, he should wait for the appropriate opportunity.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Chair has done nothing to stop this Minister from consistently refusing to answer questions and I ask you, Mr Speaker, to require him to give a relevant answer and, indeed, to stop misleading the House by refusing to acknowledge the fact that the Rural Finance Corporation is acting under written instructions from the Treasurer to wind up the business of the VEDC as rapidly as possible.

The SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members may not use the procedure of raising points of order in an attempt to introduce new matters. In respect of the point of order, as indicated previously in this House and in other places, and in other Parliaments, Ministers have a discretion as to whether or not they answer and the manner in which they answer, provided the answer is relevant to the question that

has been asked. At this stage of the Treasurer's answer, I believe it is relevant and I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I must make available to the honourable member for Brighton the guidelines under which the Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria operates because he may understand them once he has read them.

As to Islamic Abattoirs of Australia Pty Ltd, that matter is being handled by the Rural Finance Corporation; that matter is being considered by the full board, and I am certainly satisfied about the way in which the RFC is handling the matter.

PETITIONS

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

Hunters' rights

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

The humble petition of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Vic.) Inc. sheweth:

Given that the rights of duly licensed and law-abiding recreational hunters are being threatened by anti-hunting protestors who have:

caused disruption to hunters on our wetlands;

stolen game birds belonging to hunters;

acted in a manner likely to result in a firearms accident; and

incited each other to acts of violence against hunters.

Your petitioners therefore pray that:

1. The government takes immediate action to ensure that hunters can conduct their recreational hunting free of harassment by these protestors.

2. That protestors found in possession of protected species be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

3. That the government sets about the drafting of a Bill for protection of hunters' rights.

4. That the government consults regularly with the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Vic.) Inc. as to the proposed content and impact of the aforementioned Bill for protection of hunters' rights.

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

By **Mr McNamara** (11 328 signatures)

Southern Peninsula Hospital

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:

We are concerned that hospital facilities on the southern Mornington Peninsula are inadequate and continue to fall further behind. The Southern Peninsula Hospital is no longer able to meet the area's medical, surgical or maternity needs. There is a steady growth in surgical waiting lists and maternity cases are being turned away. The high permanent population growth rate of 5·5 per cent per annum—equal to the highest in Victoria—compounds daily this problem. At weekends the population increases by a further 20 000 part-time residents. Over summer a further 100 000 holiday-makers are added to the permanent and weekend population.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the Victorian government will honour its commitment to the constituents of the area by expanding the hospital to at least 113 beds as required by Commonwealth government policy.

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

By **Dr Wells** (512 signatures)

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 the State of Victoria sheweth:

Your petitioners are concerned that the introduction of computerised price scanners 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.

And your petitioners therefore pray that the government will ensure the retention of individual price marking of goods in shops using price-scanning computers.

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

By **Mr Maughan** (114 signatures)

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

PAPERS

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

Planning and Environment Act 1987—Notices of approval of amendments to the following planning schemes:

Bulla Planning Scheme—No. L9

Gisborne Planning Scheme—No. L12

Lillydale Planning Scheme—No. L57

Marong Planning Scheme—No. L10 Part A

Metropolitan Region Planning Scheme—Nos R48, RL54 Part 1, RL80, RL93

Whittlesea Planning Scheme—No. L17

State Bank of Victoria—Reports, Statements, Returns, etc. for the year 1988–89—Ordered to be printed.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Alpine Resorts Act 1983—SR No. 233

Building Control Act 1981—SR No. 220 together with copies of the following documents as required by section 32 of the *Interpretation of Legislation Act* 1984 to accompany the Statutory Rule:

Australian Standards

1530 Part 4 1985 Fire-Resistance Tests of Elements of Building Construction.

1530 Part 3 1970 Tests for Early Fire Hazard Properties of Materials.

1530 Part 1 1984 Combustibility Test for Materials

1530 Part 2 1973 Test for Flammability of Materials

1530 Part 3 1982 Test for Early Fire Hazard Properties of Materials (as amended)

1530 Part 4 1975 Fire Resistance Tests on Structures

Companies (Application of Laws) Act 1981—SR No. 221

Estate Agents Act 1980—SR No. 236

Firearms Act 1958—SR No. 226

Fisheries Act 1968—SR No. 218

Forests Act 1958—SR No. 229

Futures Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1986—SR No. 222

Health Act 1958—SR Nos 219, 224

Health Services Act 1988—SR No. 225

Land Tax Act 1958—SR No. 234

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958—SR No. 228

Planning and Environment Act 1987 and Subdivision Act 1988—SR No. 231

Police Regulation Act 1958—SR No. 232

Road Safety Act 1986—SR No. 227

Securities Industry (Application of Laws) Act 1981—SR No. 223

State Superannuation Act 1988—SR No. 235

Subdivision Act 1988—SR No. 230

Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board—Report for the year ended 31 March 1989.

STAMPS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169 (*b*), moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Stamps Act 1958, section 10 of the Business Franchise (Tobacco) Act 1974 and section 244 of the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ROOMING HOUSES BILL

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

That the following Order of the Day, Government Business, be read and discharged:

Rooming Houses Bill—Second reading—Resumption of debate.

and that the Bill be withdrawn.

In explanation, the Rooming Houses Bill was introduced in the last session of Parliament to lie over for public comment. Significant levels of public comment have been received. A revised Bill will be introduced in the other place by the Minister for Housing and Construction, who is actually responsible for these types of measures.

Mr Plowman—When?

Mr ROPER—This week.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was withdrawn.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER announced that he had received messages from His Excellency the Governor recommending that appropriations be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the following Bills:

Pay-roll Tax (Further Amendment) Bill

Racing (TAB Surplus) Bill

Water (Consequential Amendments) Bill

WILDLIFE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Wildlife Act 1975 and for other purposes.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I ask the Minister to explain to the House the purpose and content of the Bill she proposes to introduce.

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) (*By leave*)—This Bill contains a number of amendments to the Wildlife Act 1975 which amend the licensing provisions of that Act.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CONCURRENT DEBATE ON BILLS

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That this House authorises and requires Mr Speaker to permit the second reading and subsequent stages of the Water Bill and the Water (Consequential Amendments) Bill to be moved and debated concurrently.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—It is somewhat surprising that the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands has moved that the two Bills be debated concurrently in the absence of the Leader of the House. Honourable members have had no explanation as to why the Bills should be debated concurrently and as the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands has exhausted her right to speak on the motion, it would be useful if the Minister for Water Resources, who is now at the table, could explain to the House why it would be of benefit to have these two Bills debated together rather than separately.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources)—The Water Bill and the Water (Consequential Amendments) Bill go hand in hand. The Opposition has been waiting for the Water (Consequential Amendments) Bill to come into the House and the understanding was that the two measures could possibly be debated together. Changes to many Acts are involved. Having been Leader of the House some years back the honourable member for Berwick should understand that. It will be of benefit to the House to have both Bills debated together.

The motion was agreed to.

APPROPRIATION (1989-90, No. 1) BILL AND WORKS AND SERVICES (ANCILLARY PROVISIONS, 1989-90, No. 2) BILL

The debates (adjourned from September 21) on the motions of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of these Bills were resumed.

Mr CLARK (Balwyn)—One central question hangs over the entire funding of this government during its period in office since 1981-82, and that is: where has the money gone? We feel the tax burden in our hip pockets; our public assets are being sold daily; and State debt is constantly increasing. We know how the money is coming in, but where has it gone? Crime is at a near record high while the Police Force is undermanned; hospitals are stretched to the limit while wards are being closed; our children do not seem better educated; public transport and roads are not keeping pace with suburban

growth; youth homelessness abounds; and public housing lists are longer than ever. So where has the money gone?

I intend to examine the history of outlays and funding by this government since coming to office and I shall adjust the figures to take account of the effects of inflation and population growth and disregard grants received from the Commonwealth government for on-passing. In other words I will examine real State outlays and funding a head of population 1989–1990 dollars. I have prepared a table which shows these figures and I seek leave to have that table incorporated in *Hansard.*

The SPEAKER—I have examined the table and find it to be in order for incorporation.

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

BUDGET SECTOR OUTLAYS AND FUNDING

($ per capita 1989–90 prices)

	1989–90	Change 1981–82 to 1989–90	Change 1981–82 to 1985–86	Change 1985–86 to 1989–90	Change 1988–89 to 1989–90
OUTLAYS:					
General public services	259.80	+106.60	+51.90	+54.70	+6.70
Public order and safety	170.20	+43.60	+43.30	+0.20	−2.70
Education	716.90	−29.90	+44.30	−74.10	−20.30
Health	584.10	+114.60	+73.30	+41.30	−4.10
Social security & welfare	139.90	+66.40	+34.00	+32.40	+6.50
Housing & community amenities	84.60	+10.60	+37.30	−26.70	−3.20
Recreation & culture	36.50	−8.70	−4.30	-4.40	−3.00
Transport & communications	320.30	−35.80	+93.30	−129.00	−46.30
Other economic affairs	106.10	−19.40	+40.20	−59.70	−4.10
Interest	323.40	+63.00	+46.80	+16.20	+2.90
Other purposes	24.90	+18.90	+0.90	+14.90	+21.90
Total Outlays	2 767.00	+326.50	+460.90	−134.40	−46.50
FUNDING:					
Taxes, fees and fines	1 215.00	+260.10	+112.20	+147.90	+10.70
Interest received	34.30	−55.30	−27.50	−27.80	−8.90
Property income & other income	151.60	+42.70	+69.40	−23.50	+5.10
Commonwealth grants	1 064.90	−32.00	+145.00	−177.00	−55.70
Asset sales	132.40	+117.80	+10.60	+107.20	+74.70
Financing transactions	168.80	−10.00	+151.20	−162.20	−72.40
Total Funding	2 767.00	+326.50	+460.90	−134.40	−46.50

Notes: Excludes Commonwealth grants for on-passing.

Adjusted for 1984–85 series break.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Sources: Outlays and Funding: 1984–85 to 1989–90—Budget Paper No. 2 1989–90, Tables 4.4, 4.5 and A.2; 1981–82 to 1984–85—Budget Paper No. 6 1988–89, Tables A.2 and A.3.

NFGDP Deflator: 1984–85 to 1989–90—Budget Paper No. 2 1989–90 Table 4.1; 1981–82 to 1984–85—Calculated from *Victorian Public Sector Debt* (DMB Information Paper No. 2), Table 4.1.

Population: 1981 to 1988—Parliamentary Library Background Paper No. 89/16, Table 1; 1989—Interpolated from Budget Paper No. 2 1989–90, Tables 7.8 and 7.9.

Mr CLARK—The table shows that total annual outlays by this government amount to $2767 a head of population in Victoria. That represents 13·1 per cent of Victorian non-farm gross domestic product. To put it in a more telling way, it amounts to $11 068 per annum for a family of four. That compares with average earnings of approximately $27 000 per annum these days. In other words, the opportunity cost of this government's expenditure amounts to about 40 per cent of the annual pre-tax income of a single breadwinner family of four.

Since 1981–82 total outlays have increased by $326.50 a head, an increase in real terms of 13·4 per cent. This amounts to an increase of $1300 per annum or $25 a week for a family of four. The golden rule in public finance is that there is no such thing as a free lunch. This increase in outlays has had to be funded somehow. The figures show quite clearly that taxes, charges and asset sales have been the prime source of funds for this government. Taxes have increased by $260.10 a head or 27·3 per cent in real terms over the life of this government. They increased by $112 a head in the first four years of this government and, on Budget estimates, will increase by $147.90 a head in the second four years, and that includes an increase of $10.70 a head this year alone.

Hardly a category of taxes has not increased. Stamp duty on land transfers is up $157.50 a head or 247·4 per cent over the life of this government. That translates into an average rate of stamp duty on a property transaction of about 5 per cent. Such a level of taxation on the turnover of property is a major impediment to the efficient use of property. It will be even worse when the government's goodwill tax on business comes into operation.

The next area of concern is payroll tax which is up $44.60 a head or 14·2 per cent over the life of the government. Such a level of taxation is an enormous disincentive to employment in Victoria. Revenue from the financial institutions duty, which was first introduced in 1985–86, now represents $44.40 a head, including an 11·3 per cent increase this year due to the increase in the rate of FID on large transactions.

There has been only one significant reduction in taxation in real terms over the life of this government and that has been the reduction in motor vehicle registration which has come down by $46.90 a head. However, that is largely offset by the increase in motor vehicle stamp duty of $27.30 a head and, given that new rates have been applied to cars in the so-called luxury range and given the effects of inflation, that $27.30 a head will almost certainly escalate rapidly.

About 64 per cent of the government's so-called property income comes from government monopolies—such as the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the State Electricity Commission and mineral royalties. As the honourable member for Brighton has pointed out very forcefully on numerous occasions, the government has taken advantage of its monopoly position in these areas to reap monopoly profits and those monopoly profits should best be characterised as taxes. We pay taxes when we light a gas heater, turn on a power switch or drink a glass of water. This property income has increased by $42.70 per capita in the life of this government.

Interest received, asset sales and financial transactions show three things—that the government has emptied every hollow log it could find, it is selling every spare asset available and it has borrowed almost every possible cent it can. Interest received by the government on cash assets is down 61 per cent over the life of the government as

a result of the government depleting its cash reserves. On the other hand, asset sales are up $117.80 a head or a massive 784·3 per cent over the life of the government, an increase of $74.70 or 129·6 per cent this year alone. In real terms the increase of $74.70 a head of population is the biggest single component in the Budget.

In total dollars—not in per capita terms—the government has budgeted to receive $341·9 million more in asset sales this year than last year. Even if the government falls short of that target and achieves only 80 per cent of its goal, it will have a Budget deficit of $114 million. In other words, the cash asset sales program is critical to the success of the Budget.

Annual borrowing in real terms over the life of the government has almost doubled from 1981–82 to 1985–86. It has since declined, but the debt incurred during that period of doubling and the subsequent decline is still with us. It is a debt that we will have to pay out in the years ahead. The government might say that it is all right to sell assets, but what the government fails to take into account is that most government capital expenditure is probably to replace depreciating assets. It is not new capital expenditure. It is properly characterised as a current rather than a capital outlay.

The final source of funding I shall examine is Commonwealth grants. Commonwealth grants to the State, made up of general and specific purpose grants, increased by $145 per capita from 1981–82 to 1985–86. They have then fallen by $177 per capita in the years 1985–86 to this year. That is a net decline of $32 a head in real terms. It is a significant cut to State funding, but it is not an unbearable cut. It represents 1·2 per cent of outlays by the State government.

What the Treasurer has said about Commonwealth grants has been contradictory. On the one hand he devoted an entire chapter in the Budget Paper, *Budget Strategy and Review*, to an apologia for the financial difficulties of the State, blaming the Commonwealth government for his cutbacks. On the other hand, the Treasurer is not prepared publicly to criticise his Federal counterpart in an endeavour to remedy the situation. He meekly accepts what is imposed upon him by his Federal colleagues. If the Treasurer were fair dinkum about his arguments, he should be saying stridently and publicly, "It is unfair for the Commonwealth to cut funding to the State without putting its own house in order".

This examination shows where the money has come from, but as I said at the outset the more important question is, "Where has it gone; what have we got to show for it?"

In almost every portfolio area the tangible result of increased outlays is hard to see. In the Ministry of Education, the largest single component of State government outlay which represents $716.90 a head of population, there has been a cut in real terms of $29.90 over the life of the government, which is approximately 4 per cent. One might believe that is a sign of a good economy, but a breakdown of outlays in the education field reveals that the State outlay on tertiary education has fallen by $58.10 a head or approximately 34·5 per cent. Preschool funding has fallen by $28.90 a head or 42 per cent. Primary and secondary education outlays have increased by $59.30 a head in real terms over the life of the government, which amounts to 12·2 per cent.

However, it is more accurate to compare outlays with school enrolments. Real outlays per child in 1989–90 dollars have increased from $2357 in 1981–82 to $3072 in 1988–89. Those figures may have fallen slightly but they have not fallen significantly in the present Budget. That is approximately a 30 per cent increase, despite the fact that the government school share of school enrolments has fallen from 72·8 per cent in 1981–82 to 68·3 per cent in 1988–89.

As all honourable members will realise, the government pays a much smaller part of the cost of educating a child in non-government schools. Notwithstanding this,

there is an enormous increase in funding for each child in real terms. What do we have to show for this situation in the education system? One cannot point to the retention rate increase because the outcome of this increase has already been taken into account in computing that figure. One might say that it can be seen in better equipped schools, but I am not aware of evidence of that. One might say that it is shown in better educated children, but again I have not seen any evidence of that either. In fact, the Ministry appears to go to some lengths to prevent such evidence becoming available. With all this expenditure it is hard to tell where exactly the money has gone, but there seem to be two prime explanations. The first is the massive increase in teacher remuneration that took place when the government came to office as a payback for the $155 000 contribution made to the Australian Labor Party election campaign funds. The second is that money has been expended on a perpetual reorganisation of and increase in the education bureaucracy. Reorganisation and reshuffling occurs almost on an annual basis.

In health there has been a steady increase in outlays over the life of the government, but notwithstanding that increase the demand for health services is not being met. Net outlays on hospital and other institutional care have increased by 32·8 per cent in real terms—not per capita terms—over the life of the government, but during the same period the number of patients treated in public hospitals has increased by only 17·5 per cent. A significant gap exists between the 32·8 per cent increase in real funding and the 17·5 per cent increase in the number of patients treated.

Three additional factors make the performance of the government in the health portfolio even worse. Firstly, much of the blow-out in waiting lists is unnecessary. It is a consequence of the State and Federal governments' neglect of the private sector in the provision of health care, through Medicare and other disincentives. The Opposition, in its election policy delivered last year, said it believed the State government should be doing everything it could within its sphere of influence to redirect waiting patients to the private hospital sector. Much of the increased demand on the State public sector is unnecessary.

Secondly, in assessing increased outlays on health by the government one must realise that charges and reimbursements to government for health care are netted off in determining outlays and it is quite likely after allowing for charges and reimbursements that gross outlays will have increased by even more than the 32·8 per cent I referred to earlier. Total charges and reimbursements are budgeted to increase by 3·6 per cent in real terms in the current financial year alone.

Thirdly, in the midst of the present hospital crisis, the government is providing for real cuts in net hospital funding in this Budget. The cut is only 0·1 per cent, but it is not a cut that one would expect given the present difficulties that the hospital system faces.

I turn next to the interest component of outlays which is $323.40 for each man, woman and child in Victoria. It is the third largest area of outlay by the government. That shows up the price Victorians are paying for the borrowing binge the government has been on since it came to office; and it shows up the price Victorians are paying for the debacles of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd. As well as the increased capital costs that are being borne by the Budget sector, interest has to be paid on those increased borrowings.

The government claims that, as a proportion of non-farm gross domestic product, debt was higher in the 1960s than it is at present. That may be true, but the 1960s was a period of real and rapid economic and population growth. The investment that occurred in that decade provided real new capital investment and an infrastructure for a rapidly growing population. The 1960s was also a time when real rates of interest

were very low, so it was economical to borrow on a large scale. Neither of those factors are present today. The rate of growth has slowed. Most of the government's capital expenditure is probable replacement expenditure rather than new expenditure. In addition, real rates of interest are now at an historic high. In real terms they are in excess of 10 per cent, compared with a long-term historical average of between 4 and 5 per cent. In short, the government's high borrowing strategy is inappropriate for many reasons.

The next area I shall examine is transport. Public expenditure on transport has been another area of boom and bust during the lifetime of the government. Between 1981–82 and 1984–85 public transport expenditure grew from $181.80 per capita to $260.20 per capita; and it then fell to $198.70 per capita in 1988–89. One wonders what Victoria has to show for that boom in expenditure. Some new railway rolling stock and buses have been purchased, for which we should be thankful. Yet the public transport system continues to be very unreliable. Trains and buses are covered in graffiti to an extent not previously seen, and the system has become more unsafe than ever. That is a poor return for the increase in outlays that has occurred since the government came to office.

This year's Budget provides for a massive cut in outlays on public transport. In this year alone Budget outlays on transport will be cut by $59 per capita, which is equal to a cut in outlays of 29·7 per cent. If it were not for those proposed cuts, total government outlays this year would rise by $12.50 per capita in real terms. It is evident that the proposed cuts in this year's transport portfolio will be a critical element of the Budget. The proposed cuts are second in magnitude only to the proposed increase in asset sales. The burden that is being placed on the Minister for Transport to achieve those cuts is heavy. It is difficult to work out what proportion of the cuts will occur in capital expenditure and what proportion will occur in current expenditure. Probably, the larger proportion of cuts will occur in the former.

The Minister already has the plans for those proposed cuts in the bag; if he decides not to spend the money, it will not be spent. Nonetheless, there will be a significant residual cut in recurrent expenditure required, which is largely expenditure on wages and salaries. If those cuts are to be achieved, the Minister must reduce staffing levels. During the coming year all eyes will be on him to see whether he is up to the task.

The next area I shall examine is that of general public services, the outlays for which have been increased by $106.60 per capita over the lifetime of the government. One would not expect outlays in this area to have increased by that much. Certainly, there has not been a large increase in outlays for Parliament or for other areas of general public administration. There are two specific components that account for a large part of that increase. The first component is the cost of government superannuation benefits, which has increased by $57 per capita during the life of the government, an increase of 75·9 per cent. That increase has occurred steadily; and it is likely that it will continue. The chickens are coming home to roost so far as unfunded public sector superannuation is concerned. In the government's eyes unfunded liabilities can be built up forever; but sooner or later the government will have to fund superannuation benefits from current outlays.

The second area of general public services increase is workers compensation, where outlays have increased by $40.40 per capita, or 273·6 per cent per capita in real terms over the life of the government. This is yet another indication of the cost of the WorkCare debacle and shows how the government's handling of workers compensation is increasingly afflicting the State's taxpayers.

In police and emergency services, over the life of the government the incidence of major crime per 100 000 Victorians has increased by 64·9 per cent from 1981 to

1988–89. Over the same period the number of police officers per 100 000 Victorians has increased by only 3·1 per cent. That is a large discrepancy—a 64·9 per cent increase in the incidence of major crime compared with only a 3·1 per cent increase in the number of police officers.

As a result the number of major crimes that are handled by each police officer has increased by 60·3 per cent since the government came to office. The rate was 21·9 major crimes per police officer in 1981, and the rate in 1988–89 was 35·1. Despite that massive increase in workload real outlays per capita in the area of police and emergency services have increased by only 10·4 per cent over the lifetime of the government. What is worse is that that expenditure has fallen by 1·1 per cent in real terms over the past four years. Crime rates continue to soar yet real outlays have been cut—an inexplicable situation.

If one examined all of the other areas of Budget outlays, one would reach a similar conclusion. From the evidence I have put before the House it is obvious that the increases in the government's Budget outlays have not provided corresponding benefits to Victorians. Needy areas have missed out on funding, and one must assume that the only explanation for where the money has gone is that it has been either wasted or spent on unnecessary bureaucracy.

As to the solutions for the mess that Victoria finds itself in, one obvious solution would be to elect more able people to form the government, which I hope will occur after the next State election. However, that in itself is not enough; more far-reaching reforms are needed to turn the State around. Firstly, public sector employment must be reformed. We must look to those countries that have a record of successful public administration; and Singapore is a good example.

Mr A. J. Sheehan interjected.

Mr CLARK—Some honourable members opposite may take issue with the Singapore government's policies—about which I make no comment. I am commenting merely on the calibre of the public administration of that country, which is an example to all honourable members. Singapore has a lean and efficient Public Service, in which high standards of performance are set—which is exactly what Victoria needs. Good money must be paid to recruit good people to the public sector. Although there are many able people in the State's public sector, few of them are properly remunerated for their ability.

Secondly, high performance standards must be set and enforced. It is no use if the public sector operates as a sheltered workshop—which is unfortunately what happens in some areas. For example, the setting of a typing speed of 35 words a minute for employment in public sector typing pools does not encourage high standards.

Dr Napthine—It's only 30.

Mr CLARK—The honourable member for Portland suggests that the standard is only 30 words a minute. The standards must be raised not only for those at the lower levels of the Public Service but also for those at the middle management levels. Unless a government is prepared to demand certain performance standards and to dismiss people who do not meet them, Victoria will never have successful and efficient public administration.

Secondly, I touch on the provision of services. History has shown, including the experience of this and other Australian governments, that governments are not capable providers of services. This government went in entirely the wrong direction in expanding into the area of the provision of financial services through the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Victorian Investment Corporation. The

government should be going the other way: it should be contracting out work, and entering into private sector management and privatisation.

The third area that requires reform concerns social problems. We must stop trying to solve all social problems by throwing money at them. There have been times in the history of Western civilisation when it has been necessary to spend money on meeting real poverty and need. However, the causes of poverty and need can change over time. While I have no doubt that today there are instances where poverty is caused by economic circumstances and the only way of addressing that poverty is through financial assistance, I am also sure that there are social factors at work that cause a substantial amount of the distress that many people are suffering today.

In support of that proposition, I do not rely only on my own views; I refer the House to a book entitled *The Family and Nation*, written by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the United States of America, in which the senator points out that there is a strong positive correlation between expenditure on social welfare and an increase in poverty and distress. He argues that it is not merely a statistical correlation; it is cause and effect. The senator is not an extremist; in the 1960s he welcomed an increase in government expenditure on social welfare. However, now he has come to realise that that is not the answer to those problems. This should be taken into account in this State as well.

In summary, over the life of this government honourable members have seen an increased raking in of funds from the public and increases in outlays. The government has little to show for the increase in outlays. All the evidence suggests that not only do Victorians need a change in government but also they need a radical change in the direction of government if the position of this State is to be improved.

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN (Northcote)—In supporting the Budget, I indicate my disappointment on entering a debate in which the previous speaker has upheld the fascist regime in Singapore as a model of excellence and has argued that an increase in poverty is caused by an increase in social welfare payments. It is a most unusual position to support and could come only from members of certain sections of the Liberal Party. It indicates how irrelevant Liberal Party policy is to today's debate.

The Budget has been framed in quite difficult circumstances. The State is in difficulty because of cutbacks in financial assistance from the Federal government, some slowdown in revenue expectations, the slowdown in the economy, and the continuing commitment of this government to no increase in taxes and charges. Against those difficulties in raising funds, there are increased community demands and expectations of services. The result has been cutbacks in expenditure in education, the arts, health, housing, and transport, all of which have had their budgets pruned this time around.

Such pruning is particularly frustrating for a number of honourable members as the areas to which I have referred are considered as holding the key to the implementation of the many reforms that are critical to the creation of a better and fairer society. The implementation of the policy of social justice requires increased expenditure in the areas to which I have referred. It requires better targeting of expenditure in those areas, so it is frustrating that expenditure has been cut back. It is particularly frustrating when one considers the real economics of the time.

Mr Richardson—You are sounding a bit disloyal!

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—Australia is experiencing considerable economic growth and prosperity. Despite the comments about the state of the economy made from time to time by honourable members opposite, the reality is that the Australian economy is enjoying almost unprecedented prosperity.

Mr Richardson—Is this coming from the faction leaders or from the community?

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—I trust that the honourable member for Forest Hill will not only enjoy what I am saying but also learn from it.

The Australian economy has experienced considerable growth: there has been a 7 per cent growth in the gross domestic product, the highest since 1973; private capital expenditure is increasing by 16 per cent a year; business investment is at its highest level since the second world war; the Australian dollar has continued to strengthen; and unemployment is the lowest it has been since 1981. Indeed, with the changing participation rate in the workforce, Australia probably has one of the highest rates of employment on record. In short, the economic aggregates indicate a booming economy. At a time of such opportunity, why is the Victorian government being forced to introduce such a tight Budget? Perhaps the most critical factor is the reduction in Federal funding.

It is instructive for honourable members to consider the following statistics: this year the Federal contribution to this State's recurrent expenditure has decreased by $928 million; since 1985 the total decrease in round terms is $2·5 billion. As a result of Federal government cutbacks, capital expenditure has also been reduced by some 56 per cent over the same period. The State is being asked to deliver the same level of services—indeed, in many instances it is being asked to deliver increased levels of services—against the background of a reduction in recurrent payments since 1985 of $2·5 billion and a 56 per cent reduction in capital resources.

This reduction in Federal funding to Victoria—and to the other States—can be explained only in terms of the ideological capitulation by the Federal Labor government to the a priori assumptions of neoclassical economic theory.

Mr Richardson—This is definitely a factional speech!

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—The ideological presumption is that market forces typically will unleash growth, innovation and efficiency, whereas government regulations and expenditures almost by definition are seen as impeding growth and stifling productivity and entrepreneurship, as well as generating inefficiencies in both the private and public sectors.

A cargo cult mentality of the market is dominating Federal economics. While that ideology is being embraced, we are experiencing difficulties in financing programs in Victoria.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—The score is on the board, and Hawthorn proved that one does not have to win by ten goals, one goal will do, and that so long as one keeps winning everything will be all right.

Mr Richardson interjected.

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—The honourable member may see it as a "half-time" address. The Commonwealth government has adopted what might broadly be called market-liberal ideas in many areas of economic, social and education policies. It is committed to a large Budget surplus and the reduction of big government and, as a result, is neglecting the traditional Labor commitment to: one, the provision of public goods and services; and, two, a redistribution of income.

In saying that, I do not deny the Federal government's achievements in some areas; firstly, its liaison with the trade union movement on a range of economic issues, including wages and industry policy. That has been the most constructive influence in industrial development in Australia for many years. Secondly, the commitment of the

Federal government to a more vigorous public health care system is a considerable achievement. Finally, the more generous approach to affirmative action for disadvantaged groups through such programs as the Family Assistance Scheme has been successful and the government has to be applauded for that sort of action in the targeting of welfare assistance.

However, one of the ironies of the Federal government's policies has been that while it has demonstrated commendable commitment to improving the income of the poorest in our community, it is effectively running down that commitment by running down the infrastructure that is vital to that group. In a sense, the people who have experienced tax cuts and wage rises financed from those tax cuts have seen a running down of the infrastructure which contributes to the quality of life. There is no point in improving the income of a family—cash flow—if at the same time public utilities, such as education, health and transport, are being neglected. I am arguing that a vital component of a family's standard of living and its opportunity for full participation in the fruits of our society is the quality of the public goods and services being offered. It is not enough to attempt to improve the quality of life of working people and those who are not working by improving that cash income; public infrastructure must be provided to make it worthwhile.

At this point, it must be said that, despite the Commonwealth's actions, the Victorian Budget is one of considerable merit and innovation. In terms of economic development, significant funding has been provided for regional development, medical research, strategic research and training. Those areas have great potential for the development of Victoria. It is important that the government continue its commitment in those areas.

In the area of social justice, there is a commitment in the Budget to youth homelessness, to women's choice and opportunity and to Aboriginal affairs, but the greatest commitment is in the area of intellectual disability.

In terms of conservation, the State conservation strategy, nature conservation, wetlands and salinity are all areas that have benefited from the Budget and, given the economic circumstances, it is a commendable effort.

The question is: how much more could be achieved and how many opportunities are being foregone? In order to address the real needs of society, a number of points must be made. An important step is to impress upon the Commonwealth that it has a fundamental responsibility of contributing to the quality of the life of its citizens by the provision of first-class public education, health, transport and community development facilities. The Commonwealth government alone has the resources to tackle those areas. A surplus Budget may be impressive to the financial markets, but the end result is a deficit in community experience.

Apart from attempting to persuade the Commonwealth to take a new tack, we in Victoria must carry out a number of options: the first must be to examine some areas of revenue raising. I believe the government has not exhausted all the possibilities for raising revenue in the community. Furthermore, we expect that if the community wants better services and facilities it should be prepared to pay for them, but at the end of the day it must have the conviction that there is the delivery of those services.

Mr Evans—Where are you suggesting the money comes from?

Mr A. J. SHEEHAN—I will save that for another debate. We must establish a budgetary process which is based firmly upon the implementation of the government's strategic objectives in conservation, social justice and the economy. One approach would be to adopt zero based budgeting as a means of developing departmental budgets and to have departments justify their expenditure from the bottom up rather

than is the tendency today to have 90 per cent of the budget covered up by continuing expenditure.

We must invigorate our approach to social justice at a State level and make a more determined effort to deliver the goods to the community and to shift some of our energy from the rhetoric of social justice to the delivery of social justice. I look forward to a renewed commitment from the government.

Mr HAYWARD (Prahran)—I listened with much interest to the previous speech. I agree with the honourable member for Northcote that the time has come for the government to move from the rhetoric of social justice to the provision of assistance to those in need. In recent years Australia has demonstrated an interesting historical trend. We have witnessed the destruction of the egalitarian society so characteristic of Australia. The Australia most of us knew in our childhood was a country where some people were poor, some people were rich, but the majority of people were in the middle class that was peculiar to Australia.

Those people in the Australian middle class were not affluent but were sufficiently well off to be able to lead good lives without constantly worrying about how to balance the family budget, as most people now do. That has changed and Australian society has polarised; the rich have become richer and the poor have become poorer. In addition, there are many more people who are now poorer. The middle class that was so characteristic of Australian society has practically disappeared.

It is a sad fact that the destruction of the middle class and the increase in the number of poor people in Australia has occurred under Labor Party governments in Canberra and in most States, including Victoria. At the same time the capacity of governments to look after those in real need has also deteriorated.

To a large degree that is because the nature of the Labor Party has changed; it no longer has a social conscience. The Labor Party politicians I remember so well from my youth, and who are typified by Arthur Calwell, cared about people, but they have now disappeared.

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

A quorum was formed.

Mr HAYWARD—The Labor Party politicians of the past who really cared about people have been replaced by a new breed who are essentially hypocrites and care more about their mates than about the people in need. That is clearly illustrated by the fact that the Cain government has lost more than $100 million helping its mates through the Victorian Economic Development Corporation but is now reducing the subsidy paid to day training centres for the transport of the intellectually disabled to those centres.

The Minister for Community Services expects day training centres to pass on the inceased transport charges, which amount to more than $300 a year a person, to the people who use the centres. The people involved cannot afford those charges. Many of the people have virtually no money left after they have paid their board for group homes or special accommodation houses. Most of them must already pay $30 a week for their adult training whereas other people in the community receive their adult training free of charge through the technical and further education system. The Minister seems intent on keeping those people in poverty.

The impact of this move by the government will be shocking. It is untenable to expect these people to pay the additional charges themselves. Inevitably, the charges

will be met by day training centres which means there will be less money available to assist intellectually disabled people through day training programs.

In a letter dated 31 August to the General Manager of the Office of Intellectual Disability Services, the Director of Windarring, the Central Highlands Association for the Intellectually Handicapped, said that the situation will place considerable stress and strain on people with intellectual disabilities who attend the centres. He said it will also place strain on families and the administrative staff of the centre. In other words, a group of people who are not in a position to stand up for themselves and who are already in a state of stress and strain will be further stressed because the government has reduced the subsidy paid to day training centres for the transport of intellectually disabled people to those centres.

This lack of concern for people in need is likewise illustrated by the failure of the Minister for Community Services to provide adequate accommodation and support services for the thousands of intellectually disabled people in the community who are in desperate need. Last year the Cain government set up its elaborate community living support program allegedly to help the intellectually disabled to move out into the community. So far not one intellectually disabled person has been accommodated in the community through the program and that is because the Minister cannot satisfy his left-wing mates in the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch, upon whom he is dependent for his survival.

It is disgraceful that the Minister has bowed to union pressure and agreed that people employed by community organisations through the community living support program will be permanent public servants. That will make the people involved eligible to join the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch, and they will be pressured to do so. By making these people permanent public servants, the cost of the program will increase by approximately 50 per cent. New, inflexible working practices will undermine the effectiveness and responsiveness of the program, and the community organisations concerned will lose much of their local autonomy and management authority.

Why has the government done this? When one analyses the situation, one realises that it is for a simple reason. It illustrates the point I made at the beginning of my remarks about the government being more interested in helping its mates than looking after those in need. In the past the power base of the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch has been the institutions, the so-called training centres. It is government policy to progressively reduce the size of training centres. In other words, under the government's so-called deinstitutionalisation program, people will be moved from institutions into the community, and the base of the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch will progressively decrease.

The federation has persuaded the government to ensure that, in future, all people employed in the community to look after the intellectually disabled will be permanent public servants. That will once again open a growth opportunity for the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch.

The Minister struts around, throws out his chest and says that the Budget for intellectual disability services has increased by $10 million. Where is the money going? It is mainly being used to pay salaries under the new deal between the Minister and the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch. As I said, the deal will add approximately 50 per cent to the cost of providing services to the intellectually disabled. Very few additional people with intellectual disabilities will be helped through this additional $10 million.

The situation facing many people with intellectual disabilities and their families is now desperate. Nowhere has this been more graphically or tragically illustrated than

in an article in the *Sunday Sun* of 17 September under the headline "Mum's death anguish". In that article a mother says she prays every night that her intellectually disabled children will die before she does. She even says she would rather take her children with her than leave them to fend for themselves without proper support services. This is typical of the desperate problems facing many elderly people with intellectually disabled children at home. There are no proper accommodation or support services for them.

There are at least 3000 intellectually disabled people in the community in desperate need of accommodation, and the number is increasing every day. The government, having buried its ten-year plan for intellectual disability services, is supposed to be preparing a so-called State plan which, I understand, has gone before Cabinet on at least two occasions so far.

Under this plan, accommodation is supposed to be provided over a three-year period for 600 people from institutions. In other words, 600 people will be brought out into the community and given accommodation. In addition, there is supposed to be accommodation provided over a three-year period for 300 to 400 people who are already in the community. This accommodation will not even cater for the increased demand over that period, let alone provide for the 3000 people who are desperately in need of accommodation.

The State government seems to be in the process of sabotaging the three-year plan even before it gets off the ground, just as it sabotaged the ten-year plan, because the State plan calls for additional expenditure of something in the order of $30 million. As the Minister has pointed out so well, there is an increase of only $10 million in the Budget and most of that is going into salaries. In other words, to establish the essential infrastructure of the State plan and get if off the ground, $30 million must be allocated, but the government has provided only one-third of that amount in the Budget and most of that is going in salaries. Even the inadequate accommodation called for in the State plan has not been provided.

Parents like the mother referred to in the article will continue to live in anxiety about what will happen to their children when they are gone. That is a heart-rending situation. I have never been involved in sadder interviews than those involving parents who are seriously considering taking the lives of their intellectually disabled children and then their own rather than dying and leaving the children to fend for themselves.

Adding to the problems of families who try to keep intellectually disabled family members at home is the fact that the Cain government is now providing inadequate support under the Home and Community Care Program. The funding for this program is provided on a $1 for $1 basis by the Federal and State governments. However, the Cain government has taken up only 64 per cent of the available Federal funding this year. In other words, the Cain government was not prepared to provide the whole of the funding on a $1 for $1 basis. As a result, there has been no funding increase for local government to provide the vital support needed for people with disabilities who are living at home. In fact, there has been a reduction.

At the same time, there has been a substantial increase in community demand for special home help. In some municipalities it has been as high as 40 per cent. The whole purpose of this Home and Community Care Program is to assist people to stay in their own homes rather than being forced into institutions. It is less expensive to the community if people can stay in their own homes and it is better for all concerned.

It is ridiculous to cut back the program in this way because it is counterproductive not only in human terms but also in financial terms as well. A classic example of the

problems that this cut will cause is the experience of the Corio Shire Council. An article in the *Geelong Advertiser* of 19 September states:

> Elderly and disabled people are the main victims of a State government funding freeze that has forced Corio Shire Council to carve 200 hours a week from its home help service.
>
> The funding dilemma also means the council has had to refuse care to many new clients, including pregnant women struggling to cope at home.

The council must cut back on the services it provides to help people stay in their own homes and it is not able to look after people who are seeking its assistance on a daily basis. It is foolish and tragic of the government to make this cut in funds.

Likewise, it is disgraceful that the Cain government should abolish the visiting child health nurse program which has been vital to many Victorian families. The clients of this program are among the most disadvantaged in our community. For many families this program provides the only help for keeping children in the family as distinct from them being placed in institutions.

Despite statements from the Minister, this program is not duplicated by other services. What is the Minister's hidden agenda behind axing this important program? Perhaps it is because nurses are not members of the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch, the union that controls the Minister. Perhaps the objective is to put the funds into activities controlled by the union. This is an illustration of the point I made at the beginning of my remarks: the government and the Minister are more interested in helping their mates than helping those in real need. There is no question that the visiting child health nurse program has been absolutely invaluable in a number of regions in Victoria and has helped to keep families together and keep children out of institutions and also reduced the stress on families.

It is much better, not only in human terms but also in financial terms, to keep children at home with their families. The estimated cost of so-called substitute care for a child now—placing a child in accommodation other than in the home—is approximately $25 000 a year.

Another example of the shocking situation that this government has forced on Victoria is the lack of support for psychiatric services for children in various institutions. This type of situation comes about mainly because of the intervention of the police in family situations. There may be a problem in a family—perhaps the child itself has psychological or psychiatric problems and has engaged in antisocial behaviour—and the police are forced to take out a protection application and place a child in an institution. The only places available to the police in Melbourne are, for boys, Baltara Reception Centre or Turana Remand Centre and, for girls, Winbirra Remand Centre or Winlaton Youth Training Centre. I have had numerous examples in the past few days of people telling me of situations where they have had a child with serious psychiatric problems being placed in one of these institutions and there has been no proper psychiatric assistance available for that child.

This is very serious and needs to be urgently addressed by the Minister and the government. One has to call into question the attitude of the Minister and his new director-general towards the quality of care especially when one reads articles published in the press, including an article published in the *Sunday Herald* of last week. One questions whether the department is going to ensure that there is proper care on an individual basis or whether it is interested only in pushing people through the system.

The hard core facts of the matter are that the Cain government's real constituents are its trade union mates and the left-wing theorists in the government's own party and its bureaucrats. The ones in real need come off third best. This makes a mockery of the government's so-called social justice strategy. This government does not

understand the concept of its duty of care to each individual person in its care. It is really interested only in its own constituencies, which are not those in need.

The government's system should be there to serve those in need, rather than vice versa. Despite the government's so-called social justice strategy, today Victorians are worse off than ever. The citizens of Victoria are beginning to wake up to the hypocrisy of the Cain government, and are realising they have become the victims of a cynical abuse of power and funds. The day of reckoning for the government and those who hang onto its coat-tails is at hand. The time has come when Victorians will demand that community services are used for those in need in the community, rather than those funds being hijacked by the trade unions, the Australian Labor Party and its bureaucrats.

I refer now to an area of significant government expenditure for which there is very little accountability—Aboriginal affairs. The Budget includes an allocation of $3·45 million for "payment of a capital nature in connection with approved Aboriginal development projects". Many of the projects are very badly managed, and at times are not managed in the interests of those for whom the allocation was made.

That is well exemplified by the sorry saga of the Lake Condah tourist project. The management of the Kerrup–Jmara Aboriginal Elders Corporation, which operates the Lake Condah mission, has become a national scandal. Aborigines at Lake Condah mission are being exploited by a self-serving group of administrators who have no interest in the well-being of those they are appointed to represent. Through sheer desperation, the local Aborigines at Lake Condah have asked the Canberra-based Registrar of Corporations to intervene on their behalf.

The Victorian government has made a capital grant available to the corporation; it also makes available annual grants of $50 000 to the corporation. The purpose of the grants was to establish a tourist venture at Lake Condah, which has a local history of association with the Aboriginal community. The area has always been a site of special significance and importance to Aboriginal people. Evidence of habitation by Aboriginal people over many hundreds of years, including fish traps in the streams and ponds and other structures, is plain.

The idea was for the tourist venture to be established with accommodation and guides; school groups and others could learn more about Aboriginal culture and history. But, unfortunately, the funds have been made available to a corporation whose headquarters are in Collingwood, and which has very little interest in or connection with the venture at Lake Condah. The funds do not seem to be finding their way to the Lake Condah project but appear to have been used to buy motor vehicles and for other purposes for those in Collingwood who administer the corporation.

With the honourable member for Portland I visited the project; it is in a shocking situation. Elaborate and expensive accommodation has been constructed but it is not being used. No-one was at the site when I visited the area; the telephones and electricity had been disconnected because accounts had not been paid. There was no operable fire extinguisher at the run-down site.

That disgraceful episode is an example of how a group which has no real connection with a project can obtain funds, and can hijack the resources which were supposed to be used for the benefit of the local people in the Lake Condah area. The Collingwood group holds meetings that are attended only by city-based personnel; it never informs the local Aborigines in the Lake Condah area and, in effect, the project has now ground to a halt. The chairperson has not visited the mission for about four months. The local Aborigines are being denied the legal and democratic right to attend meetings that are held about the conduct of affairs of the corporation concerning the venture.

The government cannot wash its hands of that shocking situation. It has provided the capital funds, and continues to provide ongoing funds of $50 000 a year for the project so that taxpayers' money should be spent on the very sensible and useful purpose of having a tourist venture which would be educational in nature and to which schoolchildren could be brought to learn more about the Aboriginal culture and history. The project has become defunct; it is disgraceful that the funds have been hijacked by a group in the city.

For more than eight months, the Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs has been fobbing off calls for a public inquiry into the management of the venture. He has been saying that the venture has nothing to do with him or the government—but it is taxpayers' money. The Minister has a heavy responsibility to intervene in the disgraceful situation from the point of view of accountability of taxpayers' funds, and in the interests of local Aborigines who have seen the venture disintegrate because of the lack of concern by and the interests of those in the city who have control of the venture, and of the funds involved.

Sadly, this is only one example of the problems that exist in Aboriginal affairs in Victoria. The Opposition has considerable information about and examples of large sums being made available to other corporations in Victoria and instances of funds not being used for their original intention, of where there has been mismanagement, and where a considerable amount of funds has been filtered off for their own purposes by those allegedly managing the venture.

Mr J. F. McGrath—No accountability.

Mr HAYWARD—No, there is no accountability, and the situation cannot be allowed to continue. In effect, numerous small Victorian Economic Development Corporation-type situations have occurred in Aboriginal affairs. The spotlight must be played on them not only—as the honourable member for Warrnambool said—in the interests of accountability of taxpayers' funds but also on behalf of local Aborigines, because it would be very much to their benefit if these projects are managed in a proper fashion.

The government must re-examine its approach to Aboriginal affairs in Victoria. It is obviously in the interests of all concerned that Victorians should have more information and a better understanding of the history and culture of Aborigines, and of Australia's history before the white man settled here. All Victorians—all Aborigines—can take pride in that early history and culture and everything possible should be done to foster and encourage a better understanding of our heritage.

It is very foolish to attempt to fragment the Aboriginal community, to segregate them, and to discriminate against the Aboriginal people. It is in the interests of Aborigines and the community that Aborigines should be considered as Victorians, like everyone else in the State. It is foolish to put them into a special category. If Aborigines are in need of assistance, they should be provided with that assistance, as are other Victorians.

Victoria should take pride in the heritage of the Aborigines, and should encourage a better knowledge of it. It is now obvious that the original Aboriginal communities have been fragmented; they have no real links with the past and with particular areas. It is foolish to attempt to create an artificial situation. They are citizens of Victoria and, like all citizens, should be treated with the same respect as others expect.

It is foolish to try to put them into a separate situation and, in particular, it is foolish to set up these types of activities and corporations, such as at Lake Condah and other parts of Victoria, where money is not used for the purposes it is meant to be used, and the entire area is, in fact, hijacked.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—I intend to cover five areas of concern in relation to these Bills. Firstly, the Treasurer's Budget speech, unlike any of his Budget speeches since 1983–84, did not refer to the government's economic strategy. However, I believe the present position of the government's economic strategy should be examined. It appears, upon detailed examination of the Budget Papers, that the economic strategy is still alive. I should not like to say it is well, but it still seems to be with us. It is a matter of grave concern to all honourable members to know exactly what the situation is with the government's economic strategy.

Secondly, I shall consider how the losses and liabilities that have resulted from the government's economic strategy have affected Victoria. I suggest these losses and liabilities cannot be measured only in dollar terms. Thirdly, I shall examine what this Budget means to Victorian families and particularly what it says about the Premier's family pledge. Honourable members recall the Premier's family pledge that was a feature of the last State election. I suggest to the Minister for Consumer Affairs and, possibly, the Minister for Prices, that they should take a great interest in the Premier's family pledge.

Fourthly, I shall examine what the Budget says about the government's concern for women; and, fifthly, what priority the government gives to the functions of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and the Office of Prices.

This is the Treasurer's eighth Budget and, on its face, it is a great leap forward because the Budget speech does not refer to the "government's economic strategy", as every other Budget speech has done and dwelled on since 1984–85 and as was previewed in 1983–84.

Since that time, honourable members have been bored to death by talk of the government's economic strategy, but suddenly late last year, with the exposures relating to the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd, the "government's economic strategy" was taken off the list of words for use by government members. It was outlawed, and it is just as well because the government's economic strategy is enough to strike terror into the hearts of all Victorians. The government's economic strategy is responsible for most, although not quite all, of the $31 billion of losses and liabilities incurred by the government over a very short period.

I shall refer in particular to the losses incurred by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd. The VEDC losses were originally estimated at approximately $111 million, but I believe the estimates are now around $200 million. The VIC losses were originally estimated at some $30 million, and no doubt they have also increased.

I shall examine where that money has gone. The government likes to pretend that it has honestly lost this money in attempting to build up businesses and to create jobs, but this is not the fact. I should like members of the government party, in so far as there are any of them present in the Chamber—possibly some of them will be listening to the debate through the speakers in their rooms—to consider the fact that a large part of the money lost has gone in high living.

The money has gone in ways with which I was very familiar when I was in the Corporate Affairs Office, as it was then known. I point out to honourable members who may not understand that there are many smart operators out in the community. When I was at the Corporate Affairs Office, those operators were preying on gullible investors and calling for people to invest in agricultural and other investment schemes

when they knew spare money was around. They like to get their hands on spare money.

I never thought there would be a gullible government, but obviously the smart operators thought Victoria had a gullible government and Treasurer and they were in for the money that they saw readily available. That is what happened to the VEDC and the VIC, and that is what is happening with Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and, to some extent, State Bank Victoria.

The millions of dollars lost to the people of Victoria are still being enjoyed by VEDC and VIC clients. I make it clear that the money has gone on such things as company cars, extravagant boats, large houses and, in one case that I could name, a marble swimming pool. It is no good for the government to say that it made this attempt and the money was all honestly lost; it has not gone the way that taxpayers' money should go.

The Treasurer and the Director-General of the Department of Management and Budget, Dr Peter Sheehan, have not limited themselves to taxpayers' money. In 1983–84 the Treasurer referred in his Budget speech to the State Bank and said that the roles of the State Bank and the State Insurance Office were being upgraded to ensure they were in a position to operate effectively and meet the needs of the community and the public sector.

It is obvious that State Bank Victoria and its subsidiary, Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, have been in the forefront of entrepreneurial banking. They knew this was what the Treasurer expected of them; they knew that the appointments to the board of the State Bank and the appointment of the chief executive officer of the bank were a gift from the Treasurer that could also be taken away by the Treasurer.

The losses of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd are estimated at $100 million. I have not had the opportunity of obtaining the report of State Bank Victoria, but I hope it has more detail than the Budget Papers and that it is possible to see what the losses of the State Bank and Tricontinental Corporation Ltd are individually.

While the other banks sat back and watched, Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and the State Bank—particularly Tricontinental—expanded their loan books in a way that was totally unjustified. It seemed that the State Bank had no prudential controls whatsoever over Tricontinental Corporation Ltd.

Other bankers have told me that they exercise very strict control over their merchant bank subsidiaries, but obviously this was not the case with the State Bank and Tricontinental Corporation. Other bankers have told me that people who subsequently borrowed from Tricontinental Corporation Ltd had approached them for loans, and that they assessed these people as not having sufficient cash flow to be able to pay interest and loans and, therefore, they turned them down. These people would invariably go to Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and could be seen starting up businesses, showing that Tricontinental Corporation Ltd had given them loans that other banks had all denied. There was no doubt that some of the generous loans of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd would become bad debts.

I point out to any members of the government party who may be listening to the debate—although it is not apparent from the state of the Chamber that any of them are listening—that this money has gone to the same class of people that the VEDC and VIC money has gone to. Some of them will be genuine people, but many will be entrepreneurial people, who saw that money as easily available and decided to put forward some sort of entrepreneurial venture to the State Bank which was not careful enough in handling them.

In response to the Ryan report into the VEDC, the Treasurer said that State Bank Victoria was the most conservative of the government's financial institutions and that the government's other financial institutions are considerably more entrepreneurial than the State Bank. One's mind boggles, and one has to ask: what further disasters are in store for Victoria? It is already known as the State of insolvency, and it appears that it will go even further down that track.

Members of the government party must keep the cost of the government's economic strategy in the forefront of their minds. This money could have been better spent on providing services to the people of Victoria, such as services in hospitals and, as the honourable member for Prahran said, services for the mentally ill and the intellectually disabled. The losses of the Cain government must be measured in terms of lives that might have been saved in our hospitals and in terms of the failure to provide a proper quality of life to those people most in need and most disadvantaged in our society.

It is important for government members to keep in mind these facts, because the Treasurer and the director-general, Dr Peter Sheehan, have not abandoned the economic strategy and have learnt no lesson from the expensive experiments carried out with our money. The Treasurer does not care about people; he cares only about economic experiments.

Dr Peter Sheehan, prior to his appointment as director-general, was an academic who, no doubt, put his theories in many academic papers and books, and is now experimenting with the lives of the people of Victoria. Despite enormous losses and severe criticism by the Supreme Court in two recent cases—very severe criticism in the last case—no change has taken place in the management of the State Bank. The State Bank has taken over the VIC and the Rural Finance Corporation has taken over the VEDC, and in neither case has information about the activities of those organisations been made available in answer to questions asked in this House nor in response to applications under the Freedom of Information Act. No detail has been given about the organisations to which money has been lent. The principle of Ministerial responsibility to Parliament for government-funded and government-guaranteed organisations is no longer honoured in this State.

Budget Paper No. 2 sets out briefly some experiments being carried out at the expense of the Victorian people. I refer to page 18 of that paper, which refers to many initiatives under the heading "Economic Strategy". It states:

> The government has recently established, in the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources, an Office of Investment to bring together and intensify a wide range of activities seeking to increase direct investment in Victoria, especially by large firms. To assist this program, the government has appointed the international communications firm. . .to undertake, in conjunction with the Office of Investment, a $9 million investment promotion campaign over three financial years.

That paragraph tells us that the $9 million is not the only money being spent in this area, but nowhere can I find any indication of exactly how much money will be spent. How will we know whether we are getting value for the money that is being spent? We are told that additional funds of $1·8 million have been provided to thirteen institutes for medical research. I have no problem with that, as the amount given to the thirteen institutes is relatively small and we have at least a basic outline of what the money is being spent on.

We are told on page 18 about a third initiative to provide additional resources of $3·2 million in 1989–90 to the Strategic Research Fund. It states:

> The Strategic Research Fund is developing, in conjunction with CSIRO, existing universities and research institutes and major corporations, substantial proposals to strengthen strategic research in identified areas of long run economic significance in Victoria.

Whatever that may mean! I have the same feeling about this as I had about the VEDC: we are not being told the whole truth about where the money is going and what funds are available.

On pages 132 and 133 of Budget Paper No. 3, two amounts are appropriated for the Strategic Research Fund. The additional funds appear to be not $3·2 million but $6·1 million, so Budget Paper No. 2 appears to be inaccurate. In one paragraph on page 19 of that paper we are told about four major projects, which are all bundled together; Melbourne's candidature for the 1996 Olympic Games, the Anzac frigates project, the Very Fast Train proposal and the multifunction polis proposal. Then we are told that the government has been particularly active in pursuing the first two projects. Funds of $5 million are being provided to assist Melbourne's bid for the Olympic Games, and unspecified funds have been provided to support the frigates project if AMECON is the successful tenderer. We are not told what funds have been provided to support the frigates project or how they will be spent. One must ask whether the government intends to take over the support of Mr John Halfpenny and relieve AMECON from that obligation. We have been given absolutely no detail about this.

The line items in the Appropriation Bill give no detail of the amounts provided for the projects. I should be grateful if the Treasurer would tell me in particular what funds are being allocated to the multifunction polis proposal. I refer to the information given on some of the line items in program No. 726, compared with the information given on projects funded as part of the economic strategy. On page 133 of Budget Paper No. 3, under item No. 3478, we see a payment of $11 700 to the Public Transport Corporation in respect of rental of certain land by the Coburg City Council at Moreland. On the next page we see that a rent subsidy of $6000 was paid to the Housing Commission in respect of a house let to Mrs A. M. Becker, which is up from last year's amount of $4987. We are given a lot of information about that payment of $6000, compared with the little information given about major economic strategy proposals.

We are told that life rail passes to winners of the Victoria Cross and George Cross cost $800; in the City of Williamstown a grant of $300 was made towards rental of land for the Rotary Mentally Retarded Persons Respite Centre; and a grant of $5000 was made to the Catholic Family Planning Centre. My favourite line item is the $100 allocated for the winter relief payment. I should like to know exactly what was purchased with that $100—maybe two blankets or half a dozen pairs of underpants. We are given that sort of information for an amount of $100, yet the Strategic Research Fund allocations of $3·2 million and the additional $4·5 million are each contained in just one item. Then there is item No. 5560, totalling $23 922 100.

We are told of various grants, loans and payments to various people, including funds held for projects still under consideration and subject to finalisation, totalling more than $16 million. The Capital Development Fund amounts to $83·010 million. The total of those amounts for the government's economic strategy is in excess of $132 million. We have no idea where this money is being spent, except in the most general terms. I ask the Treasurer why we cannot be given the same detail about economic research and strategy funds as we have been given for the winter relief payment or the payment towards Mrs Becker's rent.

In the same way that the VEDC, VIC and Tricontinental funds went astray—this $132 million is not the government's money, it belongs to the taxpayers of Victoria—this money will go astray if it is not accounted for properly. Unless government members do something about this saga of extravagance and incompetence, this sort of thing will continue. The first move of government members should be to get a new Treasurer.

Losses should be measured not just in money but also in the run down of services that are already inadequate. The Treasurer does not seem to understand this. On the first page of his Budget speech he says that community expectations are placing increasing demands on the provision of essential services of government. He says:

> Nowhere is this more obvious than in the health sector. Fortunately Victoria's public hospital system was able to respond with a record number of inpatients treated last year. There is an expectation of a further expansion this year.

That Budget speech was delivered on 9 August. On 25 August a feature article appeared in the *Age* newspaper which was headed, "Crisis care in a critical condition". The article states:

> Critical care patients are learning the bitter truth of the State hospital crisis with not enough emergency beds to go around.

On 4 September a headline on the front page of the *Age* was "When saving lives has become a gamble". There was a report by a team of *Age* reporters and photographers who had spent a weekend in our public hospital system and who had found widespread concern among hospital casualty and intensive care staff about the lack of emergency care beds for patients. The article goes on to point out that the government has consistently denied that a public hospital space crisis exists in the treatment of emergency patients. However, the *Age* team found that the public hospitals often had to turn away emergency ward patients because of bed shortages. The article explains how a young man, severely injured in a motor car crash, managed to be admitted into intensive care but, in order for him to be admitted, an elderly woman who should have stayed in intensive care had to be moved out. I hope the Treasurer is a bit more aware of the situation now—after reading this and other newspaper reports on our hospital system—than he was when he made his Budget speech on 9 August.

Hospitals are only one example. I mentioned before the case of intellectually disabled people who should have a very high priority. The $10 million to be made available this year does not go anywhere near far enough to meet the accommodation required for intellectually disabled people.

The third point I raise is the Premier's family pledge. As well as coping with deteriorating government services, the people of Victoria have had to cope with increased Commonwealth taxation. Victoria has the highest State taxes in Australia and the people of Victoria are also coping with the high interest rates which are part of the Commonwealth government's policy. That is acknowledged by the Treasurer on the first page of his Budget speech, in contrast with the statements of the Premier who blames the high interest rates on the banks.

In addition, the people of Victoria will have to cope with higher prices in our shops as a result of the increased WorkCare levies and the proposed goodwill tax that the government will impose on businesses when they are sold. Also, it becomes clear from this Budget that the people of Victoria are having to cope with the Premier's family pledge. That pledge was a feature of the State election. It is set out on page 11 of the Budget speech and it talks about a typical Victorian family with two school children and a car. The pledge says:

> The payment to families of the education expense allowance and the abolition of private motor registration fees, together with our commitment to hold down the cost of basic household budget items such as electricity, gas, 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 pay not a dollar more in total for these items than they pay today.

The Budget figures indicate that the pledge really means that people are paying $58.50 more, on average, in the metropolitan area and $46.64 in country Victoria for their services. The Premier and the Treasurer are in effect saying that the typical Victorian

family with two children will have to offset these increases against the increase they receive in their education allowance but they will be able to do this only if they have at least two children. They have to use the increase in the education allowance for two children to pay their gas and electricity bills and so on. If a family has one child, the increase in the education allowance is not enough. This allowance is not an education allowance but a living allowance and it is available only to some Victorians.

The pledge the Premier made meant that he would be free to increase charges by up to $80 a year for those services set out in the pledge and he could increase the charges further if the education allowance was increased and that all Victorian households would pay these increased expenses. There are approximately 1·4 million Victorian households. There are 337 000 households which consist of two adults and two or more children and a further 328 000 households with one or more children, which makes a total of 665 000 households with children, but only 487 941 households receive the Commonwealth family allowance, which is the base also for payment of the education allowance. Only people receiving the family allowance are entitled to the education allowance but some people who receive the family allowance do not receive the education allowance because their children are under the age of four years or over the age of sixteen.

Some receive it only in respect of one child. Of the households that receive the education allowance in respect of two or more children—and the Premier was only talking about two children—there are only 244 000 families covered by the pledge, only 17 per cent of Victorian households. I ask about the other 83 per cent and the fact that the pledge does not cover the elderly, the ill and those with young children. The Budget reveals that the Premier actually intended that their costs of services would go up by up to $80 a year. Those costs have risen by $60 in metropolitan Melbourne this year.

The Premier's pledge was nothing but a con trick, and he claimed that this was not a promise but a pledge that he intended to stick to. I ask government members, if they have any social conscience, to call upon the Premier to abide by this pledge, not as portrayed in this Budget but as people understood it. He should freeze charges as at 20 September 1988.

Families are the real losers in this Budget and ordinary households struggling on low incomes are being battered by State and Commonwealth taxes and being further taken in by this con trick put forward by the Premier.

In particular, Victorian women will suffer in these circumstances. The government pays lip service to looking after Victorian women but they will have to provide the services that the government is not providing. This Budget does not seem to contain anything much extra for women. The allocation for a women's health project has been increased from $1·4 million to $1·7 million, an additional $300 000, but this seems to be offset by a deterioration in the funds available for screening for breast and cervical cancer—those funds have been decreased from $352 000 to $237 000. My inquiries suggest that the $352 000 was not spent in 1988–89 and it is doubtful whether the $237 000 has been appropriated for this purpose this year because the funding for that program comes out of the Victorian Health Promotion Fund.

We are told that an additional $1·2 million is to be provided for women in the government's choice and opportunity plan but when one looks at the detail line items, one cannot find anything for this because the plan is administered by different agencies and none of them appear to refer to it in the Budget. It is stated that additional money will be provided for a range of health matters, including women's health, but, again, that cannot be quantified because it is shared with other programs.

I shall briefly refer to consumer affairs. In the Budget the Treasurer speaks of an increase of 15·3 per cent in outlays for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs in 1989–90.

This compares with an expected increase of 7·4 per cent in the consumer price index during the year. At face value it looks impressive but, as always with the Treasurer, there is a trick. If one digs beneath the surface, one discovers that trust fund outlays for consumer affairs increased by 41·5 per cent while the Consolidated Fund moneys grew by a mere 4·5 per cent, which is well below the consumer price index movement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Norris)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr PESCOTT (Bennettswood)—Each year the Treasurer presents a Budget to Parliament, and each year honourable members go through the ritual of debating a set of documents that are of little worth. In an age where financial restraint in both the public and private sectors has been forcing companies, individuals and governments to be more accountable Parliament is still being presented with a series of documents that are hardly worth the time and effort involved in their production.

The Budget debate and the method of presentation of Budget Papers are little more than a farce. Honourable members know that the prudent management of a State's resources demands an assessment each year by the government of the day of what it must spend. The only way to approach that assessment is sector by sector, Ministry by Ministry. But for every year since and including 1982 the government has presented Parliament with Budget Papers using different criteria from the year before. Honourable members can never compare like with like, and this year is no exception.

For a government that has boasted it has improved government administration in Victoria since 1982 this represents a serious failing. Each year the people of Victoria have no yardstick by which to measure the economic performance of their elected government. Deception, obfuscation and misrepresentation are the name of the game in this year's Budget, as it has been in previous Cain Labor government Budgets.

The reported loss from the Victorian Economic Development Corporation fiasco has cost the taxpayer $111 million; but where does it appear in the State Budget Papers? The Auditor-General has told Victorians that realised and unrealised losses from foreign exchange dealings in previous years have amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars; never a mention of that in any year's Budget Papers. Up until 30 June 1989 WorkCare had an accumulated deficit estimated at $4000 million; no reference to that in the Budget Papers. Third-party insurance had an accumulated deficit of $1·2 billion to 30 June last year; no reference to that, either. It is the same with government superannuation unfunded liabilities. There are also off-Budget asset sales and a whole range of government dealings in financial matters that do not appear in the Budget Papers.

The method of reporting to Parliament at Budget time is a farce. The Treasurer's Budget speech is like a policy document: it makes general announcements of the government's intentions. In it he provides the public with a window through to those broad objectives. If one takes transport, which is an important portfolio in this State, one discovers that only three paragraphs in the Treasurer's speech refer to it. The first paragraph states:

> In the case of transport, the capital budget provides for ongoing tram and train maintenance, and for further significant road projects to enhance transport infrastructure. In addition, the Budget will allow commitment this financial year to double deck suburban trains, subject to economic evaluation.

The Budget speech refers to improving passenger services by a number of security, surveillance and maintenance measures at stations and by stabling facilities aimed at reducing graffiti and vandalism. It then refers to improved passenger information services and some ticketing initiatives. One other paragraph deals with the commercial

redevelopment of Flinders Street station, but that is all the Treasurer has to say about transport.

Honourable members should not allow the government to continue in this way in the future. The Treasurer should become a more honest politician and a more honest custodian of the public's money. Until he is prepared to set firm objectives, and make an attempt to meet them, he should explain why his methods are adequate for the State. If the Treasurer can provide sufficient explanation as to why the objectives set are not being met, the Opposition will understand and the public will be tolerant. At least we know that we have a real foe and not a cringing government whose death throes are an embarrassment to the nation. The whole of Australia has watched with amazement as the Cain government has stumbled from the VEDC to the Victorian Investment Corporation crises, from Tricontinental Corporation Ltd to WorkCare, and so on.

The government's economic plans of earlier years are in tatters. The only document that would be of any use to Parliament would be several pages of A4 with general headings of expenditure by different Ministries and departments. All the remaining bits of paper that have been presented are rubbish. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent in producing this rubbish in an attempt to hide where expenditure has gone wrong, where money is being overspent and where things have not worked at all. They have been carefully drafted words; they have been put together and crafted into general statements about how good the government's plans are, but there is no accountability for the previous year.

I compared the Budget Papers for 1988–89 with this year's Budget Papers and tried to work out what the government did in the transport area and what it said it would do in the year leading into 1989. I came across the same old problem where documents have different headings and different ways of describing what has been happening. I also discovered what one might call changes in the accounting procedures.

But, more importantly, I found that table C.24.3 on page 340 of Budget Paper No. 5 for 1988–89 refers to significant items of works and services expenditure in the transport area and contains a list of programs on which money was to be spent in 1988–89, so one would expect that this year's Budget Papers should show some accounting for those programs. It is important to refer to what was said would be spent in the next financial year. On page 246 of Budget Paper No. 5 for 1989–90, under a different program heading, a large number of projects are not even listed this year. Those projects were meant to be important the year before, but either no money was spent or too much money was spent on them and the government wanted to hide the truth. One of those projects concerned the Comeng trains, with $8·5 million being allocated for 1988–89. Some $40 million was meant to be spent on articulated trams. An amount of $11·1 million was meant to be spent on new buses. No reference is made in this year's Budget to that money having been spent. Parliament approved the spending of that money and the government should understand that it is accountable to Parliament for what it does.

The previous year's Budget provided for $5 million for permanent way renewal of tramway tracks, rail bridge reconstruction, railway station upgrading, improvement of staff amenities, plant, equipment and vehicles. These were all listed as significant items of works and expenditure in the transport portfolio. That money does not appear in this year's Budget. One must ask why.

Other items were mentioned as having been spent and they appear in the table of this year's Budget. For instance, the Epping depot project, which last year we were told would cost $15·3 million, is shown in the Budget as $20·5 million having been spent, an increase of $5 million which shows that the government was unable to

manage that project. I suppose that is better than all these other projects which were listed last year but which did not eventuate.

Next is replacement of tracks and power control, a tramways item. The Budget for last year was for $5·2 million but something less than that was spent. One must ask why Parliament each year is presented with a new set of Budget Papers that bear absolutely no relation to the Budget Papers for the year before.

In this year's Budget under the table of significant items of works and services expenditure is included new projects on which money has been spent although those projects were not even included in the previous year's Budget. For instance, a rail operation staffing project which had $500 000 spent on it had not been included in last year's tables. The list goes on and on. The Flinders Street station commercial development popped back into the Budget last year. In previous years it had been there on some occasions and not on others.

The people of Victoria can have no confidence in these Budget Papers. I shall give one last example of significant items which do not correlate from one year to the next. Last year's Budget mentioned $7 million to be spent on the Hume Freeway bypass at Wangaratta. We know from another document that has come from the Department of Management and Budget that there was still $62 million to be spent on that project. However, it is not included in this year's Budget Papers. Nowhere in the Budget Papers is any reference made to that $62 million being spent. We know the project is continuing but we must ask why it is not mentioned in the Budget Papers.

The same problem arises with the table of transport portfolio program outlays which lists the actual expenditure from the previous year and ties in the figures with the Budget estimates from the year before that. On each occasion that one is able to compare the figures, one finds that the government has spent more than it budgeted. In fact, in the area of central corporate services of the transport portfolio, the Budget for the year before was $22·5 million. Actual expenditure for that period turned out to be $33·45 million, an increase of 50 per cent.

There has been a 50 per cent increase in expenditure on the employment of white-collar workers in the Ministry of Transport; the non-productive people who do not provide a service to the community. They are the people who are supposed to be telling the productive area of the Ministry to trim its expenditure! Public transport is costing the taxpayer $3 million a day; $3 million disappears down the tube as the inefficiencies of the government are made clear day by day.

The Opposition is faced with the problem that, when it seeks information under the Freedom of Information Act and finds out that the bridgeworks on the West Gate Freeway have cost $21 million more than they were budgeted to cost—a 44 per cent increase in the budgeted cost—it does not know where these sorts of increases in expenditure appear in the Budget Papers. Where do the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport obtain these extra sums of money? It is clear from an examination of the Budget Papers that the Ministry of Transport and other areas in the transport portfolio are flying by the seat of their pants. Some projects that should have been run at cost have cost considerably more while other projects presumably are stopped or scaled down; but one does not know from examining the Budget Papers.

One area in which the government attempts to make up the shortfall is through asset sales. The Port of Melbourne Authority, part of the Ministry of Transport, had planned asset sales last year of $235 million. That amount did not include off-Budget asset sales of approximately $700 000. The authority failed to sell the World Trade Centre. The government planned to obtain $158 million from that sale but, when the chickens came home to roost, there was nothing there; the sale fell through.

The Budget Papers do not inform us what the Treasurer has done or how the government obtains money for its various purposes. I suppose the Treasurer borrowed more money because the State debt has risen astronomically. I suppose he juggled his expenditure because, although there is no reference to the deferred sale, there is no explanation of how these sorts of problems affect the Budget.

If, indeed, the $158 million was borrowed at 15 per cent a year—if the government can borrow money at that rate of interest—the interest payable is $23 million a year or $440 000 a week. That is the amount that is missing from the planned expenditure of the Treasurer. Parliament has passed a budgeted amount of money but there is no reference to it in the Budget Papers.

Notwithstanding the absurdity of debating Bills that are supposedly Budget Bills, the transport portfolio, naturally, was the focus of some media attention when the Budget Papers were presented to Parliament. I say "naturally" because the Minister for Transport held a press conference on the same day to announce some transport initiatives.

The initiative that has drawn the most interest is the projected staff cuts. The Minister said that the government would adopt the Liberal Party's policy of reducing manning levels on the public transport system. The Liberal Party welcomed the government's adoption of Liberal policy; it was a way of showing the Liberal Party the government's appreciation of what the Liberal Party was saying before the last election. A week after the election the Minister for Transport announced these initiatives, and the unions wanted to know from where the cuts would come.

Mr Micallef interjected.

Mr PESCOTT—As the honourable member for Springvale interjects, it is a normal process. The Minister and union representatives held a meeting and an hour or two later the union representatives walked out of the meeting shaking their heads. They said that the Minister could not identify where the cuts would be made.

However, a couple of weeks later the head of the Ministry for Transport stated in a document that he had already consulted with the unions. The picture of manning levels being a key part of the Budget proposals is confused. The Minister is unable to say to the unions where the cuts will be made but a document states that they already know. Obviously the Minister did not know that the department knew, and maybe the department should have told him. It is a confusing situation, and one which is causing strikes in the public transport system in Victoria almost every week. It is a matter of public concern that the government is unable to run the public transport system.

The Met and V/Line customers expect more quality for their money; they expect a consistent, safe and comfortable service, reliability, and trains that do not have graffiti all over them. The government should perform better financially and provide a better public service. It should improve the quality of and be committed to transportation as a cornerstone of economic development. The government should be concerned about the existing and growing subsidy to the Met and V/Line. Taxpayers and voters expect greater efficiency and demand improved financial performance to reduce the burden of the Met and V/Line on the State.

The taxpayers and voters of Victoria are resistant to investments which perpetuate inefficiencies. Met managers and employees want recognition quality and excellence in their work. Those who work for the Public Transport Corporation and the Roads Corporation want a vision to work towards. The Minister does not have a clue about the central issue of the main transport budget item of planning levels. The system will

buckle and twist as the unions try to find out how they can adjust to the Minister's ideas.

In a report in the *Age* today we are told about the new scratch ticket system. Have honourable members ever heard such a stupid idea? Blind Freddie, and even the Minister, could have worked that out if they had sat down for 5 minutes and designed a scratch ticket system for one of the 750 new retail outlets. One could ride on the public transport conveyance and not have to scratch out the ticket until one of the roving inspectors turned up. If an inspector did not turn up, one would be able to go on one's journey without scratching the ticket.

The other issue of concern in Victoria is the question of roads and road funding. The Minister recently announced a review of the Eastern Freeway. That has been on the cards for nearly twenty years. In recent years there has been study after study looking at whether this particular freeway should go ahead.

What did we have earlier this year? The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands announced that she would have yet another environmental study and would inform the Minister of this on his return from overseas. The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands was deciding the agenda on whether there would be an Eastern Freeway.

We have a number of honourable members, who are actually in the Chamber today, directly concerned with what will happen with the Eastern Freeway because they know that the people who will be affected by it want it and they want it soon. What is the government doing? What is the Minister doing? They are bowing to pressure and deciding whether we will have it. We have been through all that time and again. The issue is: when is the government going to do something?

I can understand that the government, and in particular the Minister, are a bit nervous about building a freeway or any major roads. Look what must be done with the South Eastern Arterial! The surface will have to be relaid, the lights re-synchronised and 60-kilometre an hour speed limits introduced. Along a freeway! Have honourable members ever heard anything like it? We will have to spend a lot more money on noise barriers to fix up a very bad project.

What do we have in this Budget? We have in real terms a decrease in the amount of money to be spent on roads while there is an increase in revenue of 14·4 per cent collected from road and petrol taxes. This government has neglected the road system in Victoria in a way that is an absolute disgrace. Recently the ratepayers of Rodney had to vote to increase their rates by 20 per cent to compensate for the fact that the road funding from the State government has been decreasing. It has decreased by 15 per cent over the past five years. This means that the ratepayers of all municipalities throughout Victoria are having to find more money to pay for the roads because this government has failed to do its job.

Road funding is a significant matter because road maintenance will help reduce the road toll. What occurred not long after public pressure was placed on this government? We had a series of knee-jerk reactions from the government which decided it was time to spend money to try to reduce the road toll.

None of that money was allocated in the Budget. I return to the original point I was making when I commenced my remarks: these Budget Papers are hardly worth the paper they are printed on because they give no real idea of where money is spent by the government, where money has gone, and where thousands of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted by the government. There has been no accountability

whatsoever. There is nothing in these Budget Papers that gives an idea of where that money has gone.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Gleeson)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn)—I join in this Budget debate to make a few general points that deal more with my local constituency rather than the detailed analysis of the outlays of programs within various agencies. However, at the outset, I compliment the honourable member for Brighton for his very detailed contribution to the debate and the way he has yet again exhibited his capacity and energy in reviewing proposed legislation that comes before the House.

All honourable members will recognise that the Budget debate is a complex, complicated and specialist one, and the way the honourable member for Brighton has consistently put forward alternative propositions on behalf of the Liberal Party in this place and argued with good effect the position that he and the party have taken in a number of areas has been first-class.

I shall raise a concern I have about the use of funds that have been outlaid through Community Services Victoria, particularly as it relates to one of my constituents, a Mrs Lavery, and her daughter, Janelle. This is one of those very sad and tragic cases that, until very recently, appeared to be making little headway.

In fairness, I observe that the Minister for Community Services has communicated with me—and I have received his communication only as recently as today—in respect of this matter. It is a case that I have been pursuing now for a couple of years through the normal channels of sending letters to the Minister, presenting petitions in the House, and expressing concerns during debates.

The case relates to Mrs Lavery's daughter, Janelle, who is a 22-year-old person but who is described by her mother as not an adult but a big baby. She says Janelle has the intelligence, understanding and mentality of a one-year-old child. She is concerned that the process that has been undertaken by Community Services Victoria of placing Janelle in a home that cares for adults in a community residential unit in Bayswater is not the best way for her daughter to be treated.

Mrs Lavery takes the view that she has lost her daughter, and has no control over what happens to her because, coincidentally, as an adult at law, it would be necessary for Mrs Lavery to make an application to gain custody of her own child, as she sees it. There are difficulties at law, and she is not prepared to make the necessary application, or at least she has not exhibited a preparedness to do so to date.

An interesting article appeared in the *Herald* on Thursday, 14 September 1989 which contained a picture of Janelle being pushed along in a pram. That article quotes Mrs Lavery as saying:

> I would say she would be one year old mentally but the staff at Bayswater are treating her as an adult and that's cruel.

I am not saying that what is occurring there is cruel but that is the clear perception that this distraught mother has, and she is very close to the situation. The article continues:

> I have been told she goes to the Bayswater Hotel. What for, I don't know. I am not a teetotaller, but I question taking her into a hotel. If a fight broke out she would be very vulnerable.
>
> Getting the disabled out of institutions and into the mainstream was good in theory but it hadn't worked, Mrs Lavery said.

Instead, it had led to the government spending money on luxuries Mrs Lavery believes the severely retarded cannot use nor appreciate. She claimed the Bayswater staff had spent more than $12 000 of Janelle's money on furniture, a stereo, camera and hairdressing.

It's like making a clown out of my daughter.

Honourable members can see from that article the real love that this lady has for her daughter and her concern to protect her daughter. The difficulty that Community Services Victoria has because of the legalities surrounding adulthood in this State adds a further complication and frustration. I have raised with the Minister on a number of occasions and by presenting petitions to this House my concerns about how this case has dragged on and on. One of the points I wish to make is the slowness of the process, bearing in mind that it has been public funds delivered through this and previous Budgets that have created the institutions and the staff to care for people like Janelle. In the Bayswater house the staff-patient ration is 1:1 and it cannot do much better than that in caring for somebody like Janelle. A substantial contribution of public funds is being made. This case should be treated as a one-off, a separate and distinct case because the concerns that are flowing through day after day, year after year from this lady should not be ignored. I appeal to the Minister to do all in his power to help.

I said earlier that I have received a communique—dated 6 October—only in the last 24 hours. This indicates that the department is keen to discuss more closely with Mrs Lavery a resolution to this problem. I hope on this occasion we can achieve a result because I have been raising this matter for a couple of years through more than one Minister's involvement in this area and we do not appear to be getting much closer to a resolution of the problem.

I now raise a matter relating to the transport budget and the performance of the Ministry of Transport within my electorate. I direct attention to the upgrading of tram tracks and roadworks taking place in the Toorak Road area between Camberwell Road and Burke Road.

I am concerned about the properties in the area close to Toorak Road, such as small corner stores, restaurants and the like, which have been absolutely devastated by the roadworks undertaken by the Roads Corporation. Rolling strikes and bans have been daily occurrences that have protracted the work for months; consequently, that must have had an effect on expenditure. I have no doubt that wages on most occasions continue to be paid because of the selective nature of the bans. There has not been a saving on wages paid to the construction workers. I have communicated with the Minister about this matter, but I direct it to his attention again and I hope he will address the issue before it becomes another example of the extreme waste that has occurred previously when industrial matters have not been resolved quickly.

Another example in the same Ministry is the Barwon River bridge in Geelong, which was delayed for more than a year because of industrial action. I took the opportunity in that case of applying under the freedom of information legislation in an endeavour to determine the basis of the settlement because that money came out of public funds. The Roads Corporation refused me access to the dispute resolution documents. I have heard all sorts of suggestions about the amount paid for the resolution of that dispute, such as $500 000 and $1 million. I do not know what the truth is and I do not know what the long-term costs will be to the State of Victoria. I do not know whether in the settlement of that dispute a precedent has been established that will impact on other projects around Victoria. When one considers the government's record and the cost to the taxpayer as a result of the resolution of disputes at the remand centre, the National Tennis Centre and other major projects in this State, one has cause for concern.

I am concerned also about the devastation of businesses, such as the milk bar owned by Mrs Naim, who has made a new life in Australia with her family. She had started her business and was reaching a stage where she was able to make ends meet so that her business could develop and go ahead, but this protracted dispute has devastated that business. It is not just the financial loss but also the damage to personal lives that is part of the process. A well-known and respected restaurant, Basilea, which some honourable members may have enjoyed, is situated across the road from the milk bar.

Mr Micallef—It is a bit out of our class!

Mr GUDE—The honourable member for Springvale said that the restaurant was out of his class; it is not. I am sorry that he used the word. I am sorry he chose to use the word "class" because it is a restaurant that has good fare at modest prices. Many Victorians have enjoyed what it has to offer. I know the honourable member for Springvale would be more able than I to afford the fare. Indeed, should he ever have the time, I would even be prepared to share a meal with him—but it would be a Dutch shout; my generosity would not run farther than that.

Mr Micallef—You supply the wine, as well.

Mr GUDE—I'll supply the wine! I am very concerned that many businesses are being destroyed because of the government's neglect of the dispute resolution process. Another matter that has come to my attention concerning the Roads Corporation relates to properties in Hawthorn which are available for sale but which, for whatever reason, are not being disposed of despite not being used for the purposes for which they were acquired.

The Opposition is aware that the government is having difficulties in finding sufficient money to fund its programs, probably because of the squandering of $31 000 million through the losses incurred by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd, State Bank Victoria, Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and WorkCare. The properties, which are on the western side of Burke Road near Harris Avenue, were compulsorily acquired by the Roads Corporation with a view to their demolition before Burke Road was widened on its western side. That proposed road widening was shelved when it was decided that the link would be an arterial road rather than a freeway.

Despite the government's need for additional funds, the properties have been allowed to fall into disrepair; indeed, they are in such a state that one could describe them as slum dwellings. I do not know the amount of rent being paid to the Roads Corporation for the properties. But the corporation has a responsibility, irrespective of the income it is gaining from the properties, to maintain them at an acceptable standard while they are in the corporation's possession. One wonders why the corporation has held on to the properties despite the fact that Burke Road will not be widened as proposed. Given the price of real estate in the area, the properties would fetch handsome prices if they were sold. I am concerned about the way the government is dealing with the matter.

I shall raise a matter concerning the role of the Ombudsman, particularly as it has affected the dismissal of Mr J. C. Shimmin from Victoria's 150th anniversary committee. A review of the dismissal process has been undertaken, a process that has also affected a Mr R. Macdonald. The report of the case has not been dealt with properly by Parliament. Many would argue—certainly it would be argued by the persons directly affected—that the review has been a complete waste of taxpayers' money. If funds are to be generated for projects that are needed, it is important that the government examine these matters.

Mr Shimmin believes his dismissal from Victoria's 150th Anniversary Board was unjust and without cause, and that there was no evidence of misconduct or inefficiency.

On reading the report of his dismissal, that would appear to be so. The implied or de facto contract was to be until the end of the 150th celebrations, that is, December 1985—three years after the date of his dismissal.

When one considers the process of unfair dismissal resolution through the Industrial Relations Commission—or for that matter through the civil courts—under which a person on salary who believes he or she has been hard done by is able to obtain far greater justice than this person who gave up a career to accept a senior office to assist in the celebration of Victoria's 150th anniversary and who was treated in such a way, the manner of his dismissal leaves a lot to be desired. Those responsible should hang their heads in shame! So should the government which has ignored the Ombudsman's report which indicates clearly that recompense should be paid to Mr Shimmin and Mr Macdonald. The episode leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of the people affected and holds out little hope for anyone who will be affected by similar action.

In the *Australian* of 16 June 1987, Matthew Ricketson wrote:

For the second time in two days the Victorian Premier, Mr Cain, walked out of a media conference and refused to answer questions on the Nunawading how-to-vote card scandal.

A tense Mr Cain walked out of his regular post-Cabinet meeting media conference yesterday after refusing to answer questions on an alleged attempt last year by the Solicitor-General, Mr Hartog Berkeley, QC, to influence the timing of charges that might have arisen out of an investigation into the scandal.

Honourable members can see evidence of the process of avoiding matters that are sensitive to the government. A similar thing has happened in respect of Mr Shimmin.

I refer to my concerns about how the Victorian economy is drifting onwards and cite advertisements appearing in the *Age* of 20 September 1989. The first advertisement from which I quote contained the following:

If Cain hurts your business one more time, leave him.

We are welcoming Victorian businesses with open arms.

With lots of assistance to help you get started, get people trained and help you to get new business.

With a transport infrastructure that works, every day.

And the kind of lifestyle you've been working hard for all your life.

We've got the space. We've got the workforce. And we haven't got John Cain.

Call us now, toll free, for a chat.

The Murray Industry Development Board lists a number that people can ring to make contact.

It is significant that groups such as the Murray Industry Development Board are recognising, as indeed is business in this State, that Victoria is not an exciting community in which to live and work. WorkCare levies have increased, and I shall not go over that again other than to identify the fact that some industries in Victoria have suffered from increases in WorkCare levies of up to 200 per cent and many have faced increases of 100 per cent. Most of those businesses are located in the food and clothing industries, so that the increases have a direct impact on the community in the cost of day-to-day goods, services and needs. Many companies facing such increases are contemplating whether to continue operating in Victoria or move interstate.

I have read to the House an example of an organisation recognising the problems in Victoria. The Murray Industry Development Board—toll free 008 013 087—is establishing an opportunity for Victorian business to move out of the State. It has recognised the deficiencies of continuing to operate in Victoria; it knows that business is sick of the red tape and sick of the broken promises. It knows that Victorians are hurting and will be pleased to go across the border.

I welcome the expenditure from the Department of Sport and Recreation on the bid to host the Olympic Games in Melbourne in 1996. I hope the bid will be successful, and I take the opportunity of complimenting those people involved with the facilities committee, of which I have the privilege of being a part, for the effective work it has carried out in creating the prospect of an exciting Olympic Games, should Melbourne be successful in its bid. I know the bid has the support of all parties.

I note that the budget of the Department of Labour has increased by 11·8 per cent, which is well above the level of inflation. There is a substantial increase in the youth affairs vote and in expenditure on industrial relations tribunals. I wonder why that is occurring. The occupational health and safety area has received a substantial increase, and that is good when one contemplates the number of workplace deaths that occur in Victoria. With the continuing concerns expressed by the coroner about the tardiness and ineffectiveness of officers of the Department of Labour in the way they carry out their duties, one must be concerned that the funds allocated in the Budget are not being spent in the most effective way.

The Opposition is concerned not just about the way the government has wasted money in major enterprises—the director of the Accident Compensation Commission has said that more than $100 million of fraudulent activity has occurred in that area—but also it is concerned to see that the degree of mismanagement and squandering of public money by a number of smaller agencies is stopped. The Treasurer has introduced four new taxing measures that are imposts on the broader community. Those measures are needless, senseless and without reason. If the government had managed matters effectively and not squandered $31 000 million, those new taxes would not have been necessary.

Mr LEA (Sandringham)—The Victorian Budget that is still being debated in this House some two months after its initiation is not a jolly one. Given the grim economic situation nationally, Victoria will be heavily constrained in its development in this fiscal year. The Australian Labor Party in the Federal and State spheres has predicated economic growth and development on extended debt. At present the State government owes $31 000 million, and in March the Federal government owed $103 000 million.

As a factor in gross domestic product, the payment of interest on the debt in the past decade has increased from 6 per cent of GDP to 30 per cent of GDP. It will be interesting to know how much the State government is paying in interest to service the debts.

The economic climate in the mineral boom meant that the world's greatest Treasurer—following the world's previous greatest Treasurer from Mexico—did not take advantage of trying to cut back overseas debt in the mining boom. The community now has cutbacks in grants to Victorian funds; Victoria in particular has suffered in that regard. I refer to comments of the Managing Director of North Broken Hill Peko Ltd, Peter Wade, in the *Business Council Bulletin* of July 1989:

> Our unsustainable external debt will constrain and dominate Australia's options in the nineties.

He later stated:

> Australia must reduce spending growth well below production growth in order to break the back of this crippling overseas debt.

In that framework, the community is observing a government struggling to complete a Premier's commitment to hold increases for water, gas and electricity to below the consumer price index increase, but it is a government not able to meet that commitment, and one that obviously regrets making that promise.

Further, Victoria has had a financial tragedy in the past twelve months with the tales of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, Tricontinental Corporation

Ltd, State Bank Victoria and WorkCare. One wonders whether the community has any further confidence in the Victorian and Federal governments' ability to manage economic and operational affairs.

At least the Cain government has recognised that cuts should be made in the Public Service, and that there should be more efficiency. More can be done in that domain because the thesis for development has been to spend on borrowed money and create Public Service jobs which the rest of the community has to service. That cannot continue.

The private sector creates wealth to be taxed; it creates the funds for the public sector and welfare. The Victorian and Federal governments have been very slow to learn about that situation.

I refer to a special interest of mine—education. In 1975–76 the Budget was $911 million; it is now $3·11 billion—a quadrupling of expenditure over ten years. One can argue about consumer price index increases; one also can examine the staggering decline in net enrolments—approximately 200 000 students—during that ten years. One could argue that while salaries and costs of public works have increased over that time, the education Budget should have been constrained if that many students have been lost in the State sector.

Until 1987–88 the number of teachers continued to climb and class sizes continued to go down. Since 1980–81 class sizes in technical schools have been twenty, compared with 48 in 1958–59. Given the decrease in class sizes, the number of teachers should have been cut back. The government, under the new wage restructuring agreement, is arguing for an increase in class sizes, so it is aware that the gladbag of increased salaries cannot be open ended and classes cut back indefinitely; there must be a turnaround point.

I refer to the politicisation of education. The State and Federal public services have always tried to be apolitical, and teachers and administrators should be apolitical. But one does not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out what has happened to those people who failed to get positions as regional directors some twelve to eighteen months ago and to know where their political interests lie. The government is ruthless in appointing people of its own political persuasion. That is fair enough, like the Republicans and the Democrats, but if the Labor Party appoints its own, the Liberal Party will do just that. If the government wants to back away from the Westminster tradition of apolitical appointments, the sword will come down when there is a change of government. The Labor Party should bear that in mind when setting its long-term education policies because, once the government goes, the policies will go with it.

Wednesday, 19 April this year was a horrific day. On that day a room was found containing about 1 tonne of asbestos; a ceiling fell down in the main corridor of a school; a school was found with only one tap, which was next to an open drain; a school designed for 40 students was bulging with 140 students; and teachers were trying to teach in a tin shed in the middle of summer, with no air-conditioning and floors rotting away. What a sorry state!

I have been to the Rialto Building and there would be no more luxurious building in Melbourne. The education administrators should build better classrooms in schools. The government has cut back funding for school maintenance by 2·2 per cent in real terms, but the first priority should be more suitable classrooms for teaching. The LTC classrooms built in the 1950s by the Liberal Party were meant to last only 25 years, and many of their walls contain asbestos. The government should check that out, because in those days asbestos was not considered to be a threat.

The Minister for Education has said in this session of Parliament that the literacy rate is stable. What a great achievement! Over the past ten years the literacy rate has not moved backwards or forwards, despite the cut in class sizes and teachers having fewer students to teach. It is a shocking indictment of the government that the literacy rate has not progressed.

Retention perhaps, but not literacy—they do not necessarily go together. Why has there been no improvement in standards? When were Victorian teachers last assessed? When did someone check their progress? When was the principal of a school asked, "What are your teachers doing?" It is vital to address this major factor.

There has been no proper teacher assessment in Victoria in recent years. Governments have so devalued the power of principals that they cannot keep an accurate eye on what the teachers are doing, what curriculum plans are being devised and what their students are achieving. Although many teachers do an excellent job, some do not prepare any programs. The government has been involved in spending too much time and money on social justice in schools. It has had the wrong priorities. It has spent more time in attempting to achieve social justice than on training or educating people.

Members on this side of the House would agree that education is a great improver for the disadvantaged. It is important that people gain access to education and grow as a result. That is an important educational aim. However, when the deliberate targeting of people becomes involved, such as the introduction of programs to cater for women or ethnic groups only, the whole community suffers. It is more important for everyone to be treated the same.

The Labor Party is not noted for its positive attitude towards excellence in education. There is a small glimmer on the horizon, but at present the Labor Party is frightened to cater for an intelligent or well-informed person. The government should examine countries such as China and Russia, which have socialist philosophies; their governments promote excellence in education and get the best out of their young people by trying to use them in government. The Cain Labor government should take a lesson from those socialist countries.

In many ways curriculum assessment and skill standards create mediocrity. Today the Minister for Education gave a long dissertation on the Victorian certificate of education and said there would be some external component in assessment. Unfortunately, she did not say that the assessment is either "satisfactory" or "not satisfactory". What on earth does that mean with respect to entry to university or an applicant for a job? How does one determine whether one person is more satisfactory than another? One significant issue about the VCE involves the debate on how to grade and classify a student. The government must come to terms with that because if it does not universities will set their own examinations, similar to the examinations set by Oxford and Cambridge universities in the United Kingdom. Employers will set their own tests for job applicants because school standards will not be sufficient. The attempt by the Ministry of Education to develop social justice policies blurs the educational outcome in schools.

I shall make only a passing reference to WorkCare and teacher stress. At present the inability of schools to control students places stress on teachers, forcing them to make claims under WorkCare. The sooner the government gives control of schools back to principals and teachers the better. A badly behaved student should have to argue his or her case to get back into school, not the other way round where the principal must make a case for suspending a student. The government should provide the reverse onus of proof so that schools can be properly controlled.

A number of honourable members in this Chamber have not been in schools for 30 or 40 years so they have no recent experience with the problems facing teachers and principals. The government's school system will founder unless a proper disciplinary program is introduced to support teachers and students. One has only to attend schools and talk to principals and teachers to discover that that is the case.

I turn now to school levies and fees. The Minister for Education has let down school communities by being weak and saying that school levies and fees are not compulsory and that the wearing of uniforms is not compulsory. I can cite numerous examples from my teaching experience indicating that the non-wearing of uniforms was the reason many people believed schools were badly organised. I do not suggest that the wearing of uniforms is necessary for good education, but the public perception is that if students wear jeans or other scraggy or dirty clothes they must attend a poor school. The Minister's comments have undermined the wearing of uniforms in State schools.

Members of the government talk about disadvantaged children whose parents have low incomes or are sole parents. I point out that State school relief is available to any school to provide moneys to put a student in uniform. There is no problem in obtaining that assistance. Unfortunately, the Minister lacks understanding of the current system and has failed to face up to the uniform question.

Honourable members who have visited schools and classrooms in recent years will be aware that the quality of education relates to the amount spent on class materials. The government grant does not provide enough for students to have a proper education. Schools must purchase books, art materials, wood, tin and so on. What happens when the Minister says that levies are not compulsory? Parents who can afford them do not pay the fees. In some schools only 30 per cent of parents pay the fees. The remaining 70 per cent of parents, many of whom can afford to pay fees, opt out.

Schools should be given the right to assist students who cannot pay levies. Good principals have always done that. Many parents have paid the fees for their children over the school year. The fees are paid in small amounts over the ten months, which allows the materials to be purchased to provide a good quality education. The Minister should recognise that if schools do not have the materials, students do not have an education. It is a simple philosophy, but the Minister has failed to come to grips with the essence of education.

If one compares Victorian high and technical schools with schools in other States of Australia, one discovers that Victoria has the worst maintenance service. In the last financial year 49·9 per cent of Victorian high schools required maintenance. Some 32·6 per cent of teachers had inadequate desk, floor or storage space. A higher proportion of lessons were held in classrooms not designed for these types of lessons. As a former principal of technical schools, I am aware of many subjects that have been taught in classrooms not designed for them. The English room that has been set aside is often fully occupied and one's English class has to be put into an arts room, a music room and so on. The problem is widespread in Victorian schools.

I turn now to the Budget lines in education and to the government's cover-up. The Treasurer is a master of disguise. Some of the things that have been going on in the Budget, where program lines have been manoeuvred, changed and lost, are ridiculous. I refer the Treasurer to Program No. 291, Education Ministry Services, item 2838, State teacher award scheme, where there has been an allocation of $150 000. What is

the explanation for that? In Program No. 294, Schools Support, item 2875 is expressed as "Contribution towards freight costs of schools—Payment to Public Transport Corporation" and allocates $700 000. What does that mean? I ask the Treasurer for some details.

I also refer the House to a blow-out in the Estimates. The 1987–88 Budget estimated Program No. 293, School Education, item 5716, property management, at $5 million. The payment for that year was $6·89 million. The 1988–89 estimate was $10 million, and the blow-out payment was $12 999 988. That is virtually a 25 to 30 per cent blow-out in site purchases and associated costs. Then there are changes in program names and movement of items to other programs. This is a manoeuvre that Ministers obviously use right throughout the Budget. They move things around and they lose them. That confuses even honourable members who are trying to do their job.

In the Budgets for 1986–87 and 1987–88 there were seven categories in education. This became nine programs in 1988–89 and 1989–90. I shall not list them because of the constraint of time. Then there is movement of items, such as the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board salaries, grants, expenses and overtime from Program No. 281 to No. 292 in 1989–90.

The Teaching Service Appeals Board's Program in 1985–86, 1986–87 and 1987–88 is Program No. 281 and in 1988–89 and 1989–90 it becomes Program No. 294. The school support program has been changed. State Board—salaries, fees and expenses; computers in education—salaries, grants and expenses; WorkCare initiatives; head office accommodation—office of schools administration; student transport—contract and period rate services and overtime have all been changed. The Treasurer, who has darted out of the House—probably to check my question—has been moving these items about in education. It would not surprise me if he has been changing titles and programs—changing everything—to confuse honourable members.

The public of Victoria should be aware of how the Budget is being prepared. It could well be written in Chinese. In fact, we might have a better chance of understanding it because at least the numbers would show through. Education in this State is not good because the Minister for Education will not support schools in the areas of discipline, uniform policies and classroom levels.

I shall leave the area of education and move to a more local situation in the electorate of Sandringham and comment on how the government in its financial munificence has been dealing with that electorate. Transport is a major concern in Sandringham. Beach Road has high-flying trucks and cars that run from St Kilda down to Mordialloc. The flow of traffic must be revised. It is not often I comment favourably on a Minister, but the Minister for Transport has begun to look into this matter and the people of Sandringham are hoping a few traffic islands will be built. Some islands have already been built but, at times, trucks and cars have failed to avoid them. However, progress is being made and the matter is being investigated.

A pedestrian crossing is needed at Reserve Road in the Concourse where cars fly down from Balcombe Road to Beach Road. The local residents are aware of the need for a pedestrian crossing because many of the people who live in flats and units in this area are elderly. A crossing over Bluff Road near Black Rock Primary School is extremely dangerous and children's lives are at risk. Another pedestrian crossing would help the children to come from the other side of Bluff Road to go towards the beach.

I have made comments in the past about train services. Of course, they have not improved. One wonders whether the Minister ever gets a train to run on time or how many trains are cancelled each day. The Sandringham–city loop service has been cut between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Eleven services have been cut. The Minister appears to be treating all Liberal areas illiberally.

When the Sandringham line was changed from platforms 11 and 12 to platforms 10 and 11 East no consideration was given to the large number of steps leading to the platforms. Handicapped people are not able to climb to these platforms. Another danger is the lack of lights to these platforms at night. I implore the Minister to review the situation on platforms 10 and 11 East and to provide proper access ramps for disabled people and people in wheelchairs and also to provide proper lighting.

When the Federal government cut back funds to the State, the State then cut back funds to councils. I believe Liberal councils have suffered worse than Labor councils, which have done pretty well. I suppose that is not surprising. The result of funding cuts is that the rating in Sandringham has increased by 10·6 per cent. All the local councillors could lose their jobs over that but the real villain is the State government because it is not providing proper funds.

An area that causes tremendous concern in Sandringham, Brighton, Black Rock and Beaumaris is the beach cleaning subsidy funding. Local ratepayers have to provide a large amount of money to clean the beaches for people from all parts of Melbourne and Victoria to use them. If people can come to Sandringham, Black Rock and Beaumaris, the government should pay adequately to clean the beaches. Many local people do not go to the beach. I live within 200 yards of the beach at Beaumaris and I have been to the beach three times in twelve years. The people who live around the beaches should not pay all the taxes for the cleaning of the beaches.

Mr Micallef interjected.

Mr LEA—The honourable member for Springvale probably swims at Edithvale, Carrum or Aspendale. He does that with the compliments of the people of the City of Chelsea who are paying for his swim.

We all became excited when the government cut back the land tax in real terms. The Liberal Party asserts that land tax on the principal place of residence should be abolished. It is nothing but another wealth tax. With general rates, Board of Works rates and stamp duty, it becomes very expensive to own a house. People think twice before changing their homes because of the heavy stamp duty involved. Land tax is now creeping into Labor electorates and I am sure that that will be noticed by Labor supporters in their council areas.

I am also concerned about homeless youth. Many young people seek places to stay for a short time while they are being relocated. The City of Sandringham is one of two municipalities in the metropolitan area that has not been on the list of places for homeless youth. Sandringham is being disadvantaged because it is a Liberal area.

The Southern Family Life organisation provides a family support service when breakdowns occur in families, especially through divorce, and Interchange Southern Region provides facilities for people with disabled children to obtain relief on a monthly basis. The government has cut back funding to those organisations. The government does not care about the disabled. It is not funding Interchange Southern Region properly and it is not looking after welfare agencies. The people who go to the

Southern Family Life organisation come from the cities of Oakleigh, Moorabbin and Mordialloc, not just from Sandringham. The government has dealt disastrously with the welfare situation.

I wish to also mention nursing homes. I am on the board of the Rothesay Anglican Home for Elderly People which needs something like $2 million to renovate it. It is providing a valuable service to the community. It is privately run by the Anglican Church. The government is happy for churches to carry private institutions and completely disregards them financially.

There is no joy in the Budget. I conclude where I started: this is not a jolly Budget for the State of Victoria.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—I reiterate a matter raised by the honourable member for Sandringham regarding the operation of the public transport system in Melbourne. The Glen Waverley railway line had accumulated an excellent patronage and had at one stage the second highest patronage in metropolitan Melbourne.

Mrs Hirsh—The extension was sold off?

Mr COLEMAN—Nobody sold off the extension.

Mrs Hirsh—Kevin King drew a plan of it.

Mr COLEMAN—Kevin King might have drawn a plan, but I assure the honourable member there was never an easement that went over Springvale Road. As I was saying, the service on the Glen Waverley railway line had built up a patronage over a period so that it had the second highest number of train travellers in the railway system. The number of people using the service has declined significantly. One of the reasons is the drawing power of the Box Hill transit centre and the other reason is that the service provided on that line for peak hour train travellers is abysmally low. One service has been completely withdrawn. Another service, the 8.4 morning service runs so infrequently that people no longer use it. People are unsure whether that train will arrive.

It is incumbent on the government to examine railway programming throughout the metropolitan system, not just Glen Waverley, to ensure that those people who want to use the service can use it as it is timetabled. At present trains on the Glen Waverley line run alternately through the loop and direct to Flinders Street. Passengers are considerably inconvenienced if the 8.4 a.m. service is withdrawn, because it is an express service through the loop. It is essential that the timetable for the whole railway system is reviewed.

The first matter to which I direct the attention of the House is the duplicity of the government as illustrated during the recent Greensborough by-election. Honourable members will recall that the by-election concentrated on flora and fauna issues and, in particular, the funding of flora and fauna issues in the Budget.

At a public meeting on 12 April 1989, a document was produced which included the responses from the major political parties on a range of issues. I seek the leave of the House to have that document incorporated in *Hansard*. I have spoken with *Hansard* and with the Speaker and they have no objections to the document being incorporated.

Leave was granted, and the document was as follows:

How GREEN is GREENSBOROUGH?

All the major party candidates in the Greensborough by-election say that the environment is important.

We asked the major parties where they stood on the following issues.

Will your Party:

	Australian Labor Party	Liberal Party	Australian Democrats
▶ **Rule out a pulpmill for East Gippsland** which uses chlorine bleaching or woodchips from native forests?	No	No	Yes
▶ Legislate to **protect Wilderness areas?**	Yes	Yes	Yes
▶ Only log native forest to supply sawn timber needs and **phase-out logging from native forests** as plantation resources become available?	no clear commitment	no clear commitment	Yes
▶ Support the **exclusion of mining from all existing & recommended National Parks & Wilderness areas?**	Yes	no clear commitment	Yes
▶ Support the recommended **extensions to the Mallee National Park?**	Yes	Yes	Yes
▶ Support **larger parks** than those recommended?	No	No	Yes
▶ Support the immediate proclamation of all of **Cobberas-Tingaringy National Park?**	no clear commitment	no clear commitment	Yes
▶ Support the **Alpine National Parks Bill** in Parliament?	Yes	no clear commitment	Yes
▶ **Double funding for flora & fauna** conservation programs from $10 million to $20 million in next financial year?	Yes	Yes	Yes
▶ **Protect Plenty River valley** by leaving buffers around and not developing bushland areas, treating stormwater, not permitting any sewerage in streams?	Yes	Yes	Yes
▶ Freeways – Will your party support a **public enquiry into all freeways** currently planned for Melbourne?	Yes	Yes	Yes
▶ **The Greenhouse Effect** – Does your Party support a 20% minimum reduction in the emission of Greenhouse gases by the year 2000?	Yes	Yes	Yes

PUBLIC MEETING 8pm Wednesday April 12

ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL HALL Dalton Rd, Eltham

Hear the candidates for Greensborough and Party Environment Spokespeople present their policies and answer your questions on the major environmental issues affecting your electorate and your State.

▶ Chaired by **Rob Gell**

Organised by: East Gippsland Coalition, The Wilderness Society, Conservation Council of Victoria, Australian Conservation Foundation.

Authorised by B. McLeod 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 Tel: 654 4833

Mr COLEMAN—One of the questions asked in that document was:

Will your party:

. . . Double funding for flora and fauna conservation programs from $10 million to $20 million in next financial year?

All of the three parties, the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the Australian Democrats, responded affirmatively to that question and committed themselves to doubling the funding for flora and fauna programs.

The flora and fauna subprogram, as set out in the Budget Papers, has a total allocation of $9 800 056, which is less than the $10 million figure in the questionnaire. The government stands condemned. It was prepared to answer a question drafted by the East Gippsland Coalition, the Wilderness Society, the Conservation Council of Victoria and the Australian Conservation Foundation, four large conservation groups, in the affirmative and to say that it would double the funding for flora and fauna programs; yet the allocation for the subprogram is less than the $10 million commitment.

To compound the problem, the honourable member for Greensborough recently defended the government's position. She said that $8·8 million had been allocated for the purchase of the Greens Bush area on the Mornington Peninsula and that that amount was part of the funding referred to by the government. It is clear from the breakdown of the flora and fauna program that the government had not contemplated that the money allocated for the purchase of Greens Bush was part of its flora and fauna program.

The government has built its credibility in the conservation area on what is clearly a false commitment. The honourable member for Greensborough won the Greensborough by-election on two principal issues: the conservation vote and the duplication of the bridge in Fitzsimons Lane. On both issues the honourable member said that those commitments had been met. Some minor work is going on in Fitzsimons Lane. Some road widening and work on drains on the north side of the lane has occurred, but in no sense has there been a duplication of the bridge. It is clear that the government's commitment to funding flora and fauna programs has been a significant breach of trust.

The honourable member for Greensborough, in defending the action of the government, has compounded the problem. Not only has the honourable member attempted to make out that the $8·8 million allocated for the purchase of Greens Bush was part of the flora and fauna program, but also that an additional amount of $5 million had been allocated in the Budget for wetland development. It is well understood by those in the field that funds for fauna and flora does not include wetland developments. It is an indictment of the government that it has chosen to take the route of coercing voters on the issue and then abandoning its promises.

It is a yardstick for issues that will be raised in the public arena during the next two or three years prior to the next State election and is a measure of the government's trustworthiness.

After the dinner suspension I shall comment on similar issues relating to undertakings given by the government which have subsequently not been honoured.

The sitting was suspended at 6.28 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

Mr COLEMAN—I am pleased that the Minister for Education is seated at the table to hear my contribution to the debate and to hear what has happened since she

was the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands; it is somewhat different then from what is being experienced now.

Before the suspension of the sitting I outlined the duplicity of the government in what it said to the electors of Greensborough in that it was prepared to double the funds from $10 million last financial year to $20 million this financial year for flora and fauna conservation programs. The 1989–90 allocation of $9 856 000 is less than the $10 million asked for in the questionnaire. The same duplicity is repeated time and again when one examines the performance of the government on conservation, forests and lands issues. During the government's campaign in Greensborough, the Conservation Council of Victoria raised the question of its continuing funding in the Budget. The foundation's grant has been slashed from $51 000 to $15 000. The organisation has been attempting to coerce the government into providing additional funding, and on 6 September 1989 I received a letter from the Minister, which states:

> An annual grant has been provided to the CCV by the government to assist with administration costs since 1983. Representatives of the CCV met with me recently seeking increased funding. As a result of these discussions, a "once-off" additional grant of $37 000 was made available to the council, to cover a shortfall in their 1988–89 budget. This council is aware that this grant is non-recurring in nature.

Volunteers put a lot of effort into the area of conservation. Organisations which have a substantial input into conservation in Victoria and which receive direct grants through the Budget include the Victorian National Parks Association, $11 400; the Roadside Conservation Committee, $11 300; the Australian Conservation Foundation, $11 400; and the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, $11 000. The last organisation recently held a field day at Lilydale where it planted its one millionth tree. That organisation consists of committed people. It celebrated that event by having Clifton Pugh plant the one millionth tree. That is a recognition of the tremendous work that is carried out by volunteers in the field.

We find that their work is not being supported by this government. Those people who are volunteers in the truest sense and see conservation as a way of ensuring that an environment which is somewhat better than the one they inherited will be there for their successors are not being recognised. The Deputy Premier had an understanding of the tremendous work volunteers do in the field of conservation.

The grants this government provides are at best modest and are not providing those voluntary organisations with the essential administrative funding that is required. This is best demonstrated by the experience of the Conservation Council of Victoria where there was an extraordinary slash from $51 000 to $15 000. It was provided with a $37 000 make-up amount, which was a once-off—that is the terminology used last year—which jeopardised its ability to attract a grant this year.

The Conservation Council of Victoria comprises about 114 bodies throughout the State whose interests are purely concerned with improving the environment. This government's rhetoric is not matched by its commitment, which is unfortunate. As time goes by the rhetoric it uses will be understood by the population at large and the hypocrisy that goes with it will be reflected in the people's reaction.

I shall demonstrate in another way the same sort of hypocrisy that has been demonstrated on a number of these issues. This week the Minister announced that she was prepared to provide a commitment to organisations to take up the amounts of timber which are available through the Value Adding Utilisation System—or VAUS—trial. This trial initially set out to involve 300 000 cubic metres but was reduced to 150 000 cubic metres following a very comprehensive report known as the Gruen report. It was to utilise some of the government policies, not the least of which was the timber industry strategy. Part of that strategy was the saw log industry. The Liberal Party has had a belief for some time that the use of round wood generated as

part of the saw milling industry should be a prime objective. There is at this point in time—I am sure Tree Victoria will ensure it continues if it is properly funded—a desire by all of the population to utilise every tree that is cut down. If one is going to cut down trees, one has to replace them and, if one cuts them down one has to utilise them to their best end use. That is essentially what the Liberal Party policy is and I am sure it accorded with much of what the Deputy Premier intended when she was the Minister responsible for that area.

On 5 October the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands announced that the disbursement of this VAUS trial timber will be limited to 150 000 cubic metres of residual round wood in East Gippsland and 20 000 cubic metres a year in central Gippsland. The Minister states:

> My department has made a detailed assessment of all expressions of interest received for the use of the trial wood allocation and the following companies have been made offers: APM Forests Pty Ltd (25 000 cubic metres per annum), T. J. Andrews Sawmill (22 000 cubic metres per annum), Duncans Pty Ltd (3000 cubic metres per annum) and North Broken Hill Ltd (100 000 cubic metres per annum).

I do not have to remind the House that North Broken Hill Pty Ltd was a proponent of the Wesley Vale Mill in Tasmania. Those were allocations arising from the Gruen report.

The press release speaks in terms of the utilisation of all the trees and of the trial being conducted for the best use-of-wood concept. For some comments from the recipients of the allocations, one can look to the *Herald* of Friday, 6 October which says:

> North Broken Hill Peko Ltd welcomed the government's announcement and said it was confident the trial scheme would lay the basis for an important new industry.
>
> The company's public affairs manager Mr Chris Oldfield said 15 per cent of the waste timber would be milled as sawn timber, and the rest chipped to sell to Japan.

If the government acknowledges that the round wood left on the floor of the forest following the forestry operation at the present time has a value and is clearly recognised with the allocation of the VAUS trial amounts—I might say that I fully support what has happened—the very least it should say is that a significant proportion of it could be chipped.

Those who are in the industry and are acquainted with the allocations know that there will be a significant amount of chip. It is interesting that one company awarded an allocation—it was T. J. Andrews Sawmill—of 22 000 cubic metres has been given significant assistance by this government in the allocation of D-grade logs. These are logs which have a recovery amount of 25 per cent of millable timber. Ostensibly one would need to put each of those logs over a saw bench to ensure one got the 25 per cent millable timber out of it; the other 75 per cent of that log would be chipped.

That is happening and it has been a useful way to handle the forests in East Gippsland. It is leading to an improvement in the forests that we leave for future generations.

This statement contains all the platitudes but it does not bite the bullet and say, as Chris Oldfield of North Broken Hill Peko Ltd is prepared to say, that 75 per cent of the allocation will be chipped to sell to Japan. That is another demonstration of duplicity on the part of this government.

The last matter I wish to deal with concerns the Zoological Board of Victoria, which in this city, as well as in the Australian zoo community enjoys a reputation which is widely acknowledged. There have just been several three-year appointments to the board—honourable members will correct me if I am wrong, but the previous appointments were made by the Minister—which start to reflect something of the

priorities of this government and have something to do with what it sees as its objectives.

The previous membership of the board lifted and built on the situation that existed at the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens and, as a consequence, at Healesville and at Werribee. The membership of the board that existed was very successful. I believe the most recent appointments to the board bring some of that reputation into jeopardy.

Mr Bate, a very successful businessman in this city, has left the board, as has Ms Edmonds, an architect, who was able to contribute significantly to the establishment of the butterfly enclosure and other layouts that have met with such an outstanding public response. Mr Don Fraser, who is very much involved in the Safeway stores and who is associated with retailing in this State, was able to provide to the Zoological Board of Victoria a consumer aspect that has been invaluable. Mr Grahame Swartz, the Director of the State Chemistry Laboratory, has also been removed from the board. Mr Rowe, who was the Australian Tourism Commission representative, has also resigned. Those people have been replaced by a range of people who, at best, will have some difficulty in maintaining the financial impetus that has been developed by the board.

The contribution by the State government to the board in this year's Budget is $5 million. It is not an insignificant amount, but that amount is matched by the board itself through the collection of entry fees and external contributions. The work that has been done at the zoo has been done by organisations that have taken an interest in it and which were, in a sense, coerced by the Zoological Board of Victoria members to make financial contributions.

The people who have been reappointed to the Zoological Board of Victoria include the Professor of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Melbourne University, Professor Kenneth Jubb. He is now the chairman of the board, and I suggest his financial record warrants some scrutiny. He has been a member of the Werribee Economic Development Committee, an organisation that said to the Werribee City Council that it had to rezone a significant area on the Melbourne side of Werribee for a biotechnology precinct.

Professor Jubb did that on the basis that he was a director of Wallace International Ltd, the now failed company that has taken the Victorian Economic Development Corporation to the cleaners. He did so on the basis that the government was prepared to erect an overpass over the Western Highway to provide access to an estate in which Wallace International Ltd had a land-holding; and he did so on the basis that he was interested in creating a toxicology laboratory in the area.

It just turns out that the toxicology laboratory was superseded by an organisation called Life Sciences, which drew much of its credibility from a Professor Barr who came to Australia and who was also a director of Wallace International Ltd. Wallace International Ltd collapsed and Life Sciences was not seen. One wonders what Professor Jubb's agenda is, because it seems incongruous that a person who was a director of a toxicology laboratory that intended to carry out tests on no fewer than 100 000 animals a year should now, today, be the Chairman of the Zoological Board of Victoria.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Shell)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN (Ballarat South)—I am pleased to join the Budget debate and acknowledge, as have other honourable members, that this Budget has a certain stringency about it that has not been experienced for some time. Various arguments have been put by the Treasurer and others to justify that stringency, and I acknowledge and agree that it is necessary at this stage. There is no question that our economy

needs considerable massaging, as it were, to make it more susceptible to use by people in the community generally and to ensure it does not diverge too strongly in one direction or another. Despite that stringency, there is still support for the continuation of services in key areas of our community life. I shall refer to that in more detail later.

I suppose one of the most important aspects of the Budget is the continuation of what is known as the social justice strategy. Although there have been criticisms of it from members of the Opposition and the general community, it is the first time in this State that such a strategy has been put together, and that has been done at a time of considerable economic constraint.

I am pleased to note that a number of the programs that have been commenced in past Budgets will continue and, in fact, have attracted additional funding in this Budget. In other words, I can say with great truth that the government's initiatives of past years have continued undamaged. Perhaps they have not grown to the extent that one would have expected or hoped in past years, but nevertheless they are continuing. I am sure those programs will address the needs of our community through the social justice strategy.

One of the important aspects of the strategy is the protection of the disadvantaged in our community. If there is one thing for which a government can be recognised as being a good government, it is the fact that it addresses the needs of disadvantaged people and groups in the community, and I believe the government has addressed those needs in this Budget.

At the same time, honourable members on this side of the House acknowledge—as I am sure would members of the opposition parties, although perhaps grudgingly—the economic progress that has been maintained in the past and will be sustained in this Budget.

This is being done in a climate where there have been severe cutbacks in Federal funding to the States generally and, in particular, funding to Victoria on this occasion. The Treasurer has said that if Victoria were able to attract the level of funding from the Federal government that was initiated some five or six years ago, it would now receive some $900 million more in direct funding and additional borrowings of some $379 million.

Of course, there has been a reduction in the Federal global borrowing system in this year's Budget. That means that $379 million is now not available to Victoria this year, particularly for expenditure on capital works. However, it is interesting to note that a fairly good capital works program has been maintained despite that cutback. High interest rates, which have been established deliberately, one could say, to try to dampen the Australian economy, also prevail. As a result, the Victorian economy and the Victorian community must play their part in that, and that also is presenting the climate in which this Budget must work.

We then have community expectations and demands about the need to provide essential services. No other service highlights that more than the health area where record in-patient services were required in the financial year 1988–89 and it is estimated that a further expansion of that demand will take place in the coming financial year. In the climate in which this Budget has been framed, stringency in the provision of services will be highlighted as the year goes by. Nevertheless, it is a Budget that is required in these times and one that the community, even though grudgingly, expects.

The government, as part of its strategy, could have taken the easy option by increasing taxes and the burden that community would have to bear. However, it has not taken that option and this has resulted in a reduction in growth in some services to the

community. By comparison, our sister State, New South Wales, has taken the easy option and increased taxes. If Victoria had decided to do that, an additional $525 million would be available that is now not available. That shows a responsible attitude on the part of the Victorian government to the people of our community. Taxes a head of population in this State are $100 less than in New South Wales. The Victorian Budget is building for the long-term. It is identifying our future priorities and it has taken on the notion of keeping revenue raising to a minimum. The government is adopting a responsible attitude.

When considering the Budget overview, one notes that the outlays in this Budget are the lowest in three decades. Members of the Opposition who are new to this place might consider what happened in previous Budgets under what was supposed to be a strong Liberal government. That government was in office during times of expansion and when it was easy to frame Budgets. Harsh decisions did not need to be made. The increases in outlays in the present Budget amount to 3·7 per cent, the lowest in three decades, and the borrowings are also the lowest in three decades.

There has also been the necessity in this Budget to protect the ordinary families. Increased services are provided to the community and a commitment is made to protect the environment. An example of stringency is the productivity savings that have taken place over the previous five years and, in this particular year, $103 million has been saved across various departments. Over the past five years productivity savings in the various departments have amounted to some $434 million.

One of the arguments that I have heard frequently from members of the Opposition is that Labor governments are big spending governments and never take strong decisions about saving money. Now we are receiving criticism for actually doing so and the phrase "two faces of the blacksmith's hammer" comes to mind. I have a view that that phrase fits the arguments from the Opposition benches.

Over recent years a record export income has been earned by this State and it is expected that this year that trend will continue. I illustrate that by mentioning a valve manufacturing company in my community which received a substantial amount of money from this government to prepare a management information service. That firm is looking to the export market and hoping to gain greater income as a result of the management information service. The company also has the potential for developing a strong market with the large AMECON contract which is a major initiative to this State. This major windfall is a victory for Victoria and the people who prepared the submission to the Commonwealth government and I feel relatively certain that this company, as a result of our assistance, will be far more competitive in proposing contracts and tenders to the AMECON project. Victoria has had a strong record in export growth over recent years and will continue that growth in the coming year.

Seven or eight years ago, there were probably about one or two major buildings being erected against the skyscape of Melbourne. Nowadays it is a common sight to see new and very large buildings going up in this city. That is certainly true of the metropolitan area and it is also true of the major provincial centres. I am sure that places even like Swan Hill and Mildura have benefited from the growth in the past year or two.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Shell)—Order! I remind the honourable member for Doncaster that interjections are out of order and I also remind him that when he is referring to other honourable members he should use their correct titles.

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN—I am endeavouring to present a few facts about business investment during the past few years to those honourable members on the other side

who do not know about them. During the past three years there has been an increase of approximately 40 per cent in business investment in this State. Over the past seven years, since the Labor government has been in power, there has been an increase of approximately 95 per cent in business investment.

In response to critics on the other side and particularly for those honourable members involved in government during the decade prior to the Labor government coming to power, I point out that during that decade there was an increase of approximately 5 per cent in business investment. One would have to say that during those years there was stagnation of the highest order compared with the dynamism of the period of this government.

That dynamism is nowhere better seen than in the employment record of the government during the past seven years. In June 1989 approximately 4·6 per cent of workers were unemployed in this State. That was the lowest level in Australia and, in fact, it was the lowest level since 1976. That means there will be a continuing reduction in unemployment, which would no doubt cause pain to Opposition members who would prefer to believe the government has made a mess of the situation.

Borrowings and debts have been used as red herrings by the Opposition in its argument that the State debt is growing. I shall examine some of the provisions in the Budget. Borrowing has decreased from $821 million in 1988–89 to $532 million in 1989–90, which is a 29 per cent reduction. Significantly, it now represents 26 per cent of non-farm gross domestic product, which is the lowest figure for three decades. In 1988–89 it was 27·3 per cent and in 1985–86 it was 30·5 per cent. When one goes back even further to the halcyon days of the Liberal government, in those expansive times it was more like 40 per cent. It appears there has been a double standard in the arguments presented by the Opposition.

It is pleasing to note that the government has made a commitment to the redevelopment of the Ballarat Base Hospital. In 1972 a decision was made that that hospital should be redeveloped. Nothing was done until 1982. During the period when the Liberal Party was in government nothing was done about the development. The overall development estimate was $52 million and some $38 million has now been committed and has started to flow to that development. A substantial media campaign was undertaken by some members of the Liberal Party, who were endeavouring to cause strife earlier this year with their suggestion that the Labor government would not honour its commitment to that redevelopment. I am pleased to say that those honourable members were wrong again. These major works will be completed during the next three to four years.

In the health area the Ballarat community, the central highlands and the western area of the State have been well served by the government. One facility for which there has been a need in the Ballarat community is a major community health centre. Such a health centre has finally been established in a building of its own and it is developing outreach centres in other parts of the area that have not been serviced by a community health centre. Through the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre, a 30-bed elderly persons' hostel and a nursing home facility—again, something of an outreach-type operation—have been established to service areas including Sebastopol and other areas of the city.

Recently, through Lifeline Ballarat, and with funding from Community Services Victoria, a 008 number was set up to service the Mallee and central highlands areas of Victoria. I had the pleasure of taking the first call. One of the people I spoke to on that occasion was the honourable member for Swan Hill, who rang from an outreach centre. The honourable member for Swan Hill would have to acknowledge that that service will be of benefit to communities in northern and western Victoria.

So far as Budget initiatives are concerned, approximately $2 million will be provided for homeless young people as a response to the much discussed Burdekin report; $10 million will be provided for the intellectually disabled; $2 million will be provided for integration programs in schools; $2 million will be provided for child protection services; and there are a number of others. The social justice strategy to develop a just society has been given a further boost in the Budget. Another important initiative concerns the provision of an extra $2·5 million for training schemes under the TAFE colleges program. I am pleased to see that not only my area but also other areas of the State will benefit from that provision.

Law and order has been a contentious issue over recent years. An extra $5·4 million has been provided to employ an additional 300 police officers. In case other speakers have overlooked the fact, that will raise the strength of the Police Force to 9920.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN—I am disappointed by the reaction of honourable members opposite. As I understand it, the Opposition's policy is to raise the strength of the Police Force to 10 000, yet through government initiatives the Police Force is only 80 short of that number. Honourable members opposite cry, "Not enough, not enough", while calling for a reduction in public sector spending! I am sure honourable members will agree that the completion of the Loddon and Barwon prisons, through the provision in the Budget of $16·5 million, is to be applauded. Unfortunately, the state of our society requires that such extra spending be provided. I can remember many speeches by members of the Opposition claiming that the government was not doing enough in this area. I suspect those cries will diminish because of the programs provided for in the Budget.

Environmental issues are a matter of special concern to our young people. The government has developed programs and strategies that will conserve and safeguard our environment; and because of that young people will view the Budget in a positive light. The State conservation strategy, the challenges of the greenhouse effect and the problems caused by salinity will be of as much interest to those in other rural areas as they are to me. The government has provided an extra $2 million to develop programs to deal with problems caused by salinity, which will bring to $23 million the amount of money the government has provided in this area.

I have seen the effect of the salting of soil. Many people do not realise how high levels of salinity affect detrimentally the productivity of soil. As I said, such programs will attract the interest not only of young people but also of the State's farming community. In that regard, the government has established a number of programs that I am sure people in rural communities will agree are important to their well being. There is a great deal of interest in the value-added program that the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs has recently announced, as well as initiatives to develop export markets.

Reference has been made by honourable members opposite to the impost on the Totalizator Agency Board announced in the Budget.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr F. P. SHEEHAN—If members of the Opposition examined the package the government has offered to the racing codes, they would see that an extra $4·5 million has been offered to the racing industry. Members opposite talk about broken promises, yet they seem to make up those promises as they go along. Something like $80 million will be provided to the racing codes under the Budget.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Shell)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—Mr Acting Speaker, perhaps the honourable member for Ballarat South should have been allowed an extension of time to enable him to explain to the House the facts concerning the slashing of funds for the racing industry.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! Is the honourable member for Gisborne putting a proposition to the Chair?

Mr REYNOLDS—I am not suggesting that he ought to have been given an extension of time—definitely not! Nevertheless, it is a pity the honourable member did not have a little more time to explain how the $20 million slash in funding to the racing industry works out to be an extra $5 million. Obviously the honourable member has his head in the sand. If he talked to the Secretary of the Ballarat Turf Club, Eric Tonks, he would be told a story very different from the one he is telling the House.

The Budget provides for total outlays of $12 651 million, an amount double that of the last Budget of the former Liberal government, which amounted to approximately $5500 million. This year, Budget outlays will increase by 3·7 per cent in money terms, which in real terms amounts to a decrease of 3·1 per cent. The decrease is largely due to cutbacks in Federal government funding. If the Federal government had maintained its level of spending of five years ago, Victoria would have received an extra $900 million this financial year.

Local government, the operations of which affect us all, has fared badly in the Budget. The most noticeable cutback, especially to those of us who live beyond the tram terminuses, has been in road funding, which has dropped this financial year by 2·6 per cent in real terms. Over the past eight years, road funding as part of Budget outlays has decreased by approximately 30 per cent in real terms. Anyone who traverses the highways and byways of rural Victoria will notice the poor state of the roads. It seems as though the roads are disintegrating before one's eyes—and I note that there are holes appearing in suburban streets, as well.

The holes that are appearing in our major bitumen roads are dangerous; and the state of our roads should be considered when attempts are made to stop the increasing road toll. In the electorate of Gisborne—although not on major highways such as the Calder Highway and the Gisborne bypass, which was opened last year—potholes are appearing in series on secondary bitumen roads which makes the potholes difficult to dodge. Such roads are crumbling because the seals are worn out and local councils do not have the money to repair them. Local government cannot borrow money to carry out such necessary repairs because it has been ordered to reduce its borrowings in line with the 29 per cent reduction in the State's global borrowing limit.

Local councils will have to resort to what is, in my opinion, a wealth tax: local rates will increase by more than the rate of inflation. Because of the way in which funds for local government programs have been slashed, local councils will be forced to increase rates in early April of next year at a rate higher than their ratepayers deserve and will expect.

What has happened since this government came to power? It has sold everything that is not nailed down; it has emptied every hollow log it could find; it has hocked the State in such a way that now it is $31 000 million behind. Honourable members need only consider the facts to realise that the State is $31 000 million behind in eight short years because of WorkCare and all the other things that the government has done. The State is bankrupt.

The Federal Treasurer, who is by his own frank admission the world's best Treasurer—I have heard him use the words—said that Australia soon would be a banana republic. It happened that he said those words in my electorate, at a businessmen's breakfast at Sunbury. How right he was! He thought he was being humorous and mildly prophetic.

Dr Napthine—He was pathetic!

Mr REYNOLDS—It is frightening to all Australians that we are heading down the same path as that followed by Argentina. This State is crippled with a WorkCare burden of $4000 million. The Victorian Economic Development Corporation poured some of its money into the electorate of Ballarat South, according to the previous speaker. The VEDC represents $111 million that will never be seen again. The Victorian Investment Corporation is $27 million down the drain. The lease-back of rolling stock will ultimately cost the State some $600 million. Losses on foreign exchange markets amount to $714 million. The figures go on and on.

Today honourable members have seen the latest revelation: State Bank Victoria has announced a loss of $197 million—never before in its history has its performance been so bad! Last year the State Bank showed a profit of some $100 million.

The Treasurer, who is better known to everyone as "Boy Blunder", should resign his position. The Treasurer and the honourable member for Sunshine—the architects of WorkCare—have caused the State to be $4000 million down the drain on that one scheme. The government was told by the Opposition that that would be so. The VEDC is another of the Treasurer's babies and it is down the drain. Stock market investments and foreign exchange investments are down the drain—it is time for the Treasurer to go! It is scandalous that the Treasurer will not accept the blame. He shows contempt for Parliament when he will not answer questions like those asked of him today concerning the further losses incurred by the VEDC. Today he shrugged his shoulders, washed his hands, and said, "None of my business".

If the Treasurer had any respect for this House and for the Westminster system of Parliament, if he had any compassion or any compunction or remorse at all, he would resign and fade away into the distance.

I refer in particular to one of the many unsung services provided in most electorates, those services provided by the State Emergency Service. The service has been hard done by by the government over the past eight years. There are 148 SES units in this State and, by the nature of our community, most of them are in country areas. The future of the service is in jeopardy.

Currently, the SES receives government funding of $500 a unit, amounting in real terms to a paltry $74 000. The SES does not ask to be brought up to full funding—which, depending on the unit, would be somewhere between $5000 and $10 000; it asks to be brought somewhere in the vicinity of government funding of $2500 a unit. Such funding would cost the government a lousy $370 000, representing an increase of just $296 000. The sums I refer to are peanuts when honourable members consider the government's losses—$4000 million on WorkCare alone.

One of the best services in Victoria is asking for a lousy $296 000 increase. Members of the SES are volunteers who perform their duties in a dedicated and devoted manner. They take their jobs seriously. They perform search and rescue operations, assist people at times of flood or fire or storm and, more importantly, they provide assistance to victims of motor car accidents.

On Saturday night, honourable members will have seen in a report on television that there was an accident involving a hot air balloon which came down at

Bullengarook, in my electorate. The township is just outside Gisborne and many famous people sport it as their address. When the hot air balloon fell to the ground, the State Emergency Service was there first and members of the service appeared on television.

Service clubs are owed a great debt. When I refer to service clubs, I mean not only Rotary, Apex, Lions and Kiwanis International, but also the Country Fire Authority, St John's Ambulance, the State Emergency Service and all the committees that run the various organisations in country towns. I refer to all the honorary committees that run our assets, because municipalities do not run them in country Victoria as happens in metropolitan areas.

The volunteer members of the organisations deserve support. As I said, the State Emergency Service is asking for a paltry $296 00 increase in government funding. It is not much money when one considers the $31 000 million lost by this government. The government should help to bring the service above the standard of having to raise its own funds with chook raffles, cake stalls and the like. One can see members of the SES standing on street corners rattling tins. They look like beggars standing there in their yellow SES uniforms, and yet they have to raise funds just to exist. It is a pity they are not provided with more assistance.

The members of the municipalities with SES units are supportive of the units. By not increasing funding to SES units the government is shifting responsibility back to either local government or local communities. It is a cop-out and the government should be ashamed of its inaction. The government does not help the SES units because most of them are in country Victoria. The government's attitude represents another example of its tram-track mentality. I suggest that the government adopt a formula by which it matches the contributions made by local government.

It is a joke to call the organisation the State Emergency Service. If one takes the word "State" one can see that it is inappropriate because the State takes no responsibility for it, although it is prepared to have its name included in the title of the service. The government indicated that it considered the SES a vital cog in the DISPLAN wheel which was much lauded by the government when it was set up.

The word "Emergency" is appropriate in the title of the State Emergency Service as that is what it is experiencing: the service is now in a state of funding emergency.

As for the third word in the title, "Service", there soon will not be any: if something is not done to help the SES, there will be no more service provided. In my electorate, there are four SES units—at Bacchus Marsh, Sunbury, Gisborne and Woodend. They receive much local support and I am pleased to support them whenever I can. The units service two of the State's most heavily used and dangerous highways, the Western Highway from Melton to Bacchus Marsh and beyond, and the Calder Highway. All honourable members know the record that highway has in the Sunbury to Gisborne stretch. Those areas are also high growth areas, and it is essential that the government reconsider the paltry amount it allocates to that organisation.

I shall now refer to something about which I am sure the honourable member for Derrimut would love to speak; it is a shame he is not in the Chamber. I refer to the government's undertaking and commitment given over many years to fund the Melton–Sunbury Management Committee. In 1978 the previous Liberal government made a commitment that, over five years, it would provide $12·5 million to the townships of Sunbury and Melton. At the time it was to be $2·5 million each year split equally between the two towns, which were designated as satellite cities or accelerated growth areas.

Over the years—and commencing with the previous Liberal government—the amount of $2·5 million was scaled down. It was expected that the funding would continue for more than five years, and it has been going on for some ten years. I inform the House that $10·7 million of the $12·5 million has been expended and $1·8 million is still to be delivered. In other words, a promise of $1·8 million has not been delivered.

I have a letter from the Minister for Planning and Environment to the president and councillors of the Shire of Bulla. The letter is dated 20 September 1989 and the Minister says:

> I believe a separate funding allocation for Melton and Sunbury can no longer be justified.

On many occasions over the past years the government has committed itself to that promise. I particularly recall Mr Speaker, when he was just the ordinary honourable member for Werribee, extracting a promise about the continuation of the funding. If the honourable member for Derrimut were present I am sure he would also castigate the government for welching on this deal.

In his correspondence to the Shire of Bulla, the Minister said that he believes the continuing role of the Melton–Sunbury Management Committee may be in question. In other words, because of the new funding arrangements the Minister will put in place where approximately $4 million will be shared by all of metropolitan Melbourne, the Minister is getting out of his previous commitment.

This year Melton and Sunbury expected to receive $500 000 between the two of them. Therefore, each town expected to receive $250 000. The towns had been verbally promised that amount and had made arrangements, drawn up plans and specifications and submitted their suggestions for approval. The major commitment for Sunbury was to construct a bus terminal close to a shopping centre that the Minister for Transport had the pleasure of opening only last week. At that time the Minister commented on the progress of Sunbury and the work that had taken place. He said how wonderful a new bus terminal would be. Until he was advised that his colleague, the Minister for Planning and Environment, had knocked off the funding, the Minister for Transport did not realise that a bus terminal would not be constructed.

Over a ten-year period the funding has provided for both townships—I speak especially of Sunbury roads, community buildings and facilities, sporting buildings and facilities, promotion, employment by way of factoryettes—they have been extremely successful—economic development, a street and plaza paving scheme, tree planting and emergency housing.

Undertakings have been given by the government and commitments have been made by the Melton–Sunbury Management Committee and the Shire of Bulla. The government has welched on the deal and Sunbury has been cheated. It is another broken promise and the government stands condemned, as does the honourable member for Derrimut because he has said nothing about the matter. It affects the town he represents even more than it affects Sunbury because there is no doubt that Melton is in more need of assets than Sunbury. Over many years the government has made a firm commitment to funding and it has now backed out. For that it stands condemned.

The last matter I wish to refer to is the decrease of $21·2 million to the income of the racing industry. In effect, it is a decrease of 25 per cent of the TAB distribution, which is 60 per cent of the income for each of the racing clubs. It is a 15 per cent cut overall from annual total income.

It is wonderful to see the Minister for Sport and Recreation back on his feet. This decision was made while he was on his sick bed and I bet he was not consulted about it. I bet he was not asked about his thoughts and I bet he has fought like mad to get

the decision changed. I do not think the Minister for Water Resources, who was the Acting Minister for Sport and Recreation, was asked what he thought about the decision. The industry was not consulted and I doubt that anyone who knows anything about the industry was consulted.

This is a stupid, thoughtless action by the government and was taken without consultation with anybody. Only two weeks before the decision was announced the Chairman of the Totalizator Agency Board informed the racing codes that they would receive $85 million to divide between themselves. Who is the Chairman of the Totalizator Agency Board? None other than Mr Peter Redlich, a famous name in Labor Party circles. There is no doubt that Mr Redlich knew nothing about the 25 per cent cutback announced in the Budget. If he did, he would not have made the promise a couple of weeks earlier to provide more than $85 million to the racing codes.

TAB turnover has escalated briskly because of several innovations in recent years such as the introduction of Pubtab, which has a direct Sky Channel link-up with most race meetings, odds and dividend displays at TAB agencies, after-race pay-outs, and betting to race start.

Those innovations—as well as some finetuning within the organisation—have caused the Totalizator Agency Board turnover to escalate. The downside of that escalation has been a decrease in oncourse attendance and turnover. Racing clubs receive about 8 per cent of oncourse totalisator turnover; therefore, while that has dropped and the TAB turnover has escalated, the overall income has not shown the advantage of the huge windfall that honourable members on the government side would like to imagine existed.

The government always wins from TAB distributions; it has never lost since the day the TAB commenced operations in 1962. Figures from the latest TAB report show the government received $96 856 038 and, by way of surplus distribution and the Racecourses Development Fund, the three codes received $88 743 980, which means that the government took more than the racing industry received—actually, $8 112 058 more; but it wants more because it is greedy.

I do not think I can possibly miss being at Moonee Valley Racecourse when the Premier presents the trophy to the winner of the W.S. Cox Plate, as he loves to do. There is no way known he will have the opportunity of presenting the Melbourne Cup because the Victoria Racing Club would not have him there after the government's decision. I want to hear how the public greets him at the presentation at Moonee Valley—probably in the way it greeted the Prime Minister several years ago at the presentation of the Victorian Football League premiership trophy. He has not presented it since—even to the extent that he recommended that Ted Whitten present it this year!

The government received not only its $96·8 million from the TAB but also $18 million as its cut from the oncourse totalisator; $15 million from bookmakers' transactions; $500 000 from unclaimed dividends; and, not forgetting that insignificant item called "fractions", from which it received $12 million.

I refer to *Hansard* of 10 December 1981, at page 4838. The speaker at the time was the present Minister for Sport and Recreation, then the shadow Minister for the same portfolio. He stated:

> On top of that, the government takes something like $7 million a year in fractions, which morally do not belong to the government but to the punter, but the government takes the fractions for itself and therefore that is the reason why the government should not complain about having to give the amount under this Bill to guarantee the future of racing.

As the shadow Minister, the present Minister made a lot of noise about fractions, which have escalated from $7 million a year in 1981 to the present $12 million—and are still increasing. However, he will still not honour that statement!

It has been interesting to hear previous speakers discussing the racing industry. Mr Deputy Speaker—the honourable member for Dandenong—suggested in his speech that the meeting at Flemington was stage-managed, and that Nick Columb—a prominent speaker at the meeting, where this matter was given a fair hearing—had his speech scripted by the Liberal Party. I know Nick Columb very well; there is no way I would want to write a script for him, nor would he let me because he is quite capable of writing his own. Mr Deputy Speaker could not even properly pronounce his name. The most interesting aspect about that episode is that the honourable member is chairman of the government's backbench committee on the racing industry. I wonder what he will tell the racing industry when he now talks to them!

Mr KENNEDY (Bendigo West)—I add my support to the passage of the Budget. I preface my remarks by commenting on the contribution made to the debate by the honourable member for Gisborne. When the opposition parties refer to funds coming to the government from the TAB, and the proposals in the Budget—as later amended by the government—they forget to state that $21 million is earmarked for vital hospital and health services. They will never admit to that in public. Members of the Opposition tell the communtiy that $21 million has been taken from the racing industry but they do not have the fortitude to tell the public that they are holding hospital and health services to ransom because of their game.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr KENNEDY—One hears the babble of interjection from the Opposition because one touches a very sensitive nerve. The Opposition is always complaining that insufficient funds are allocated to health services but when the government specifically provides $21 million, the Opposition is prepared to obstruct that measure. It is prepared to hold hospitals and health services to ransom because it wishes to engage in a party political game with the government. That is a disgraceful tactic, particularly as it refuses to recognise in public statements the quite reasonable concessions the government has been prepared to make in that area since the proposal was first inserted in the Budget, as announced by the Treasurer.

The honourable member for Gisborne seemed unable to comprehend the amount to be allocated to the industry as a result of recent government decisions, nor could he understand where the funds were coming from. As a result of an 80–20 percentage share of TAB surplus in favour of the government, as originally announced in the Budget $66 million was to be allocated to the industry. The government listened to the views expressed by the racing industry, and was prepared to take account of those views.

Consequently, its proposal now is that rather than the $66 million as proposed, the amount will total $80 million, resulting from a new 50–50 sharing formula, an injection of funds from a racing industry trust fund, and an advance on this year's projected revenue from the TAB.

I commend the Minister for Water Resources for his handling of this matter in those weeks when he tackled the task as the Acting Minister for Sport and Recreation. I commend the government for its reasonableness in recognising that while the industry has a case, it also has to meet vital health services throughout Victoria.

I find it outrageous that the Opposition is prepared to be so bloody-minded about the subject, and to play a game of politics with Victorian health services. It holds to ransom the health services in my electorate; it is most important that funds are made

available for those essential services, yet the Opposition plays a political game. It moans about the funds that are made available; it will not concede—which it would if it were a reasonable Opposition—that the new allocation to the industry is an increase on the original Budget figure.

Last year, the racing industry received $75·5 million from the TAB; this year, it will receive $80 million as a result of the package of new measures. That is $3 million less than would have been expected before the Budget. All those who champion the cause of how the Liberal Party would handle the racing industry have very little on which to pride themselves. It is interesting to compare the record of the Liberal Party in government with the achievements of the Labor government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Shell)—Order! The honourable member for Gisborne was heard in silence. I suggest that he affords the same courtesy to the honourable member for Bendigo West.

Mr KENNEDY—Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker; I appreciate the protection you have afforded me.

Let us move beyond the propaganda and baloney of Opposition members and look at the facts. The TAB distribution of funds to the racing codes in Bendigo since Labor has been in government has improved dramatically. Taking the three codes together, it has increased threefold. Funding from the TAB to the Bendigo Harness Racing Club has nearly tripled, from $147 394 in 1981–82 to $393 599 in 1987–88.

Mr Reynolds interjected.

Mr KENNEDY—The honourable member for Gisborne does not have a positive role to play; he just interjects in a carping way. Funding to the Bendigo Coursing Association tripled, from $84 709 in 1981–82 to $263 354 in 1987–88; and funding to the Bendigo Jockey Club went from $324 345 in 1981–82 to $1 169 336 in 1987–88. That is the record. The racing industry has not had a better government in its history.

Opposition members are complaining because the government wants to ensure that it has funds for hospitals and health services. If Opposition members are so rapt in how the Liberal Party handles the racing industry, they should look at the facts in New South Wales. The TAB turnover in that State in 1988–89 was $2·6 billion and the distribution to the industry was $67·6 million. In Victoria the TAB turnover is $1·7 billion and the distribution to the industry will be $80 million, so the Victorian industry is not doing too badly. The government recognises the importance and value of the industry. Opposition members who sneer at the government should go back to their electorates and put out press statements saying that they are prepared to hold to ransom the hospitals and health system. But they will not do that because they will not own up.

The Treasurer has given a high priority in the Budget to the family pledge. Opposition members may sneer, but we are delivering on what we have promised. The government has pledged to keep down the cost of specified government services, offset with the phasing out and abolition of the motor registration fee and the payment of the education expense allowance. In 1987–88 those items totalled $1252.28 in country Victoria, whereas this year the cost of those goods and services provided by the government, offset by the phasing out and abolition of the motor registration fee and the payment of the education expense allowance is $1230.94. A typical family in country Victoria covered by the government pledge will pay $21.34 less for those services this financial year. If the price of those services had gone up at the same rate as inflation, those families would instead be paying $205.47 extra.

If Opposition members want some concrete facts and statistics to put their teeth into, instead of just interjecting and criticising, they should look at pages 75–77 of Budget Paper No. 2 entitled *Budget Strategy and Review 1989–90*. The facts are there in black and white, setting out the government's achievements.

I have spoken to people in Bendigo about the importance of the Budget. The people to whom I spoke recently at the Bendigo Community House recognised that the government has made a fair dinkum commitment to looking after the incomes of people, especially families on low incomes. The people I have spoken to recognise the value of abolishing the motor registration fee, the payment of the $100 education expense allowance, and holding down rises in charges for electricity, gas and water supplies, as well as public transport. People in Bendigo accept that the government has made a fair dinkum effort that no other political party is prepared to make.

Another thing that has gone down very well in Bendigo is the 15 per cent concession on payment of winter energy bills, introduced in 1983. This year $20·7 million is allocated for the payment of this concession to eligible households. The average benefit on combined electricity and gas bills is $91.50 this financial year; a saving of $46 on electricity and $45.50 on gas. That assistance to families on low incomes is very welcome. It is estimated that $7·8 million will be paid to recipients of this benefit in country Victoria, of which $1·8 million will go to recipients in the Bendigo region.

I recognise the importance of the benefit paid to help low-income families to send their children to school. The education maintenance allowance has improved dramatically over the past few years, and the education expense allowance was introduced by this government. The education maintenance allowance for low-income families is $127 for primary school students and $25 for post-primary students, and there is an education expense allowance of $100.

Opposition members should not whinge about country versus city but should talk about people in need and look at where the government meets that need. National Party members tried to start a propaganda war between the country and the city, but there is no such war. The Labor government has introduced policies, which help country people in particular, They are based on the needs in areas where there are large numbers of low-income families, as in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The Liberal and National parties do not care two hoots about people's living standards, but put up a facade between the country and the city to cover up the fact that they cannot even up the living standards of the people they represent.

The so-called social justice policy of the National Party covers two pages, and basically says that electorates should be loaded so that the National Party can have an artificially high number of seats in Parliament. That is what social justice means to the National Party. It has nothing to do with living standards.

I return to education initiatives, which are extremely welcome. Before the government introduced these major changes in the education system, in 1987 some 1800 children were receiving assistance for the whole Loddon Campaspe–Mallee region. Now 8000 children in that region receive maintenance assistance, which is a dramatic improvement.

Before these changes the total funds paid out by the Victorian government in that region, which includes the electorates represented by the honourable member for Swan Hill, the honourable member for Mildura and me, were $300 000. The government has improved its maintenance allowance and introduced the education expense allowance, which is provided to 42 000 children. The government's commitment in the Loddon Campaspe–Mallee Region has risen from $300 000 under the system inherited from the Liberal Party government to around $6 million, which

is a dramatic improvement. These are concrete, definite facts that the Opposition cannot refute, no matter how much propaganda it throws out. That is a considerable achievement by a good State government that has given a high priority to tackling the needs of families on low incomes, which is of importance in provincial and regional areas.

I am pleased also with the commitment the government has made to regional economic development. I shall again refer to some concrete facts. The Budget allocates $16 million for specific programs to encourage regional economic development in areas including the Latrobe Valley, and the Bendigo and Ballarat areas. That is a fact. It is twice the amount allocated last year.

Fact No. 2 is the considerable expansion of financial support for development. Bendigo received $60 000 in the past and will now be eligible for around $200 000 under the new policy once a decision is made by the Bendigo community as to what development structure will be chosen. The government is assisting the community to make that choice. It allocated $10 000 to enable a study of options to be made on what development structure alternatives are available.

In addition, major studies are being undertaken in Bendigo and other areas of Victoria into population growth and future planning needs. These are solid, concrete facts and achievements. Funds for development committees have been increased in the Castlemaine, Maryborough and Stawell areas. In the past $30 000 was provided and each town will be eligible for $60 000. New areas added this year are Swan Hill, Horsham, Echuca, Ararat, Colac and Hamilton. I wonder whether the honourable member for Swan Hill can find anything positive to say about that fact. Members of the opposition parties have not said a single word about the program in Bendigo. They cannot find a single thing to criticise. The Liberal and National parties, which are usually so loquacious in attacking the government, cannot find anything to criticise. A couple of their mates in Bendigo are doing the front work for them, but the opposition parties have not issued a single word in praise or condemnation. How eloquent is that silence!

The Rural Enterprise Victoria scheme is an important program introduced by the Labor government to assist the development of enterprise and jobs in small towns. An additional $50 000 has been provided. The scheme assists six programs, one of them in the Bendigo West electorate.

With respect to the cash available for growth, some $1 million has been allocated in the Budget for infrastructure, and that will increase to $2 million for a full financial year. Cash to individual firms to assist in growth and development has also been provided for in the Budget. Some $5 million has been allocated this year, which will increase to $8 million to $10 million for a full financial year.

The Rural Finance Corporation is playing an important role, despite attempts by the National and Liberal parties to undermine it. Because the Rural Finance Corporation has taken on the responsibilities of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, these characters from the country are attempting to undermine it. They have done so consistently and monotonously. The corporation continues to play its role in supporting and developing country firms.

A hoax has been played by the Liberal and National parties since 1984 about whether they should assist country Victoria. An impression has been given that if they got back into office they would reintroduce the payroll tax rebate that the Labor government phased out, on the advice of the then President of the National Party, Stuart McDonald. The Liberal Party has tried to con country people into believing that it would reintroduce the tax. At the last State election the Liberal Party made no such commitment. The National Party made no commitment, either.

Mr Maughan—Mr Deputy Speaker, I direct to your attention the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr KENNEDY—The Liberal and National parties have been carrying out this hoax on country Victorians since 1984. They have tried to give the impression that if they were elected to office they would bring back the payroll tax rebate that the Labor government phased out. There is no mention of the restoration of that rebate in the Liberal Party's 1988 policy statement. I love to refer the House to the National Party's policies because they demonstrate that its members are con men. Page 4 of the National Party's decentralisation policy states:

> The Nationals will reinstate a rebate to help offset transport costs incurred by decentralised industries in country areas.

There is no mention of a payroll rebate. It is gone forever.

I am also interested in the attitude of the opposition parties to the Victorian Economic Development Corporation because they rubbish it all the time. At the State election last year the National Party, after having mercilessly attacked the VEDC, said it would reinvigorate it and use it to inject $175 million more money into country Victoria.

Mr Sandon—Who said that?

Mr KENNEDY—The National Party. Of course, it did not mention the word "loans", but it was referring to loans through the VEDC, an organisation it believed was so bad.

During the recent by-election for the electorate of Rodney the now honourable member for Rodney was so impressed by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation that he was reported on radio in Bendigo as advocating a mark-2 VEDC. The now honourable member for Rodney was coming out, after all the snide attacks being made on the VEDC—which of course has played such an excellent role in developing industry in country Victoria—and advocating a renewed, reinvigorated mark-2 VEDC.

It is also interesting to consider some aspects of law and order and to study the significant achievements of the Victorian government. In my electorate of Bendigo West, a major development is taking place with the construction of a $29 million medium security prison. National Party members have an interesting attitude towards this prison because they have never really liked it. In fact, in 1985 they believed I should be voted out by my constituents because I had the gall to stand up for my community at Castlemaine and say the prison should be built in Castlemaine. They attacked this prison and the way they did that was by saying that the old gaol was still good enough. The old gaol is a good National Party-type gaol. It is only 130 years old. That is ultra-modern by National Party standards.

Every time they get a chance National Party members say they want to hold on to the old gaol. To put down the new gaol they use terms such as "motel-style accommodation". It is a typical classic act of the National Party to denigrate an important achievement. It goes down like a lead balloon in Castlemaine because people are not impressed with the National Party's negative sniping and whinging attitude.

One wonders why the National Party wants to maintain a second gaol in Castlemaine. Perhaps it has something to do with what is happening in Queensland. By the time the trials of the multitude of National Party politicians or former politicians who have been publicised as being caught with their fingers in the till and of making various

sums of money are held, the serious question about whether the gaol system in Queensland will be big enough to cope with the vast increase in population will have to be addressed. There is serious speculation in the Castlemaine and Bendigo areas about whether the National Party is planning to siphon off some of the surplus population about to explode in Queensland gaols down to Castlemaine.

The National Party would regard the old gaol at Castlemaine as fairly modern because it is only 130 years old; it would provide fairly adequate living conditions. I do not want to prejudge any of the future trials in Queensland, and we cannot say what the outcome will be but one must ask who would be brought down from Queensland? Would it be Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Russell Hinze, Don Lane, Sir Edward Lyons or Terry Lewis? A whole gaggle of National Party politicians and hangers-on could be accommodated in what the Nationals see as this fine, modern-style, 130-year-old prison in Castlemaine.

Obviously many politicians in north-west Victoria would have access to these people they respect and admire. It would be easy for National Party politicians in Victoria to visit these people they idolise at the Castlemaine Prison. The spin-off for the Nationals of having such former skilful politicians from Queensland in Castlemaine would be that in the event of the Victorian National Party contemplating getting into government it would have some experienced advice on how to redraw the boundaries of Victoria to fit in with their idea of the most modern democratic standards. As honourable members know, Queensland has a four-tier system of electorates and if one lives in a provincial city in Queensland one is a third-class citizen. One is only slightly better off than someone living in the horrible, big city of Brisbane.

The boundaries in central Victoria could be redrawn by the Nationals so that Bendigo and Castlemaine—and Maryborough, a little outside—would be reduced to a category three electorate. Their voting power would be slashed by one-third; they would be regarded by the Nationals as third-class citizens living in third-class cities. That is what the National Party has done in Queensland and this is what it would like to do in Victoria. If some of the former esteemed representatives of the political system in Queensland were residing in prison in Castlemaine, they would be readily accessible to National Party politicians in the area who could get some sound advice on how to implement the best democratic philosophy of the National Party.

I commend the Treasurer and the government for the introduction of this Budget. It is a finely formed document. It is important in meeting the standards of the people I represent and I have great pleasure in supporting it.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I am delighted to follow the honourable member for Bendigo West in this Budget debate. In drawing comparisons between Queensland and Victoria, it should be noted that the Queensland ALP scored 50 per cent of the vote at the last election but did not attain government. The conservative parties at the last election in this State obtained 51 per cent of the vote and are still in opposition. The honourable member for Bendigo West should think about gerrymanders before he speaks. Although the conservatives obtained 51 per cent of the vote in Victoria, the Labor Party still snuck in by dubious means. The Labor Party was four seats in front but two per cent behind.

One must feel a little sorry for the honourable member for Bendigo West. He has battled away in his strong Labor seat and, single-handedly, has turned it into a marginal seat. No-one will be surprised about the way it will go at the next election. That will not be unexpected to the honourable member for Bendigo West because in 1982 with the sweep of Labor throughout the Federal electorates of Australia, he was the only one to be toppled.

The debate on the Budget today has been interesting. One point that has not been made is that the Budgets being debated in the Parliaments of Australia this year are all based on fundamental problems. People are operating with interest rates at 20 per cent and more. The honourable member for Bendigo West and a few of his colleagues today spoke about the government's social justice strategy and its affirmative action strategy but did not say anything about the ordinary people whose home interest rates are running at 17 and 18 per cent or the small businessmen and women who are trying to earn a living, to employ people, to maintain their properties and to keep their small operations going with 20 to 26 per cent interest rates.

Mr SANDON (Carrum)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, the honourable member should come back to the Bills. The issue of interest rates is beyond the parameters of the Budget. It is in the jurisdiction of the Federal government. The honourable member should be asked to come back to the Bills before the House.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Harrowfield)—Order! The honourable member for Carrum should know that this is a wide-ranging debate. There is no point of order.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—The honourable member for Carrum and other members of his party should hang their heads in shame about what they have done to the people of Australia both Federally and in Victoria with high interest rates and current account deficits. The artificially high interest rates are beyond the ability of many people in our society to pay.

Mr Sandon—What would you do?

Mr STEGGALL—The first thing I would do is to hold a State election as quickly as possible so that the people of Victoria can elect a fair and proper group of politicians to govern the State.

The honourable member for Bendigo West spoke about the rural urban mix in country Victoria. Country Victoria was compared with the western suburbs of Melbourne. The honourable member also said that the social justice policies of the government should be directed to areas of greatest need, to low-income areas and low-income families. Unfortunately, following the last census, the people of my electorate were found to be on the bottom rung of the socioeconomic ladder. I am not proud of that and it comes as a shock even to my colleague, the honourable member for Sunshine. When an artificial operation for the economic base on which we operate is created and the flow of money and the power base within the country is manipulated, the country is in a difficult situation.

Mr Baker interjected.

Mr STEGGALL—I shall speak about subsidies later. A country member of Parliament represents a small minority of the people, because only 30 per cent of Victoria's population live in country Victoria, while 70 per cent lives in Melbourne. Over the past few years there has been a concentration of commerce from the rural areas to the city. This has occurred in markets for primary produce to the extent that there is a deficit of funds circulating throughout rural Victoria.

The lack of funds circulating throughout rural Victoria has led to a downturn in the economic structure and the viability of small businesses and rural enterprises. World prices and artificial cost structures govern what primary producers receive for their goods. Primary producers have to generate the income and protect established structures throughout country Victoria. The lack of decentralisation programs and the fact that 70 per cent of the population live in the city has made it difficult for country Victorians to receive a fair share of the resources.

Mr Sandon—What about all the roads, canals and so on?

Mr STEGGALL—The honourable member says what about the roads. During the past few weeks I have been travelling around Victoria and I have never known roads to have deteriorated to the extent that they have at present. I hope the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs has travelled on roads other than highways when touring rural Victoria. Approximately 80 per cent of State road funds are spent in metropolitan Melbourne. Country Victorians do not expect to get a fair go, because 70 per cent of the population lives in Melbourne, but they do expect a fair say. They do expect that the road networks built up over the years are maintained.

Honourable members may remember the debate on the Local Government Bill, which I had something to do with, some time ago. That debate highlighted the deterioration of road funding distributed throughout the State by the Victoria Grants Commission and other agencies of government. Victoria is now in a serious situation because the assets built up and maintained over the years are going down the gurgler.

I passed through the electorates of Ballarat South and Bendigo West some weeks ago and I saw first-hand the deterioration in the road networks in those electorates. It would be a smart move if the country members of the Australian Labor Party examined the road links that have been developed over many years.

Many honourable members regard a debate on the deterioration of country roads as mundane. Last year a national survey of women was conducted by the Prime Minister's department and Senator Reynolds had the job of disseminating the study of rural women throughout Australia. The first priority of 70 per cent of the rural women who took part in the survey was the standard of the road networks. They recognised that although it was important to have adequate child care, education and other social assistance, an adequate road system was even more important. I listened on the radio to Senator Reynolds trying to explain why 70 per cent of country women said that country roads were their No. 1 priority.

Members of the Labor Party should think about where we are going and what we are doing. While it might be a joke and while they get a kick out of kicking the bushies, the government should go back and maintain those areas of work which have not been maintained over the past few years.

The Swan Hill electorate is a rural electorate, not a regional one; it is based on eighteen communities spread throughout the north-west of Victoria. It is an area that has a lot of small hospitals and schools, and honourable members in other areas of Victoria would have a lot of difficulty in understanding that. An area of concern to the Swan Hill electorate is the attack on the bush nursing hospitals. Those hospitals have been built and developed by individual community people over the past 30 or 40 years and their virtual existence is now being challenged. I have two bush nursing hospitals in my electorate, one at Pyramid Hill and one at Wedderburn, which are under attack.

One does not hear much from the Labor Party about the attack on health care in those areas. The people who use the hospitals cannot now afford to have the cover necessary for private health insurance as was the case over the past 30 or 40 years. Because of that the hospitals have low occupancy rates of acute patients, and patients who become ill have to be transported to public hospitals in towns that are half an hour to three-quarters of an hour's drive away.

Over the past years we have developed our nursing home beds to enable the elderly people in those areas to stay within their communities, but they are under attack and are now threatened by the Federal government's rationalisation schemes. One of those under attack is Wirrum House at Birchip. An amount of $800 000 was raised to build that hospital.

The attacks on health care and aged care operations in country Victoria are of concern, and I must admit that the Minister for Health has been keen to listen and I hope in the end she will assist by working with members of the hospital boards and local members of Parliament to try to ensure that we do not lose those facilities. We have not succeeded in maintaining them yet, but I bring that to the attention of the House because country people have taken a lot of kicking around over the past seven or eight years and cannot go much further.

It is about time the Labor Party's social justice policy was delivered. Country Victoria loses so much in the area of social justice, in health care, in education and in other areas by government cutbacks—country Victoria has now had enough.

I turn to the area of primary production. The value of our products produced in country Victoria has fallen dramatically and the return on many of our primary products is now so low that the rural community is not meeting the cost of production. Prices for many of our primary products today are below the actual cost of production. Most of the farming community is living on depreciation. In the mid-1970s as the local government member for the Mallee I was involved in the enormous downturn in that region. The same thing is happening now; it is returning through high interest rates—the 20 to 28 per cent for overdrafts—and the low return for primary products.

For example, a fat lamb in the mid-1950s was returning a farmer about $25; the same fat lamb today is returning the farmer $30. Financially the farmer is way behind. The country community has not been good enough to counter the concentration of control and organisation of business and city operators. The political side of rural Victoria leaves a lot to be desired and, as rural politicians, we must ensure that we improve both the position of those we represent and the political approaches that are made. The National Party and the country members of the Liberal Party have an enormous challenge ahead of them. If we do not remedy this situation, the rural community will continue to be at the bottom of the pile when it comes to economic development.

With regard to the subsidy argument, about which cities keep talking, rural Victoria has lost those subsidies; they are being replaced by the subsidies of Melbourne. I smile when I see the subsidies that are given to public transport, to WorkCare and to land development in Melbourne.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr STEGGALL—Try the deficit of WorkCare and see where it is. The metropolitan community should examine the subsidies that are given for the development of land in the outer metropolitan areas of Melbourne. The sprawl and planning has gone so wide and so far in the development of the metropolis that an enormous subsidy is being paid for each housing plot that is being developed in Melbourne. One does not have to talk about subsidies for country Victoria because they have long since gone.

Mr Seitz interjected.

Mr STEGGALL—I will give the honourable member for Keilor a chance to prove what he has said by way of interjection, and I look forward to his contribution to the debate.

The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands has now joined honourable members and I appreciate her presence. The Swan Hill electorate covers a lot of the Mallee area and consists of wetlands, beautiful lakes, State parks and public lands. Governments have over the years, and in particular over recent years, decided that the best way to control and manage public land was to lock it up.

Mr Kennedy interjected.

Mr STEGGALL—The honourable member for Bendigo West mouths the old cliches, slogans and sayings. One thing about this Labor government and Labor parties is that they are absolutely full of rhetoric. We hear it every day from the Premier, the backbenchers and the Ministers. Every member of the Labor Party is primed and tuned—it is Dial-A-Rhetoric.

This is the government of rhetoric. It has not delivered half of what it talks about and if it would like to come and look at the country, it will find that it has taken most of what it is talking about away. The delivery of the Labor Party is nothing to be proud of. When the backbenchers come back to reality, they will find the delivery is not there.

The same is true of conservation. The policies of this government are basically rhetoric and are not in any way, shape or form funded in a reasonable way to establish balanced development through the public lands of this State.

When one looks at the government's policies on hunting—areas which the Land Conservation Council has been looking at rather closely—one realises that it would be a good idea if we, as a community and a Parliament, started to take a practical approach to our land management problems and challenges.

Honourable members know that I am heavily involved in the debate concerning the development of salinity programs throughout north-western Victoria and the development and operation of the River Murray. I suggest that the rhetoric be decreased and we start looking at the positive development and management of those areas.

Last night it was interesting to note at the Australian Conservation Foundation meeting at the Melbourne Concert Hall with Professor Erlich that there was not a single Labor Party politician present. There were Liberal and National Party politicians but no Labor Party politicians.

There is enormous concern on all sides of Parliament for the environment, where we are going and how to get there. It would be very nice if Parliament could get away from the rhetoric that is thrown around by the Labor Party members and settle down to see whether it cannot develop a proper and balanced management program for our public lands as well as working through the problems we have with our private lands. There are several ways to do this and I know the Labor Party is looking at the Water Bill and a few other Bills that are floating around and considering using regulatory control to do it.

Country people are not going to travel down that track. We will not succeed as a society by using punitive threats and regulation to overcome the problems of land use, both public and private. I suggest that Parliament should look for a true and honest approach to our environmental situation that the people of Victoria would listen to. Life would be a lot easier if that occurred. However, that is a debate for another day.

I conclude my remarks on this Budget with the subject I started with: interest rates are so far out of gear that there is something fundamentally wrong with our society and State and Federal governments have to accept that and start attacking it. The other major problem is the huge Current Account deficit for which the country people generate most of the income.

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—I remind the House in this Budget debate that sometimes the figures tend to be overwhelming and we forget that all those sums of money affect the lives of people all over Victoria. I should also like to remind the House of the implications and impacts of the Budget on the electorate of Narracan. It is one of those ALP "gonna" seats: it was always "gonna" win it but it never has had that pleasure. I will make sure it does not.

Because Narracan is a marginal seat, it attracts more than the usual attention of Labor Party Ministers around election time and if there are troubles there, the Ministers of the Crown try to paper over the cracks. In dealing with the Budget, I remind the House of the situation of hospitals in my electorate and the precarious position they find themselves in due to this government's administration.

Prior to the election last year, the then Minister for Health, the Honourable David White, arrived in his white Ministerial car on a grand tour through the electorate of Narracan. On that day he was not flying his flag of office, the skull and crossbones—I do not know about the crossbones but the skull is probably appropriate. He told the people of the Latrobe Valley Hospital at Moe, "Do as we say, obey our rules and regulations and there will be no problem". He forced the hospital to increase its output with less funds. He said, "Don't worry; if you get into trouble and overrun your budget, we will see that there is extra money to get you out of a hole".

The election came around and we all know the result. The Latrobe Valley Hospital found it was $600 000 over budget but it had increased its output in accordance with the instructions of the Minister. Then, of course, the promise the Minister made about bailing it out with extra funds had to be faced up to.

I took a deputation from the hospital to see the present Minister for Health who was very pleasant and understanding and we were able to get half that amount. There still remains $300 000 which has not been provided in accordance with the promise made by the Minister for Health of the day, the Honourable David White. The people of Moe and the hospital committee are very angry indeed.

I went to the annual meeting of the Latrobe Valley Hospital in Moe and listened to the president of the hospital pour out his soul to the members of the public who were there and describe the position in which the hospital found itself. Some of the points he made are very interesting indeed. He was moved to furnish a press release to the *Latrobe Valley Express* which I shall quote. He said, among other things:

> The public hospital system is no longer able to respond properly, quickly and humanely to illness in the Latrobe Valley.

These are the words of the hospital president, Dr Stewart Mair.

The article also states:

> In 1989–90 LVH had been offered enough money to admit only 6300 patients next year, 455 patients or 6·7 per cent fewer than last year. Dr Mair said during the year the hospital had run more than $400 000 over budget and was now $1·8 million in debt.

This is the pattern of other hospitals in Victoria and in my electorate: the Labor Party is funding hospitals by getting them to take out loans, forcing them into overdraft situations and, in the case of the Latrobe Valley Hospital, the debt is now $1·8 million.

I put it to the House that that loan has to be serviced, and the only way that can be done is from the hospital funds themselves. The article continues:

> The hospital's ability to admit people for repair was diminishing as society faced an ageing population which posed the hospital with increasing demands to maintain its health.

That is a disgrace:

> The hospital would close 28 beds over the next month to reduce the number of patients which could be admitted to the hospital; a continuation of a policy which had seen beds closed over the past twelve months by shutting a ward over week-ends and holidays.

The moral of the story is that if one has a disease that requires hospitalisation for more than five days, a hospital like that at Moe cannot admit one because of the restraint that has been placed on it by this government and previous Ministers for

Health. Dr Mair's advice to the community was to insure for private hospital care. He states:

We pay a Medicare levy and expect health care, including hospital care. We are not going to get it when we need it if we are uninsured.

The Labor Party, in the Federal sphere especially, convinced people that Medicare was the answer to all health problems. In a deliberate policy stand, it encouraged people to rely on Medicare and to forget about private insurance, saying that Medicare would solve all the ills, to the extent that it levied the taxation of all individuals in Australia to pay for Medicare. It also made contributions to the private funds non tax deductible, whereas previously such items could be deducted from the tax. There was a two-way push to persuade people to get out of private health insurance and to throw themselves at the mercy of the Medicare system.

Dr Mair also states that:

. . . everyone who could afford private health insurance should take it because when they needed hospital care they should be able to seek it outside of Gippsland in private establishments. . .

That is a terrible indictment of this government and its hospital system. He states:

. . . the more people who could be privately hospitalised meant the public facilities would be the more readily available to those who could not afford health insurance.

Honourable members should bear in mind that a great majority of people in that long queue waiting to use the hospital are elderly people and pensioners, and the queue is being cluttered by people who have been asked to opt out of the private health system and into Medicare, and the whole thing is causing much heartache and pain.

Dr Mair, the president of the Moe hospital says:

"What public hospitals can supply today no longer match the expectations of those who need hospital care," he said. He urged people to take medical insurance sooner rather than later "because it might be a while before the insurance company covers one for whatever disease might turn up in the future".

"This grim future faces all hospitals, all Victorians. It is important that the people convey to their representatives in Parliament—State and Federal—that we will be in no position to provide you with the hospital care of the quality, quantity, degree and speed you might expect.

The following statement is a classic:

This sad state of affairs is largely the responsibility of a State government that has agreed to the Medicare agreement. . .

It was previous Ministers for Health—the present Minister for Planning and Environment and, to a lesser degree, the present Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources—who agreed with their Federal counterparts with the Medicare agreement, and they sold Victoria short. Dr Mair continues:

. . . a health funding agreement with the Federal government without receiving sufficient funds for hospital care. . .

Latrobe Valley Hospital would become more efficient, it would supply only the bare necessities.

Dr Mair's message to the people in my electorate was:

Bring your own linen, mop and meals. The choice is between minimal service for more people or normal service for fewer.

That is a disgrace, and it is all sheeted home to the actions of the present government in dealing with this health problem and is further compounded by the fact that the Morwell hospital, which is in the electorate of the honourable member for Morwell, was compulsorily closed by this government and turned into a day hospital. It no longer takes long-term patients.

In closing that hospital, the government of the day ran into a certain amount of opposition. In the discussions that ensued between the community and Health Department Victoria, it was agreed that the hospital at Traralgon and the hospital in Moe would take the overflow of patients from the Morwell hospital. Some 75 per cent of the people using the old Morwell hospital have elected to go to Moe, but not a dollar extra has been made available to cater for that additional demand. The government has gone back on its word, and the then Minister for Health was deceitful in the way he sold the story to the local people. We will get nowhere until Ministers for Health face up to their responsibilities to run a reasonable hospital service in the Latrobe Valley.

There are two other hospitals in the electorate I represent, one of which is the West Gippsland Hospital at Warragul. Its story is the same: there were standover tactics by the Minister, who was able to instil a certain amount of fear into hospital administrators. It started with the present Minister for Planning and Environment when he was Minister for Health. He made it clear that if anyone in the hospital administration dared to voice any criticism, that person's career in the hospital system would be in serious jeopardy. I deplore that stand.

The government has prided itself on open government; it was open on one hand, but, on the other hand, when unpleasant and unpalatable things came to the fore, the Minister exerted pressure.

Last year the hospital at Warragul treated some 4900 patients. It now has to treat an additional 2 per cent of patients, with very little increase in funding. Its overdraft is similar to that of the hospital at Moe and has gone to $1·408 million. Once again a considerable percentage of funds that ought to be used for patient care is being used to service the debts of these hospitals. It is a great tragedy that, when people are clamouring to get into hospitals, there are vacant beds in hospitals that cannot be used because the government will not allow them to be used.

The honourable member for Swan Hill mentioned bush nursing hospitals. I should declare, under the provisions relating to pecuniary interests of members, that I am a life member of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association and was for some years its chief executive. I declare that interest now, in accordance with the pecuniary interest rules of the House.

Since the government came to power bush nursing hospitals have received no assistance by way of grants. One of the first actions the government took in 1982 was to cut off all funds to bush nursing hospitals. Often these hospitals are in remote areas. They are funded out of the goodness, kindness, consideration and concern that country people have for their own hospitals.

It is a feeling that people who come from the metropolitan area find alien, but country communities regard their hospitals jealously and use the possessive case with great pride. The Neerim South hospital, which is in my electorate, has been able to keep its head above water but receives no encouragement. The community receives no encouragement for its donations and support of the local hospital. Volunteers who service these organisations and support them have been without any reward or recognition and deserve more encouragement than they get at present.

The government would be well aware of some of the decisions that have been made and that are reflected in this Budget about courthouses that service country areas. It is strange how trends and patterns emerge. I direct attention to the fact that the historic courthouse at Warragul is under threat of closure, as are a number of other courthouses in country Victoria. The court services will be transferred to the City of Moe and people will have to travel many miles to attend that court, as will the police. The Moe

courthouse is serviced by the police station at Moe, a police station that is already undermanned. It is two sergeants and about four constables short and in spite of the pleas by the police, they have not managed to get the station up to strength.

Compounding that shortage of police personnel is the decision to close the Warragul courthouse which means that the Moe court will have to sit from four to five days a week. The police at Moe police station who are already undermanned will have to provide doormen and escort prisoners to and from the court to cells at Moe. The cells are a disgrace. If the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands were to look at these cells, she would not let animals be incarcerated in them, let alone human beings. No provision is made for female prisoners except by locking them in totally. Junior male prisoners have to be incarcerated in the remand yard and adult male prisoners in the remainder. The cells are dank and damp and the whole thing is a disgrace. The government needs to look very closely at that situation in Moe.

Furthermore, prisoners have to be interrogated in the interview room which is a room set aside as a small kitchen or office. It has no security and this means that a policeman has to be detailed to stay with the prisoner all the time they are in the station. The police in Moe are very angry with the poor deal they have been given.

Once again this is compounded by the fact that there is now a move to shift a large number of senior police around the district. I refer to an article which appeared in the *Warragul Gazette* of 19 September, in which one of the police officers had the temerity to speak out. He talked about the new structure that is proposed for the police districts in Victoria. Under the new structure proposed by the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister, the districts will lose their inspectors and there will be a system of centralisation with only senior police in the big towns, in this case in Morwell, and this means that the electorate and the community will be more removed from the senior police than in the past. This is poor indeed and we will see only a further falling back on the law and order aspect if this trend is to continue. I urge the government and the Minister to think again before this step is taken as it will have a dramatic effect on the welfare and well-being of people in my electorate.

Police in the country have to deal not only with law and order but also deal with other matters. In the electorate of Narracan, there is some very rocky country and from time to time people become lost. People have been lost around Mount Baw Baw and in the bush at Noojee and, a few weeks ago, a party of skiers was lost on the Mount Baw Baw plateau. It was significant that in the television account of the search which was mounted by the police it was shown that the inspector of police at Warragul was there in quick time to personally lead and conduct that search and to use his own knowledge of the area. Fortunately those people were found. If that man is shifted, and this will occur under the new plan, that local knowledge will be lost and this could have dire consequences for people who might become lost in the bush in the future.

I take the opportunity, as the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands is currently in charge of the debate, addressing some remarks to her concerning logging in the Erica area, which is also in my electorate. Erica is part of the area being logged in the Thomson Valley, and the Thomson Valley is being developed because the government has decided, according to its right, to move logging out of East Gippsland and bring it into the forests of the Upper Thomson Valley and the Toorongo Valley.

The Minister is very fond of being photographed with small cuddly animals and I am sure honourable members have seen this from time to time. It is getting to the stage where, if it continues, I will probably get a very rare disease called hyperemesis gravidum, a vomiting attack for which there is no cure. I remind the Minister of her decision on placing restrictions on logging activities in that area. It must be appreciated that, because of the high rainfall, the logging season in Central Gippsland is relatively

short, the roads need to be upgraded to carry the timber for extraction and snig tracks need to be constructed to remove that timber. Because someone has blown down the Minister's ear saying, "You can't have these tracks through the bush because it upsets the ecology of the countryside", the Minister has issued restrictions on the construction of more country roads. An inquiry is to be held. The result of the inquiry is to be produced by 23 December, when half of the logging season is over. As a consequence timber workers in the area could be out of work.

A reduction in logging of 15 000 cubic metres of timber will be made, which will mean less revenue because no royalties will be paid. That is because of the whim of a Minister who is conducting a country road review. People are angry with the Minister. Timber workers and contractors alike will not be able to get full production until January, February or March when the season is about to close. Effectively, the Minister has cut off the livelihood of those people. I urge the Minister to reconsider her decision or otherwise to reach a conclusion earlier than 23 December, which is the date by which the inquiry is to be concluded. If the Minister does not want logging in the area, let her say so rather than placing an artificial barrier in the way to discourage people from lawfully going about their business. That is poor indeed! I severely criticise the Minister for taking that course. It has been done without thought for the people who are earning a living in the area. It would be interesting to see the memorandum from the Australian Timber Workers Union when it finds out about this situation, but it has probably found out that its workers' jobs are in jeopardy. I urge the Minister to reconsider her decision.

Cuts have also been made to funding for the Correspondence School, which provides instruction at various secondary schools in my electorate and throughout other areas in Victoria where there are smaller high schools that do not have sufficient students to form particular classes. Those students rely heavily on the Correspondence School for instruction in less popular subjects. It is a disgrace that these cuts were made without consultation, surveys or the provision of questionnaires or any of the other paraphernalia the government uses in determining similar questions.

The Correspondence School is being severely curtailed, which will mean that students in electorates such as mine will be severely punished by the government, which has no idea of the difficulties of obtaining an education if one lives in rural Victoria. My four children went to country high schools and I found that it was expensive to educate them when compared with the costs of educating children in Melbourne because if the children wanted to go on with their education they had to go to Melbourne, which meant that board and fees had to be paid. Perhaps people in the metropolitan area take those things for granted, but country children are definitely disadvantaged under the new scheme. Cuts to the Correspondence School will remove opportunities for access to a variety of resources that have been built up over the years. The Correspondence School has an excellent name in the country. I urge the government and the Minister for Education to reconsider her decision to cut the funds allocated for the Correspondence School and to accept deputations on this matter—it is difficult to get a deputation to the Minister—in order that she may sort out some of the problems.

On the motion of Dr WELLS (Dromana), the debates were adjourned.

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

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

ADJOURNMENT

Deputations to Ministers—Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital—Northern suburbs improvement plan—Riddells Creek sewerage scheme—Swan Hill Water Board—Campaign against alcohol abuse—Highvale Primary School—State Superannuation Board

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—I direct to the attention of the Premier my concern about the rights of honourable members to seek the receival of deputations by Ministers. I refer particularly to a telephone call I made to the office of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands on 14 September for receipt of a deputation from the Port Phillip Bay Professional Fishermen's Association. That request was followed up on 19 September by a telephone call from the Minister's office seeking the names of the people who would be party to the deputation. Later that day the names of the people in that deputation were supplied to the Minister's office. On 3 October my office rang the Minister's office to ascertain when the deputation might be received.

It is legitimate for any honourable member under the Westminster system to seek to represent anybody in the State. On 3 October a request was made to the Minister's office for a time or date for the reception of the deputation, but no response was made until today when I approached the Minister to ask when she would meet with the deputation. It appeared from her comments that while I was a member of that deputation she was not prepared to meet with it.

I now give the Minister the opportunity to clarify the situation. I am under no misapprehension; I believe that is the situation. The Minister told me that if I advise the president of the association to ring her office she will provide a date for the meeting. The situation might have rested at that point, but yesterday she met with members of the same association, not the executive whom I nominated to meet with her but other members of the association. It is presumptive in the sense that the Minister was prepared, through another intermediary, to meet members of the same association. I wonder whether the Minister believes she has now received the views of the Port Phillip Bay Professional Fishermen's Association—irrespective of whether I support what was said—or whether she believes she has heard just the views of the members with whom she met.

The situation requires the intervention of the Premier because access to this Minister is very much on a prerogative basis. One does not need to go far to find all sorts of organisations anxious to see this Minister. In fact, they are queued up to see her. If one must be a member of the ALP before one can get to see this Minister, the whole concept of the Westminster system is blown apart.

I do not say the Minister is discriminatory, I say that if she has had a request for four days short of a month, the least she can do is respond, even if it is to say that she will not meet one. It took a direct question today to ascertain whether a meeting would be held. The people involved might as well have gone direct to her office.

I ask the Premier to intervene and give some direction as to what this Minister is supposed to do.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs as the representative of the Minister for Health in this place. My concern is about the future of the Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital.

Honourable members will be aware of the problems facing bush nursing hospitals across the State. The problems facing the Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital were brought to my attention when I attended a fete conducted by the ladies auxiliary of the hospital last Sunday. I was asked to open a commemorative rose garden which had been developed voluntarily by the ladies auxiliary with the support of many organisations in Chiltern. The hospital was celebrating the 30th anniversary of the opening of the hospital on 4 October 1969 by a former member for North Eastern Province, the Honourable Ivan Swinburne.

When I spoke at the opening I said that this was not a wake, that we should not be looking at the eventual closure of the hospital but rather working to ensure that the hospital remains open. The hospital is facing an enormous problem because, despite the fact that it has operated efficiently and effectively, in the past financial year it has lost $70 000. It is believed unless consideration is given by the government the hospital will close within the next twelve months to two years because of the lack of financial support from State and Federal governments.

The hospital must operate as a private hospital because no funding support is being provided by the government. The hospital supplies and provides a large range of services. It is a 14-bed hospital with eight or nine long-term patients. Its occupancy rate in the last financial year was approximately 73 per cent and the daily average occupancy was 10·4 patients.

I know from inspecting the hospital how efficiently it operates in providing care for acute patients and nursing home patients. It provides a 24-hour a day, 365-days a year casualty outpatient service free to the people of Chiltern and surrounding areas. It handled approximately 700 people last year. It operates as a dispensing agency for pharmaceutical prescriptions as there is no chemist in the town. It also operates as a referral centre for home care and for geriatric assessment. The district nursing service coordinator operates from the hospital. It also provides a consulting room and waiting room for a local doctor. The hospital must be retained.

What can be done to ensure the continued operation of the hospital? The honourable member for Swan Hill interjects that perhaps we need a change of government. In the meantime, consideration to retaining this hospital must be given by the Victorian Labor government. One suggestion to ensure its continuation is the return of the $20 a day Commonwealth bed subsidy for long-term patients. Perhaps two or three beds could be provided through Medicare and perhaps the development of further community care facilities would assist. These are the sorts of alternatives that should be considered.

I ask that the Minister for Health visit the people of Chiltern to discuss the future of their hospital which must be retained to provide services for the people of Chiltern and surrounding areas. I want action from this government and a definite response from the Minister that such action will be taken immediately.

Mr THOMSON (Pascoe Vale)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Planning and Environment the need for a northern suburbs area improvement program that would be modelled on the highly successful Western Suburbs Action Program. As a member representing, in part, the City of Essendon, I am well aware of the positive benefits the Western Suburbs Action Program has provided for the municipalities and communities in the western region. I am also aware that a similar program is under way in the eastern group of municipalities.

I wish to put to the Minister forcefully that there is an equivalent need for such a program to be developed in the northern and north-eastern municipalities. There is a rapidly growing community awareness of the desirability of environmental improvement within the northern suburbs. Community groups are springing up everywhere and they are committed to environmental protection and improvement. Local government throughout this region is now firmly aware of its responsibilities in this area.

I believe the time is right for local community groups to take advantage of a northern suburbs area improvement program. For example, in July I established the Moonee Ponds Creek committee. It has been holding successful meetings involving more than 40 representatives of the community, local government and State government departments as well as interested individuals.

The Moonee Ponds Creek was once a charming and tranquil area but with the construction of the Tullamarine Freeway it was concrete-lined and straightened and much of its original charm was lost. Other creeks and rivers in the northern area such as the Darebin Creek, the Merri Creek and the Maribyrnong River have received much tender loving care in recent years and have undergone extensive transformations based on Federal and State government support. I believe the time has come for similar care to be shown to the Moonee Ponds Creek. Its committee is simply one of a wide variety of community groups that could take advantage of the northern suburbs area improvement program.

That program would pay special attention to providing opportunities for access and participation by a wide range of people, especially those communities or groups subject to relative disadvantage or deprivation. It would build self-confidence and pride at the local level through projects falling within the general ambit of the Minister for Planning and Environment. It would also build cooperation and goodwill between community interests and councils, regional bodies and State agencies on planning, heritage and environmental matters.

The time has come for the northern suburbs to receive the same attention that has been given to the western and eastern areas.

Mr REYNOLDS (Gisborne)—I raise for the attention of the Treasurer the continuing saga of funding for the Riddells Creek sewerage scheme. Recently the Priorities Planning and Strategy Committee, which I understand is chaired by the Treasurer, refused funding and borrowing for this scheme and the Treasurer, in a letter to the Riddells Creek Water Board, told the board to seek the Minister for Water Resources to resubmit the project to the Priorities Planning and Strategy Committee at the next appropriate opportunity. It appears there were nine projects submitted to the committee, but only two were approved—one under the auspices of the Westernport Water Board and the other under the auspices of the Geelong and District Water Board.

The matter is very urgent. Firstly, there is massive and growing pollution in waters downstream of Riddells Creek; and reports made by Health Department Victoria, the Environment Protection Authority, the Shire of Romsey and the Riddells Creek Water Board support that claim. Pollution downstream of Riddells Creek has increased tenfold since readings were first taken in 1978. Readings upstream of Riddells Creek indicate the water in that area is in pristine condition. The streams in the area form part of the Maribyrnong River catchment.

There are serious health and environmental problems in the townships. In the State Environment Protection Authority document—*Waters of Victoria*—printed in February 1988, the government suggests that the provision of a sewerage system in Riddells Creek is of high priority. In a letter to the Riddells Creek Water Board the Department of Water Resources said that the commencement of the project is considered to be a high priority.

Another problem in this saga is that the Shire of Romsey has sought legal advice which states that where there is no practical effective solution for the disposal of waste the shire may refuse to grant building permits—and indeed should refuse to grant them. On 15 November the council is to consider stopping the issuing of building permits if the water board cannot give a definite date for the commencement of the installation of the scheme, which would be a drastic step to take.

Undoubtedly the matter is extremely urgent. Some subdivisions have remained unsold for many years because of the lack of a sewerage system. Millions of dollars are tied up in such developments. I know some of the developers concerned and they are by no means wealthy. The township's projected growth of 5 per cent in this year is in danger of being completely stifled.

The local community is overwhelmingly in favour of the scheme, so much so that local residents are paying $200 per annum per tenement development rate. The next time the matter comes before the Priorities Planning and Strategy Committee, I ask the Treasurer to ensure that the matter receives urgent attention so that funding is provided as soon as possible.

Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Water Resources the Swan Hill Water Board and the problems it is having with its estimates for this year being accepted by the Minister's department. The water board's estimates commence on 1 July, as do those of all other water boards; and the Swan Hill Water Board's estimates were approved at a meeting in May. In June the estimates were submitted to the Department of Water Resources for its approval. The Swan Hill Water Board is responsible for two areas—Swan Hill water and waste water, and the Lake Boga district, a small area some ten miles away.

The Swan Hill Water Board has been unofficially notified that its estimates for Swan Hill water and waste water are satisfactory but will not be approved until the estimates for the Lake Boga district are approved. The problem stems from the fact that last summer the excess water rates did not reach the amount estimated as a result of both a mild summer and a campaign to conserve water carried out by the board. Last year's revenue shortfall for the Lake Boga area was added to the estimate to balance it, because the estimated amount had already been spent. Because the board's area is very small, the increase required is 34 per cent. That reflects the difficulties encountered by a small water board.

The Department of Water Resources has advised the Swan Hill Water Board to take one of three measures: firstly, to budget for a deficit, which the Minister would frown upon; secondly, not to provide for depreciation funding, which again the Minister would frown upon; or thirdly, to use its own reserve of funds to subsidise the general fund and balance the budget, which once again the Minister would frown upon.

The importance of this issue is highlighted when one considers the Water Bill that will soon be debated in the House and the powers that the Minister will be given in the Bill. I direct the matter to the attention of the Minister because the way in which his department has gone about approving the estimates of the Swan Hill Water Board is completely unsatisfactory. I am sorry to say that the matter needs his intervention to ensure that the problems that exist between the Swan Hill Water Board and his department are resolved quickly so that no financial loss will be suffered by the board.

Mr HAMILTON (Morwell)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Health in another place or in her absence the Minister for Community Services. This matter was brought to my attention by a constituent, a Mrs Jutta Didjurgies from Morwell, who rang my electorate office some weeks ago suggesting that the government could do more to promote the health of our young people if it gave the same attention to the problems associated with under-age drinking as it has given to the Quit campaign.

That constituent and a number of others to whom I have spoken have praised the Quit campaign for the way it has drawn the attention of the community in general and of young people in particular to the health hazards associated with cigarette smoking. Many of my constituents believe the government could adopt a program similar to the Quit campaign to make young people aware of the health hazards associated with the excessive consumption of alcohol.

This matter was highlighted when the Latrobe Valley Football League grand final was sponsored by the Quit campaign which replaced a cigarette company that had sponsored the grand final for many years. The Latrobe Valley community appreciates major sporting events in the valley being sponsored by the Quit campaign.

The following Saturday, the major sporting event in Victoria, the Victorian Football League grand final, was clearly being sponsored by a promoter of alcohol. The community generally saw this as a contradiction, because one week earlier a major sporting event was sponsored by a health promotion program and the next week a major sporting event in Victoria was sponsored by a company whose product is well recognised throughout the community as a product that has many bad effects on the community's health.

The people I have spoken to in relation to this matter believe the way in which funds are raised for the health promotion program, by having a special tax on cigarettes, could be duplicated by having a similar tax on alcohol and alcohol products and that the money so raised could be devoted to community programs that would enable the government to give a lead in overcoming the large number of community problems associated with the consumption of alcohol.

Of course, there needs to be further attempts made to establish such a program given the recent publicity about road deaths and the close correlation between the consumption of alcohol and road deaths and the cost to the community.

The people I have spoken to believe it is in the interests of the community generally, especially young people, for the establishment of a program which would make the community conscious of the health hazards associated with alcohol consumption, which sometimes leads to alcoholism, which, of course, is a major cost to the community.

The government should give serious attention to the establishment of a program that would warn people of the dangers of the abuse of alcohol and would encourage the community to treat this problem just as seriously as the problems of smoking.

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—I direct the attention of the Minister for Education to Highvale Primary School and the unfinished works program carried out at the school since last May.

Two letters have been sent to me from the secretary of the school council, Mr D. J. McLure, concerning the work carried out at the school on a new fire service installation and associated works that have not been done. The school councillors first wrote to me and to Mr Jim Campbell, the acting area works manager, on 24 August because they wanted to ensure that the work would be completed expeditiously and because

they considered that the tasks to be completed were posing a health and safety hazard to pupils at the school.

There are still eleven works that are causing concern to the school council. For example, the car park screening has not yet been finished, there is cracked concrete caused by heavy equipment yet to be repaired, top soil has to be spread and the ovals levelled.

The main purpose in getting the work completed as quickly as possible is to obviate the health and safety problems at the school. The school council believes if these works are not finished very soon there will be an accident in the school and it is concerned about that.

At the moment the school has no oval because of the sprinkler system being installed and the other playing areas in the school cannot be used, so students can use only the ashphalted schoolyard. The contractors have been to the school on a number of occasions and they have blamed the weather, but the school council has pointed out that the weather has not been the main delay and they ask the Minister to take urgent steps to ensure that the contractors finish all the works as soon as possible.

Mr EVANS (Gippsland East)—I direct to the attention of the Treasurer an urgent and important matter concerning a complete mess-up in the issuing of group certificates by the State Superannuation Board. I have a letter in my possession which indicates that four people have received the wrong group certificates. I point out to the Premier, who I hope will take an interest in the matter, that the group certificates contain the taxation file numbers and the people involved are concerned that confidential information may be made public.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Water Resources)—The honourable member for Swan Hill raised a matter concerning water estimates issued by the Department of Water Resources since June this year. I shall take up the matter with officers of my department and ask for a speedy decision.

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—The honourable member for Syndal raised a matter——

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I raised a matter with the Premier, not with the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

The SPEAKER—Order! The custom is that, if the Minister concerned is not in the House, the matter will be taken up by the Minister at the table. The Minister at the table is the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I was at the table when the matter was raised and I am now back at the table. The Premier is not in the House. The honourable member for Syndal raised a matter regarding a deputation he was seeking on behalf of the Port Phillip Bay Professional Fishermen's Association. The honourable member claims that he contacted my office on a number of occasions and, indeed, he did write to me and I have a copy of his letter, which asked about the position of certain fishermen who hold a net fishing licence for snapper fishing in the bay and indicated that these fishermen could be disadvantaged by a regulatory impact statement and regulations that have resulted from that statement.

The fishermen concerned believe they will be disadvantaged because of the government's action in protecting the population of snapper in the bay. Last Monday I met with certain fishermen and Mr Tony Defino, who represented some of the fishermen who have not got a long line licence for live snapper and I gave an undertaking that I would see what could be done to assist those people who did not have a long line endorsement on their licence and who can demonstrate hardship.

Also at that meeting was Ms Probstyl who represents VicFish and the proposed peak body. A number of fishing organisations have been present when these matters were being discussed with peak fishing groups by the department.

My departmental officers have met with a number of fishing organisations regarding the snapper fishing regulatory impact statement and the regulations that have been enacted since then. I had also met over a period with the commercial fishermen's association and a number of other organisations before the regulatory impact statement was introduced and I shall continue meeting with organisations at their request.

The honourable member for Syndal raised a matter concerning a number of people who have wanted to speak to me about a number of issues, but he was not specific about the issues. The honourable member is right; I receive about 180 letters a day asking me to direct my attention or that of my department to certain matters. The honourable member is just one of the people who make representations.

Mr Coleman—Join the queue!

Mrs SETCHES—Yes, that is right, the honourable member is in the queue. The department and I will continue to meet with organisations in the company of people whom I choose.

Mr Coleman interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Syndal raised his matter, as is his entitlement, on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting. The Minister is now responding and should be heard without interruption.

Mrs SETCHES—As I said, people must wait their turn to be seen. They will be seen when it is considered appropriate and the people who will accompany them will be decided by me.

If the Port Phillip Bay Professional Fishermen's Association wishes to see me, its members can make representations directly to me.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—The honourable member for Murray Valley raised the problem facing the Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital. As he said, there are significant problems facing a number of bush nursing hospitals throughout Victoria. Questions have been asked about how many of these hospitals will operate in the future, as to whether they will continue to operate actively as acute hospitals as they have in the past, and how they should operate in the future.

I commend to the honourable member the example set by his brother at the Rutherglen Hospital. As president there, he turned the hospital into a very useful and major centre providing services to the elderly in the area. That may well be one of the ways that some of the bush nursing hospitals will provide services in the future rather than providing services in the field of acute care. I shall refer the particular problem of the Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital to the Minister for Health.

The honourable member for Pascoe Vale raised with me the issue of providing adequate funds for community environment activities in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. I am well aware not only from my own electorate but also from other electorates in that part of Melbourne of the difficulties caused by the fact that funds have not been available for that segment of Melbourne for a whole range of environment and community planning issues, although such funds have been available traditionally for projects in the western suburbs and, to a lesser extent, in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

I am aware also of the initiatives that the honourable member has taken in respect of setting up the Moonee Ponds Creek committee which is starting to redevelop in a

significant way an area that has been seen basically as a drain for a very long time. I am aware that a significant tree planting program has been devised for the area, and other things could be done as well.

I assure the honourable member for Pascoe Vale that I shall provide funds for the northern suburbs of Melbourne so that the people in those suburbs have access to the equity and environment programs that the government has previously established.

The honourable member for Gisborne raised an issue concerning funding for drainage and water services in his electorate. I shall raise the matter on his behalf with the Treasurer.

The honourable member for Morwell referred to issues relating to health services in his area. I am well aware of his longstanding interest in health issues in the Latrobe Valley, not only since he has been a member of this House but also well predating that time. I shall direct the matter to the attention of the Minister for Health.

The honourable member for Glen Waverley raised issues in respect of school works in his area. I will have the matter drawn to the attention of the relevant Minister.

The honourable member for Gippsland East raised matters for the attention of the Treasurer. Unfortunately, in the time available to him he was not able to fully explain the issues. However, I shall direct the matters to the attention of the Treasurer so that the honourable member will receive an appropriate reply.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.36 *p.m.*

Wednesday, 11 October 1989

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE BANK VICTORIA

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—I refer to the Treasurer the first ever reported loss of State Bank Victoria and to today's full page advertisements costing tens of thousands of dollars which falsely claim that the bank's loss does not "adversely affect its customers in any way whatsoever", and I ask whether the State Bank's home loan rate for new customers is higher than that of other major banks because of its recent $198 million loss and whether the Treasurer will assure the House that the State Bank will not further increase its home loan interest rate.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—So far as the State Bank's housing loan position is concerned, honourable members would have recognised from reading the annual report yesterday that the number of housing loan approvals last financial year in Victoria was a record, with $1820 million of new housing loans and some 40 per cent of those new housing loans being for first home buyers. State Bank Victoria has had an excellent record in respect of home lending and the State Bank's prime rate for housing loans is one of the lowest of any bank operating in this State.

I also point out that, because of the determination by the State Bank to keep interest rates on housing loans as low as possible, the bank has had a squeeze in the margin between the borrowing cost and the lending cost and consequently, by playing that role, it has forgone $100 million in profit, in the interests of home buyers in this State. There is no doubt that the housing loan operations of the State Bank will remain a very important part of its operations. The State Bank is the most significant home lender in Victoria and has an outstanding record in respect of interest rates and will continue to do so in the future.

Mr McNAMARA (Leader of the National Party)—I address a question to the Premier. Given that the honourable member for Footscray was sacked as Deputy Premier following losses, identified at that stage, of $111 million by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, can the Premier advise the House whether he is satisfied with the performance of the Treasurer following his overseeing the activities of State Bank Victoria, its subsidiary Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, the activities of WorkCare and the State Superannuation Fund, which amount to either unfunded liabilities or losses in excess of $10 000 million?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The first thing that can be said is that the Leader of the National Party, when scratching around for a question, will spring upon the headlines of the day.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! There are too many interjections and it is difficult to hear the answer of the Premier.

Mr CAIN—If the Leader of the National Party is asserting that the annual report of State Bank Victoria tabled yesterday offers some reason why I should adopt the line he has taken, let me make a few things clear about that. Firstly, if the honourable

member wishes to examine the report of the bank, I am prepared to answer the question, but if he wishes to go on talking as an apologist for Joh in Queenland, as he has done for the past two years, he can go on doing it. I am prepared to state the facts.

This year the State Bank posted a near record operating profit of $165 million, just 3 per cent below its all-time record. The loss was incurred by Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, not by State Bank Victoria.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Ballarat South should realise that interjections are disorderly and all the more so when the Speaker is on his feet. I ask the honourable member for Burwood to cease interjecting.

Mr CAIN—The point I am making is that the State Bank has further consolidated its position as the leading retail bank in the State. It has some 34 per cent of the market; and it has lifted its capital base by some 42 per cent to approximately $1·5 billion.

It is worth looking at the record of the State Bank under the previous Liberal government. The fact is that the Liberal Party did not want the State Bank to compete freely with private banks. The State Bank was a sleeping giant when the Labor government came to office. It has since been transformed. Even after taking account of this year's result, the bank's profit in the seven years since 1982 is double the figure of the last seven years of the previous Liberal administration. The comparative profits in those two periods are: $465 million in the seven years of this government compared with $232 million in the last seven years of the previous government. In the 1982 financial year the assets of the State Bank were $5·7 billion; this year those assets total $23·9 billion. In 1982 the State Bank made 20 000 housing loans, lending a total of $594 million; in 1989 the bank made 27 000 housing loans for a total of $1·82 billion.

The point I am making is that the bank's performance has been superb. It is serving the needs of the people of this State, and it will go on doing so. The government will maintain the arm's length relationship that it has always maintained with the bank. I emphasise that the government has never had any direct relationship with Tricontinental Corporation Ltd. I offer these comments on the attack by the Leader of the National Party on the Treasurer: in this State the government has tried——

Mr McNamara interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the National Party has asked his question. If he wishes to ask a further question he will have an opportunity at a later stage of question time.

Mr CAIN—The government has tried to take care of ordinary people. It does not, as the previous Liberal government did and the present New South Wales Liberal government does, slug the taxpayer. This Treasurer and this government have looked after ordinary taxpayers and battling householders. When we came to government the former Liberal government had sent the costs of gas, electricity and water skyrocketing. The Treasurer brought them back under control; and I shall go on defending the Treasurer because he is the person who has made that possible.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is becoming virtually impossible to hear the Premier because of the barrage of interjections.

Mr W. D. McGrath—He takes so long to answer a question.

The SPEAKER—Order! The Deputy Leader of the National Party should be aware of Standing Orders. I ask all honourable members to observe the Standing Orders; and I ask the Premier to round off his reply.

Mr CAIN—Although honourable members opposite may not wish to hear this, the fact is this Treasurer has ensured that the people of this State are better able than people in any other State to manage their household expenses.

It is this Treasurer who abolished motor registration fees for ordinary motorists, abolished land tax for more than 120 000 land taxpayers and introduced the education expense allowance that takes care of ordinary families; it is this Treasurer who has ensured that tens of thousands of people in Victoria who were previously unemployed are able to get jobs; it is this Treasurer who has presided over a State which, for six years and five months, has had the lowest unemployment rate of any State. That is the record of this Treasurer and this government.

The opposition parties can yell and scream as much as they like. They know those are the facts. This government has delivered to ordinary taxpayers what the Liberal Party could not deliver.

Finally, I ask honourable members to consider one thing. Imagine for one moment what would have happened to ordinary Victorians if we had gone the Greiner way and slugged the ordinary taxpayer the way the previous government did here the moment the going got tough. That is what it did. This Treasurer is the champion of the ordinary family. This Treasurer is the reason why people in this State have more money in their pockets than have people in any other State.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier is defying a direction from the Chair. You asked him to round off his answer. That was almost 3 minutes ago. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to remind him of your direction and force him to comply with it.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order. Indeed, it seemed to me——

Mr Micallef interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Springvale that that sort of behaviour is out of character and out of keeping with the conduct in this Chamber. It did appear to me that the Premier was on the point of concluding when the honourable member for Caulfield rose to his feet. I ask the Premier to complete his reply.

Mr CAIN—I conclude by saying that this Treasurer has looked after ordinary Victorians, ordinary families battling with household budget difficulties in difficult times. The Treasurer has been the champion of those ordinary families and has served this government and the people of Victoria well and he will go on being Treasurer.

HOMICIDES INVOLVING FIREARMS

Mr COLE (Melbourne)—I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services whether he is having monitored the impact of Victoria's gun legislation on the number of homicides caused by firearms. If so, will he provide details to the House?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—My department has been monitoring for some time the number of homicides caused by firearms in this State, and I am pleased to inform the House that, for the twelve months ended September 1989, the number of homicides caused by firearms has fallen by more than 50 per cent compared with the previous twelve months.

In the twelve months to September 1989 there were 19 homicides by firearms compared with 39 in the twelve months to September 1988. Even allowing for the Queen Street tragedy, the number of homicides involving firearms has fallen from 31 in the previous twelve months to 19.

The Hoddle Street tragedy occurred in the previous year, the year ended September 1987, in which there were 36 such deaths. In 1986 when there was neither the Queen Street nor the Hoddle Street incident, there were 33 firearm homicides in this State.

In the past twelve months there have been only 19 homicides resulting from the use of firearms. Indeed, that is reflected also in the aggregate number of homicides by all causes which has fallen from 226 in the year ended September 1988 to 145 in the year just ended. That has come about because of a toughening of the gun laws, because of tighter licensing provisions, tighter registration provisions and a tighter permit to purchase system, all things that were achieved by the government despite the trenchant opposition of the gun lobby and its right-wing running dogs in the Liberal and National parties.

A significant part of the effect was created by the most successful gun amnesty ever conducted in this or any other State late last year when the government unashamedly spent $1 million in advertising that gun amnesty, despite the criticism that I received from the gun lobby and honourable members opposite about the provocative nature of those advertisements. The advertisements were deliberately provocative so they would achieve the effect that has been achieved, that is, to reduce the number of people who have died from irresponsible use of guns.

The cold, hard fact is that the number of people dying from gun homicides is dropping in this State.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr CRABB—That is the reality and that puts the lie to the claim by the honourable member for Mornington that the gun amnesty was an expensive shambles.

Mr Cooper interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest to the honourable member for Mornington and the honourable member for Carrum that almost all other honourable members are attempting to maintain decorum in the Chamber and do not want the proceedings disrupted by disorderly interjections.

TRICONTINENTAL CORPORATION LTD

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—I address my question to the champion of the ordinary, the Treasurer.

Ms Kirner interjected.

Mr STOCKDALE—My background is not as lofty as yours, my dear! Does the Treasurer stand by——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Brighton is entitled to ask his question without interruption.

Mr STOCKDALE—Does the Treasurer stand by his glowing endorsement of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd when on 12 April 1988 he told the House:

> Tricontinental is one of Australia's leading merchant banks with an outstanding record in Victoria—

or does he now accept the Premier's criticism today of Tricontinental and prefer to wash his hands of responsibility for Tricontinental's huge losses?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—It is interesting to hear from the de facto Leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr Stockdale interjected.

Mr JOLLY—He rushed very rapidly and he certainly enjoys that because he is working hard to be the de jure Leader—but he will never be the legitimate Leader of the Liberal Party.

With regard to Tricontinental, prior to the financial year 1988–89 its profit record was a good one. The only person in the Liberal Party who criticised Tricontinental during the debate to which the honourable member referred was the former honourable member for Doncaster, Mr Morrie Williams. The honourable member for Brighton at that time had no words to say about Tricontinental. In fact, he supported the government's proposition to expand the charter of State Bank Victoria. That is in stark contrast with the position of the current Leader of the Liberal Party, who wants the State Bank to go back to a situation where it was not allowed even to offer overdrafts to customers.

The Leader of the Liberal Party issued a press statement on Monday stating that he wanted the State Bank to go back to the good old days, in stark contrast with the view of honourable member for Brighton, who obviously supported the expanded charter of the State Bank and made it clear that the State Bank should compete on equal terms with the private sector.

State Bank Victoria had its second highest profit ever—$165 million. During the seven years since the Labor Party has been in government, the profit figure has been more than $450 million, even taking into account the poor performance of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd this year. The profit in the final seven years of the Liberal Party's reign was $232 million.

There is no doubt that, if the State government had not taken action to expand the charter and to enhance the operations of the State Bank, a far worse performance would have been announced.

LICENSING LAWS

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Given the mounting disaster in road accidents and the increased crime contributed to by the government's liquor industry policy of extended trading hours—virtually unlimited trading hours—will the government now accept the advice of its own commissioner, Ms Elizabeth Bond, to restrict late night trading hours? Will the Minister reassess the liquor licensing laws in Victoria?

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—As honourable members will be aware, an overwhelming majority in this place passed the significant new provisions in the 1987 liquor legislation. In the majority of instances, those laws have greatly improved the quality of life for many Victorians. The government does not suggest that there have not been problems in the liquor industry, and I shall later mention some of those which I know concern the honourable member.

On balance, one would have to say that the reforms passed by Parliament, with the support of most honourable members, have been very successful. Certainly, the matter of times of opening is not one for the government but for the Liquor Licensing Commission, which can hear proposals for varying the hours of operation for any licensed premises; indeed, the commission has had before it over the past few months quite a number of matters concerning hours of opening.

Honourable members need to understand that the reforms passed in 1987 ensured not only that people had more reasonable access to liquor but also that the commission was able to deal with problems in the industry. As some honourable members will be aware, under the previous legislation difficulties existed in dealing with individual licensees during the licence year, that is, between the commencement and termination dates of licences. Often long delays occurred in identifying licensee problems and rectifying them.

The 1987 legislation has a section that allows for the suspension or cancellation of a licence at any time, where circumstances warrant it. I am sure honourable members are pleased with the way that provision is operating because it means that affected individuals or communities can take action, particularly when the police become aware that a licensee is abusing the licence and the community.

The police have been very active in taking before the commission problems involving a number of Melbourne nightspots; those locations have become notorious for "antisocial" behaviour—although that is not really the appropriate word; there have been rather more severe problems. The number of intoxicated people in the vicinity of those premises, and the violence of the bashers, have been of phenomenal concern to most members of the Victorian community.

Last week two major decisions were taken, one by Commissioner Bond in relation to the Hippodrome Discotheque Club and the other by Commissioner Ryan in relation to the Underground; a number of other nightspots are currently being considered.

The Liquor Licensing Commission made it clear, and I am sure it has the support of Parliament, that the community will not tolerate this kind of action. Commissioner Ryan sent me detailed material from those two inquiries and, when I read the transcript of the evidence and the decisions, I was horrified at what was being allowed to occur, particularly at the Hippodrome Discotheque Club.

I took the view that it was important that the Victorian Community Council Against Violence, which my colleague the Minister for Police and Emergency Services established, has access to this information. The council is currently inquiring into the issues of bouncers and violence around these nightspots. I believe it will find the transcript of these hearings of great value to it. I am informed that it is due to report to the Minister by Christmas this year.

A committee chaired by the former Chief Commissioner of Police, Mick Miller, is also providing me with advice on this matter. As a government and a Parliament we want to ensure that the disgraceful practices that occur in some nightspots are stamped out. It can be done through the Liquor Licensing Commission or as a result of the report that will come to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

FAMILY BUDGET PLEDGE

Mr LEIGHTON (Preston)—Has the Premier examined the implications of the recent results of the Australian Bureau of Statistics household expenditure survey on the government's family budget pledge and, if so, will the Premier indicate to the House the outcome of that review?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The Australian Bureau of Statistics has just released preliminary results of a survey on household incomes throughout Australia. They show that Victorian families have the highest average income for any State in Australia. Victorian families now enjoy an average income of $673 a week, $62 a week more than the average family in New South Wales and $69 above the average family for the rest of Australia.

The results of this survey are a measure of how the economy of the State has led the country during the 1980s. I say that recognising, as I am sure all honourable members do, that the government inherited a stagnant economy and, in a short space of time, transformed that economy into an economic powerhouse.

Victorian families are also benefiting from the success of the family pledge. A typical Victorian family is now paying $5 less for all services than it was two years ago. In New South Wales, in contrast—I suppose that is the best relative measure—families have been dished out treatment of the kind that households here received before a Labor government came to power. New South Wales families have been markedly affected by the high-taxing policies of the New South Wales government. In 1988–89 total taxes, fees and charges in Victoria amounted to $1102 a person, 15 per cent less than the level in New South Wales, which is $1286 a person.

The House well knows that for the second year in a row the Premier of New South Wales has broken his promise to keep taxes below the rise in the consumer price index. The New South Wales government Budget Papers show that New South Wales has the highest taxes a person in the country. I suppose this is a measure of what Victorians could expect under a conservative government.

I am reminded that the State's local agent for the "Joh for Canberra show", the Leader of the National Party, recently said that Victorians should understand that a conservative government in Victoria, if it acted responsibly, would need to follow the path of the coalition government in New South Wales. That is what the Leader of the National Party wants to do.

I guess that means Victoria would suffer from the same kind of disgraceful conduct that New South Wales got with its conservative government, which has broken promise after promise. If that were in store for Victorians under a conservative government, the tariffs for electricity, gas and the supply of water would all increase. Families are well protected by a Victorian Labor government, and they will go on being protected.

STATE BANK VICTORIA

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I direct my question to the Treasurer. Which State Bank Victoria group director was paid between $410 000 and $420 000 and which executive was paid between $285 000 and $295 000 last year? Has the remuneration of those individuals been reduced in light of the bank's $198 million loss; if not, why not?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As the honourable member should be aware, Tricontinental Corporation Ltd directors' fees and remunerations were determined by the board of that organisation; I had no influence whatsoever on those matters. I make the comment that the State Bank board has made the decision to integrate Tricontinental into the State Bank. Consequently, there are no directors of Tricontinental; the executive positions of Tricontinental have been abolished.

PETITIONS

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

Caging and trapping of birds

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria respectfully shows their opposition to the cruel and unnecessary caging of birds and the breeding and trapping of birds for trade. Birds cannot live a natural life confined as ornaments in a cage.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the caging, trapping and selling of birds be made illegal immediately.

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

By **Mrs Ray** (1351 signatures)

Pine plantations in Mirboo

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 object strongly to the planting of pines in the Mirboo area until such time as the consultant's report to the State plantations impact study has been studied fully.

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

By **Mr Wallace** (69 signatures)

Very Fast Train

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Nilma and outlying districts in the State of Victoria sheweth:

We oppose the construction of the Very Fast Train—VFT—line and said satellite cities required to make the VFT proposal viable for the following reasons:

social disruption, environmental impact, noise pollution, water availability for said cities and most importantly the loss of control of a vital community service due to the huge amount of foreign money required to make it possible.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the proposed VFT route via Gippsland project be abandoned.

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

By **Mr Delzoppo** (225 signatures)

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

PAPERS

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

Benefit Associations—Report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year 1988–89.

Building Societies Council—Report for the year 1988–89.

Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978—

Summary of Returns—June 1989—Ordered to be printed.

Summary of Variations Notified between 1 May and 30 June 1989—Ordered to be printed.

Planning and Environment Act 1987—Notices of approval of amendments to the following planning schemes:

Alexandra Planning Scheme—No. L5.

Ararat (Shire) Planning Scheme—No. L2.

Bairnsdale (Shire) Planning Scheme—No. L9.

Box Hill Planning Scheme—No. L3 Part 1.

Caulfield Planning Scheme—No. L7.

Colac (Shire) Planning Scheme—No. L2.

Eaglehawk Planning Scheme—Nos L2, L3.

Healesville Planning Scheme—No. L14.

Knox Planning Scheme—No. L9 Part 1.

Lillydale Planning Scheme—No. L49.

Maromg Planning Scheme—No. L4.

Melton Planning Scheme—No. L1.

Metropolitan Region Planning Scheme—No. R18, R79, RL37 Part 2.

Myrtleford Planning Scheme—No. L9.

Pakenham Planning Scheme—No. L15.

Rosedale Planning Scheme—Nos L12, L19.

Shepparton (City) Planning Scheme—No. L17.

Sherbrooke Planning Scheme—No. L14.

Swan Hill (Shire) Planning Scheme—No. L2.

Tambo Planning Scheme—No. L10.

Upper Murray Planning Scheme—No. L5.

Whittlesea Planning Scheme—No. L7.

Statutory Rule under the following Act:

Accident Compensation Act 1985—SR No. 238.

CRIMES (FAMILY VIOLENCE) (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987 and the Children and Young Persons Act 1989 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL (PLANNING) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1984 and the Planning Appeals Act 1980 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Administration and Probate Act 1958, the Wills Act 1958, the Property Law Act 1958, the State Trust Corporation of Victoria Act 1987 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND TRUST BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to incorporate the trustees of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and for other purposes.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—Will the Minister give a brief resumé of the details of the proposed legislation?

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) (*By leave*)—The purpose of the Bill is to incorporate the existing trustees of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and for other purposes.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—By leave, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER—Order! Is leave granted?

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—Leave is refused.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I ask that the Minister, having introduced the Bill, in accordance with Standing Orders and as is required from time to time, give the House a brief explanation of the details of the proposed legislation. If the Minister cannot do that, the Opposition will be happy to accept her answer that she cannot. If she can and does not, it is an affront to the House and its procedures.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order. It is a matter for the Minister as to how she responds to comments such as those made by the honourable member for Burwood. I put the question:

That the motion be agreed to.

The division bells were rung.

The SPEAKER—Order! The ringing of the division bells is not the time for a free-for-all and unrestricted debate. I ask honourable members to remain quiet and talk only among themselves.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. Ken Coghill in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	38
Majority for the motion	5

AYES	NOES
Mr Andrianopoulos	Mr Austin
Mr Baker	Mr Bildstien
Mrs Barker	Mr Brown
Mr Cain	Mr Coleman
Mr Cole	Mr Cooper
Mr Crabb	Mr Delzoppo

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

PAIRS

Mr Fordham	Mr John
Mr Pope	Mr Dickinson

The SPEAKER—Order! The question is:

That this Bill be now read a first time, that the Bill be printed and, by leave, the second reading be made an Order of the Day for next day.

Those of that opinion say Aye, those against say No. I think the Ayes have it.

Mr Kennett—The Noes have it—division!

The SPEAKER—Order! Before calling for the division bells to be rung, I indicate to the House that if a division is required, it will be necessary to put each question separately. Therefore, the first question to be determined is:

That this Bill be now read a first time.

I ask the Clerk to ring the bells.

The division bells were rung.

The SPEAKER—Order! Once again, I indicate that the ringing of the bells is not an opportunity for free and unrestricted debate. I suggest honourable members talk quietly among themselves.

The House divided on the question (the Hon. Ken Coghill in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	36
Majority for the question	7

AYES	NOES
Mr Andrianopoulos	Mr Austin
Mr Baker	Mr Bildstien
Mr Cain	Mr Brown
Mr Crabb	Mr Clark
Mr Cunningham	Mr Coleman
Mr Dollis	Mr Cooper
Mr Ernst	Mr Delzoppo
Mrs Garbutt	Mr Elder
Mr Gavin	Mr Evans
Mrs Gleeson	Mr Gude
Mr Hamilton	Mr Hayward
Mr Harrowfield	Mr Jasper
Mrs Hill	Mr Kennett
Mrs Hirsh	Mr Lea
Mr Jolly	Mr Lieberman
Mr Kennan	Mr McGrath *(Lowan)*
Mr Kennedy	Mr McGrath *(Warrnambool)*
Ms Kirner	Mr McNamara
Mr Leighton	Mr Maughan
Mr McCutcheon	Dr Napthine
Mr McDonald	Mr Perrin
Mr Mathews	Mr Perton
Mr Micallef	Mr Pescott
Mr Norris	Mr Reynolds
Mrs Ray	Mr Richardson
Mr Roper	Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Rowe	Mr Smith *(Glen Waverley)*
Mr Sandon	Mr Smith *(Polwarth)*
Mr Seitz	Mr Steggall
Mr Sercombe	Mr Stockdale
Mrs Setches	Mr Tanner
Mr Sheehan *(Ballarat South)*	Mrs Wade
Mr Sheehan *(Northcote)*	Mr Wallace
Mr Shell	Mr Weideman
Mr Simmonds	
Mr Spyker	*Tellers:*
Mr Thomson	Mr Honeywood
Mr Trezise	Dr Wells
Dr Vaughan	
Mr Walsh	
Mrs Wilson	
Tellers:	
Mrs Barker	
Mr Cole	

PAIRS

Mr Fordham	Mr John
Mr Pope	Mr Dickinson

The Bill was read a first time.

It was ordered that the Bill be printed and that the second reading be an Order of the Day for next day.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BILL

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to establish a State training system in Victoria and to amend the Post-Secondary Education Act 1978, to amend the Employment and Training Act 1981 and to repeal the Industrial Training Act 1975 and for other purposes.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—I ask the Minister for Education to give further details of the proposed legislation she is introducing, particularly the part that amends the Employment and Training Act 1981.

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education) (*By leave*)—The amendments in the Bill are directed towards changing the structural basis of the State training system in Victoria. There are two parts to it: firstly, it is to establish officially the State Training Board and to define its powers vis-a-vis the Minister and other agencies; and, secondly, it is to deal with the Industrial Training Commission.

Mr Kennett interjected.

Ms KIRNER—What the honourable member for Burwood would really like to be is a teacher in the State system, and I would be very happy to have him. However, I am not sure that the parents and children would be.

The Bill also places the apprenticeship system under the State Training Board and ensures that the State employment and training system in Victoria is under the board.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

FIRE AUTHORITIES (CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL

Mr CRABB (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Country Fire Authority Act 1958, the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958 and the Fire Authorities Act 1989 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

TRANSPORT ACCIDENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I move:

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to amend sections 61 and 172 of the Transport Accident Act 1986 and for other purposes.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—I ask the Minister for Transport to explain to the House the relevance of the amendment to section 172.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport) (*By leave*)—I am delighted to do that. I left a message for the honourable member for Burwood on a tape and was prepared to give him some legal assistance for no fee, and I now have some advice about his appearance. The honourable member for Burwood looks much better when he puts his gel in, but he got out of bed late this morning and did not have time to put it in. I do not intend to charge for that advice either. The honourable member for Burwood

needs all the help he can get, and I am giving it to him, just like I do with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

An Honourable Member—Do you dye your hair?

Mr KENNAN—I haven't even got to the gel stage yet, let alone the dye stage.

Mr Weideman—Do you have a barber?

Mr KENNAN—Yes I have, and I am trying to persuade him to cut Jeff's hair.

I shall now explain the purpose of section 172. As the honourable member for Burwood will be aware of all the sections in detail, he will recall that at the time the government introduced the Transport Accident Act certain limitations were put on common-law damages. The honourable member may know what common law is; he has heard about it. There is a lot of it about; it is very common. The government has expanded both the statutory law and the common law. The government has appointed more judges and they are making more common law all the time. They are very common, except over the Christmas vacation. I know that Alan, the honourable member for Brighton, would not laugh because he does not have a sense of humour. Years ago it was not funny being opposed to him before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission because it was a thorough bore. If he were on the other side we used to get higher fees as a hardship allowance!

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest that the Minister come back to the question.

Mr KENNAN—I have been savaged again; it happened to me this morning on talkback radio. The common law—and there is a lot of it about—was the law that governed claims for damages by people injured in motor car accidents. The honourable member for Burwood will remember *Donoghue* v. *Stevenson* 1932.

Mr Kennett—1933!

Mr KENNAN—It was a 1932 House of Lords case. As I recall the facts, the case related to a snail in a bottle and established something called the duty of care. It was the principle of the duty of care that governed the rights of persons who were injured.

Mr Kennett—How are you going to implement it?

Mr KENNAN—I am explaining it to you.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Burwood should cease interjecting and allow the Minister to answer.

Mr KENNAN—Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. Until the government introduced the Transport Accident Act, generally the common law governed the right of injured people to sue those at fault. One of the things one had to establish was a breach of the duty of care owed by a person—usually the driver—to the person who was injured. If a breach of reasonable care was established, one could then go on and get what is known in the law as damages. The honourable member for Burwood is familiar with that, of course.

Mr Kennett—I am, thanks to your great advice.

Mr KENNAN—It is usually given in Aussie dollars, but I am sure the honourable member for Burwood would settle for American dollars or yen in his present case.

When the government introduced the Transport Accident Act it abolished the notion of fault to more equitably spread the payments to injured persons across the board. One of the purposes of that is to have a more equitable scheme. The government

put a limitation on the damages that could be claimed at common law. The government has not got around to defamation.

Mr Kennett—I understand that.

Mr KENNAN—The government is not going to do it retrospectively in the case of the honourable member for Burwood. How anyone could injure his reputation is a matter of some wonderment to members of the government. If that was worth $20 000 the rest of us must be entitled to $2 million or $3 million every day!

In limiting and modifying the common law and placing those limitations on damages from motor car accidents generally the government did not, because of an oversight, extend those provisions to trains and trams.

Mr Weideman interjected.

Mr KENNAN—That is offensive. I do not know whether I can continue.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest to the honourable member for Frankston South that it will facilitate the proceedings of the House if he resists the temptation to interject.

Mr KENNAN—The limitation applied to accidents and injuries arising out of the use of motor vehicles but it did not extend to trains and trams. It should have extended to all injuries caused by vehicles, so the amendment to section 172 will extend the provision covering motor vehicles to trains and trams.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BILL

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the marketing of certain agricultural commodities; to provide for the establishment and functions of committees in respect of certain of those products; to provide for the establishment and functions of a Wine Grape Industry Negotiating Committee; to repeal the Wine Grape Processing Industry Act 1978; and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

FARM PRODUCE WHOLESALE BILL

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to re-enact with amendments provisions relating to the wholesale marketing of fruit and vegetables, cut flowers, beeswax and honey; to repeal the Farm Produce Merchants and Commission Agents Act 1965; to amend the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust Act 1977; and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Environment Protection Act 1970, the Health (General Amendment) Act 1988 and the Litter Act 1987.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Local Government Act 1958, the Valuation of Land (Amendment) Act 1989, the Planning Appeals Act 1980 and the Building Control Act 1981 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HOUSE CONTRACTS GUARANTEE (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the House Contracts Guarantee Act 1987 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

APPROPRIATION (1989-90, No. 1) BILL AND WORKS AND SERVICES (ANCILLARY PROVISIONS, 1989-90, No. 2) BILL

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debates on the motions for the second reading of these Bills was read.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I declare these Bills to be urgent and I move:

That these Bills be considered urgent Bills.

Approval of the motion being put was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 105 (*a*).

The motion was agreed to.

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

That the time allotted in connection with the Bills be as follows:

For the remaining stages of the Bills until 9 p.m. this day.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—A considerable number of Opposition speakers have indicated their intention to speak on these Bills. Both the Treasurer and the Leader of the House have consistently monitored the number of Opposition speakers who desire to speak on the Bills. We have avoided moving into the Committee stage to give honourable members the opportunity of participating in the second-reading debate.

It is outrageous for the government to walk in here and use its numbers to trample on the Parliament. There is no urgency about these Bills. The Bills have languished on the Notice Paper at the government's pleasure for the whole sessional period. The government has done nothing to ensure that there will be a reasonable opportunity of debating the Bills. There is no need for these Bills to be guillotined at this stage.

The SPEAKER—Order! I advise the honourable member for Brighton that the debate is on the time for the remaining stages. The House has already resolved that the Bills will be considered urgent; the honourable member may speak on the time but not on urgency.

Mr STOCKDALE—Mr Speaker, I was speaking on the time. I am suggesting to the House and to the Chair that the time allocated by the Leader of the House is ludicrous. I put the Leader of the House and the government on notice; they are denying honourable members who have prepared speeches, in the expectation built up by the Leader of the House, by the government Whip and by the Treasurer that they would have the opportunity of participating in one of the major debates of this time, and to allow them only between now and 9 p.m. today is ludicrous.

The Leader of the House, the Treasurer and the government ought to bear in mind that this is a Parliament. Safeguards have been placed in the hands of honourable members in the other place, where the government does not have the capacity to ride roughshod over the other parties whose members are elected by Victorians to participate in the process of government. It is inappropriate for the Appropriation Bill, which is the most important Bill to be debated in Parliament, to be allocated limited time and for honourable members to have the time available to them cut off without prior warning. During question time today I, as shadow Treasurer, was given the first indication that the government did not propose to proceed with the course we previously had been led to believe would be followed. It is intolerable not only to this House but also to Parliament as a whole.

It is about time the government recognised that it needs the cooperation of the other parties in Parliament and that it cannot simply ride roughshod over honourable members here and in the other place.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—Mr Speaker, the question of time is important. The proposed legislation, which provides for the financial arrangements of the State for the next twelve months, has been debated for only 24 or 25 hours. In order to put forward arguments on why the government should not introduce new taxes covering the Totalizator Agency Board, goodwill and so on, honourable members need time to explain their positions.

In question time today, and in question times on three or four occasions, the Premier has deliberately taken time to explain to the opposition parties the taxation arrangements of New South Wales. We want to demonstrate to the Victorian public, through this debate, what is wrong with the Budget and its provisions.

Proper and adequate time must be allowed for consultation and debate on the Budget to take place. Some members on this side of the House have not had the opportunity of making their contribution to the debate. Some honourable members opposite are not game to take the opportunity of explaining where they stand on the Budget!

It is absolutely inappropriate that the guillotine be applied to the debate on such an important Bill. I invite honourable members to reflect on what happened in the past in respect of the time allowed for debate on the Budget: the Committee would go through the provisions of the Budget, department by department. Honourable members

do not get that opportunity now. Instead, the debate is chopped off in the second-reading stage of the Bill by moving the motion that the debate be guillotined! It is ridiculous that the government has the opportunity to curtail debate on such an important subject. In taking that opportunity the government shows that all it wants is to ride roughshod over the people of Victoria. It is not only the members of the Opposition but also all the people of Victoria who will be affected.

The government is demonstrating that it has no consideration for the people of Victoria because it will not allow members of the Opposition the time to speak on behalf of the people, in the proper forum for presenting the views of the people—on the floor of Parliament.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—On the question of time, Mr Speaker, if the motion of the Minister for Planning and Environment is agreed to, the role of Parliament will be negated, as will the role of honourable members of this House. All honourable members should have the opportunity of speaking on the Budget. The Appropriation Bill is the most important Bill that the House considers in the course of a year. If the Minister's motion is agreed to, members of the Opposition will be prevented from speaking in the second-reading debate. As well, the shadow spokespersons of the opposition parties will be prevented from participating in the Committee stage of the Bill.

If Parliament is to exist in the Westminster tradition that has provided its safeguards over the centuries, the least that the government can do—through the Minister for Planning and Environment—is to allow all members of the Opposition who wish to make a contribution during the second-reading debate to make that contribution and to allow at least the shadow spokespersons of the opposition parties—if not other members of the Opposition—the opportunity of making a contribution in the Committee stage in respect of those matters of interest to them.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—The annual Budget debate, based this year on the Appropriation (1989–90, No. 1) Bill and the Works and Services (Ancillary Provisions, 1989–90, No. 2) Bill, is clearly the most important managerial debate conducted in Parliament each year. It deals with the ways and means of running the State of Victoria. I suggest that the Budget debate should be the exceptional debate in the annual life of the Parliament. It should be the one in which, as of right, every member can speak for 30 minutes. Whether he or she takes up that opportunity should be for each individual member to decide.

As I said, the Budget deals with the total financial running of the State of Victoria. That is the first reason why every member of Parliament should have the opportunity of and should exercise the right to speak. The second reason why every member of a democratically elected Parliament should have and should exercise his or her right to speak is that there is something in every electorate of the State worthy of being raised by the elected members in the course of the annual Budget debate. It is beyond my comprehension that that would not be so. It is not a question of trying to destroy the government or trying to attack the Opposition; it is a question of each elected member fulfilling his or her responsibilities to the people in their electorates.

It is unacceptable that the debate should be truncated in the manner proposed. It would be to the benefit of this Parliament and to its distinction and standing if each year the appropriate time were made available to exhaust debate on the Budget as honourable members wish. Any other policy, regardless of political party considerations, is secondary and should not be considered.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. Ken Coghill in the chair).

Ayes	43
Noes	35
Majority for the motion	8

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

PAIRS

Mr Fordham	Mr John
Mr Pope	Mr Dickson

The debates (adjourned from the previous day) on the motions of Mr Jolly (Treasurer) for the second reading of these Bills were resumed.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—The act of guillotining the annual Budget debate is not the act of an efficient and confident government and I regret that the government has taken this step. To understand the Budget documents and, more importantly, the Budget strategies for Victoria in the year ahead, it is necessary to realise that there are

two guiding principles that are not stated anywhere in the Budget documents. The first is the process of changing headings and categorisation of entries in the annual Budget documents. This obfuscation is the act of a government that wishes to cover up what it says and does and not the act of a properly functioning and decent government.

The second important unstated principle of the Budget documents, and, more importantly, the Budget strategy, is that the Budget is now, after eight years of Labor government, deficit driven, and the government does not include in its statement the entries I have included in my table 1, which I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard,* as I do for the other documents that follow.

The SPEAKER—Order! I have examined the documents and they are suitable for incorporation. Is leave granted?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I do not have copies, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER—Order! Would the honourable member for Dromana make copies available to the Treasurer and I shall defer consideration of incorporation.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—Table 1 refers to Treasurer's debts, liabilities and losses and shows a total of $31·8 billion wasted in this State since the Labor Party came to office. By rushing the last election before the people were aware of the situation the Labor Party was able to save its neck for one more term in office, but it will not be able to do so next time around.

The second point in an overview of this Budget statement is incorporated in my table 2.

The SPEAKER—Order! I understand the Treasurer has now had an opportunity of examining the documents. Is leave granted?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—Mr Speaker, I assume the handwritten alterations are the final figures to be incorporated?

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—Yes.

Leave was granted, and the tables were as follows:

Table 1

Treasurer's debts, liabilities and losses	$ millions
1. Increase in Victorian State net debt	13 705
2. WorkCare: accumulated deficit	4 200
3. Third party insurance: deficit	1 298
4. Government superannuation: unfunded liabilities	4 000
5. Sale and lease back of rolling stock: cost	600
6. Treasurer's stock-market losses	918
7. Treasurer's foreign exchange losses	714
8. Pre-WorkCare government worker's compensation—unfunded liabilities	278
9. VEDC reported losses	111
10. Victorian Investment Corporation losses	80
11. Interest forgone on DITR industry assistance loans	30
12. VEDC subjected to a contingent liability to repurchase units in VET	700
13. Transport losses	5 000
14. State Bank and Tricontinental	198
Total of Treasurer's debts, liabilities and losses	31 832

*Nos 1–12 and 14: Government reports and papers.
13: Liberal Party estimate.

Table 2

Victoria Falling Behind

Economic Indicators 1987–1989

Indicator			*Victoria as % of Australia* 1987	1989	*Notes*
			(%)	(%)	
Employment	(June)		27·0	26·6	
Unemployment	(June)		19·8	20·5	
Retail sales		(year)	26·7	25·9	
Motor registrations		(year)	27·4	24·9	
Dwelling commencements		(year)	28·0	21·7	(1)
Building approvals		(year)	27·4	21·8	
Capital expenditure		(year)	28·1	26·9	(2)

Notes: (1) 1988–89: year to March.
(2) 1988–89: year to March.
Sources: ABS Statistics Cat. Nos 6203·0
8501·0
8303·0
9303·0
8750·0
8731·0
5646·0

Table 3

State Taxation Per Head of Population

State	*State Taxation Per Capita* 1988–89	1988–90
	$P.A.	*$P.A.*
Victoria	1196	1294
New South Wales	1078	
Western Australia	890	
South Australia	847	
Tasmania	800	
Queensland	632	
Weighted average of States other than Victoria	912	

Sources: State Budgets and December population estimates from ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics (Cat. No. 3101·0) and Projections of the Populations of Australia, States and Territories 1987–2031 (Cat. No. 3220·0)

Table 4

Statutory Authority Taxes

1981–82 to 1989–90

Authority Taxes	1981–82 ($m)	1989–90 ($m)	% *Increase*
SECV	58·8	106·7	81·5
GFCV	39·8	292·3	634·4
MMBW	0·0	84·6	(new)
Brown coal royalty	0·9	14·6	1522·2
Energy consumption levy	0·0	4·2	(new)
Gas, water and electricity	99·5	502·4	404·9
All statutory authorities	111·0	666·0	500·00

Sources: Victorian Budget Papers 1982–83 to 1989–90

Table 5

Asset Sales 1984–85 to 1989–90

Year	*Budget Sector*	*Non-Budget Sector*	*Public Sector*
	$m	$m	$m
1984–5	36·1	17·5	53·6
1985–6	78·1	26·1	104·2
1986–7	139·2	46·8	186·0
1987–8	223·0	57·4	280·4
1988–9	229·7	71·0	300·7
1989–90	571·6	274·5	796·1*

Sources: 1989–90 Budget Paper No. 2:

(1) Budget Sector—Table 4.2, page 49

(2) Non-Budget Sector—Table 4.6, page 53

(3) Public Sector—Table 4.7, page 56

*Note: 1989–90 "Public Sector" is net of $50 million transferred from Non-Budget sector to Budget sector in connection with sale of government housing by GEHA 1989–90 Budget Paper No. 2, page 56.

Table 6

Budget Estimates Compared to Actual Outcomes

% Change on Previous Year 1984–85 to 1988–89

A. Total Continuing Expenditure

Year	*Budget Estimate*	*Actual Outcome*
1984–5	8·2	8·6
1985–6	9·5	10·1
1986–7	7·4	9·2
1987–8	6·7	8·4
1988–9	8·8	10·0

B. Total Continuing Revenue

Year	*Budget Estimate*	*Actual Outcome*
1984–5	7·8	9·4
1985–6	9·3	9·8
1986–7	7·3	9·1
1987–8	7·0	10·2
1988–9	6·1	7·8

C. State Taxation

Year	*Budget Estimate*	*Actual Outcome*
1984–5	7·8	14·3
1985–6	7·1	10·1
1986–7	6·3	9·8
1987–8	7·0	15·6
1988–9	9·5	14·2

Sources: Consolidated Fund Current Account Summary, Victorian Budget Papers, No. 2:
1985–6 page 5
1986–7 page 10
1987–8 page 13
1988–9 page 15
1989–90 page 20

Table 7

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

MARCH QUARTER 1984 to 1989

Government	*Percentage Increase*
	(%)
Victoria	10·1
Western Australia	6·9
South Australia	3·9
Northern Territory	3·9
Queensland	2·7
New South Wales	2·1
Tasmania	0·5
Commonwealth	0·5
States and Territories (excluding Victoria)	3·1
States, Territories and Commonwealth (excluding Victoria)	2·2

Note: ABS series commenced September quarter, 1983 and March quarter data are used to remove seasonal factors.

Source: Employed Wage and Salary Earners, March quarter (ABS Cat. No. 6248·0)

Dr WELLS—Table 2, entitled "Victoria Falling Behind", lists a number of economic indicators between 1987 and 1989 for Victoria under the headings of employment, unemployment, retail sales, motor registrations, dwelling commencements, building approvals and capital expenditure, all of which show that between those two years our performance has deteriorated as a percentage of figures for Australia.

Table 3 refers to Victorian State taxation a head of population as being the highest in Australia. I shall not go through the figures but the point is made clearly in the table that by a significant sum of money Victorian State tax is higher than that in any other State.

Table 4 extends the statement on taxation by referring to statutory authority taxes. It shows that not only has the Treasurer, with his own style of juggling finances, found ways of increasing personal taxation in this State directly but he has also done it efficiently and indirectly by using the great public statutory authorities of Victoria that produce electricity, gas and so forth to act as a milking machine for raising further money for the Treasury.

The fifth item which is a guide to an overview of the State Budget is table 5 which refers to asset sales and shows again that the Treasurer has found a major way of raising money to dispose of as he wishes. The table shows that the government is growing in confidence and in its ability to milk the asset register of this State as each year passes by. Whereas in 1984–85 the government raised $53·6 million from asset sales, by 1989–90 the figure has risen to $796·1 million, a figure that is many times ahead of any inflationary adjustments.

Table 6 refers to Budget estimates compared to actual outcomes, expressed as a percentage change on the previous year, for the period from 1984–85 to 1988–89. The sad story in that table is that in every way, whether we discuss Budget estimates for expenditure, whether we look at revenue or at taxation, the figures go in the wrong direction each time. Expenditure is higher than was budgeted each year. Revenue raised is much higher than was budgeted each year. Taxation is much higher than was budgeted each year and that can be ascertained from the statements brought into this place by the Treasurer. In many instances the discrepancy is so great as to question the credibility of the Treasurer.

Table 7 refers to public sector employment and provides some explanation of where this money has gone. The table establishes from official Australian Bureau of Statistics figures that, since the Labor Party has been in office in Victoria, public employment in this State has grown by 10·1 per cent, whereas the average over the rest of Australia, excluding Victoria, is 2·2 per cent. They are some of the major parameters by which to judge the performance of the government. In summary, the eight Budgets brought down by the Treasurer have resulted in a net annual increase of 2 per cent in real terms each year in taxation collected, amounting to an increase of 17 per cent for eight years. Under the government the Budget deficit has trebled during that time; last year an estimated loss of $1 billion occurred.

There are two major driving deficiencies in the government's budgetary and economic strategy. The first concerns the explosion in the rate of growth of the bureaucracy. I referred to the growth of 10·1 per cent in public sector employment. One must challenge the Treasurer to show how life in Victoria has been improved by increasing the size of the Public Service by more than 10 per cent. Indeed, one may assert with confidence that the quality of life of Victorians has not improved because of this increase. Therefore, in so far as more taxation has been collected to meet those costs the standard of living in Victoria has deteriorated under the government's economic strategy.

The second great explosion that is causing financial difficulty for all Victorians is the growth of the State debt, which has risen from $11·4 billion in 1981–82—which referred to the total debt accumulated in Victoria to that time—to $25·1 billion in seven years. Whereas before the Labor Party came to office it required 14·8 per cent of State revenue to pay the interest bill, it now requires 21·2 per cent of State revenue—an increase of 50 per cent. The absolutely damning observation has been made by the

Auditor-General that the Labor government is now borrowing capital funds to pay the interest bill. That must be the end of the line when it comes to economic management!

State taxation has increased by 52 per cent in real terms since the government has been in office. In Victoria higher taxes than in any other State prevail for gas, electricity, water and charges imposed by other statutory authorities, all of which have grown by the remarkable amount of 500 per cent during that time—from $111 million in 1981-82 to $666 million in 1989-90. The rot has not yet stopped because in the current Budget statement it is proposed that those taxes will increase by a further 11 per cent in the year ahead, which will amount to not much under 50 per cent above the predicted inflation rate for the year.

Clearly Victoria has the highest rates of payroll tax, stamp duty on land transfers, tote tax, gas, water and electricity charges and other charges imposed by statutory authorities. They make a mockery of claims made by both the Premier and the Treasurer in 1985 when they said that no new taxes would be introduced. Similarly the 1988 family pledge, under which no family would pay $1 more overall for gas, electricity and water charges, as well as no motor registration fees, in the life of the next Parliament if the Labor government were returned to office, has turned out to be a farce.

The reason that the family pledge is nothing but a cynical farce is that it applied only to 17 per cent of Victorian families. Also, what a farce it is for the government to say to Victorian families with two children at school: "If you subtract from the $100 we have paid you for your education expense allowance the extra costs of those public utilities it will not cost you $1 more". That claim should have been nailed by the media during the last election campaign as gross dishonesty. Yet the government appeared to get away with it—just. Already those costs have risen by $60 a family in city areas and $50 in rural areas; so there is little chance of the government preventing those taxes going above the $100 education expense allowance.

Other highlights of the past year include the government's incredible economic failures—failures such as the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd, WorkCare and even Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, the final figures for which are published in this morning's newspapers and amount to not much less than $400 million—and all of those figures are contained in Table 1 to which I referred.

The most important point about the government's loss of almost $32 billion over the seven years is that it equates to a debt of $50 million for each of the 88 electorates in this House for every year that the government has been in office. It means that for the past seven years each electorate, which contains approximately 30 000 voters, has been slugged $350 million—a figure that has either been paid or will be paid because of the money the government has squandered during its time in office. All honourable members will realise that they, their children and their grandchildren will have to pay for those losses.

If that money had been well used Victoria would probably be one of the most blessed States of any in the world's great democracies. Certainly in my electorate, which has the lowest average income per capita of any of the 88 electorates and which lacks so many other facilities, all of the electorate's needs that I can identify in terms of civic and physical needs could have been met—as well as educational, social and cultural needs, which are valid needs in any modern democratic society. Instead, my electorate is now responsible for a debt of $350 million, without any of the attendant benefits. As a result it is in a state of disaster.

One of the most important and more damning highlights of the past financial year concerns the statement made by the Auditor-General in which he confirms the extent of the massive losses to which the Opposition has so often referred, in which he confirms that the government has borrowed long to pay interest short, and in which he confirms that he is not happy with the state of the books kept by the government. They are damaging allegations. Little reference has been made to them in the media. Even Mr Speaker became involved and made suggestions that the government ignored. As a result Victoria has become a laughing stock, a joke within Australian financial circles, because of its amazingly incompetent economic management.

Recently the Leader of the Opposition said that this government would go down in history as the worst economic manager since the Whitlam government and that it would make the Khemlani loans affair look like absolute chicken feed. That was an important statement. Those of us who remember what occurred during the loans affair will recall that a figure of $4 billion was talked about. Yet look at the figures to which we are exposed at present! The Leader of the Opposition also said that the last tribe of Whitlamites in the Cain government had made Victoria the State of insolvency and the laughing stock of the Collins Street financial community.

Sorry comparisons cannot be avoided between Victoria and other strong economic States in our area of the world—South-East Asia and the Pacific. Many of the States and countries in our region are racing ahead because of their capacity to respond to modern international needs, to produce goods and to make them available at competitive prices, with the services necessary to back them up. That is an area in which Victoria will suffer greatly in the years ahead—an area that is not the sole responsibility of the Federal government.

The government itself realises that things are bad because, as was reported by Simon Clarke in the *Herald* of 10 September this year when government documents were leaked:

> When a leaked government document says there is serious concern among senior Ministers that "the government's record as an economic manager is under scrutiny", the mild words belie deep anxiety about its reputation and, therefore, its political future.

I guess the most recent insult in this whole process of economic mismanagement was revealed this morning when we had the revelation about the losses of the Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, the subsidiary of State Bank Victoria, amounting to $374 million. One has to ask the Treasurer: if he is not responsible at the Parliamentary level—who is? If the leaders of the State Bank at some level are not responsible—who is? The fact is that the people of Victoria have lost a third of a billion dollars. Someone has to carry the responsibility for those decisions. Certainly the Treasurer cannot escape every occasion when this sort of thing comes up, as it has done to the tune of some $30 billion, by saying it is not his responsibility. Governments reflect and set the tone of society and set the philosophy and general guidelines of the economic management of a society and a State. It is abundantly clear that this government has by now set a tone of profligate, reckless economic management in this State. That is why the Treasurer has the result he has got and that is why, together with the Premier, he is, in fact, responsible.

There is no question that if the previous Deputy Premier was forced to resign because of his own performance in this place, this Treasurer must be judged to have performed much worse again. There is no question that on a day such as this when I, as a member of the Opposition, should speak in the annual Budget debate, I am obliged to call for the Treasurer's resignation—it may not be anything personal between him and me—but in terms of his position as the senior economic manager and guide in the State of Victoria, he is responsible for setting the disastrous atmosphere that

has led us to yet another major loss of a further one-third billion dollars, and he should go. Equally, we would require to know who in the corporate sector has been directly responsible for the decisions taken that led to this situation and those persons should be held to account also.

I do not intend to pursue too much what the government proposes in the 1989–90 Budget statement, but simply to say it is more of the same: increasing taxes, sale of assets, further cuts in family services, further slugging of the business sector wherever possible, and now a tax on goodwill—not just a tax but a very high tax. The headings have changed again so we cannot follow what the government is up to. The result is that across the State of Victoria hospitals, transport, TAFE, youth services, children's health, educational services and family services are all being pinched because the Budgetary strategy is now deficit driven.

It is a mockery and a disgrace that when we have $31 billion lost in terms of macro-economic mismanagement where we are wiping off sums at a hundred million dollars or a billion dollars at a time, we should then go back and squeeze those most in need in the community for Statewide sums of $800 000 which comes down to a few dollars a head for the people who really cannot afford it.

I want to finish in my last few minutes by looking at my electorate, at the coalface level, at what the disgraceful macro-economic mismanagement of this government has brought us to in terms of what happens to individual men and women.

Across the State of Victoria there have been cuts made in some 50-odd programs at the municipal government level where the services are delivered, including: regional performing art centres; regional art galleries; library services; community support development; creches and day nurseries; kindergartens; pensioner concessions; child-care service centres; out-of-school hours programs; maternal and child-care services; family planning expenses; family support services; community support works; community health projects; immunization programs; Victorian Arbovirus Disease Program expenses; the national and State program of fire access roads; subsidies for State municipal emergency service units; sports facilities, including works, grants and loans; tourism strategy special projects; Roads Corporation operating expenses and works; Roads Corporation further operating expenses; subsidies to urban water and sewerage authorities; and very large sums for roads, water and sewerage; and 40 and 50 per cent cuts in other programs and other borrowing limits.

The message of that list is: in the fine print we see that the government has not just attempted to be an efficient economic manager; we see a government that is desperate to recover a few dollars here and there almost no matter what the origin. The question of governmental efficiency involves governmental sufficiency to meet the minimal needs of the people. That involves those who have the least capacity to care for themselves. The fine print covering those small programs at the community level establishes the point that this government's strategy is now deficit driven.

If one were to turn and look at the Shire of Flinders, not only has it been cut by 33 per cent on State grants and allowances over recent times but in services it is encouraged to establish under the Home and Community Care Program, community bus and Southern Peninsula community care services—the government encouraged the establishment and then walked away.

The road situation, as has been outlined by colleagues in previous speeches, shows that the situation in Victoria for road maintenance is quite desperate. Not only is the government cutting the sum of money but also using the deceptive practice of reclassifying roads from public roads to local roads which attracts 20 per cent less funding provision for their maintenance.

There are many cases in which one could show that public bodies and local community bodies as well as individuals have said it is time the government went. Motions have been moved condemning it for its failures.

Hospital beds are a very sensitive indicator of what the government is failing to do. Across Victoria, hospitals are suffering and the waiting lists have grown to two and three times what they were when Labor came to government. If one were to look at the Mornington Peninsula, one would find the real prospective bed deficiency calculated on Health Department Victoria figures to be 577. Of that situation, my electorate has 34 beds for 40 000 people. There is no worse electorate in Victoria in that regard. When the Minister for Health spoke at a meeting of 500 of my people last Sunday, she declined to give any undertaking whatsoever and just acted as a politician covering her tracks.

Closures of courts will save the government, across Victoria, half a million dollars but will cost more to the community to shift police and witnesses and all sorts of people around and take our hard-pressed police from their other duties. Cuts in bus services will mean that in my area some 50 000 residents will lack services at the end of the day, nights, weekends and public holidays. Overall 130 routes of private bus services are to be cut. Why? To save 15 per cent from the private bus operating budget for the year.

In all sorts of things such as road maintenance, bus services in expanding areas and school buses, the government has threatened to charge for those services. I shall read to the House the Premier's comments earlier this day when he said:

> We have tried in this State to take care of ordinary people . . .

That was said by the Premier on 11 October 1989 in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. The government has just announced the most severe cuts in the transport subsidy to people with intellectual disabilities—$1.30 a day will be taken off State funding because the Federal government has made some funds available. The government is out to save $810 000 from 4 million people across the State.

I shall read the result of this from Wongabeena Association, a care centre in the electorate I represent:

> It is probably opportune for us to now give an example of one of our clients. This is not an isolated case, and would undoubtedly be quite prevalent in all centres.
>
> The gentleman receives a pension, incentive allowance and mobility allowance. He has no living relatives.
>
> After payment of his board at a special accommodation home and centre attendance fees (which are comparatively modest) he has $14.40 per fortnight left to cover personal requisites, entertainment, clothing, toiletries, fares etc.
>
> Implementation of the proposed transport subsidy reduction will result in him having 70 cents per week available for these necessities.
>
> The man has already been apprehended by police for shoplifting, not through any criminal intent, but sheer need.

In that famous comment, the Premier today will go down in history and take his place beside his claim about "not $1 more" made in the September 1988 election campaign and he will sit just as infamously beside the statement of the Labor Prime Minister of this nation—the Right Honourable R. J. L. Hawke—who said recently that by 1990 no child in Australia would live in poverty. Every welfare organisation in Australia that has commented has laughed at the government and ridiculed it because of its Prime Minister who states that his government has already met that commitment.

These are some of the most sensitive indicators one could use to show the failure of this government as it wastes its money on big unions and worthless schemes and then drains it from individual Victorians.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs Gleeson)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr WALLACE (Gippsland South)—I wish to raise a number of points in this debate and I am pleased that the Treasurer is in the House to hear some of the concerns of the electorate I represent and the surrounding areas.

The main issue is road funding. This is of serious concern across the State. The deterioration of the State road network is causing growing concern, especially in country Victoria. Crisis point has been reached and a complete disaster is not far off.

The government should make 1990 a benchmark year and should now be preparing an inventory of the work to be done in the next ten years to improve the road network. An increase in road funding is urgently needed. Our roads carry 97 per cent of all passenger journeys, 77 per cent of all freight journeys, 83 per cent of domestic tourist traffic and 43 per cent of overseas tourist journeys between capital cities. Commonwealth figures show that the number of cars will increase by 30 per cent by the year 2000 and road freight journeys will increase by 60 per cent. The amount spent on road construction should be increased adequately to cater for those increases.

Unfortunately the government is spending its road funds in the metropolitan area and country roads are being neglected. Mr Acting Speaker, I know you have travelled extensively on country roads and you would be well aware of what is happening. On many country roads one must zigzag across the road to avoid rough surface patches. Deaths on the road are of major concern and it is obvious that the poor state of our roads is contributing dramatically to those deaths.

Federal government spending on roads has fallen by 30 per cent in real terms in the past four years. The Commonwealth is allocating only 23 per cent of its fuel excise to road construction and maintenance whereas it contributed 66 per cent in 1982–83. That trend must be reversed for the benefit of the people and the economy of this country. I hope that in his discussions with the Federal Treasurer in Canberra, the Victorian Treasurer will emphasise the condition of our roads and the need for more road funding.

Apart from the cut in funds by the Federal government, State funds have also declined. The deterioration of roads has caused a 20 per cent increase in fuel consumption. Hauliers have told me that they are paying up to 40 per cent extra for fuel consumption because of the deteriorating state of our roads.

Interestingly enough, for every $1 million spent on road works 60 jobs are created. The government has concentrated on endeavouring to provide Victorians with jobs. Road construction is one way of achieving this. I know that councils would assist in this area because they are more than willing to ensure that funds are allocated in the best manner.

Road grants have declined in real terms in the whole of Australia. The Federal government has been reasonably sympathetic towards Victoria and this year has increased the allocation for road construction and maintenance funds from $243·8 million to $276·3 million, an increase of 13·3 per cent. Victoria has also received an additional $3 million taking the total amount to $279 million. However, when it comes to the State government's contribution to road works we find it has been totally dishonest. The government has taken some $15 million from the Commonwealth grants for road-rail projects in the metropolitan area.

I hope that when the Treasurer formulates the next Budget—if he is here to do so—he will redress that situation. By taking that $15 million from the Commonwealth grants, the amount has been reduced to $264 million. The State Budget for road works is significantly less than last year. An examination of the Roads Corporation grants to councils in eastern and central Gippsland shows that the State contribution is between 10 and 15 per cent below last year. I have not merely picked these figures out of the air, they are proven figures which show how road funds to country areas are declining in real terms.

The issue yet to be determined is what amount the government is allocating to roads from its own funds. Last year the Road Construction Authority and the Road Traffic Authority were funded under separate operations.

Funds for road construction and maintenance have been combined in this year's allocation. The road safety and licensing programs have been lumped together under the single allocation of $420·4 million to the Roads Corporation; the funds have not been easily divided. The government has deliberately fiddled with the figures in an attempt to hide the real situation. Only $44 million of the $264 million allocated by the Commonwealth for road programs has been included in preliminary distributions by the Roads Corporation for 210 municipalities.

The example at Sale demonstrates what has happened at the end of the funding chain; the majority of councils are in no better a position, some are in a worse situation. The allocation to Sale from the Roads Corporation is $226 000, representing a decrease of approximately 14 per cent in real terms. The City of Sale must raise approximately $500 000 from loan funds to carry out essential and planned road works next year. No funds have been allocated for the East Gippsland region for new roads; road engineers in the area say that they are restricted to protecting and repairing existing roads because of the level of funding.

Roadworks that were programmed for completion over the next ten years must now be spread over about twenty years. The road network will suffer in that time, and surface conditions will rapidly deteriorate. Other honourable members have confirmed that because of the wet season this year, roads are falling apart; unless something dramatic is done quickly, Victoria will need to expend large sums in future. My concern is that the Opposition will have to find that money because unless this government addresses the problem, it will not be in office at the appropriate time.

The situation is beyond councils; they are rapidly reaching the stage where they will no longer be able to contribute additional funds to account for the shortfall from government grants. The local communities will experience a significant impact, particularly in rural areas. Country Victorians rely almost exclusively on road transport. Also, more than 100 jobs in the road construction industry throughout Gippsland will be lost because of the lack of funding.

Councils—particularly in rural areas—face further cutbacks because of the road classifications. The honourable member for Dromana covered that topic very well. That system will result in a major reduction in funding in many areas; roads regarded as important to local traffic will need to be wholly funded because of the changing classifications.

I refer to a letter I received from a council in my electorate, complaining about road funding. That states:

> Statistics which have been recently released indicate that there has been a 13 per cent decline in government road funding as distributed through the Roads Corporation between the financial years 1983–84 and 1987–88 to the thirteen municipalities in the central Gippsland region.

Council believes that social justice, national and State productivity, community safety and tourism are all being detrimentally affected by the Labor government's obsession to ruin the only efficient form of transport that is used and preferred by the business community and general public. The government continues to subsidise low standard and under-utilised public transport systems. Obviously some forms of government are more equal than others and local government, being the closest form of government to the people, is being asked to pick up the tab.

That council further states:

The two Labor governments operating in Australia and Victoria at the moment will be remembered for:

1. Their social injustice to rural communities, especially women;

2. Their lack of foresight to grasp potential productivity gains for the State's agricultural, raw material and industrial resources;

3. Their ignorance of the community safety, especially school bus services in rural areas; and

Eventually Victoria will regret that because school buses are heavily-loaded, and are travelling on unsafe roads. That letter further states:

4. Their inability to capitalise on and accommodate existing and potential tourism markets.

Council has already pointed out to you that the government's decisions are killing off a number of Australians each week and the current governments will be remembered as the governments which facilitated the deaths of many hundreds of Australians.

That is a serious comment from a local government authority that is extremely concerned. It further states:

Council calls upon the government and the opposition parties . . .

and I stress "opposition parties"—

. . . to lift their game and to ensure that motorists are given a rightful share of the millions of dollars which are collected from them.

The situation has become dramatic when a council writes in that manner.

The government has produced its social justice strategy but several points in that policy need to be brought to the attention of the House. The Central Gippsland Road Funding Committee has analysed that strategy, and in its analysis states:

. . . by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet are poles apart or should I say "the much feared drive to town on a rough country road" apart, when it comes to the country road network and the access it affords.

In the survey of Rural Women in Australia, 69 per cent of the respondents believe that roads should be a priority for government spending in rural areas. Clearly, the Labor government's Budget indicates that social justice is not available to all the community.

The government has repeatedly stated that social justice is available to all communities, but that is incorrect. The committee further states:

The road network in the Gippsland region, and no doubt other country regions, provides the only form of access for country women and their families to many facilities and services.

They must take their children by car—they cannot catch a tram, bus or train. They have to make the effort to travel by car because it is their only means of transport. The committee states:

The following excerpts from the survey overwhelmingly support my statement: "Improved rural roads were important to women of all ages in places of all sizes".

That is important. It further states:

Road transport is the means through which the rural population can access education, health and other community services.

Rural roads provide access to friends, families and neighbours. The problem of the deterioration of roads must be addressed.

The government has ignored many recommendations and has put its hope in short-term vote-catching gimmicks, while at the same time passing on the responsibility of road funding to other levels of government. I know I am stressing the problems with rural roads, but it is a serious problem that must be addressed.

Another important issue is the proposed ocean outfall in the Gippsland area. The Minister for Planning and Environment is aware of what has happened and is working well with local members to try to resolve the problem. It is a sensitive issue in Gippsland. The Minister for Planning and Environment and the Minister for Water Resources have established a three-man review panel to investigate the proposed ocean outfall. Various inquiries have already been made. It is time for the issue to be addressed and a decision made.

I am not against the proposed ocean outfall if it is found that it is the best way to proceed. I have had conversations with the Minister for Planning and Environment over the past few months over the proposed ocean outfall and I have suggested to him that people should be sent overseas to gain a broader appreciation of the problem. I have been informed that that could be done, but it is the Minister's view that it is no good sending people involved with the proposal such as the honourable members for Morwell, Gippsland South or Gippsland East. It is the Minister's view that independent people should be sent overseas and I am concerned about that because the Minister has now appointed a review panel. I respect the members of that panel. The chairman of the panel is Mr Ian Gibson, a former deputy chairperson of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. It is difficult for Mr Gibson to be totally independent. Another member of the panel is Mr Barry Hart, Director of the Centre for Stream Ecology at the Chisholm Institute of Technology. Mr Hart has considerable expertise in that area and I wonder how he would react if evidence is presented that is different from the views he has already expressed.

It is my view that members of the panel should be independent and far removed from this issue so that they have no preconceived conceptions. I am not sure what the review panel will decide or gain from its exercise.

Who will pay for the review? The ratepayers of that area have borne the brunt of the expenses. A figure of $30 million has been mentioned as the possible cost for the proposed ocean outfall and the ratepayers have been contributing to the proposal for two years, but we are no closer to a solution.

The community was told by experts there were no dioxins in the system, but now we find there are some dioxins in the system. The community was told, again by experts, that there were no chlorines in the system and now we find there are chlorines present. A decision must be made. Perhaps an all-party Parliamentary committee may resolve the problem.

The first term of reference of the review panel is the evaluation of existing material on the ocean outfall. What can they evaluate? The second term of reference is to call for and review submissions on the treatment and disposal and/or use of Latrobe Valley waste water. The review panel will investigate this issue, but it will see the same people and regurgitate the same material.

It is unfortunate that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is not present in the Chamber, because if he were I could inform him that the increase in the incidence of crime is one of the major concerns throughout Victoria. When the government first came to power the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the honourable member for Oakleigh, said that police numbers would be increased by

900 during the first three years of the Cain government. That did not occur during the first six years of the Cain government, but crime is on the increase.

The government said that there would be no closure of police stations. I was informed just a few days ago that there is a police report in existence indicating that a number of police stations will close. I am concerned about the closures of one-man police stations, but it now appears that the government is planning to close a two-man police station at Loora and one-man stations at Meeniyan and Loch. The honourable member for Morwell may lose some police personnel in his electorate. I note that he shakes his head, but I am led to understand that some police services will go from his electorate to my electorate.

Police are within calling distance to people in metropolitan areas, but that does not occur in remote country areas. People living in the Wilsons Promontory area may have to go to Korumburra for police services, which is 2 hours away under blue light conditions but, with the State's roads falling apart, they may never get there.

I am concerned about the enormous pressures being placed on members of the Police Force because of the inadequacies in our present system. Won Wron Prison is a low-security prison and the prisoners are just walking out. Police are very concerned. There has been a reduction in the services provided by prison warders. Because of budgetary constraints overtime worked by prison warders has been reduced, with a consequent reduction in prisoner visiting hours.

Just a few weeks ago prisoners created a severe disturbance and decided to ring the Minister. Fancy a prisoner ringing the Minister to ask him whether there was a reduction in services provided by prison warders. It is ridiculous that prisoners can walk out of a prison and make a phone call to the Minister and say, "For goodness' sake, our visiting hours are being cut back. Review the situation or we will riot". That is what occurred. The Premier, the Treasurer and other Ministers must ensure that the safety of the citizens is their foremost priority.

I am concerned about conservation issues. The government has found millions of dollars to purchase private land on which it grows pines for APM Ltd because it has a contract that it cannot get out of.

I call on the Minister to put a stop to buying more private land until the report comes down. At Erica the 1939 ash regrowth is at risk because it cannot be got out on the roads. The Minister has stopped all development of roads in that area until an environmental study has been done to see whether possums can get across the road before a fox grabs them. That is absolutely ridiculous! On the one hand we talk about building houses and on the other hand we do not have the timber to build those houses. The government has much to answer for. Unless the Treasurer gets down to the nitty-gritty and stops spending money on stupid things, the situation will be disastrous.

The government has grabbed the TAB funds. The Treasurer should have a jolly good look at it, because if $21 million can save the government, a lot of questions must be answered. The National Party will protect the racegoers, punters and people in the racing industry, because if the government's proposal goes ahead, 250 permanent jobs and 480 casual jobs will be lost and millions of dollars will be lost to the industry. The Sale Turf Club will have to cut back between 20 and 25 per cent of its race meetings. The Budget has many problems, and I hope that the Treasurer will make some adjustments and look at the seriousness of the problems.

Mr PERTON (Doncaster)—Australia is in a time of crisis. The Federal government has imposed on the people the highest interest rate regime of any industrialised society and, through its monetary policy, is imposing an intolerable blunder on business.

Small business has had a hard enough time over the past six or seven years under the Federal government, yet times are getting harder. It is harder for businesses to make ends meet as they are forced to cope with a rigid labour market and the unreasonable interest rate structure.

The Federal government's policies have caused the trade deficit to reach record levels. The world is not demanding our products at the same rate as we are sucking in imports to meet the demands of a growing society with great social and economic needs and potential. Overall, we are not able to reach the appropriate levels of productivity and quality that overseas countries demand in their imports because of the labour market rigidity caused by the labour practices of the supporters of this government, the union movement. Those practices are encouraged by the State and Federal governments.

In the airline industry we have the ludicrous situation whereby pilots are not allowed to negotiate with their employers. They are told by the Federal government that they have no right to enter into the conciliation and arbitration process unless they are prepared to be bound by an agreement between the ACTU and the Labor government—in other words, the de facto government, led by Mr Crean and his puppets. The conduct of the airlines and the government would not be so objectionable if the airlines were bearing the loss caused by their business decisions, but my constituents object to paying for this blatantly political exercise. The Federal government, in conjunction with its union and big business mates, is imposing its will on the community and taking away the rights of those who seek a free enterprise, free market solution.

This action is occurring at a time when productivity is falling across the board. We have had the ludicrous situation of awards that purportedly grant income increases to workers as a result of productivity trade-off, while all of the statistics indicate that Australia is falling behind, and no part of Australia is falling behind faster than is Victoria. Time and again the Treasurer and the Premier have told the House that Victoria is going well and our place in the world trading community is being enhanced because our exports have grown by some 11 per cent, but we are competing with societies with trade growth rates of 15, 20 and 25 per cent. We are falling behind those societies with which we ought to be able to compete and cooperate to create a better world trading environment for future generations.

Victoria is in a particularly parlous state, with record levels of State taxation and the crushing burden of increasing State debt, together with falling school standards. When we compare ourselves with societies that regard the teaching of science, mathematics and grammar as being of the utmost importance, we find that we are led by a Minister for Education whose philosophies can be found in the education policies of countries such as Albania and Rumania. Whereas other societies in Europe, the United States of America and Asia seek excellence and the promotion of better than average and gifted students, our Minister says that she is not after equality of opportunity but believes in equality of result. That is nothing more than socialist claptrap. We are spending, quite properly, awesome amounts to assist the disadvantaged and the handicapped to enter the ordinary school system, but we are spending next to nothing to meet the needs of those who are equipped to advance our society and who will be our future leaders in government, science, technology and industry.

Standards are falling in the medical services area and in public transport. A former Minister for Health, now the Minister for Planning and Environment, when he inherited the health Ministry admitted that it was the finest health system in Australia, if not the Pacific. Since that time the health system has gone backwards. Hospitals have closed; wards have closed; beds remain empty in public hospitals while emergency

cases are ferried from suburb to suburb in an effort to find a hospital that can provide treatment.

Public transport continues to bleed the State's finances, not only through continuing losses but also through the extraordinary corporate practices of the Treasurer. The Treasurer has sold off rolling stock, in some cases for only a matter of hours, in order to assist tax evasion or avoidance by people in other jurisdictions. The Treasurer must be blamed for his mismanagement in all those ventures for which he has responsibility.

Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition asserted that the Treasurer had caused any institution over which he has had responsibility to go into the red. The Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the Victorian Investment Corporation and WorkCare are all in this situation. They have all undergone these new management practices of the Treasurer and all have been notable failures.

While this nation and this State suffer under Labor governments, we live in a world of great opportunity and challenge. Melbourne is ideally suited to seize upon the growth of the Asian-Pacific Basin and to seize upon the new opportunities in trade that exist as a result of the free trade agreements with the United States of America and Canada. We have the resources and the energy base to be able to supply and assist in the growth of Asian trade tigers, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. The fact is that we are not taking advantage of that situation. We have been beaten by the Japanese; we have been beaten by the American suppliers and by the Europeans, who are prepared to put in effort and who have a taxation structure that enables them to compete.

In Europe governments are taking exactly the opposite stance to that taken by Australia. Trade barriers for industry have been removed and governments are prepared to allow competition to thrive. Those governments are prepared to allow those who can demonstrate their capability of trading in the world to do so without the dead hand of socialism imposing enormous taxation burdens upon them.

There are further opportunities in this changing world. Changes are taking place in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and in China, both prior to the June problems and even afterwards. Those countries are moving away from State intervention in industry and moving towards a position where incentives exist in the economic system to enable individuals to work harder for better returns.

Unfortunately, with the taxation policies of the Federal government and the direct intervention of the State government in the Victorian economy because of its efforts to pick winners and losers—but invariably picking the losers—the hopes of those who seek to work harder to assist their families and their communities have been set back.

Opportunities are being lost because the government is not prepared to deregulate. The government is not prepared to leave well enough alone. An overseas corporation or an Australian businessman who is determining whether to establish an enterprise in this country will make a State-by-State comparison. The New South Wales government is prepared to assist business to set up and to set aside its red tape to ensure that development can take place. It recognises that in a growing society in a growing part of the world that is what is needed. Enterprise is needed; deregulation is needed, but a government that is trying to pick winners is not needed. A government that is restraining most individuals in the community while subsidising others is not needed.

A businessman who is determining in which State he ought to set up his business must examine the potential liabilities of WorkCare, which are between $4 billion and $5 billion. The businessman would be entitled to say, "Victoria doesn't look like the place where I should set up my business". The businessman would understand that

Victorian employers and consumers are subsidising the rest of the country as a system that differs dramatically from those that exist in the rest of Australia is set up to replace the old workers compensation system.

The government has failed the people of Victoria as a whole, and in particular it has failed the people of Doncaster and the eastern suburbs. Just half an hour ago I met two businessmen from my electorate who came to complain about the effect traffic congestion has had on their businesses in Doncaster Road. I bore witness to the fact that two days ago at 3.30 p.m. there was a traffic jam that extended from Doncaster Shoppingtown to Thompsons Road, a distance of approximately 5 kilometres. Of course this was before the afternoon business peak hour! That sort of traffic disruption has a dramatic effect on the residents who would normally use the roadway to travel from work to their homes in the late afternoon. It affects transport drivers who are transporting goods during the day and in particular it is affecting retailers operating in Doncaster Road, particularly on the northern side.

The reason for the congestion is in part the government's failure to extend the Eastern Freeway to Ringwood. It was almost two years ago that the Federal government agreed to fund the extension, and $130 million was provided for that purpose. What has the government done? When the time came to commence construction the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands took it into her head to call for yet another inquiry. It is interesting to note that she did that when the Minister for Transport was out of the country. I suggest the reason she did that has a close relationship to her desire to retain her seat in the next election rather than being in the interests of the residents of the eastern suburbs whose lives are being disrupted daily as they sit in traffic congestion for 2 hours or more. The ridiculous decision made by the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands stood alone until approximately six weeks ago when the Minister for Transport decided to call his own inquiry, despite the fact that the Minister for Planning and Environment had established an independent inquiry that handed down its report in March.

The Minister for Transport decided to hold yet another inquiry despite the fact that the Minister for Planning and Environment has a report that not only approved the construction of the government's planned arterial road but also went on to say that the public was confused but that it demands the best in roadways.

Despite the overwhelming evidence, what the Minister for Transport has done is to set up a new inquiry with terms of reference which do not meet the challenge of the Minister for Planning and Environment's independent committee to examine the option of extending the Eastern Freeway by way of a dual freeway to Ringwood rather than an arterial road.

The residents of Doncaster include a high proportion of young people. In parts of East Doncaster there is a very high concentration of population under the age of five years and one should have thought that a government that was properly planning for the educational needs of the area would have provided primary schools on land set aside for that purpose. Instead, the government has sold off land.

The honourable member for Bulleen in his contribution to the debate earlier this sessional period listed the full sell off of assets in the area. I do not propose to repeat them. The government has land set aside for a school in Blackburn Road, East Doncaster and that school was to have been known as the Doncaster East Heights Primary School. The construction of that school should have proceeded two years ago. It might have proceeded a year ago. A constituent said to me some months ago, "I moved here because the school was shown on the map; I knew in two or three years time when my children reached school age that they would be able to attend that school". What has happened? Precisely nothing!

Inquiries of the Ministry for Education show that time and again the Ministry has tried to avoid its responsibilities and has decided to sell off land allocated for a secondary school in the same region and has even contemplated a sell-off of land designated for primary school construction. In other words, the government has failed to meet the legitimate expectations of people with young children who have moved to that area. It has failed to meet their needs for education services.

I turn to the area of policing. Enough has been said about the failings of the government in meeting the policing needs of the State. It is again the district in which Doncaster is situated which has some of the worst shortages of police motor vehicles. At one stage the Doncaster Criminal Investigation Branch, which covers an enormous area, was left with one operating motor vehicle.

Mr Elder—Shame!

Mr PERTON—Indeed it is a shame. People are not able to have their expectations of police attention on reasonable notice met because of the inadequacy of resources which have been devoted to the eastern suburbs.

Some weeks ago the Mayor of Doncaster and Templestowe complained vigorously about the discrimination against people in the eastern suburbs vis-a-vis the western suburbs and that there did appear to be some bias in favour of those residents living in seats marginally held by the Labor Party.

The mayor indicated that library needs—a very important education need in that area—are being left unmet as a result of the government's transfer of funds away from the eastern suburbs to the western suburbs. The government has failed this community because it has been unable to reach appropriate management standards: it thought it could determine the performance of the State economy. Unfortunately for the government, and perhaps fortunately for the State, it did not control the instrument of macro-economic policy. The role of the State government should be sensible financial management of the State's resources. The government thought it could create economic recovery. It has demonstrated a record of disastrous financial mismanagement and adopted high-risk policies which have compounded failure upon failure upon failure.

Modern financial mismanagement has been marked by disasters like the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, the Victorian Investment Corporation, WorkCare and many others. My constituents cannot expect decent financial administration until the government finally meets its proper judgment and is defeated at the polls at the next election and replaced by a Liberal government.

Mr ELDER (Ballarat North)—This is the second Jolly–Cain Budget that I have had to put up with in my short time in this House. I must admit that the government is good at packaging its Budget; it has made a billycart into a Mercedes Benz. It has come up with the same old fanfare from the advisers who drive the Ministers; the same old rhetoric from the media unit; the same old fiddles and the same old untruths.

The Victorian people have been delivered their last supper; they have gone from steak under a Liberal government to mincemeat under the present government. I have listened to speakers from both sides of the House bandying around jargon, like the honourable member for Sunshine with his Markovitz theorem regarding micro and macro-economic policy; the capital markets; the State Budget sector debt and so on. They are words and jargon used only to confuse the listeners.

Mr Baker—The simple-minded.

Mr ELDER—I am just a bread-and-butter accountant. I sat down and analysed the Budget and ended up asking myself, "What is it all about; have I missed the point?"

No, I have not. What Budgets are all about is people. The people of Ballarat North have received nothing from the Budget.

Mr Baker interjected.

Mr ELDER—The Markovitz theorem man should understand that Budgets still equal people. My constituents have waited expectantly for the Premier to deliver his pledge. We all remember that pledge just before the last State election. If honourable members do not remember it, the pledge was that the average Victorian family would not pay 1 cent more for gas, water or electricity. About three weeks ago I received my water rate notice and, as Gomer Pyle said, "Surprise, surprise, surprise". I looked at the random increases across the electorate of Ballarat North and some rating increases were up 38 per cent. Shock! Horror! The overall average increase for water users in Ballarat was 7·7 per cent. That shows the Premier's pledge for what it is; nothing more than a Clayton's pledge; a deception on the people of Victoria and on the people of Ballarat North.

The people of Ballarat North have been hit with record unemployment. In a work force of 42 000 people, 6465 are unemployed. For the statisticians opposite, that works out at an unemployment rate of 15·3 per cent; about three times the State average. The worse hit is the family man in the 25 to 44 year age group who makes up 40 per cent of the unemployment statistics. It is tough on the young people who are trying to save money to buy their first homes and first cars as 18 per cent of young people are unemployed in Ballarat North.

What is unemployment doing to Ballarat? It is destroying the whole social fabric of the community. Of course, unemployment leads to other social problems, such as increased drug and alcohol consumption, increased petty theft and marriage breakdowns. This is what unemployment can do to any community and, in particular, what it is doing to the community of Ballarat.

Welfare agencies are under siege for handouts, clothing for children, and food to put on the table. The family services of the Catholic Church in Ballarat say they have never had so many demands placed on them. The outreach service of the Uniting Church in Australia is in the same circumstances. In fact, its funds ran out in the first four months of this year.

In addition, there is a housing crisis. In Ballarat 1000 families are waiting for public housing and they must wait a minimum of two years for that housing. Many young families are living in caravans or in bungalows at the back of their parents' houses. This makes a mockery of the government's social justice strategy. These people receive no reprieve in this Budget, which has been delivered by this so-called caring government.

Jobs in Ballarat are as scarce as the sheep in the pens at the Ballarat abattoirs. All honourable members know—the people of Ballarat certainly do—that the abattoirs were closed, resulting in the loss of 600 jobs. Cries by local municipalities, community organisations and the people of Ballarat for this government to offer them something in the Budget did not bear fruit. We asked that some form of government equity be put into the project, or that some form of low-interest loan be made available to keep the abattoirs in existence so that 600 jobs could be retained in an area where unemployment is among the highest in the State. Of course, those requests fell on deaf ears. The saga will conclude within two weeks, when the property will finally be sold off.

This circumstance is not new to the people of Ballarat. Over the past seven or eight years under this government, major industries have been closing and thousands of jobs have been lost. The Ballarat economy is now driven by social security payments.

The government does not understand that people in the bush do not want handouts; they want work. They are very independent people, and they were looking to the government for some vision and action to provide them with long-term employment opportunities and to create jobs. That did not eventuate.

The situation is so bad that it prompted the Ballarat Shire Council to write to the Premier requesting him to do something about it and to provide the unemployment figures. Honourable members know that the government will not release those figures; it hides them. They have to fall off the back of a truck or be obtained through freedom of information requests. Of course, the Premier did not want to have anything to do with that request from the shire council. He asked the Director-General of Labour to reply to the letter.

The director-general said the government had undertaken major initiatives in Ballarat to create long-term employment. He cited the Youth Guarantee scheme as one initiative. Honourable members know what the Auditor-General thinks of that scheme. It is nothing but a con and a farce. The director-general also quoted as an initiative a small grant to a local FM radio station of some $4000. I do not know how that will contribute to long-term employment in Ballarat.

Before the last election, there was even a promise of some $10 000 for the local skills training centre, which enables long-term unemployed young people to be trained and put back into the work force. The scheme has certainly achieved great things in Ballarat. In fact, 49 per cent of those who participated in the last course—most of whom were long-term unemployed kids who had been on the dole or some form of social security benefit for an average of two years—were actually placed back in the work force.

Before the last State election the skills training centre was offered $10 000 by the government to expand its scheme. Despite requests from the management of the skills training centre for that money to be made available, nothing has happened. Despite requests to the honourable member for Ballarat South to chase up the money on the centre's behalf, nothing happened. It was not until I put the blowtorch to the government that the $10 000 was finally handed over, nine months after it was promised, by which time there were 72 people waiting to participate in the scheme.

The government also promised $1200 for every young person who was referred to the scheme by the Ballarat office of the Department of Labour. However, to date, not one person has been referred. I find that absolutely amazing, given that Ballarat has the highest youth unemployment rate of any electorate in Victoria. Perhaps the Minister for Labour can get on the backs of people who are working on the Youth Guarantee scheme and ensure that some of the young people who are waiting in the dole queues and who want to get back into employment are referred to this worthwhile scheme.

The government needs to offer some initiatives to industry in Ballarat, or to get industry to Ballarat. No initiatives were forthcoming in the last State Budget. There is a need for someone with the vision of the Honourable Murray Byrne—a former member of the other place—to come up with something like his ten-point plan to ensure the rural economies are kick-started by some government incentive to get industry into rural areas.

The government needs to recognise that a great disincentive for people establishing industry in rural Victoria is the high transport cost. The government needs to recognise that it must provide some relief from fuel tax. It needs to examine the rail system with a view to providing something more efficient to transport goods from rural centres to the larger cities.

The government needs also to recognise that tourism in rural Victoria, particularly in Ballarat, is one of the few areas that will provide some form of long-term employment. However, what has happened instead is that tourism in regional Victoria has been killed, wiped out. The regional tourism body in Ballarat, Gold Centre Tourism, was done away with by the stroke of a pen. The local office, staff and promotions unit have now gone. Tourism in Ballarat is in limbo. The government needs to recognise the benefits of tourism and the fact that it is a labour-intensive industry.

I tell the canny Scot who is the Minister for Tourism that, if the tour operators in Ballarat grabbed his bagpipes and squeezed them until his eyes watered, I am sure he would come up with the money.

There is a need for an increase in funding to provide for tourism in Victoria so that it can attract tourists from not only the rest of Australia but also the world. It is alarming that Victoria receives only approximately 18 per cent of all international tourists to this country. That is because the tourists do not know about rural Victoria. There is a need for an injection of funds into local government so that it can employ tourism promotion officers and establish tourism units to ensure tourism is up and running.

I was very pleased to note that, after reading the Budget and discovering that there were no funds for the second stage of the Hepburn Spa complex, the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands actually went to the Treasurer and asked him to provide those funds through the mineral spa levy. Of course, with pressure from her—and I thank her for it—and from me it was possible to convince the Treasurer to agree to the request. I am pleased that this worthwhile tourism venture will now proceed, with the cost of $2·2 million being met through the spa levy.

The people of Ballarat have suffered for too long under this government. Surely the government should reflect on its situation, realise that it got a rejection from the Ballarat South electorate during the last State election—which it won by only 53 votes—and do something to restore some confidence and credibility among people in the Ballarat area. As I said earlier, the people of Ballarat are looking for a vision and for assistance, but nothing has materialised.

Small towns in the electorate I represent are being hard hit. The small town of Daylesford is used to election promises being broken by the government. Recently the State Electricity Commission shopfront in the town was closed and accounts now have to be paid at the major centre of Ballarat. With the poor public transport system in the area, many pensioners and people on social security benefits are finding it difficult to get to Ballarat to pay the accounts.

Just as the door had been firmly bolted on the SEC shopfront, the next door to be shut was that of the Daylesford courthouse. The people of Daylesford will now have to travel to Ballarat to attend court cases. The Daylesford police will have to be taken from their district and spend days in Ballarat attending court cases. Daylesford will, therefore, lose its police presence. Once again people will have to try to get to Ballarat by hook or by crook because there is no reliable public transport system.

I found it interesting that the courthouse was closed after the Attorney-General had said that it would remain open. During the last State election campaign I raised the matter with him and the Attorney-General said the courthouse would not be closed and that it was only rumour and innuendo on my part. Some eight months down the track and—bang—the door to the Daylesford courthouse is closed. Such closures have a substantial effect on small rural communities. One job lost in such a community means that another family will leave the community to go to Ballarat or Melbourne. Victoria's small rural communities are dying a slow and painful death.

The good thing for me is that Daylesford has traditionally been a Labor Party town. People who have consistently voted for the Labor Party are now starting to wake up. They are saying to me "Steve, you are going in to bat for us; you are working for us; this government has deserted us". One has only to look at the latest State election result to realise that that is true. The government is losing ground in the Labor Party heartlands. I would be alarmed about that, but this government is so arrogant that it does not care about the average family. While the government is closing the doors of the SEC and the courthouse in Daylesford, the traditional Labor Party voters of Daylesford are closing the door on it.

People in the bush believe the only salvation in the attempt to provide employment opportunities for young people is in the training and retraining area. After the last State election the technical and further education system was hit with a 5 per cent funding cut across the board. Apprentices in Ballarat working in the building industry cannot get into courses at the local TAFE college because of the 5 per cent cut. Not only is the TAFE education system suffering from enormous cuts but also it appears that the Minister for Education is trying to rid the State of any private education system; she is trying to wipe out private schools.

Honourable members would have noted that in the Budget there was a 4 per cent reduction in real terms in the funds provided to private schools. Supernumerary positions in Catholic schools—that is people holding positions of responsibility—are being done away with because of the enormous constraints the Catholic school system has been put under by the government. Coordinators of various subjects are being done away with and education in the Catholic and private schools is suffering. To compensate for the enormous cuts, schools are having to increase their staff-pupil ratios.

Not only did the government cut funding by 4 per cent but also it cut 4 per cent from the interest subsidy on capital works programs. That is placing enormous strains on the ability of the Catholic Education Office to build new schools in expanding areas such as Alfredton in the electorate I represent.

The government has provided no funds for integrating handicapped children into the Catholic school system. Some 18 per cent of students in the Catholic school system who need some form of integration aid come from the State system. Even those children are bailing out and going to a system that is more caring!

The government has also cut funds for in-service courses for the Catholic education system. The Minister for Education has said that in-service training for Catholic school staff will be provided on a user-pays basis. This miserable government is attempting to make non-government school students pay to catch buses to go to school. Once again that will discriminate against rural children who attend private schools. The government is attempting to bolster the numbers in its own schools. It is trying to stop the drift of government schoolchildren to the private education system because it is embarrassing to the government.

I shall now refer to drug education. I have taken up with the Minister for Education the funding for teachers in the Life Education program. A definite need exists within the Ballarat area. In New South Wales the Greiner government funds teachers in Life Education units, and it has the full support of the Opposition. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition in that State, Mr Bob Carr, wants to take it one step further and make Life Education units available to preschool children. Despite that, this government will not put 1 cent into Life Education units. Perhaps members of the government have not read the statistics showing that one-fifth of all deaths in Australia can be attributed to drug abuse. In our lifetime some 256 000 boys and 159 000 girls under the age of fourteen years will die from the effects of one drug or another.

I urge members of the government, particularly the honourable member for Sunshine who has many young people in the electorate he represents, to urge the Premier to fund Life Education units. Because so many schools in the Ballarat area are missing out on the valuable service, another Life Education unit is needed. The community is currently picking up the cost of the unit and salaries for the teachers. The community has enough money to buy another unit, but the government must show its good faith and put up the bucks to pay the teachers.

I have referred to the young people who will die from the effects of drugs, and I shall now refer to health, particularly the Ballarat Base Hospital. All that hospital received from the government for its redevelopment was a lousy $2 million. That was well short of the $50 million promised during the Ballarat North by-election campaign and once again in the last State election campaign. The hospital needs $50 million to go ahead with the redevelopment to provide 300 acute care beds and six operating theatres, which are desperately needed.

The $2 million the hospital received is not even enough to pay for the site works. Funds are needed to reopen beds in wards that have been closed because of the government's tight Budget policy. Some 1200 people are on the hospital's waiting list for elective surgery. I shall not call it a waiting list: I shall call it a suffering list because the people on that list are suffering in pain waiting for the government to put the bucks into the health system so that they can be treated.

Because it has a compassionate board, last year the Ballarat Base Hospital overspent its budget by $850 000. That amount enabled the Ballarat Base Hospital to treat an additional 340 patients. What has happened this year? The government has said that the hospital will have to treat 300 fewer patients to make up the shortfall between what the hospital spent last year and the expenditure required to keep within its budget this year. So much for the government's social justice policy! It is a sham.

I turn now to another area that is of interest to my constituents—the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services. Every time the Minister came to Ballarat he boasted about the relocation to Ballarat of the Country Fire Authority headquarters. There have been numerous reports suggesting that the CFA headquarters would be relocated to Ballarat and that hundreds of jobs would be transferred to the area, which would be an enormous boost to Ballarat's economy.

What has happened? The government continued its charade right up until the State Budget. When one looks at the small print one discovers that the CFA headquarters will not be relocated anywhere and that the government will spend $1 million in refurbishing the existing site. The government's credibility has been blown out of the water with this farce about the relocation of the CFA headquarters. The Chairman of the Country Fire Authority, Mr Greenwood, has told the government about the low morale among the troops working in the Country Fire Authority. The government does not care about people. It has shown that by the services delivered to the people of Ballarat. These people are sick of being teased by the government and then let down. The people of Ballarat were looking forward to a Budget that would provide some real incentive and local employment.

I move now to road funding, which members of the National Party have covered in some depth in their contributions. I specifically refer to road funding in rural Victoria. The Shire of Ballarat conducted a road funding survey among 23 shires in the region. The survey proved that over four years State and Federal governments had reduced funding by between 30 and 60 per cent. Rural roads are now turning into gravel goat tracks. The state of the roads is increasing the road toll and adding to the road carnage.

Recently the Premier announced that the speed limit on the Western Freeway will be reduced from 110 to 100 kilometres an hour. If the Premier were fair dinkum, he

would have injected funds into rural Victorian councils so that they could get on with their maintenance plans and assist in reducing the carnage on our roads. The government should have put in the bucks to provide more police officers to undertake surveillance work on Victorian roads. There is no better deterrent to offenders than having police on our roads. Ballarat is still waiting for the sergeant and three police officers that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services promised during the Ballarat North by-election. Once again they have not materialised. If those officers were provided it would go part of the way towards having a bigger police presence on our roads.

The government cannot believe it is achieving its social justice strategy. I suggest to members of the government that they should get out of their bunkers and talk to the families who are suffering in Victoria. If they believe the government is achieving its social justice strategy, they are simply deluding themselves. Members of the government should get out of their bunkers and find out what is really going on. They should get out of their chauffeur-driven limousines, get away from their Ministries and Ministerial advisers and discover what is really happening.

I can tell them in a nutshell: rural Victoria is struggling. There is high unemployment. There are record public housing waiting lists. Welfare agencies are buckling under the pressure of people wanting handouts, food vouchers and clothing assistance for their children. There are thousands of people in Ballarat suffering from unemployment. There have been cutbacks to government services. The government has increased its charges in many areas. I suggest to the government that Budgets should be about protecting the average wage and salary earner. These people have received no joy from the Budget delivered by the Labor government.

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney)—It gives me much pleasure to speak in my first Budget debate on the Appropriation and Works and Services Bills. The Budget is a disaster for country people. It is an absolute mockery that reveals the government's hollow rhetoric on social justice and equality of opportunity, as the honourable member for Ballarat North has so eloquently pointed out.

The Budget further disadvantages country people. It has not given social justice to the sick, the aged or the handicapped. It has not given social justice to children attending independent schools, particularly Catholic schools, and especially children who are handicapped. It has certainly not given equality of opportunity to country students.

The Budget has further eroded the provision of facilities for country people. I shall refer in more detail to roads, courthouses, hospitals, the visiting child health nurse program, hostel accommodation, transport subsidies for the intellectually disabled, the closure of various government offices in the Rodney electorate and the reduction of facilities generally.

The government's economic performance has been appalling. In his term of office the Treasurer has lost $31 000 million. This makes the losses suffered by companies such as Ardiane, the Bell group and the Victorian Division of the National Safety Council of Australia pale into insignificance. If the Treasurer were in private industry, he would have been sacked long ago for incompetence.

I shall refer briefly to these losses because honourable members have already recited them ad nauseam. There have been share market losses of $918 million; $200 million plus from the Victorian Economic Development Corporation; almost $5 billion from WorkCare; in the order of $27 million from the Victorian Investment Corporation; and State assets conservatively estimated at $1·8 billion have been sold off in recent years.

The public transport system is losing $3 million every working day, which amounts to $1000 million a year. The government is responsible for public sector employment continuing to increase by up to four times the increases experienced by other States; it increased by more than 10 per cent between 1984 and 1989.

The government has failed to reform third-party insurance, which has unfunded liabilities of $1·3 billion. It has failed to reform public sector superannuation, again with unfunded liabilities of $4 billion. The unfunded liabilities for these two organisations together are in excess of $5 billion. Is it any wonder that interest charges are now consuming $1400 million a year, or 22 per cent of State revenue? In 1982–83 approximately 15 per cent of State revenue was paid in interest, but it is now approximately 22 per cent of all revenues received by the government. It is worth noting in passing that public sector debt is now $24 billion. In many ways debt is the worst form of child abuse. We are abusing our children by passing on these liabilities.

Is it any wonder that now Victorians pay nearly $1300 tax for every man, woman and child living in the State? Victoria is the highest-taxed State in the Commonwealth, having topped the list in 1988–89, and it looks as though Victoria will do it again this year.

Is it any wonder, as total public sector spending continues to increase above the inflation rate, that Victoria continues to slide further into bankruptcy? Obviously the Treasurer is not satisfied with losing $31 billion; he seems to be hell-bent on achieving losses of $50 billion! The way he is going, he will achieve his aim.

What is worse than all of this is that the government is not doing anything to rectify the situation. This year the increase in recurrent expenditure is disproportionate to the increase in capital expenditure. In this Budget, recurrent expenditure has increased by 7·2 per cent. In other words, the increase in the allocation for wages and salaries for public servants has been 7·2 per cent, yet capital expenditure—on our schools, roads, and hospitals—has decreased by 16·2 per cent.

This situation is compounded by the Federal situation where there is a similar scenario, with an overseas debt that now exceeds $120 billion, and an ever increasing proportion of government expenditure being consumed simply to pay the interest on that ever increasing debt.

Australia has record balance of payments problems. The most recent figures show that, for the 30th consecutive month, Australians have spent more than we have earned. Last month Australians spent a record $2·6 billion more than we earned and expenditure is still increasing. Increased productivity has not been encouraged so that Australia can be more competitive on world markets.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the State Budget provides totally inadequate funds for roads, schools, hospitals, the Police Force and for provision for the handicapped and disadvantaged in our communities. The effect of this gross mismanagement, the consequences of this $31 billion loss, and the consequences of Australia's overseas debt—with a Federal overseas debt of $120 billion and a State overseas debt of $24 billion—is that an ever increasing proportion of our income is going simply to service this debt.

I refer to a number of government departments one by one and make a few comments on the situation in each of them. Because of my background and my particular interest in the area and because of its importance to the State economy, I start with agriculture, which is the most important single industry in this State. Agriculture had a gross value in rural production in 1987–88 of $4·6 billion. When the value of transport, processing and packaging is added to that, the total is $10 billion. It comprises 20 per cent of the State's economy and generates 45 per cent of Victoria's export income. Agriculture is

an industry on which Australians have been able to rely for more than 100 years. It has provided our food, fibre, and the export income on which the nation is built.

Australia's large land area, our soils, our water and sunshine, and above all the skill and determination of our farmers, have resulted in agriculture in this country having a competitive advantage over the rest of the world.

While the appropriation for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has increased marginally this year to $116 million, that sum is totally inappropriate. Our agricultural industries have a tremendous potential for growth and for increasing our export income. Scientific research is desperately needed to provide the technology to enable industry to achieve those objectives.

While honourable members refer to the potential of our agricultural industries—which potential is acknowledged around the world—the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs is considering closing agricultural research institutes in Victoria. For the moment he has backed off from the proposal to close the Animal Research Institute at Werribee, which has contributed immensely to the productivity of Victoria's primary industries.

The Minister has also threatened to close the Kyabram Animal and Irrigated Pastures Research Institute, the only institute north of the Great Dividing Range that is dealing primarily with irrigated agriculture, animal production, and in particular with the dairy industry. The Kyabram institute attracts 40 per cent of its funding from industry, so it cannot be claimed that it is not appealing to industry and not attracting funds outside the government sector. The institute has the runs on the board and yet the Minister is considering closing it and other similar institutes which are desperately needed. The government's attitude is back to front and should be reversed.

I refer to Community Services Victoria. Its area of responsibility is one in which I have a particular interest. I am delighted that the Budget allocations for Community Services Victoria have been increased. An additional $10 million has been provided to enable intellectually disabled people to move out of institutions into the community. While I welcome that grant, I make the comment that it is totally inadequate. A government report indicated that, to achieve its objective, $30 million was needed in the first year of the scheme. The government has not bitten the bullet on this issue. It has allocated 30 per cent of the funds that were needed and so for some time the dual track system will operate. Institutions will still operate and the $10 million will be used to begin the process of moving people out of institutions.

The approach taken to the scheme is typical of the solution proposed to the problems dealt with in the Budget. The solutions provided demonstrate an inefficient use of government funds. It would be far more efficient to provide all the funds now to allow the program to be carried out quickly, effectively and economically, rather than to carry out the program on a piecemeal basis. The government is pursuing the same course with many programs and this course is followed at great additional cost.

While I welcome the $10 million grant, on the other side of the coin I am appalled at the callous introduction of a charge of $1.30 a day for people with intellectual disabilities attending day training centres. The charge will take $800 000 a year out of the pockets of those Victorians who are least able to afford to pay it.

Mr J. F. McGrath—That is social justice!

Mr MAUGHAN—Social justice—it is a real mockery! The money will come out of the pockets of people who are least able to afford to pay the charge. They are all on pensions and by the time they pay $100 to $120 a week for accommodation and $20 to $30 a week in fees to day training centres, they have absolutely nothing left. Yet the

government is prepared to take $1.30 a day from these people who can least afford to pay!

I refer to the proposed dismissal of 28 visiting child health nurses. This tragedy must be reversed. The nurses have played an incredibly valuable role in the community on a low-key level. Perhaps that is part of the problem, that they have been effective and maintained a low profile, not having shouted from the rooftops what they were doing, and so they have become vulnerable. The nurses have been professional in providing a caring support service. They have given counselling and support to thousands of families over the years. They have supported families with preschool age children with serious medical, social and behavioural problems.

The proposed dismissal of the nurses is another example of the stupidity of the government. Surely it is far more effective to spend taxpayers' funds on preventive programs such as this program that has proved to be so effective, than to deal with problems later because the causes were not dealt with at the preventive stage. Cutting this program will mean that families will suffer, children at risk will suffer and long-term financial cost will occur, let alone the human cost involved which will be considerably greater.

I shall speak briefly on the tax on business goodwill introduced in this Budget. This is an insidious anti-business, anti-incentive tax. It is expected to raise $20 million in this financial year but it is a tax that destroys initiative and provides no encouragement to work and invest, in spite of the fact that those things are what we need in this State and nation. The tax gives no encouragement to create jobs. As honourable members are aware, 60 per cent of Australia's work force is employed by small business and we should be doing everything possible to encourage small business to go out and invest and create more jobs, rather than imposing further taxes on them and driving more of them into the ground.

I turn now to the subject of road funding because, as the honourable member for Ballarat South pointed out and as the honourable member for Warrnambool stated so eloquently when he spoke on his motion a week or two ago, road funding is the No. 1 problem in country Victoria. I challenge the Minister for Transport to go to the Goulburn Valley and drive over the roads that I drive over every day. They are absolutely disgraceful and people will be killed on them if nothing is done—and nothing is being done.

Roads are of vital importance to the economic development of this State and nation. They are critical not only for social and domestic reasons but also for tourism and the movement of commerce in this State. We need a good infrastructure and efficient roads so that we can get the maximum economic benefits out of the industries which are in the country and which are still generating 45 per cent of this State's export income. Without a good roads system our competitive advantage in those industries will be diminished and eroded.

Country roads are falling to pieces. They are a disgrace. They are dangerous. People are now risking their lives daily going to work and to their social engagements. I do not think the Ministers of this government realise how serious the situation is.

Mr J. F. McGrath—Some 30 per cent of all accidents are caused by bad roads.

Mr MAUGHAN—Yes; some 30 per cent of all accidents are caused to some degree by bad road formations. It is beyond the scope of local government to correct this problem. Local government already provides about 40 per cent of the funding, with the State government providing about 35 per cent and the Commonwealth government providing 25 per cent. I note with much interest that State petrol taxes collected by this government have risen by 14·4 per cent. Has there been that increase in road

funding? The answer is no. Road funding has decreased by 3·6 per cent in real terms and this has been going on for years in both the State and Federal contributions. The actions of the Commonwealth government are even worse. It is currently receiving about $7 billion in fuel excise but returning to the States only $1·2 billion for road funding. Road funding must be made a Federal issue, and more funding must be provided by both State and Federal governments to deal with this serious problem that is prevalent across country Victoria.

The Victorian government is taking a short-sighted attitude. In our road system we have a valuable asset that has been built up over many years but it is rapidly deteriorating and vast amounts of money will be required to remedy the situation and get those roads back to their previous condition. The honourable member for Warrnambool points out that bridges also require restoration.

Public transport is, to some extent, linked with road funding. The rail system is losing $1000 million a year. The poor rail systen is partly the reason for our road problem. Road traffic is ever increasing. A dramatic increase in the volume of road freight has occurred since 1982. From 1982 to 1985 road freight increased by 25 per cent and is expected to double by the year 2000. At the same time vehicular traffic—motor cars—is also expected to double by the year 2000. If we could only improve the service of our railways, particularly the freight service, and get some of this heavy traffic off our highway system, we could alleviate many of our problems with roads being overcrowded and overused. Victoria's rail system, and particularly the freight system, is unreliable and plagued by union disputes. The problem needs attention. More of the heavy freight should be carried on the rail system and removed from the roads.

I shall illustrate two personal problems I have had with the rail system in recent weeks. On the last occasion that Parliament was sitting I went to go home by train and sat in the train at Spencer Street station for half an hour after the scheduled departure time before the conductor came along and informed us that he was sorry but that we did not have an engine. A half-hour later, that is, an hour after the scheduled departure time, the conductor came through and asked us our destinations. We still had no engine and we had been sitting there for an hour waiting to go home. Then, we were all loaded onto coaches and finally commenced to make our way home one and a half hours after the scheduled departure time. Honourable members can imagine the inconvenience and heartache that caused many of the passengers on the train.

In the area of freight, my electorate office was recently consigned a new desk. It came by V/Line. When it arrived, it was damaged. It now has to go back and I hesitate to think when I will get a desk that will arrive undamaged. Is it any wonder that commercial organisations choose to use road transport, which is reliable, rather than entrust their valuable goods and important time schedules to a grossly inefficient rail system. It is time this government dealt with the union problem and provided the necessary management apparatus to tidy up the rail system, particularly the freight operation.

There is another aspect to the problem, and although the government is quite rightly concerned about the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer and is telling us that we should be reducing the use of our motor cars, it is letting the rail system die rather than encouraging people to leave their cars at home and to use the rail system that is already in place.

Another important issue to country people is fuel. Country people have absolutely no option but to use the motor car and, therefore, have to purchase fuel. They are absolutely incensed at the difference of at least 10 cents a litre between the prices of fuel in the metropolitan area and those in country Victoria. This situation occurs

month after month and year after year and country people are sick and tired of having to pay this differential which is so far in excess of what it costs to transport fuel from Melbourne to the farthest part of this State. When the Federal Liberal–National Party government was in office the fuel price differential was never more than 2 cents a litre in any part of Australia. I hope we get back to that situation soon. In Victoria we have ever increasing fuel taxes and the government has a vested interest in seeing that fuel prices go higher because it rakes off more taxes as a result of that.

I refer now to a problem in the racing industry. Without any prior discussion, this government has attempted to grab an extra $21·2 million from that industry. This would have a heavy impact on racing clubs and would mean less money available for stakes and for facilities. The racing industry is a big employer, particularly in country Victoria.

I remind the House that many of those who work in the racing industry do so in a voluntary capacity. This is a very shortsighted and desperate grab for funds. The turnover of the Totalizator Agency Board will undoubtedly fall as a result of punters, owners and other members of the racing fraternity supporting meetings in other States rather than in Victoria. Ultimately there will be fewer funds available for the government through the TAB.

The closure of courthouses flows from the Budget. Shortly after the Budget was introduced the Attorney-General announced that 41 Magistrates Courts throughout the State will be closed, several of which are in my electorate. I shall mention two in particular—Kyabram and Cohuna. In both cases large numbers of people will be severely disadvantaged. I have been told by police officers in Kyabram that 50 per cent of the people who attend the Kyabram court walk to court, not necessarily because they choose to but because other means of transport are not available. There is no public transport from either Kyabram or Cohuna to the adjacent large centres of Shepparton, Kerang and Echuca that would allow residents of either Kyabram or Cohuna to arrive at those major centres in time for the opening of court.

Certainly there is no public transport that would allow people who attend court in those centres to return home on the same day. The closures will cause inconvenience to people who have to stay in those centres overnight: it will cause inconvenience to witnesses, police officers and legal representatives. In Kyabram, the closures could well mean that on court sitting days no police officers will be available to deal with emergencies, even though there is a staff of seven police officers in the town.

The proposed closures conflict with government policies concerning the depletion of the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect. At the same time as telling people that they should leave their cars at home and use public transport instead, in this instance the government is asking people to jump into their cars in large numbers and travel anything up to 50 kilometres to attend court. Where is the social justice and equality of opportunity in those policies? The proposal is also shortsighted because legal aid costs will rise dramatically as a result, so eliminating almost all of the so-called savings to be gained by the closure of courthouses.

Mr J. F. McGrath interjected.

Mr MAUGHAN—Yes, it's a joke; it really is. The State apprenticeship scheme is another example of the cynical policies of the government. Eighteen months ago 290 apprentices were employed, with the assistance of government subsidies. The scheme worked well: hospitals, municipalities and other institutions were encouraged to provide jobs for apprentices. Halfway through, the government pulled the rug from under those apprentices. In Kyabram, for example, the local hospital has been left with a bill of $20 000 and is not able to dismiss the apprentices.

Education is another area in which the government is deficient. In Echuca stage 3 of the Echuca Technical School's rebuilding program has been completed. Stage 4 will not proceed this year because, although a former Minister for Education, Mr Cathie, said that the rebuilding program would be continuous, the government has seen fit not to fund the program this financial year. That will cause inconvenience to students and staff and will also affect Echuca State School No. 208, which will not be able to be moved to the technical school site until the building program is completed. The decision will deny the government the opportunity of benefiting from the sale of valuable real estate in Echuca. The decision is shortsighted and is typical of the inefficiency and mismanagement of the government. At the tertiary training level there is a lack of suitable hostel facilities for tertiary students at Bendigo, as well as a lack of suitable accommodation for intellectually disabled students.

The Budget is testimony to the inadequate and gross mismanagement of the government. The Treasurer is responsible for the loss of $31 billion. Victoria has a high external debt and the government has refused to cut recurrent expenditure. Far too much is spent on public servants and far too little on capital works. The Budget is anti-business and anti-private enterprise. It is inconsistent with concerns for the environment, and it is short-term in its outlook. We may be able to pay the bills today, but how will we pay them tomorrow?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Jasper)—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—The Budget has been introduced against a background of record high interest rates, a record high Current Account deficit and an inflation rate double the Treasurer's predicted level—and rising. It has been introduced against a background of State government losses and liabilities of $31 000 million, a figure that includes the first ever loss by the State Bank. It has been introduced against the background of a huge increase in the State debt, huge increases in the level of personal debt, and the stockmarket crash.

This background also includes the collapse of high fliers and entrepreneurs who are mainly friends or former friends of Labor governments throughout Australia, the financial interests of whom those governments are attempting to shore up and "WA Inc." is a good example of the disastrous results that have occurred. As well, television networks are facing increasing financial hardship and possible substantial retrenchments. Small businesses and farmers are being financially squeezed harder than they have ever before been squeezed.

Against this background both the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer are saying that all is well and that the economy is "in the groove". The State government continually claims—and the Deputy Premier repeated the claim in the House recently—that it has a vision as to where it is taking the State. The groove that the Federal Treasurer talks about will lead to financial disaster for the nation. The vision that the government, and particularly the Deputy Premier, talks about is akin to a Walter Mitty vision: it has all sorts of grand dreams but absolutely no understanding of sound financial management and the need to account for the public dollar.

This lack of accountability is highlighted in the House day after day. Both the Premier and his Ministers refuse to accept the accountability they should accept to Parliament and the people of Victoria. Under the Westminster system of Parliamentary democracy the executive government is accountable to the people of a State or a nation through the Parliamentary system. Yet day after day the Prime Minister, the Premier and the Treasurer duck and weave, are secretive and evasive, and try to avoid accepting the accountability to Parliament they should accept.

A Goebbels-type lie is being told to the nation by the Federal Treasurer. Time and again we are told that all is well and that the economy is on the right track. When such lies are told often enough and brazenly enough and when people start to read about them in the newspapers and hear about them on the electronic media, they begin to believe them. But when the facts are examined they reveal that the opposite is the case.

The facts around the nation prove the old saying that has been said time and again and which is rejected by our Labor colleagues: Labor governments simply cannot manage the economy. Why not? When one looks at the line-up in this Chamber and the line-up of Labor members in Federal Parliament, one sees that they have no experience in the real world of commerce, business or finance. They have never run their own businesses where their own dollars are at risk. In the main, they have had the luxury of an academic approach to life.

They are different from the old-time Labor members who came up through the trade union movement—the salt of the earth, old-time Labor people. They are referred to in this Chamber as the "shellbacks". They came up from a different direction and had dirt on their hands and understood the realities of life.

The present academic group we see now is led—or misled—by that academic social engineer—perhaps I should say socialist social engineer—Peter Sheehan in the Department of Management and Budget. They are running the State and nation off the rails. Victoria probably has the record for the worst financial management of all the States and that is a pretty poor situation.

I am pleased that at last the more professional commentators in the media are beginning to get their calculators out and question the brash statements of the Federal Treasurer and the statements made in Victoria by the Premier and his Treasurer. They are simply not accepting the statements issued by that Orwellian creature, the Ministry of Truth, otherwise known as the Government Media Unit, and are beginning to question the statements and look at the appalling mismanagement of the Victorian government and to question the national economic situation.

It is reasonable to compare a State Budget and financial management with a company in the private sector or even a household. A State Budget is infinitely more complex but the same principles apply. The big difference between them is that the householder is accountable. He can spend no more than his income or what he can reasonably borrow and is ultimately accountable to himself and his bank manager. A company is accountable to its shareholders, to Corporate Affairs Victoria and, ultimately, to its financiers.

A State Budget and a government's financial management are accountable in the long term to the people only through Parliament. If the disastrous mismanagement this government has perpetrated on Victoria occurred in any household, the household would long since have been broken up and sold. In the same way, a man with his own small business would be well and truly out of business.

In a company situation, the same disastrous results we have seen in Victoria would cause receivers to be appointed, the company would be put into liquidation and the directors would be investigated and, if found liable for the sorts of losses we have seen in Victoria, would end up languishing in gaol.

The voters are the final arbiter of the performance of a government and they judge the situation accordingly at the time of elections. The Premier, in answer to our accusations of mismanagement unctuously says, "In October 1988 the Victorian people gave us a clear mandate to govern". However, although the Premier has said that, he deceived the voters of Victoria when he said, prior to the election when

questions were being raised, "There is nothing to worry about regarding the VEDC, the VIC, WorkCare et cetera". Then he rushed off to an early election. This was despite the fact that this Parliament had just agreed to a four-year term in Victoria rather than a three-year term.

He said to the voters, "There is nothing to worry about, vote for me, I am squeaky clean and trustworthy". He deceived the people of Victoria and called an early election so he could cover up what was really happening and what he knew perfectly well was happening. He hoodwinked the electors and won what he proudly proclaims is a record third term for the ALP in Victoria.

Mr Weideman interjected.

Mr PLOWMAN—As my colleague says, it was with less than 50 per cent of the vote. If we look at any sort of gerrymander, we might look carefully at the situation in Victoria.

That record third term for the ALP, which the Premier is no doubt proud of, is a Pyrrhic victory for the Labor Party. He will be remembered in the same way that Nixon is remembered. Nixon is not remembered for the crimes of Watergate but he will always be remembered for the cover-up and for trying to hoodwink the people of the United States of America. The Premier will not be remembered for his win in 1988; he will be remembered for his deceit and for avoiding the accountability to the State and the people. He will be remembered for the cover-up of facts that would otherwise have sent him out of office, where he deserves to be.

The government should not be too smug about this situation because it still faces the possibility of the opposition parties in this Parliament calling in the receiver. If government cover-ups, deceit and lack of accountability to Victorians continue, the government should not forget that the Opposition still has the Constitutional option to call in a receiver by blocking Supply. It is most unlikely, I might say, that that power would be used but the opposition parties could never undertake never to use that Constitutional power in Victoria if the government continues the deceit, secrecy and cover-up it has perpetrated on the people of Victoria. If this situation continues, the ultimate Constitutional weapon might have to be used by the Opposition in this Parliament to protect the people of Victoria from these deceits.

The housing sector in Australia and in Victoria is a sensitive barometer of the economic and social circumstances of the people of this nation. In the private sector it is a sensitive barometer to building sector activity that has an important flow-on to employment and economic activity.

Economic activity is seen not only in the production of building materials, the timber industry, brick manufacture and all the other industries involved in building houses because once the houses are built there is a substantial flow-on to the provision of furniture, domestic appliances, floor coverings, garden equipment, the Federal Treasurer's dreaded Hills hoist, fencing materials, nursery equipment and so on. Housing construction is an important industry and an important barometer of the economic and social circumstances of this State. As I said, it is extremely important to the employment prospects of the State and the economic activity of the future.

The barometer in the housing market is also sensitive to the housing affordability. It is sensitive to the availability of services to domestic land. In the public sector it is a substantial indicator of social conditions of those ordinary people the Premier was talking about at question time today, those who he claims his government will be looking after carefully. One must also consider waiting lists, rental rebates, mortgage assistance schemes, bad debts and rental arrears in the public housing market. I shall come back to each of those individual items shortly.

In the general housing sector, both public and private, the barometer is pointing to some fairly dirty weather ahead. With all-time record interest rates, which are the direct result of the Hawke–Keating monetary policy, starting to bite, we are experiencing a distinct downturn in this sector in Victoria. Private housing activity is substantially reduced. The home affordability index shows that Victoria has the most rapidly declining rate of home affordability of any State in this nation. House starts by builders are down 50 per cent this month to this time last year.

As I mentioned, this is an important part of the Victorian economy. A substantial downturn in the housing sector and the building market will have a considerable flow-on to the economy and will mean increasing unemployment as the months go by. It takes a little while to work its way into the system but the downturn in the housing market will have a serious effect on both employment and economic activity in this State in the next twelve months. There will be a blow-out in home debt levels as lenders, who are endeavouring to assist people having to pay higher mortgage rates, will simply add those additional rates on to the loans of the people concerned. That is temporarily helping those people who are facing additional payments, who are not shielded by the 13·5 per cent mortgage ceiling, but the ultimate result will be that the loans concerned will be substantially increased from the original loans.

With regard to land availability, despite the protestations of the Minister for Planning and Environment, shortages of serviced land where people want to live are hitting people in Victoria as a direct result of the inactivity in this area and of the poor planning or lack of planning since the responsibility for that function was removed by the government from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. That has resulted in considerable distortions in the land market and has driven up land prices.

Lack of forward planning and the rezoning of land for residential development has also resulted in tremendous activity by speculators taking profits, turning land over and driving up land prices. The overall result of these factors and the action of increased interest rates has caused a huge escalation in land prices which is ultimately passed on to the home owner or home buyer.

The first home owner, or the would-be first home owner, with the current economic climate, the record high interest rates and the cost of housing, is almost totally excluded from the market. The prospect for the young people of Victoria wanting to buy their first homes is poor.

In the public sector Victoria is experiencing record waiting lists for public housing, record rental rebate levels, record rental arrears, record bad debts in public housing and record levels of mortgage rent assistance. A great social injustice is being perpetrated on the people of Victoria when this happens.

The government must address waiting lists and affordability in the private sector because if the affordability index does not improve in the private sector in Victoria more and more people will be driven on to public waiting lists and there will be infinitely more pressure for public housing. Despite the philosophical alliance of Labor governments to public housing, I should have thought a pragmatic approach to the Budget would dictate that the government should be maximising private home ownership for one simple reason: it is cheaper for any government to assist people to obtain their own homes than it is to put people into public housing.

Of course, there are people who do not want to own their own homes or do not have the capacity to own their own homes. The government has a responsibility to look after people in the latter category. However, the truth is that it costs less to get people into their own homes.

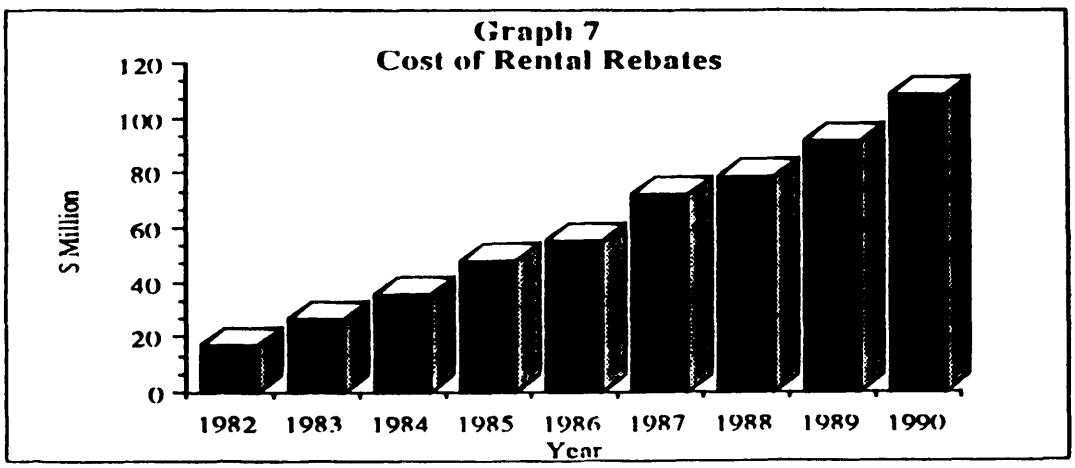
Mrs Hirsh interjected.

Mr PLOWMAN—I should be happy to debate this issue with the honourable member for Wantirna at any time. The government would be saving the tax dollar by getting people into their own homes.

With regard to rental rebates, I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a graph from the Supplementary Budget Papers provided by the Ministry of Housing and Construction. I shall refer to it as table!

Leave was granted, and the graph was as follows:

Table 1



Source: Supplementary Budget Papers, Ministry of Housing and Construction.

Mr PLOWMAN—The table shows an increase in rental rebates being picked up by this State from approximately $17 million in 1982 to the 1989–90 Budget where the figure is approximately $120 million. This escalation of rental rebates is an indication of a trend in this State and this nation of more and more people finding it harder to pay rent for public housing.

In June 1988, Victoria had 57 000 public rental dwellings; of that figure, 42 600 Ministry of Housing and Construction tenants were receiving rental rebates. That table also reflects the changing nature of public housing, which is fast becoming welfare housing. Welfare should be the responsibility of the Federal government. The Cain government has to pick up $109·2 million in welfare assistance through housing and is being asked to carry the can for the Hawke government. The Cain government should be fighting hard with Canberra to have the Federal government accept its responsibilities.

Perhaps that is simply an indication of where the socialist government is taking Victorians—to more and more welfare housing, and closer to the Welfare State! I seek leave to have table No. 2 incorporated in *Hansard*; the Speaker has approved its incorporation.

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

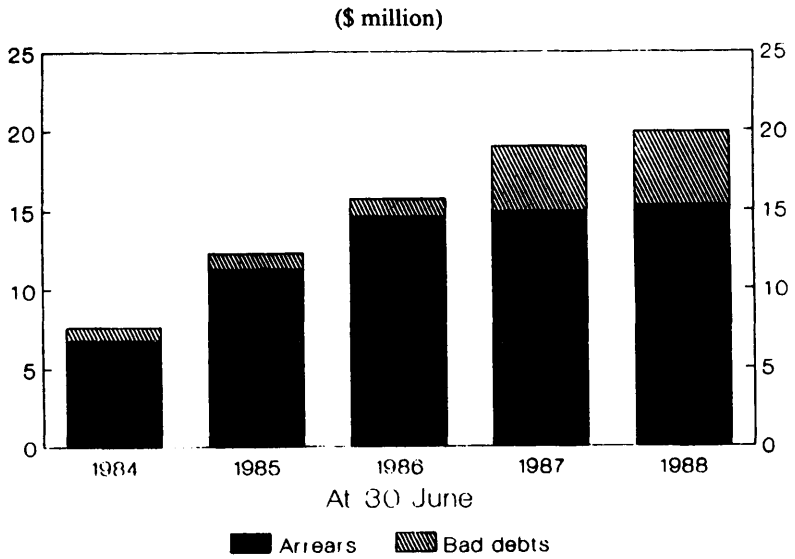
Table 2

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION

Rental arrears

3.10.1 For the past 3 years audit has expressed concern about the unsatisfactory level of rental arrears. Despite the Ministry giving priority to reducing rental arrears, the level has remained unchanged after taking into account the magnitude of bad debts being written off. Chart 3.10A illustrates the situation:

CHART 3.10A. RENTAL ARREARS AND BAD DEBTS



Source: Auditor-General's report May 1989.

Mr PLOWMAN—That table shows the rental arrears and debts currently being foisted upon Victorians and upon the Ministry of Housing and Construction. Rental arrears were highlighted by the Auditor-General's report in 1989 as being a real problem for the Victorian government. A huge escalation has occurred since the Cain government came to office.

I seek leave to incorporate table No. 3, detailing a comparison of rental arrears and bad debts in Victoria with those in other States. I have received the approval of the Speaker.

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

Table 3

3.10.4 At 30 June 1988 the severity of the arrears and bad debt problems in Victoria is demonstrated by comparison with housing bodies in other States. Details are shown in Charts 3.10B and 3.10C:

CHART 3.10B.
AVERAGE RENTAL ARREARS
PER TENANT
($)

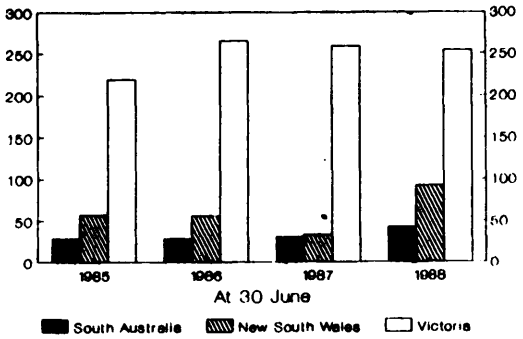
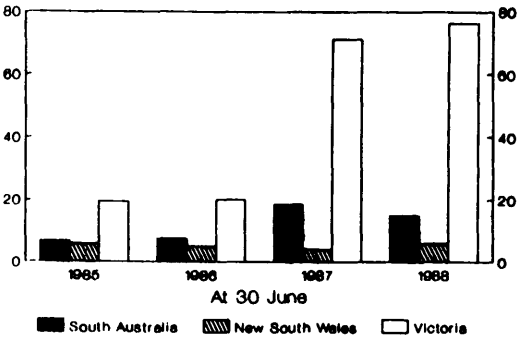


CHART 3.10C.
AVERAGE BAD DEBTS
PER TENANT
($)



Source: Auditor-General's report May 1989

Mr PLOWMAN—The table demonstrates how Victoria fares vis-a-vis the former Labor States of New South Wales, and South Australia; Victoria compares unfavourably. It is appallingly bad management on behalf of the government to allow tenants who are principally low-income people to get into a position of bad debt and rental arrears because once in that situation many people find it difficult to extract themselves.

Either it is bad management or it highlights the soft underbelly of the left wing Ministers who have held that responsibility since Labor came to government; obviously they have been persuaded by the Tenants Union of Victoria, and others, to not be too hard on tenants, and to not make them pay rent. Some do not want to pay rent, and would not do so if they could escape that requirement, but others have been allowed to slide into that situation. It is unjust for those tenants to be allowed to drift into that situation. Improved management and counselling, as is evidently provided in other States, would lead to a comparison being more favourable for Victoria.

The economic health of Victoria is indicated by a need for significant increases in mortgage assistance; the stop press provided in the supplementary papers of the Ministry of Housing and Construction documents disclose that an additional $3·863 million will be provided to the State for mortgage relief, and for those experiencing severe financial hardship. Victorians are suffering from the housing problems brought about by government policies, by government mismanagement, and by the extraordinarily high interest rates imposed on Australia by the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer. People are being forced to the brink of losing their homes; first home buyers are unable to purchase homes.

The Premier and the Treasurer are not prepared to say one word in support of those Victorians; they fear they may cause an embarrassment for their Federal confrires because of the approaching Federal election. It is an indictment upon the government that nothing was said about this problem in the State Budget speech. There is much more that could be said about the housing problem, and I hope to expand on that in other debates in this place.

The Budget does nothing for people in the housing industry and, in real terms, Victoria will experience a reduction in expenditure. The Budget does nothing to help

those reeling under the record high interest rates in Australia. It is an indictment of the government, and of its Federal colleagues.

The sitting was suspended at 6.25 *p.m. until* 8.2 *p.m.*

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—As the shadow Minister for Education I should like to commence my speech on education. I direct the attention of the House to the way the public funds have been utilised in education, and I refer to an article in the *Australian* of 29 July 1989 by Mr Greg Sheridan, in which he says of the administration of education in this State:

> But taken as a whole, Ms Kirner's approach embodies most of the failed and rotten educational experiments of the past two decades from which most other societies comparable to Australia are running away as fast as they can.
>
> There in Ms Kirner's speech—

The speech to which Mr Sheridan refers is a speech made by the Minister to a principals' conference outlining her political–educational philosophy—

> . . . is all the anti-intellectualism, all the Utopian, excessive and coercive egalitarianism, all the resentment at real achievement, the hostility to objective evaluation, the second-rate Leftist ideological claptrap of class and gender, which have made up the stuff of radical education workshops for 20 years.
>
> It is truly a dinosaur approach unwilling to change methods that have plainly failed.

That observation on the approach to education by the Minister for Education, unfortunately also the Deputy Premier, is an accurate description of the ideological imperatives which drive the Minister in her perception of education.

It must be understood at the outset that there are clear ideological divisions between the Labor government and the Liberal Opposition as to the purpose of education. Simplistically—I acknowledge the problems inherent in over-simplification—the Minister perceives education as part of the class struggle and as a means of achieving social change, social engineering, if you like; and even if one does not like it, that is what it means. The Minister is pursuing social rather than educational objectives.

My Liberal Party view of the purpose is that it is a preparation for life and work and should equip the individual for maximum realisation of his or her potential and the achievement of personal fulfilment in a free, competitive society.

Since 1982 the Ministry of Education has experienced substantial structural and directional changes. The portfolio has had a succession of Ministers and, as is to be expected, the militant teacher unions have exercised a dominant influence on the administration of education. The Minister has her own agenda, and the militant teacher unions are galloping breathlessly to keep up as she attempts to achieve her own ideological imperatives.

The administration of education is now totally politicised. More people have gone down the liftwell in education than in any other government department. Euphemistic buzzwords such as "equity", "social justice", "participation", "equality of outcomes", "consultation" and many others are now part of the education jargon. They all disguise an ideological obsession with non-existent class distinctions, non-existent discrimination and an almost paranoid rejection of aims, approaches and traditions which have emerged from the experiences of the past, even to the extent of forcing change to the names of schools simply for the sake of change.

Although we live in an increasingly competitive world in which Australia must become more competitive to survive, competition is discouraged in government schools in assessments and even in sport. The pursuit of intellectual excellence is discouraged and the selective high schools are now ordinary local secondary schools because their historic role was characterised as elitist and inequitable.

My central concern is that these policies are clearly designed to undermine the encouragement of merit and promote instead the rise and eventual triumph of mediocrity. Victoria and Australia cannot afford this ideological folly.

Earlier this year the Australian Council for Educational Research published its survey of literacy and numeracy in Victoria. In essence the report concluded that, apart from some evidence of a decline in standards in the lower secondary years, overall standards in 1988 were similar to those in 1975. In other words, standards have not fallen; a result hailed by the Minister as proof of the success of Labor's education policies. What is important is that they have not improved.

Since 1982 expenditure on State schools has risen from $1·6 billion to $3 billion in 1989. The 1988 education Budget was overspent by an additional $94 million. But there are fewer students in government schools and an increasing enrolment at private schools.

I am concerned that the vast expenditure on a government education system, which services fewer students, has not resolved funding problems, nor has it provided an education service vastly superior to that which existed in 1982. I am also concerned that State government support for private schools has substantially declined in real terms since 1982.

I am concerned that integration programs at both government and non-government schools are probably only half successful because promised resources have not been supplied. I am concerned that special schools for the physically and intellectually handicapped continue to garner with difficulty the resources necessary for their continuing service to the young people they teach with dedication, and I regard as a scandal the absence in Victoria of facilities for intellectually gifted children who, in my view, are the most severely disadvantaged clients of our government school system.

The new Victorian certificate of education—VCE—is controversial and the subject of considerable disquiet in many quarters. I understand and share that concern, but my public position has been, and will remain, that as the VCE is in place and students have no choice but to pursue it, I will do nothing to jeopardise the interests of those students.

Mr Micallef interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! I have already indicated to the honourable member for Springvale that he should not interject. He is out of place and out of order, and his constant interjections are not assisting the proceedings of the House.

Mr RICHARDSON—Progress towards the implementation of the VCE will be carefully monitored and comments will continue to be made on it. Nevertheless, the Liberal Party does not endorse the current direction of the VCE. If there is disquiet in the community, especially from parents and employers, I want to hear about it. A Liberal government will initiate a thorough review of it when it assumes office.

My overwhelming concern is that, as the ideological waves wash constantly across the educational landscape, there appears to be no realistic comprehension of what education should do in preparing our children for tomorrow. In ten years we shall be on the threshhold of the 21st century. The government's educational policies look back to Luddites rather than to the future, and one can understand that when one looks at the collection of Luddites on the government back benches. Our education policies should be preparing our children for an enthusiastic leap into the technical and intensely competitive world of the 21st century.

In the time remaining before the next election the Liberal Party will assist in the implementation of the legislative measures with which it agrees, and I shall continue to make representations to the Minister on behalf of schools, organisations and individuals across the State who have constantly approached me for support as shadow Minister. Most important is the formulation of policies to be put in place on the assumption of government by my party. Those policies must relate to the overall objective to be served by education. The socialist education objective is the reshaping of society through education; the Liberal education objective is to equip individuals for life, work, fulfilment and the maximum achievement of potential. Society can benefit and develop through the optimum achievement of each individual.

The Liberal Party faces the prospect of assuming government in late 1991 or early 1992. Children starting school then will leave school after the turn of the century. By then, if our standard of living has not already fallen substantially below that of the present, it will certainly be under intense domestic and external economic pressure. The best that we can hope for is the maintenance of our present standard of living, and all of the economic indicators project that as an unlikely prospect.

When the children who start school in 1992 leave school they must be equipped not just with survival skills but also with the intellectual background to take them on to further education and training. They must be equipped with an awareness of the environment in which they must survive, and should have attitudes which motivate them to strive for excellence and achievement. The world in which they must survive and succeed will be more international, more technological and more competitive than today.

Government schools are already competing among themselves within a tightening market. If government schools are to compete successfully with non-government schools, they must improve the quality of the product they are offering the market and, above all, engage in some creative salesmanship. The high number of Labor Parliamentarians and government schoolteachers who send their children to private rather than government schools provides a powerful illustration of current perceptions. The solution does not lie in yet another restructuring of the system; it may perhaps lie in destructuring.

We already live in a computer-dominated society, yet not every primary and secondary school teaches computer usage, nor do all adequately recognise computer technology as an aid to learning. The financial implications of overcoming that deficiency are horrendous, yet it must be done, not just for those children who will start school in 1992 but also for those 532 000 children who presently attend government schools.

If we as a nation are to survive in an increasingly competitive world, we cannot continue to recline in contented English-speaking isolation. We are already disadvantaged in the international market by limitations in language and understanding of foreign cultures that are not shared by our competitors. That disadvantage need not exist. Victoria has the greatest language bank in the world, yet it is not utilised. Not every school teaches languages, and many primary schools which have been conducting exciting and successful language programs have had them curtailed. My objective is that every child in government primary schools will learn a second language, and that will be carried on to secondary schools by the year 2000.

Another priority objective is the abolition of the ideological nonsense of equality of outcomes. The only person who can legitimately engage in weighting a field of candidates to achieve equality of outcomes is a race handicapper who deliberately disadvantages a superior horse to bring it back to the field and makes winning as difficult as possible. Such an approach has no place in education, yet that is the essence

of this educationally sacreligious expression of equality of outcomes, which is embraced and promoted by the Minister for Education. It is official doctrine in Victoria, although thankfully most teachers ignore it and children succeed in spite of it. Equality of opportunity was the doctrine and it will be again.

The educational services provided to the intellectually and physically disabled are of a high Australian standard and have been for many years. Youngsters with exceptional sporting ability can go to the Australian Institute of Sport; talented singers, dancers, actors, musicians and artists can attend the College of the Arts; but intellectually gifted children are the most disadvantaged of all. For them there is nothing but frustration, behavioural problems and, on the evidence, a nationally debilitating drop-out rate. It is essential that we not only talk about the pursuit of excellence but also do something about it. We cannot afford to waste our intellectual resources——

Mr MICALLEF (Springvale)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the honourable member seems to be reading his speech. I understand that is against Standing Orders. I understand also that as a former schoolteacher he has the ability to read, but he should be able to articulate his speech from notes like the rest of us.

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the honourable member for Forest Hill advise the House whether he is reading his speech or whether he is referring to copious notes?

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—I am referring to copious notes. If the honourable member for Springvale were to remain alert he would see that I have glanced in his direction many times during each sentence.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr RICHARDSON—We cannot afford to waste our intellectual resources, and to positively discriminate against them on spurious ideological grounds, as is done in Victoria, is reprehensible.

My advocacy over many years of facilities for intellectually gifted children has, not suprisingly, been derided by successive Labor Ministers as elitist. Why is the encouragement of achievement and excellence elitist when applied to education and employment and not so when applied to sport or art? I know, as does the House, that our future as a nation will be jeopardised if we do not utilise more effectively the intellectual resources at present being wasted. Thus, the establishment of centres of excellence will be given a high priority in the development of Liberal education policy.

Non-government schools will continue to receive financial and functional support from a Liberal government, for two reasons: firstly, because it believes in freedom of choice; and secondly, parents of children attending private schools are taxpayers and are thus entitled to the utilisation of part of their taxes to support the private education chosen for their children.

The value in real terms of State government support for private schools has steadily declined since 1982. My initial objective will be to improve the real value of support for independent schools. I acknowledge the importance of unions. I have been a union member and I believe in them. My objective will be to work in partnership and consultation with all teacher unions and professional organisations, but it will be clearly established that in the final resort the government determines education policy and not the unions, which is currently the case.

The school principal is the chief executive of the school, and like the chief executive of any enterprise will be expected to manage the school and its staff. The principal will have authority for decision making and will receive the support of the Ministry in exercising that authority.

Discipline in government schools has been the source of widespread concern in the community ever since the Labor Party came to office. Indeed, concern about discipline is regularly expressed by teachers and it is one of the reasons why increasing numbers of parents choose private school education for their children. Discipline and the wearing of uniforms are matters for the school to decide within regulatory guidelines. Having established school policy on these related issues, the school council and the principal, who will implement the school policy, will receive Ministry support in that implementation.

The apparent increase in discipline problems is but one of the many challenges facing teachers. Secondary teachers face the daunting task of curriculum development and the new teaching styles needed for the Victorian certificate of education.

Primary school teachers must continue to teach the basics and also create awareness of a changing and increasingly complicated environment as the preparation for entry to more demanding secondary education. Teachers of children with intellectual and physical disabilities now work in an environment of greater community awareness, understanding and acceptance of disability. They must continue to teach survival skills to children with widely variant levels of disability.

It is, therefore, imperative that greater emphasis be placed on professional development for all teachers, with a range of options including in-service training, leave of absence, vacation and after-hour courses. My objective will be to provide improved professional development opportunities for teachers to enable them to acquire new skills, where necessary, that will better prepare the children in their care for the challenges they will face in the 21st century.

Education is central to national survival and the maintenance of our standard of living. Many countries have the natural resource capacity of Australia yet languish in the Third World. The fundamental difference between those countries and Australia is that our population is educated. However, other countries also have educated populations and many of them are doing better than Australia. The great migrations from Europe that characterised the 1950s and 1960s have ceased because those homelands now have more to offer than Australia.

If we are to maintain our standard of living, we must do better than we are at present and that means: the better use of technology; improved quality of all our work, goods and services; the restoration of the work ethic and an understanding of competition; final product development from our natural resources; greater and more diversified agricultural productivity; and better marketing based on an understanding of overseas markets, their cultures and languages.

I remind honourable members that as years go by countries that are presently behind us will be working at their development and they will be catching up. In every underdeveloped country education is emphasised as the basis for development. In Australia we are complacent about our future, but we remain complacent at our peril. The Third World country strives through education to improve its standard of living. In Australia the task is to maintain our standard of living, and education is crucial to achieving that objective. That is why my approach to education in Victoria is aggressively pragmatic and futuristic.

As the alternative education Minister I have a responsibility to contribute to the survival and growth of our nation, and tonight I have provided some indicators of my approach to the thrust of Liberal education policy development. In essence I reject a Luddite, left-wing ideological approach to education with all its social and economic consequences. My overall objective is to ensure that our young people, rather than being thrust unprepared into their futures, are educated and ready to make an enthusiastic leap into the complex and intensely competitive 21st century.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston South)—I realise that there is approximately 30 minutes before the debate on the Budget Bills is completed. I am disgusted that the government has cut this important debate short, because there are a number of speakers who wish to contribute but who will not have the opportunity of doing so.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Frankston South may not reflect on a decision of the House.

Mr WEIDEMAN—I accept your guidance, Mr Speaker. It appears that the House sits for fewer hours than it did in the period previous to 1982. At that time Parliament would sit for more than 2000 hours in a session but that has now been reduced to a shadow of former sitting times. Perhaps some of the sessional periods were lengthy to the extreme, but they provided the opportunity for members on both sides of the House to contribute to the Budget debate.

One of the highlights of this debate has been the lack of participation of government members. They are damned by their silence and their failure to debate the arguments presented by the Opposition.

In the period since the election twelve months ago many government problems have been highlighted, such as the loss by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation of $111 million, the Victorian Investment Corporation of $28·7 million and the recent State Bank Victoria loss of $197 million, which was the result of losses by Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, its subsidiary merchant bank, which had $500 million go astray.

Losses are attributed to the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division). In 1985–86 I wrote to a group of Ministers, including the Premier, the then Minister for Health and the then Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands asking them what was happening to the council. I sought documentation through freedom of information legislation. The matter was brought to my attention initially by a well-known dentist in my electorate, Mr Bill Suhr, who ran the peninsula air ambulance service. He had the contract for the air ambulance and was concerned about another competitor in the field who did not have to pay for the service. He wanted to find out what was going on. I raised the issue with the Ministers and was unable to get a reply. Unfortunately the person who was concerned met his death in an air accident at Essendon and the matter did not proceed.

After the matter was raised, I made further inquiries for documents through freedom of information legislation, but did not receive them. The relevant departments claimed they sent the documents to me, but I did not receive them. I received a letter from the former Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, the present Minister for Education, which had three signatures on it. One would have to be a fool not to recognise that the signatures were signed by John Friedrich—but in three different styles. The person who handled the freedom of information request and the Minister would know that. That is the kind of information that is being forwarded to Ministers.

If the government had taken some action in 1985 Victoria would not be in the state it is in. Ministers should take note of letters they receive. WorkCare has blown out to $5000 million; liabilities of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation total $111 million; the Victorian Investment Corporation, $28·7 million; stock market losses, $9·8 million; sales and leaseback debts, $600 million; compulsory third-party insurance, $1298 million; and a $4000 million increase in public sector superannuation liabilities. The government has estimated transport losses at $5000 million and the overall loss by the government is in the order of $31 000 million.

Any Treasurer who has that sort of loss should toss in the job—at least he should consider it. One must expect a hard and tough Budget after the Premiers Conference

in Canberra, as a result of which we were led to believe Victoria would receive $381 million less. After that, one would not expect the Premier to return to Victoria with enthusiasm.

One must reflect on what the position was in 1982–83 when the Premier claimed that he took over a debt of some $380 million. When one examines the Budget Papers as at 30 June that year, one notes the Premier claimed the government had turned that loss into a $6 million profit. The Premier said that if he had allowed the Liberal government policies to continue from March to the end of June, for a full year it would be a $1400 million loss, but the Treasurer was able to turn that around in three months.

With such losses in the Budget today the government cannot claim to be modern-day managers. There have been enormous cutbacks in the community—we do not have cutbacks, what we have are false promises. Before the last election the former Minister for Health, the present Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, circulated a plan of $900 million worth of promises, such as a $14·5 million allocation for a psychiatric unit at the Frankston Hospital, some $80 million for the Mount Eliza Centre and for the establishment centres at Frankston, Hastings and Rosebud. When one examines some of the promises for Portland, Geelong and Ballarat and other hospital developments around the State one realises, it was a tall order.

Some of the promises have been met. The psychiatric wing of the Frankston Hospital is to get $400 000 so that that project can get under way. When section 1B of that hospital was planned, it would have cost $2·7 million to build the powerhouse, do some earthworks and construct a 500-bed hospital. That plan was reduced to 100 beds. I hope that will come to fruition. I am sceptical about it. The $400 000 is being made available to start the project. It is hoped the documentation, the signing of leases and so on will take place and the project will begin and be completed over the next eighteen months. I hope it will not become a hole in the ground as was the Frankston Hospital experience when the hospital sold sand for more than $1 million to raise part of the funds for the project.

One must refer to other hidden factors, such as waiting lists. It has been revealed that the waiting lists are in the order of 25 000. When the government was elected in 1982 there were only 8000 on the waiting lists, and with 200 hospitals throughout Victoria, that was not many people. The problem has increased and there are now more people on the waiting lists. Those who require hip replacements must wait up to three years and during that time they are in considerable pain. The surgical waiting list in 1988 has increased by 100 per cent, but nobody knows the extent of that list today; it is certainly greater than it was a year ago.

The waiting time for general surgery is up to sixteen months, and I have just given the example of the waiting time of three years for hip replacement operations. There has certainly been no improvement in the waiting times. All that honourable members have heard from the government is rhetoric about many of our hospitals in country and city areas.

Last year the Frankston, Maroondah, Royal Southern Memorial, and Dandenong hospitals each had waiting lists of almost 1000. The waiting time at Dandenong Hospital for ophthalmology is 21 months. At Frankston Hospital, the waiting time for orthopaedic services was 13·6 months and I believe it is now closer to three years. The waiting time for ophthalmology services at the Frankston Hospital is 7·1 months, and for general surgery, it is 5·1 months.

As I said, the waiting lists are believed to total more than 30 000, yet to introduce pain relieving surgical procedures would be a very simple matter, bearing in mind that

there are some 2000 empty beds in the State, particularly in the private sector. At times almost 50 per cent of the beds in private hospitals are empty.

Prior to the presentation of the Budget, private and public hospital representatives expressed concern about what would happen if a tight budget were applied in the health area. One should reflect on what the Premier said at the time: that hospital administrations raise these issues just to get sympathy from the public, and they have no foundation. Those representatives certainly found out what would happen when the Budget was finally presented. In fact, the Premier accused officers within the public health system of driving around in fancy cars and going to fancy lunches rather than working on administration in their own areas.

No-one would suggest that Mr Kenneth Davidson is not a respected financial journalist. He wrote an article in the *Age* about the $25 million mentioned in the Budget as being a cost saving of 2 per cent as a result of productivity savings in hospitals. However, on reflection, it was found that only $6·9 million would be made available to provide for an additional 4 per cent of services. Mr Davidson commented that perhaps that $25 million can be found, but up until now it has not been an area in which the hospitals have been able to consider savings because they realise there would be strong resistance from the union movement. He said if that is how the Minister intended to gain the productivity savings of $25 million, she should spell it out, and that the hospitals and the public should know where the $25 million in cuts will come from and where the productivity savings will be made.

There has been much talk about industry unions and, in this case, it is obvious that the health and allied services areas would be well served if there were only one union rather than three or four unions serving that industry. One should consider the difficulties created where catering staff will not answer telephones, others in the cafeteria will not do work in specific areas, and certain people will not cross the line when it comes to delivering blood samples to laboratories, and so on.

It seems to me that unless some of these major areas are addressed, it will be impossible for hospitals to provide services because their funds have been cut back over the past five or six years; they have all gone through the productivity saving situation, and there is just no fat left to be trimmed. It has come down to lean mean, and the situation has been reached where one would be cutting into the sinews and the very necessary services provided by the hospitals. These matters must be addressed quickly because there is no way that the $25 million in productivity gains can be achieved without the support of the Minister and the unions.

A couple of honourable members of the Labor Party who have taken the opportunity of contributing to this debate have said they did not believe the Liberal Party provided any alternative strategies or policies to those contained in the Budget. That is not the case. The Liberal Party has very good policies, particularly the excellent health policy that was announced during the last State election campaign.

In fact, upon examination, a writer for the *Age* took the opportunity of saying the Liberal Party's initiative was of a high standard; that it should be considered; that it was imaginative; and that it would go a long way towards bringing this State back to the position of being, as was claimed by the Minister for Health in the first Labor government, one of the best, if not the best, health systems in Australia, if not the world. That is certainly not the case today.

If the $25 million in productivity savings is to be achieved, there will be a need for increased servicing. Over the past three years there has been a substantial increase in the number of people treated by the public hospital system. In 1987–88 there was an increase of 11 per cent; and in 1988–89 the increase was 4·8 per cent.

The present situation reminds me of similar arguments now taking place in regard to the pharmacists in this State. The House will recognise that I come from that profession and that I have some understanding of what is sought to be accomplished by the removal of some 1800 pharmacists from the scene in Australia, including some 600 or 700 in Victoria. One way the government is trying to achieve that aim is by using the rule of "volume gives income". The same applies when considering the treatment of patients at hospitals. It takes time and money to treat each patient.

The Opposition recognises that the stay in hospitals has reduced somewhat in recent years from an average of seventeen days to some eleven days. That is a significant saving, and the stage has now been reached where there can be only marginal improvement. The increase in the number of people treated by the public hospital system has gone from 11 per cent down to 4·8 per cent. When one remembers that the government wishes to take away $25 million from the system yet wants to increase the number of patients treated in the next twelve months by 3 or 4 per cent, one realises this will create enormous problems of efficiency for hospitals.

The development of the psychiatric wing at the Frankston Hospital will cost $14·5 million; however, it has attracted only some $400 000 for commencement. One needs to recognise some of the promises that were made, which I believe were most invaluable to the State. I refer to the problem with AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. The treatment of patients with such diseases occurs at Fairfield Hospital. Initially, an attempt was made to treat AIDS patients with AZT and other drugs, which cost approximately $1·7 million; that figure doubled over ten months to some $3·5 million. If the increase continues at that rate, it appears—with the number of AIDS victims being approximately 2000 in this State—people with the disease will be treated at a cost of some $161 million by 1992.

Money is being taken away from hospitals. Fairfield Hospital was promised $10 million for the establishment of a centre for research into the treatment of communicable diseases. The centre of communicable diseases at Atlanta, Georgia, looks after people with communicable diseases throughout the Northern Hemisphere, and its researchers travel all over the world to try to establish some control over infections and viruses that break out, particularly those that cannot be easily controlled, such as AIDS.

It is desirable for Victoria for the Fairfield Hospital to develop a centre that has expertise in this area so that it can treat people with communicable diseases and send out experts in epidemiology throughout the Southern Hemisphere.

I am involved with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, which has provided $1·96 million to the Fairfield Hospital on the basis that the hospital will also be supported by the government to the tune of $10 million.

Plenty Valley is a Labor Party stronghold, but the promised hospital at South Morang will not go ahead. Even though the incidence of cancer is reducing, it is still a huge problem. The government promised some $50 million to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute for cancer research and new diagnostic laboratories, but that money has not been made available.

The Victorian Hospitals Association Ltd report of July this year says that Victoria's toughest State Budget in twenty years has clearly identified health as a priority with a marginal increase in health funding of 0·3 per cent in real terms. In other words, despite the $2·5 billion to be spent on health in the coming year, the real increase on last year is only 0·3 per cent.

I have already mentioned the $25 million in productivity savings. That will fund a 2 per cent increase in throughput on a Statewide basis as well as expanded services in

priority areas. It appears that the $25 million in productivity savings will have an impact equivalent to a 1·2 per cent cut to hospitals, which will create difficulties for many hospitals.

Prince Henry's Hospital has lost $10 million, which will be diverted to the western suburbs. If one wants to close a hospital, one has only to take away its funding, and that is what has been done to Prince Henry's Hospital.

I shall now comment on the alternative methods of obtaining money to fund hospitals. The Opposition has always criticised the establishment of district health councils. Some $5 million or $6 million is spent in that area, but that money could be better used. A recent report in the journal of district health councils—I have sought to obtain a copy of it—criticises a recent evaluation performed by an outside professor. The journal suggests that the professor was critical of the situation but not extremely so. My understanding is that the professor was more than critical and suggested that if district health councils were to be any good they needed to be freestanding, have their own resources and distribute their own funds with Health Department Victoria having no involvement in the funding. Under the terms under which district health councils were established, that is impossible and, therefore, the money allocated to them should be used in another area.

The government has had six years to decrease waiting lists for elective surgery, but the number of people waiting for such surgery has increased.

Mr Gude—It is a mess.

Mr WEIDEMAN—It is a hell of a mess. No political party would want to inherit such a mess, but, after the next State election, the Liberal Party will battle with it and will ensure that Victoria once again has a good health service.

The Opposition's health policy announced before the last State election proposed a subsidy of $180 a family and $90 for a single person to encourage people to join health insurance organisations. A decade or more ago some 70 to 80 per cent of the population belonged to health funds, but that figure has now decreased to less than 50 per cent. That has created an enormous problem for health funding in the State. Some 77 000 people each year have opted out of paying health insurance, and that results in a lot of money not being available to health funds. According to the figures obtained by the Opposition, if there were a 5 per cent increase in health fund membership, the cost of the subsidy would be covered and an increase of 10 per cent would mean many millions of additional dollars being available for the health budget.

The Budget allocates $1·7 million for women's health projects. Last year no money was allocated for breast and cervical cancer screening, but this year $352 000 is allocated for that purpose. It is anticipated that $237 000 will be expended next financial year. When one examines the Budget allocations for women's health screening one sees that the Commonwealth government has made $5 million available for that purpose.

When I checked that with Health Department Victoria I discovered that the $5 million is for all of Australia. One would assume that Victoria would get a percentage of that. When I inquired as to how the money was being spent, I was told it was being spent at the Essendon hospital on a pilot program. As a member of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, I am aware that the foundation is funding that project. I want to know why Health Department Victoria is claiming to be funding a pilot scheme dealing with mammography and cervical cancer when the money is coming from another source. If there is one item in the Budget about which I have some special knowledge and can follow through, this is it. I hope the other projects in the

Budget are not being funded in funny ways and that, although they are mentioned in the Budget, they do not exist.

When I rang Health Department Victoria I was told not to take any notice of the subprograms in the Budget because the department had not yet written the programs or come up with any idea of how they would work.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—In the 2 minutes I have available, I wish to raise the following matters. I would like the Attorney-General to explain to the House whether the former member for Warrandyte, Mr Lou Hill, applied for his appointment as a magistrate, whether he was approached in respect of that appointment or whether the appointment was recommended to the Attorney-General by anyone in particular. I also want to know whether, since his appointment, Mr Hill has given up any political ambitions.

I want to know what the Attorney-General is going to do about the endless court delays in Victoria where court delays are being transferred from the Supreme Court to the County Court and are now arising at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal as well as Magistrates Courts.

How does the Attorney-General propose to save money by closing 41 Magistrates Courts in country Victoria? Police and witness time will be wasted and it will cost more in police time than will be saved on the repair bills to the 41 courthouses that are to be closed.

The former Attorney-General, the current Minister for Transport, refused to establish a Magistrates Court in the new Melbourne Remand Centre. Remand prisoners and persons are now taken from the remand centre to Pentridge Prison and from Pentridge into the city to the courts. The waste of time and resources involved in that shows the need for a Magistrates Court at the remand centre.

I ask the Attorney-General to advise the House why Victoria has lost the headquarters of the former National Companies and Securities Commission to Sydney.

The SPEAKER—Order! The time allotted for the remaining stages of the Bills has expired. The question is:

That these Bills be now read a second time.

The motions were agreed to.

The Bills were read a second time, and passed through their remaining stages.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from August 17) on the motion of Mr Roper (Minister for Planning and Environment) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte)—The Bill provides for amendments to the Historic Buildings Act 1981. Under that Act buildings of historic importance in this State can be preserved and protected on one of two registers. The first is the Government Buildings Register, which provides protection under the auspices of the Historic Buildings Council for buildings of historic importance owned by the government. The second register is the Historic Buildings Register, which provides similar protection, although it provides for separate works approvals and registration procedures for buildings of historic importance in this State that are owned privately. As the Minister for Planning and Environment pointed out in his second-reading

speech, Victoria is the only State in Australia that distinguishes in this manner and has two separate registers.

The Bill provides for the closure of the Government Buildings Register, to which no further additions will be made; the removal of the provision that prevents government buildings from being added to the Historic Buildings Register; a simple discretionary mechanism to enable items on the current Government Buildings Register to be transferred to the Historic Buildings Register; and ensures, even for buildings not currently listed on the Government Buildings Register, that a single set of registration and approval procedures will apply in future to all historic buildings whatever their ownership—it follows the procedures of the Historic Buildings Register.

Finally, in essence, the Bill provides a safeguard for buildings on the present Government Buildings Register to ensure that, unless they are to be transferred to the Historic Buildings Register, they cannot be removed without a private report from the Historic Buildings Council.

The Liberal Party does not oppose the Bill. However, it is concerned about various aspects of the government's management in this area. It appears to be good housekeeping for the government to work towards a single register, so long as the register is as comprehensive as possible at the end of the day.

The background to the Bill dates back to 1972 when a previous Liberal government supported the need perceived by the Victorian community to preserve buildings owned by the government, some of which were under threat of demolition and usage that was not deemed suitable at the time. The then Liberal government was at the forefront of heritage legislation in Australia when, in 1972, it moved to protect such public buildings. In 1974 the Historic Buildings Register came into operation, again under a previous Liberal government, to protect buildings owned privately, as a result of similar concerns expressed by the community.

Victorian Liberal governments have a great record in preserving the heritage of the State and it is unfortunate that the Cain government has taken so long to tackle the management of this vital area. The preservation of buildings of historic importance has become a topical issue, including the proposed $750 million fire sale by the government of Victoria's heritage.

In considering the Bill, the Liberal Party has consulted with the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the City Heritage Watch. Neither of these important bodies, together with others who were written to and did not express any alarm about the Bill, opposes it. However, they support the Liberal Party's real concern about the government's management of buildings of historic importance. The government has messed up the economy so badly that its sole imperative is to sell any assets it has left. In this category one can put the Spencer Street railway administration building, the Windsor Hotel, the Queen Victoria Hospital building and hundreds of others.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has provided a realistic picture of the extent to which the government intends to conduct its fire sale, including lists of buildings in the central business district—a number of which I have already referred to—lists of assessed buildings in the country, schools known to be assessed or sold already, railway facilities to go under the hammer, even land with natural conservation values that might have a number of buildings on it and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade building.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, as the honourable member is quoting from a document, I ask whether he is prepared to make it available so that both the spokesman for the National Party and I can see the list of buildings to which he is referring.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr F. P. Sheehan)—Order! Is the honourable member for Warrandyte prepared to make the document available?

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte)—Yes, I have no problems with that; indeed, I expected the request.

A significant number of courthouses are alleged to be under the auctioneer's hammer or are being made available to the auctioneer to dispose of, to the benefit of consolidated revenue in Victoria. The subject of this $750 million fire sale was dealt with on the 7.30 *Report* of 5 October, when the concerns of a number of heritage conscious community leaders were discussed at some length. Mr Simon Molesworth, the Director of the Victorian division of the National Trust of Australia, only a couple of years ago said that the value of buildings of historic importance sold by the government amounted to $5·5 million. The government's target for this year alone—a twelve-month period—revealed in the Budget Papers is sales amounting to $500 million.

As a responsible Opposition, the Liberal Party cannot allow that to occur without some public scrutiny because it will be to the enormous detriment of the State over a short time.

Under the Historic Buildings (Amendment) Bill, which attempts to streamline the process of administration in placing buildings on a register, the government does not address the real administrative concerns expressed by Mr Simon Molesworth of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and Ms Virginia Maxwell from City Heritage Watch. While they support the Bill, they do not support the thrust of the government's administration.

The Bill is one of a number of Bills expected to be introduced under the government's review of the Historic Buildings Act 1981 which has resulted in the production of a discussion paper. The Opposition expresses the hope that the government will introduce more comprehensive legislation in the near future. After all, the government has been in power for seven years now and it has not made much of an attempt at administrative cleaning-up and effective administration in this area.

In this respect, the Liberal Party intends to scrutinise any asset sale that involves a building on the Government Buildings Register or any building which the government seeks to transfer from one register to another. The Liberal Party will expect the Minister for Planning and Environment to provide it with a list of any imminent sales before the Bill proceeds to another place. The Minister should be well acquainted with this matter and there is no reason why he should not be able to provide the Liberal Party with the list. Some time ago, the shadow Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Birrell, requested the list from the Minister's adviser.

I invite honourable members to consider the comprehensive list put forward by the National Trust of Australia and City Heritage Watch. The National Trust of Australia has decided to coordinate a body which will be in the forefront of protecting the heritage of this State. On 5 October the Public Assets Defence Coalition was launched. I quote from the press release of the coalition:

> We are pleased to announce the recent formation of a coalition of community and local government organisations.

Local government organisations are so concerned that they have joined forces and form part of the coalition. The press release continues:

> These organisations have come together through their common opposition to the process by which surplus State and Federal government assets are being determined for sale. The coalition is made up of:
>
> National Trust of Australia (Victoria),
>
> City Heritage Watch,

Municipal Association of Victoria,

Inner Metropolitan Regional Association,

Victorian National Parks Association,

Royal Historical Society of Victoria,

Museums Association of Australia (Victoria), and

Conservation Council of Victoria.

The coalition is a sound body. One could not question its authenticity or the concerns of the groups that have come together to fight the government on its lax administration in this area. The press release continues:

The coalition stresses that it is not opposed per se to the principle of selling assets . . .

The Liberal Party accepts that from time to time there may be a need for government buildings to be disposed of. The press release of the coalition notes, however, that:

Our concern is that in its rush to gain short-term financial benefit from these sales, the government is neglecting to consider assets, other values. These include heritage and natural landscape values, the potential re-use of sites by community groups and museums, tourism, recreation and social justice values. . .

The coalition mentions the much vaunted social justice policy of the State government. The coalition supports the Opposition's contention that the government aims to raise $571·6 million in 1989–90. Dr John Lack, the spokesperson for the coalition, is quoted as having said:

Heritage and other broader public values are being plundered to enable the government to balance its budget. The government is selling off the family silver.

The coalition is concerned at the fact that there is no provision for public participation in the sales program.

This is one of the chief concerns noted in the item on this issue in the recent 7.30 *Report*; it is one of the chief concerns raised by Virginia Maxwell of City Heritage Watch and by Simon Molesworth of the National Trust of Australia—that the government is a secretive government. All honourable members know that the government has to keep its cards close to its chest and that it does so whenever possible.

The Minister for Planning and Environment will say in his speech that the commercial realities are such that proposed sales of assets cannot be divulged before the auction date is set. However, as a number of the heritage bodies correctly emphasise, they and the Victorian public have a right to have some impact on the decision on whether the assets will be sold. After all, the assets are not owned by the government but by the Victorian community. That community should have a real say and input into the consultation process that one might hope the government would conduct before it disposes willy-nilly of buildings like the Windsor Hotel, some of which were built well over 100 years ago.

In this respect, the National Trust of Australia has a wealth of knowledge. Indeed, the government has consistently called on the trust for support and advice on heritage matters in other arenas. However, in respect of asset sales a secretive committee close to the Premier makes the decisions and organises the sales as its members think fit. They do not consult with any community body of note or, indeed, with the Victorian public.

As Mr Simon Molesworth, and Mr Stephen Davies, the Acting Director of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), have said, community bodies often do not know of the impending sale of important buildings of significant value to the heritage

of this State until the auction board is attached to the front of the building. It is not good enough!

I return to the press release of Dr John Lack, who noted on 5 October when the Public Assets Defence Coalition was formed, that:

> Resources also need to be committed to enable proper consideration of management issues.

The issue of heritage protection is very much an issue of management. Honourable members will be aware that the government is concerned to lock up the State as much as possible in respect of State parks. What does the government do then? It throws away the keys to the gates of the State parks and will not allow people to walk through them or to drive their cars there. Why does the government pursue that course? Because it cannot manage its assets.

When honourable members consider the Historic Buildings (Amendment) Bill and the buildings of historic importance to which it relates, they can see a similar situation to that applying in the State parks. The government cannot manage its assets so it decides that it must sell them off as soon as posible. The money is put into consolidated revenue and a valuable asset is lost for all time.

Dr Lack continues in the press release in the following terms:

> Provision needs to be made for leasing or sale at less than market values in some circumstances, and proposals for community usage of facilities should be invited.

The government has pursued this course in many areas for the benefit of community groups that the government supports. As Dr Lack has said, sales of assets at less than market value should be considered and supported for buildings that might be used by the community.

I refer to a number of cases. A good example of the government's mismanagement is what happened at the Carlsruhe railway station, where a slate roof that was 100 years or more old was falling in because the government had done nothing to manage the property. In rural communities such buildings play an important part in the heart and soul of small towns. Many country towns suffer from a lack of facilities such as community halls and I am sure members of the National Party will support my contention that rural communities would be able to make full and sensible use of their community assets if they were given time to organise themselves for the pending sale of such a building.

Quite often they are not aware that a building in their community is to be auctioned and they do not have time to implement the necessary procedures to put forward a submission to manage the building, and the government goes ahead and sells it to the highest bidder who, in many cases, does not have the heritage value of the building at heart.

Relating this aspect to the Bill, a large number of buildings should be placed on the Historic Buildings Register and on the Government Buildings Register, but for many reasons to do with government administration, these buildings do not find their way on to the government register. The committee involved in granting approval for works or in making decisions on registration of buildings for inclusion on the register does not consult with the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) or the City Heritage Watch. It is a closed committee in relation to making decisions on a large number of government buildings, as the National Trust of Australia has shown in the list provided.

Mr Roper—Tell me one.

Mr HONEYWOOD—All honourable members know the history of the Queen Victoria Hospital building where, if not for the intervention of the Opposition, there

would have been no community consultation or preservation of community usage of that building. It was the Opposition that pointed out to the government the secretive and surreptitious move it was making by removing this building from the list of assets of Victoria. The Opposition is still waiting for the government to get its act together, and the Minister should agree with me that the government's administration of this whole area leaves a lot to be desired.

When it is proposed that a government building be sold, a thorough assessment procedure of the building should be undertaken to ascertain its historic importance and whether it should be placed on the register. Many local government bodies in this State have called for the inclusion of a large number of buildings on the register, particularly in rural communities, but the government has not supported the inclusion of those buildings on the register and local government has had to argue to include the buildings on a local government register which may not be as effective as would be the position if the government had given its full support to the initial registration proposals. I shall not list the more than 200 buildings on the list that I have tabled for the Minister's benefit tonight. That would take up the time of the House unnecessarily. However, looking at the list in an abbreviated form, there is the South Bank building, Port Melbourne railway station, Queen Victoria Hospital——

Mr Roper interjected.

Mr HONEYWOOD—I take up the Minister's interjection. The Opposition has concerns about the Minister's pie in the sky extention of Collins Street with a flyover over Spencer Street railway station and his pie in the sky docklands development.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—Mr Acting Speaker, I raise a point of order. The Minister's second-reading speech on this Bill occupied no more than one and a half pages. He is putting whatever case he has in support of the Bill by interjection. I respectfully request that it be drawn to his attention that he will have an opportunity of puting his argument when closing the debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr F. P. Sheehan)—Order! I have made that comment to the Minister and I request the Minister to take note of that comment. He will have an opportunity of putting his argument when closing the debate.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte)—I take up the Minister's suggestion to name a number of buildings. I am happy to mention the Carlsruhe railway station which was the subject of a 7.30 *Report* analysis of the government's lack of administration and management in this area. This building has been neglected for some time and no process has ever been undertaken to provide for its maintenance or to have the building looked after properly. Similar remarks can be made about a number of courthouses.

Mr Roper interjected.

Mr HONEYWOOD—I again take up the Minister's interjection. The fact that a building has closed does not mean the government can wash its hands of the future management of that building. That comment applies to a number of courthouses.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Order! I ask the honourable member to ignore interjections and to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr HONEYWOOD—In regard to a number of courthouses a similar situation applies—the government is not managing them correctly, and local community groups believe they can do a better job and some are in the process of getting funds together for that purpose. However, the government, intent on reaching its $750 million target from the sale of assets within twelve months, if possible, will try to ignore the

community's objectives and overrule them and place the buldings under the auctioneer's hammer.

Although the Liberal Party supports the Bill and believes it is sensible to work towards a single register, it supports the real concerns that have been put forward consistently by groups such as the City Heritage Watch and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) about the provision of proper management and administration of these buildings.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton)—The National Party supports the measure and does so having been guided by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). My party has the highest regard for that organisation. I cannot let this opportunity pass without commenting on the honourable member for Warrandyte saying that the Liberal Party does not oppose the Bill. That is an old Labor expression; they want a bob each way. The Liberal Party supports the Bill but says it is iffy about the measure. One either supports a Bill or opposes it. The Liberal Party is supporting it as is the National Party.

It has been explained to the House how this matter goes back to 1972 and 1974 and how the two registers came into being, one a public buildings register in 1972 and one a private buildings register in 1974. It is matter of history. However, I direct the attention of the Minister to one point. As I understand it, in order to get off the public buildings register instituted in 1972, at present one needs to obtain an Order in Council, which is a government prerogative. Am I right in saying that after this legislation is proclaimed the Minister can take a building off the public buildings register without there being an Order in Council? I ask the Minister to respond when he makes his concluding comments. It would be a good idea to have the removal from the register made public so that the public knows whether a building has been taken off the register.

The selling of government buildings is not terribly relevant to this proposed legislation and I shall not dwell on it. Technically it has nothing to do with the Bill. I have my reservations about government fire sales, some of which are justified and some of which are carried out just to collect revenue. When the government sells buildings the proceeds should be used to buy other property. One does not sell Parliament House. But one might exchange government land for another piece of land at another place. I should like to see the funds gained from the sale of government estate property placed into a separate fund to provide money for buying new land and/or buildings as they become necessary. Obviously the world does not stand still: what is relevant today may not be relevant tomorrow.

At this stage it is relevant to mention the Windsor Hotel, to which the honourable member for Warrandyte also referred. A few years ago the government of the then Premier, Mr Hamer, found itself in a difficult position regarding the Windsor Hotel. It is an institution of which I have fond memories. It has played an important part in my life: I stayed there as a child and frequented the place when I was older.

Mr Coleman—Did you have the wedding suite or not?

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—We had the wedding reception at Scots but we stayed at the Windsor.

Mr Maclellan—Did you marry out?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr F. P. Sheehan)—Order! I do not think this is the time for personal explanations.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The fortunes of the Windsor Hotel fell during the years of the Hamer Liberal government, so much so that the unfortunate public company

that owned it was looking for money. Because that company owned a valuable historic asset something had to be done. To my surprise and delight the Hamer Liberal government purchased the hotel, put a lot of money into it and encouraged private enterprise to participate.

Mr Roper—On a very good lease.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—Yes, on a very good lease; but by so doing the hotel was preserved not only for Melburnians but for all Australians. If, for example, the conservative government that will follow this government were to sell the Windsor, while setting conditions for its preservation, I would have no quarrel with the sale. The government has spent a fortune on the Windsor; and although the money has been well spent, if the hotel were sold and that money used for other projects——

Mr Honeywood interjected.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—That has happened in the past and it will happen in the future. The honourable member for Warrandyte has not yet accepted that there will be a conservative government after the next election! As I said, if the hotel were sold and the proceeds earmarked for the preservation of other historic assets I would not argue against such sale.

I am not against privatisation and the selling of government assets, although each case must be considered on its merits. I am not against the selling of buildings on either the public or private building registers, so long as necessary precautions are taken to preserve the buildings. I agree that there should be one register combining both private and government buildings. I should have been happier if all the buildings had been included in the one register, after which the Minister could have examined each case—although he may have faced greater problems by doing it that way. Nevertheless, in his concluding remarks I ask the Minister to explain what steps will be taken to ensure that, when a building is taken off the public list, for example, the public will be aware that it is being removed from the list and for what reasons. If I receive that explanation I shall be happy.

I noted with interest that in the Minister's second-reading speech he said he envisages major amendments to the historic buildings legislation in the not too distant future. The Minister is looking for contributions to the debate from those of us who are interested in the matter; and it is up to us to make such contributions. Twenty or thirty years ago many of us were not as interested as we should have been in the preservation of historic buildings. It is up to all of us who are interested in the matter to make constructive contributions when the legislation to which the Minister referred is debated in the House.

The National Party supports the Bill. As I said, I hope the Minister will comment on the matters that I have raised.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—I compliment the honourable member for Warrandyte on his handling of the Bill. It is the first Bill he has handled, and although it was unfortunate that he had to withstand a good deal of provocation from the Minister for Planning and Environment, it is obvious that he has done all the necessary work; and as I said, I congratulate him for his handling of the Bill. There are two lists of historic buildings, which is reasonable when one considers when most of them were built. Nevertheless, it is reasonable that the two lists be amalgamated.

Mr Ross-Edwards—We are worse off now than we were then.

Mr COLEMAN—That may be correct, but the people who were responsible for the construction of those buildings, particularly during the gold era, did so with the aim of providing their successors with a series of structures that would be long lasting.

The most serious abuse of those buildings concerns what is being done to the Treasury building at present. If one walks down the main streets of the city or the suburbs, one notices painted barbers poles outside only hairdressers. But if one walks down Spring Street one notices that the pillars of one of the most beautiful buildings in Melbourne have the Olympic Games colours painted on them. The decision to paint the pillars was authorised by the Premier's office, which makes a mockery of what Victorians understand is the way in which their buildings will properly be treated. As one walks up Collins Street one is confronted by the sight of what appears to be a lollypop factory—four columns painted in the Olympic colours.

Mr Maclellan—Draped.

Mr COLEMAN—Painted, I am afraid. But irrespective of whether the colours are painted on or draped over the pillars, the colours adorn the front of the building and may be seen as the ultimate in election ploys for the next State election. Although most Victorians are anxious to see the 1996 Olympic Games held in Melbourne, never in their wildest dreams would they imagine that the Treasury building would be adorned as it is.

Mr E. R. Smith—Desecrated.

Mr COLEMAN—"Desecrated" is probably the word. At least the colours adorn——

Mr Maclellan—They don't need the Treasury for anything else: they're bankrupt.

Mr COLEMAN—I suppose that is the case. What else could be housed in the building but the Olympic Games committee?

Putting that to one side, the public buildings that were built during the middle of the last century are the buildings that have lasted. There have been sound reasons for maintaining two separate lists of buildings. Public buildings such as post offices and courthouses are reminders of the development of Victorian society. There have been many changes since then but the buildings survive as a reminder of the successes of previous generations.

In Victoria today we are attempting to provide for future generations and, quite rightly, a better environment than that which we perhaps inherited. The same thing applies to the public buildings, which were built at a time when most people were determined that what future generations inherited was better than what they had inherited. Today we are seeing a push for a reversion to some of the values those people enjoyed.

One area that springs to mind is the development the Minister is proposing in the Plenty Valley on the north side of Melbourne where there are remnants of a red gum forest spread over an area which is anticipated for residential development. Included in it are a number of historic bluestone buildings, some of which have a very limited future. One is the bridge at Doreen which is an historic structure. It was the first bridge cast in Victoria using pre-stressed concrete. It is unique in the sense that it was erected with the bluestone abutments and it has the first pre-stressed concrete arch.

There are similar buildings throughout that area where principally Cornish farmers erected these substantial farm buildings using local stone. I suppose there are a number of districts where that occurred so we have a heritage we should be protecting.

The Minister interjects to say that I should include Pentridge Prison too. That is probably unique in its own sense. For those who have been in it, it would be unique; those who have visited would be pleased to come out! When it comes to determining its future, as society changes, there will probably be the same sort of debate about it

that is occurring tonight. Suffice to say the people who built those buildings did so with the intention of ensuring that future generations had a heritage they could continue with.

The honourable member for Warrandyte has presented tonight a list of public buildings of some significance which are either potentially for sale or, with the ominous possibilities of the terminology used "being assessed". The list also includes court buildings located throughout the State. Those court buildings form part of the legal jurisdiction of Victoria and it is incumbent upon the government to ensure that those substantial buildings are continued to be used for community benefit. After all, they were placed there with community benefit in mind.

There are many organisations in the State that have the potential to use those buildings for the furtherance of the community in which they are located. It would be unfortunate for them to fall into disrepair.

The same applies to a number of significant railway stations throughout the State. One that springs to mind is located at Yea. It is a dignified building with a slate roof and great potential for use as a restaurant or something of that nature. It is currently being used to store waste paper; and the slates are coming off the roof, the windows are broken and it really is an indictment of those who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring such buildings are maintained.

Mr Roper interjected.

Mr COLEMAN—The comment from the Minister really represents how politics get drawn across community heritage. His comment was that the railway station was closed by a Liberal government. I do not doubt that in the period he was Minister for Transport and closed some lines, there were some equally notable buildings involved. I do not think he is able to say the method by which the government addresses the protection of those buildings is different from what is occurring at Yea. If the Bill is about the protection of historic buildings and their continuing use by the community, the comment belies the intention of the Bill.

The sale of a number of buildings are required to generate funds to service the high costs of this government. For example, large areas in South Melbourne have been sold off just to maintain interest payments on the debt that this government has created. This list will be no different in the long term.

One building which is on the front page of this list is Willsmere Hospital. What is that contributing to this State's operations at the present time? The building itself is there; we have seen the subdivision of the land surrounding it. It is just a means of using the assets of the State—I refer back to the comment of the honourable member for Shepparton—and they are not being preserved for future generations but simply to service some recurrent costs. A range of properties will finish up the same way, much to the detriment of future generations of this State, and I hope to see some significant buildings left which represent previous eras and generations.

Although it has been indicated that the Opposition is not opposing the Bill, it is certainly prepared to register some apprehension about the way the dispersal of these properties will be carried out. One has only to look across the street at the Princess Theatre to realise that private enterprise—something which the honourable member for Wantirna does not appreciate or understand—is prepared to look after some of these outstanding, major buildings which will be a heritage for the forthcoming generations. Day after day we have seen a regeneration of that building and we understand what has been spent on it. I think it will be a significant building for some time to come.

I should like to compliment the honourable member for Warrandyte on his presentation. As he indicated, the Opposition is not opposing the Bill.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—To some degree I reiterate the points made by the honourable members for Warrandyte, Syndal and Shepparton. For too long the private sector has been treated entirely differently from the public sector in responsibility towards buildings of importance in this State. In retrospect I have some concern for the major redevelopment of the City of Melbourne which has led to the demolition of a lot of buildings of character which have been replaced with what I would call high-rise glasshouses.

I suppose nothing illustrates that better than the CRA building in Collins Street which was pulled down after 25 years. When it was built it was regarded as one of the foremost buildings of its time yet 25 years later it had become obsolete. With the removal of so many buildings like the CRA building the face of the City of Melbourne has been changed.

We cannot change what we have already done but we can ensure that in both the private sector and the public sector we accept more responsibility for buildings of significance. I am pleased that on this occasion the government is introducing a measure that will allow the same conditions that apply to buildings owned by the private sector to be applied to government buildings. The reservation must be that if there is a repeat in the treatment of our public buildings of the treatment of our national parks and parklands, and if the money is not allocated to restore these buildings, a number of public buildings will continue to deteriorate. No better example of that is the State Library complex, a magnificent building similar to the Parliament House building. It was built around the same time by Sir John Barry.

Mr Roper—And is having a huge re-investment.

Mr KENNETT—It is starting to have a re-investment. I recall when I came into this place in 1976 Parliament was spending $156 000 on restoring the Legislative Council. It seemed a fairly high price at the time but when one looks back one appreciates that in restoring a building of importance it was a magnificent investment.

Too many public buildings in this State have not had the same commitment by the government of the day. If the measure introduced by the government leads to a lot of plaques being attached to buildings and if restoration is not provided to maintain or renovate those buildings, in the future not only incoming governments but also the community will have to bear the large cost that ultimately those buildings will need to have spent on them.

That raises the question that has been raised earlier today on the future of courthouses and some other buildings. The Windsor Hotel was mentioned earlier. If the government in its own heart and, it is hoped, with the agreement of Parliament, identifies a government building on which it has established a plaque and has determined to be worthy of restoration, although there is no practical need for that building, that building should be transferred to the private sector to ensure its renovation. One recognises the incredible costs borne by those in the private sector who restore buildings of significance and importance. That restoration can be done in three ways. Firstly, it can be done without government assistance. Secondly, there can be a trade-off arrangement, as was the case with the Princess Theatre, where site ratios on another site were traded off to enable Mr Marriner to do such a magnificent job of restoring the Princess Theatre. Thirdly, I hope that this government and successive governments will work with the Federal government in introducing some form of tax concession similar to that which applies in the United States of America for those who undertake the responsibility of historic buildings and in fact finance what is in many cases a very

real cost. We have not moved down that path in this country, for many reasons, and there are some arguments against it.

Australia has a young history. It is interesting that an award has been given for the restoration of the Rialto building which is approximately 80 years old. It is a magnificent restoration job. By comparison, in London the Westminster Houses of Parliament, which are 700 years old, are being restored. The relativities of the two are many miles apart.

I should like to see, not only for Victoria, but also for Australia, a Federal government regardless of its political persuasion addressing the real concern of preserving buildings of historic importance and providing a tax deduction to those in the private sector who restore those buildings. However, that does not answer the question of what we will do if there is a mad rush to place public buildings on the register and if, having decided we need to keep certain buildings, we do not have the funds on a day-to-day basis to restore them. That is something we must address.

Another issue that applies to historic buildings is the damage caused to them by pollution. There are many examples overseas in the more populous cities of London, Paris and Rome where damage is being done to so many of the old important buildings by the growth in motor traffic. That must also be addressed when we consider historic buildings. It is not good enough to believe one has met one's social conscience by shoving a plaque on the front door of a building; we must also look at the ingredients that go towards the destruction of our older and finer buildings. We have the opportunity of learning from the experience of more populous cities around the world.

The Minister has been given responsibility for the environment and he has expressed a number of views that would be supported by most honourable members in this House and by the community at large. In fact he is going to Cairo at Christmas to give an address to the United Nations. I accept and support many of the initiatives the government is taking in this important area, but it is not good enough to consider merely the issues that are popular at the time. We have an opportunity in this State of working ahead of the pollution of our environment and preventing the congestion that is such a threat to our fine buildings.

I also bring to the Minister's attention the environment in which our historic buildings are located. Although the Minister may not take on board everything I put forward on a regular basis I ask him to consider the top end of Bourke Street with its fine buildings. There is a six-storey maximum limit on buildings in this area for the very good reason that it affords a wonderful view down Bourke Street. In this area is the Princess Theatre, one of the finest buildings in Australia and the restoration that is currently being carried out is a tribute not only to the developer—and developers are normally associated with destruction rather than preservation—but also to the tradesmen who are working on the site.

I refer also to the Windsor Hotel. I believe the top end of Bourke Street is unique because of the nature and position of those buildings and the vista down Bourke Street. I hope that at some stage the government will consider developing this area into a mall, which could so easily be done. Many fine restaurants are being established at this end of the city.

Mr Roper—That is the greenhouse effect.

Mr KENNETT—No, that gives us the opportunity of moving in advance of many of the changes occurring; and where we can provide for the people of Victoria—as the honourable member for Syndal and others have mentioned—a better environment as a result of our administration, rather than maintaining what we have.

The preservation of our buildings is important. The acceptance by the community of experiences overseas is giving Victoria the opportunity of working in advance of growing change; and the State has a magnificent opportunity to create facilities in Melbourne by examining this end of the city because the most important buildings at this end of the city have now either been totally restored or are about to be restored. There is no doubt that Victorians will be very much enriched by the restoration that is taking place with some of our public and now buildings of public importance that are owned by the private sector.

The final point I make is the one I started on: it is very easy for the House to pass legislation.

Mr Kennan—It is easier here than for us in the Upper House.

Mr KENNETT—It is easy for people to place plaques on buildings. As we move towards this step which is in principle supported by all, ultimately the test will be in its practice. If we rush into placing plaques and declaring public buildings to be of historic value, which should be retained, the government must provide the wherewithal to retain them, as it is doing with a number of courthouses around the State, which are magnificently constructed and important to Victoria—one not mentioned is the one at Echuca—and ultimately it is important for the government not to sign and seal those buildings as historic, and to then allow them to decay.

Mr Roper—Finish on Echuca.

Mr KENNETT—That is a good example of an old courthouse close to the river, and which is being restored.

Mr Kennan—Not quite finished.

Mr KENNETT—Thank you, Minister. It is not quite finished but it needs a massive restoration job. That is not cheap.

Mr McNamara—Have you been to Rodney?

Mr KENNETT—Yes, I have been to Rodney. That is a good example of what can be done. In the event the government does not want or has no further use for the buildings, they should be turned over to private enterprise with the qualification that they are historic buildings; to enable those who purchase them to effect restoration. Ultimately, from that process a number of public buildings will be able to be identified and registered as historic buildings.

State governments at all levels, together with the Federal government, should recognise taxation deductability in the restoration of the historic buildings, with a final responsibility and cost for ultimately restoring them.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I support the view expressed by the honourable member for Shepparton when he asked the Minister for Planning and Environment to indicate, in concluding the debate, whether a transfer from the Government Buildings Register would be a public process.

The House deserves an explanation from the Minister as to whether that will be a public process, and whether the public will have access to the information regarding any either proposed report upon a building, or, indeed, the outcome of the report if it leads to a change of status as provided for in the Bill.

The attitude of the Liberal Party and the National Party undoubtedly will be influenced by the Minister's answer to those questions.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I thank all honourable members for having taken part in what certainly has been an interesting debate. I look

forward to the contributions to be made when the House is considering in the near future the revised Historic Buildings Act because the government intends to introduce the appropriate Bill into this place. It is an important Bill of the 1970s and everyone who works in the area believes it needs updating, although there are different views about how that updating should occur. The government is working with a variety of groups on that problem to enable it to present a Bill to Parliament.

Often there is confusion in arrangements for heritage buildings in Victoria, that it is only through being on either the Historic Buildings Register or the Government Buildings Register that a building receives protection. That is not always the case, and far more buildings in the central district of Melbourne are protected by being classified as notable buildings under the planning scheme, or in local government areas by being in heritage precincts, or having particular protection under those local planning schemes, than are the buildings on the actual register.

The government certainly encourages local government to work through what can be very difficult local issues, ensuring its heritage areas and heritage buildings are protected. I am well aware of the controversies that often occur in local government on this subject. At the moment in Brighton—and in a few other areas—there is significant controversy about this issue.

That means very positive public debate will occur and the government is prepared to assist in that public debate knowing full well that often it is not necessarily pleasant for a politician to be caught up in that but it is something we all need to work on in those areas of the State—and that applies in most areas of the State where there are significant heritage factors in a buildings environment—more than simply the registers that protect buildings and areas.

The assets sales program is not simply about selling assets. It is also about creating new assets for new services that are acquired.

Mr Honeywood—Such as?

Mr ROPER—I take up the interjection of the honourable member for Warrandyte. Willsmere Hospital has been mentioned by three honourable members; I take pride in the fact that I was the Minister responsible at the time when the government decided to close Willsmere Hospital. Much work has been required, and it has not been an easy or simple process. The government decided to close Willsmere Hospital because it was no longer an appropriate place for Victorians who needed care and treatment, just as it decided to close the St Nicholas Hospital prior to that.

Those were historic and traditional assets that had served their time by the 1980s in relation to the provision of services for Victorians. A report in the 1930s condemned Willsmere Hospital as a building not fit for human habitation. One can hardly claim that successive governments actually rushed into the closing of Willsmere Hospital, given that it took 50 years after the recommendation to effect a closure.

The funds from the sale of Willsmere Hospital will be retained by the community and will be used, as in the case of the St Nicholas's Hospital, to purchase and develop facilities required for residents and patients of that place.

Mr Honeywood—All of them?

Mr ROPER—The government does not know what it will receive from the sale. I give an example that I know of in relation to St Nicholas Hospital. Every time I drive up Rathdowne Street and see the development occurring on that site I feel very proud that I was involved in that decision. It was a decision that was supported by Parliament, and I presented legislation to Parliament on that matter. In that instance an old asset was transferred into new and more appropriate assets for people who needed assistance,

while retaining three historic buildings on the site. There can be argument about whether three or fewer historic buildings should have been retained but, nevertheless, three buildings were kept.

In the sale of Willsmere Hospital there was a strong heritage consideration in the determination about what happened with that site. I give those two examples as examples of places that were no longer appropriate in the 1980s and of capital assets being used to develop services that are appropriate.

The old Queen Victoria Hospital site has also been given as an example. The honourable member for Syndal can well remember the time he seconded a motion condemning me and saying that there should be a movement of hospital services to the Clayton area. It was one of those splendid debates in this place when the government retired from the field, after a number of speakers had contributed, and the motion was never put.

The Queen Victoria Hospital was an old hospital inappropriately located and not adequate in many ways for modern health services. Its move to Clayton means the site is now available for other purposes. A number of the buildings of heritage value are being retained and the resources that the public will get from the sale of the balance of the site will significantly assist in the development of library and museum services.

Parliament considered the difficult issues involved in the development of that site during the last sessional period and agreed that it was an appropriate decision to be made. Members of all political parties were involved in those discussions and in the debate.

The honourable member for Warrandyte suggested that the historic South Melbourne–Port Melbourne railway line should be retained. I was involved in the closure of that line which was very important for the people who used that line. Often at night people, apart from the driver and the guard, would actually use it! Occasionally there would be half a dozen people on the Port Melbourne train. It was decided that there could be a better system of public transport and that the old line should be removed to allow South Melbourne to develop right down to the Yarra River. That will allow a significant new residential development to occur in that area, an area that is basically a wasteland that is not suitable for a modern city in the 1980s.

Honourable members must look at the resources that we have to decide what their future should be; their future is not always the same as that of their current use.

I have heard the honourable member for Warrandyte and other honourable members talk about the need for new schools and a range of new services. New community assets are being provided by governments of all political persuasions in a constant way. Old assets must be examined and it must be decided whether they are still useful. In a number of areas over time the government has spent considerable sums on schools which, unfortunately, now have no students. It does not make much sense to have a school in which there are no students. There is no moral good in spending $4 million on a school in which there are 200 students. It is a case of working out how those assets can be properly organised over a long period. We have to do that collectively.

The honourable member for Warrandyte referred to the railway building. Some people in the media last week seemed to have forgotten that the railway building was sold two years ago with a heritage protection condition that it be placed on the Historic Buildings Register.

As the Minister involved, I was pleased that someone was prepared to pay for it because it had not been contributing to the public good for many years. The government

actually received approximately $5 million for it. I thought at the time, and everyone else agreed, that it was an excellent price because there were some who suggested the government should pay someone to take it off the public's hands.

The proposed legislation will assist in the sale of such buildings, because the government will not have to go through the various legal agreements that had to be put in place to protect the railway building. The proposed legislation allows for not only the ending of the two registers over time, but for a much easier movement of a building from the Government Buildings Register to the Historic Buildings Register. It will work extremely well.

The government has, of course, considered a variety of buildings that have a potential to be sold. It was my view, as well as that of my colleagues and most members of the House, that those buildings that have a heritage component should have adequate protection. The proposed legislation will provide that.

The honourable member for Shepparton rightly asked about the arrangements in terms of notification or procedure about any such movement. The amendment to section 32A of the principal Act will mean that the register of government buildings can be amended and designated buildings can be removed from the register, subject to the Minister obtaining a report from the Historic Buildings Council. Further, if one goes back to the principal Act, it can be seen that any building that is removed from either the register of government buildings or the Historic Buildings Register has to be notified in the *Victoria Government Gazette.*

The arrangement for notification is one that many people have commented upon so far as the development of the new Historic Buildings Register is concerned. That is one of the issues that I hope to bring before Parliament within the next six to twelve months when I introduce a modern Bill in that area.

The honourable member for Burwood raised the issue of tax deductibility for the restoration of historic buildings by private citizens or companies. I totally support the views he expressed and, indeed, on a number of occasions that view has been collectively put forward by planning and heritage Ministers to the Commonwealth government. We have not yet received the response we would wish; it works not only in North America, but also works in other countries. I have spent some time talking to a number of heritage organisations in Europe—in particular, the Netherlands—where it also works extremely well.

However, we are not simply saying that it should be left to the Commonwealth. The government and the Melbourne City Council have put $1·2 million into a restoration fund with which we hope to assist private companies to restore buildings.

The honourable member for Burwood has supported the Princess Theatre, which is a good example of cooperation between government and the private sector. I look forward to its successful completion and revival in helping to preserve this end of the city. I have said on a couple of occasions—on one occasion a suitable apology was printed in the *Age*—that I certainly do not foresee any high-rise buildings going up in this end of town, no matter who says that they should.

The motion was agreed to.

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

FISHERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from May 26) on the motion of Mrs Setches (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—The Victorian fishing industry is significant and is gaining increasing importance not only because of the population changes that are ocurring but also because of its exports. The industry has had a checkered career. It must continually balance commercial and recreational interests, which inevitably causes some conflict because those who seek to make a living out of the resource have a different approach from those who use the resource for recreation. Some significant debate has taken place on that matter.

Recreational fishermen who use Port Phillip Bay have been particularly strident in their criticism of the administration of the fishery and have held many public meetings to vent their views. They have been able to obtain some changes to the regulations to ensure that the recreational fishery is maintained. Commercial fishermen believe, as they have paid for licences to operate in the commercial fishery, they ought to be given some protection to offset the cost of the licences they have purchased.

The debate has been such that three years ago the government set up an inquiry, conducted by a former member of the Legislative Council, Mr Arnold, to review commercial fishing licences. That inquiry made many recommendations for changes in the operation of the commercial fishery and the recommendations were generally accepted by the industry. The government has not implemented all of the recommendations, but many of them have been picked up in this Bill and previous Bills.

This Bill refers to many matters which may best be dealt with in Committee. As a result of the consultation that took place earlier this year, the Opposition will propose some amendments to the Bill. The Bill was introduced in May this year and it is a reflection of how the House operates that it has been brought on for debate at this stage of the day.

One of the Opposition's amendments relates to an organisation that has become known as VicFish, which has played a valuable role in the industry. The Bill seeks to establish a new industry peak body which will have the support of major fishing organisations. The Bill refers to the 15 per cent levy collected by the State being transferred to that organisation to cover its administrative costs, but the Opposition will propose an amendment to nominate that body as the recipient of that money, as the Bill is open to misinterpretation on how the money might be directed. The Minister said in her second-reading speech that it intended to transfer the funds to the peak body, but the Bill does not make it clear that this will be the case.

Matters relating to the abalone industry will attract some attention in the debate. That industry has been loaded with considerable additional costs for licences and transfer fees which are well above the rate of increase in the consumer price index, and the industry has some difficulty with the basis of the calculations. The industry is under stress in some parts of the State and operates quite effectively in other areas.

The fishing industry has a reputation of being a boom and bust industry, and regrettably is in a significant decline at present. Tests have been carried out by fishing organisations and the CSIRO on the fishery, extending across Bass Strait to Tasmania and along the coast of Victoria. In 1988 the CSIRO conducted a survey of the Bass Strait scallop fishery which showed that it was under extreme stress. Considerable public comment has been made about the fishery, including an article in the *Australian*

Fisheries in March 1989 which dealt with the results of the CSIRO survey. The report is headed, "Bad news in Bass Strait". It says:

The scallop industry in south-eastern Australia has recently experienced the worst season in the nineteen years of fishing in Bass Strait.

In 1988, for the first time, all Tasmanian waters were closed to scallop fishing for the entire year while in Victoria the predictions of fishermen and scientists of a poor season proved to be correct.

I understand that some trials conducted recently show that that situation still exists and that much of that fishery will not be able to be open this year. The Bill provides for emergency closures through fisheries notices and applies a formula under which they can operate. The amendments the Opposition proposes to move in the Committee stage are intended to sharpen up some of the points involved to ensure that the notices are used only for the purpose suggested rather than as a pseudo-regulatory process such as the one used recently to control fish netting in Port Phillip Bay. The process dealt with in the Bill should provide the protection of a regulatory impact statement, and the process would take approximately three months to implement. The Opposition believes the fisheries notice process should involve that time span. The proposed amendments will provide for that.

With regard to scallop fishing—and this is indicative of the way in which commercial fishing is currently undertaken in south-eastern waters—the CSIRO went on to say:

The 1988 survey has confirmed earlier reports. . .that commercial scallop stocks throughout Bass Strait are at an extremely low level—almost certainly the lowest in the nineteen year history of the fishery.

This decline in scallop stocks is also reflected in landings which have declined dramatically from a peak of 3200 tonnes flesh weight in 1983 to 81 tonnes in 1987.

That is a significant drop in yield for effort. Landings for the 1988 season are estimated to be less than 60 tonnes,which is the lowest since the Bass Strait fishery began in 1970. The report continues:

While it can be argued that this decline is part of a natural fluctuation in scallop abundance, the lack of any significant recruitment in Bass Strait over the last three years is a cause for serious concern.

That concern is again reflected in some recent work that showed that the scallop industry may not open again this year. Linked with that is some aquiculture work done by the department in scallop fishing trials in Port Phillip Bay. On 6 August the Minister said that the trials, which are similar to the mussel and oyster farming projects in the bay, have shown that they will provide some useful alternatives.

Many people now immigrating to this country have basically a fish diet rather than a red meat diet and, as a consequence, there will be a continuing demand for fish in the future and fisheries will be put under pressure.

It will be necessary to ensure that alternative sources of fish and shellfish are developed and alternative resources for recreational fishing activities are also established. The development of scallop farming in Port Phillip Bay is a move along that track. Countries such as China and Japan are using what is known as mid-water farming techniques to develop fisheries. If they are as successful as mussel farming has proved to be in Port Phillip Bay, that will be welcomed.

Equally we should be able to move in some aquiculture experiments for abalone because that is a significant industry for Australia. The price for abalone has risen from approximately $4 a kilogram in 1983 to approximately $20 currently. Australia is producing approximately 12 per cent of the world production of abalone. We are in a unique position to supply a developing market. If the abalone industry can be developed in Victorian waters at an economic level and if the production of that abalone and its export to overseas markets is increased, the community will benefit from the overseas funds generated through those sales. That is a goal we ought to

pursue. We should ensure that we exercise all of the prerogatives available to develop such fisheries in a way that will sustain growth in Australia and prove to overseas markets that we are reliable suppliers. That is why the trade in abalone, and to a lesser extent crayfish and a number of other species, has been able to be expanded in overseas markets and why Australia is recognised as a reliable supplier. We should do nothing to jeopardise that.

However, there has been what can be described only as a bureaucratic nightmare in the export of crayfish to Japan from Victoria. The industry has developed using as its base the crayfish provided and caught in South Australia, some of which under Victorian legislation would be under size. That trade has been jeopardised by the imposition of the legislation so that those who have been processing South Australian crayfish have said that they will not continue in what could be a lucrative export market. To the government's credit that matter has been reviewed.

I understand that the export of crayfish will continue during the South Australian season commencing on 1 October. That lucrative market should be developed and not jeopardised by the provisions of Victorian legislation, but the size limits that apply in Victoria, which are based on the survival of the fishery, should not be jeopardised, either. It is reasonable to develop a system that ensures that crayfish caught by licensees along the coastlines of Australia are identified; it is not sufficient to confine that to our own fisheries.

Fishing is a mobile industry. If one goes to South Australia, clearly people are not concerned about the border; they are able to move freely between South Australia and Victoria. The same applies to New South Wales. The significant fishing base at Eden is not far from the Gippsland fishery, and clearly there are considerable movements of people and fishermen between New South Wales and Victoria.

This matter cannot be looked at in isolation; it is of some importance and one which should be addressed by the Australian Fisheries Council. We must have an understanding between the States as to the derivation—particularly in this instance—of crayfish. The people who have determined working relationships with the importers in Japan and who have an understanding of payment processes, security of supply and quality of the product—those people who have been able to generate that industry—should be allowed to continue to develop the industry and, in so doing, provide valuable export income for Australia from a demand which has been clearly demonstrated in Japan.

Fisheries as we know them are changing. That is recognised by the government putting into place a review of the fisheries in the bays and estuaries of Victoria. That review will be undertaken by the Natural Resources and Environment Committee which will build on to the work which was carried out by the Arnold committee. Much of the work carried out by the Arnold committee dealt with bays and estuaries in this State. Under its terms of reference, the Arnold report addressed in part some of the issues that I have no doubt will be addressed by the all-party committee that will carry out that review.

What one must understand is that this is a shared resource; we have a resource which is available to commercial fisheries and recreational fishermen; it is a resource that is not the sole property of one person. The government, like previous governments, licensed commercial fisheries which allowed them access to that resource. The Fisheries (Abalone Licence Charges) Bill that will be debated in this place will test that concept. The provisions in that Bill are based not purely on access to the resource but on the government's perception that it wants to take a share of the production. It is not confined to access through a licensing process as are a number of other undertakings the government makes by licensing arrangements.

Because the cost of a licence has escalated over time, the government by agreement has said that because it has risen from $4 to $20 it wants a greater share in the industry. That may be a reasonable point of view to take except that the cost to the department has not altered; there is no greater contribution to the fisheries because the government wants to take a greater share. What it is saying is that the administrative costs in licensing will be maintained but because industry prices have risen the government wants a greater share for consolidated revenue.

If that is the way the government views it, it is to the detriment of the fisheries because there is an exploitation theme running through it. It will be detrimental to the fisheries as a whole and it is a concept that is based on the Fisheries (Abalone Charges) Bill. If the concept in that Bill is carried across into other fisheries, licensing charges would work against their survival. One cannot continue increasing the price of licences and expect people not to abuse the system in order to maintain the direct cost of the licence.

That is best demonstrated by a well-known poacher in this State who subsequently has left the State after being pursued by the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. It is known that when the gentleman was taken to court for poaching offences and he was required to pay the poaching fine, he went back into the fishing area to poach a sufficient amount to pay the fine.

One has to ask, as a consequence of that: where is the market for the fish which is taken illegally? We have seen in recent times a clear indication that people are prepared. to trade in illegally-caught fish for their own benefit. Some of the more recent apprehensions have occurred not far from this House. We have seen significant quantities of illegally-caught and undersized abalone seized by inspectors. It is hoped those people who have perpetrated those offences will be forced to face the full force of the law.

The most recent apprehension I am aware of was on 7 September when abalone valued at $21 000 was seized in Melbourne. That abalone was being retailed out to restaurants and distributors throughout the suburban area. I have been told that if one puts on a snorkel and flippers and goes to Cape Schanck, one can fill up the boot of the car with illegally-caught abalone. It does not take long to do that and one can come home with $6000 to $10 000 worth of illegally-caught fish which is easily sold. That process has to be broken if we are to see the continuation of our fisheries as we know them.

Some doubts have been cast over recreational fishermen and the way in which their catch is disposed of. With the introduction of electronic and technological equipment on boats which are ostensibly owned by amateur fishermen, it is clear their potential to catch large hauls of fish has expanded significantly; they are catching amounts which are beyond the capacity of our home freezers, and they must find a market for that fish.

One of the disappointing factors of the legislation is that the fish traders licence will go out of existence. If a fish traders licence had been properly implemented and enforced it would have provided records on which we could trace fish disposal by those people holding those licences.

Ostensibly a fish shop in the local shopping centre has the capacity to provide to restaurants and hotels a supply of fish over a period of time. Fish shops are traders in the sense that they are selling the product.

It is very difficult to envisage a situation where all the fish sold in Melbourne at the table stage is sold through what is known as the fish market, because quite clearly a significant amount of fish is not going through the fish market but is finding its way

onto both residential and restaurant tables in this city. Therefore, there is a need to establish a system that traces the movement of fish from the point of catch right through—regardless of how many times it is handled—to the eventual point of sale.

The Opposition supports deregulation. A whole range of agriculture-based industries has had to come to terms with reducing cost structures to operate effectively. The fishing industry needs some attention. A number of reviews of the industry have been carried out, such as that conducted by Mr Michael Arnold. Reviews have previously been carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in an attempt to establish a satisfactory retail selling arrangement. However, it appears that it is still not possible to monitor the movement of fish sales within Victoria. It is a growing industry. I am sure those people who come from Mediterranean countries, and, to a lesser extent, the South-East Asian countries, who had fish as the basis of their diets and as a regular component of their weekly menus in their countries of origin, are keen to ensure the fish supply is sustained in Australia.

Because of that, some quite clear patterns of trade seem to have built up in Victoria. They are distributors, restaurants and fish shops that do not need to go into what is known as the market system and who are able to extract from the non-market system sufficient quantities of fish to sustain their businesses.

The fish traders licence arrangement—which, after all, involved a cost—was never properly policed, and it was brought into disrepute for that reason. As a result, a Parliamentary inquiry has recommended that the fish traders licence be abandoned. This provides an opportunity for illegal trade to both continue and expand. Therefore, the issue needs to be addressed, and some lateral thinking ought to be applied to the effect of repealing the fish traders licence, notwithstanding that a Parliamentary committee has recommended its abolition. If it is intended to have controls on the fishing end of the industry through licensing, it seems to me to be imperative that some controls and data collection arrangements should also be applied at the retail end.

It is a large industry that involves many people. In some parts of the State it is seasonal; in other parts it is a full-time occupation. However, it is undoubtedly an industry that should be encouraged. It provides a food source for a significant number of people in Victoria. I am sure, for those people who are relying on the government to ensure that the quality and supply of fish are maintained, some of the aspects inherent in this Bill—although they may address some of the concerns—do not address all the concerns.

As one may expect, a considerable amount of comment has been made about the Bill. The people who are reliant on the industry for their incomes consider that some aspects of the Bill will jeopardise the continuity of their incomes. Therefore, a significant amount of comment has been received from a wide range of fishermen throughout the State.

The Apollo Bay Fishermen's Cooperative Society Ltd made significant comment. In regard to the repeal of the fish traders licence, it said:

> The licence was introduced with the support of industry in 1985. Seventy per cent of the revenue is paid to the Victorian Fishing Industry Council for promoting fish consumption whilst 30 per cent is retained by the department to cover administrative costs.
>
> Revenue declined to about $10 000 last year. This was largely due to the fact that the licence is voluntary and has not been enforced by the department. This led to the proposal now in the Bill that the licence be revoked as a 'deregulatory initiative'.

I might add that that deregulatory initiative does not take into account the value of the promotion that was inherent in the fish traders licence when it was introduced.

Those of us who regularly go to fish shops know that there is a vast difference in the presentation of fish available for sale.

Mrs Hirsh—Chips are like that, too.

Mr COLEMAN—Chips are like that. Anyone who has peeled a potato—although I doubt whether the honourable member for Wantirna has done much of that—would know that some potatoes peel better than others. Similarly, some varieties of fish are better than others. The presentation of fish in retail outlets shows that some varieties of fish are not as well respected for their keeping properties as others.

Part of the promotion activity was inherent in the fish traders licence when it was introduced to ensure that some promotion would be generated by the retail end of the industry and that some promotional funds were made available to ensure that people's perceptions of the commercial fishery was such that they would be prepared to continue to purchase fish from retail outlets and, through the licensing system, have some record of the source of that fish. The society states further:

> Repealing the licence will create quite separate problems with the proposed setting up of a new peak industry body. Funding contributions from all sectors of the industry are vital to the success of the new body. The retail and trading sector has indicated a willingness to help fund the new peak body via the wholesale fish market and/or specific funding for promotion. The practical problem facing industry is that final agreement on the details of a new retailer's levy is some way off and proposals are not therefore ready for inclusion in this Bill.

The society said that, to safeguard the future funding of the peak body, the industry is seeking a commitment from the government that it will introduce the necessary amendments to the Fisheries Act in the autumn sessional period of Parliament in relation to retailers and traders.

There has been no indication of whether this will be the case, but clearly if fishermen are to continue in their efforts to catch fish, there needs to be some commitment at the retail end of the market to ensure that the take-up of the catch at the retail end will continue. That can be achieved, in part, through the revenue generated from the fish traders licence fees.

Another person, Mr Draeger of St Albans, also commented on this matter.

In accordance with Sessional Orders, the debate was interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

Massage parlour in Malvern—Grain freight rates—'05 campaign sponsorship—Sunraysia Growers Advisory Group—Closure of country courthouses—Waste collection in Greensborough—Politicisation of Public Service

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

> That the House do now adjourn.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Planning and Environment an attempt to establish a massage parlour under another name. I raise the matter because of the legalisation of massage parlours in Victoria and the concern I have about the inappropriate locations of some massage parlours, not only in the electorate I represent but also in other areas, such as the infamous parlour in the City of Camberwell known as Canterbury Tales.

Mr Roper—Have you been there?

Mr LEIGH—No, I suspect that the Minister has had more chance of going there than I have. I am concerned about a business located at 16 Glenferrie Road, Malvern. It appears that the business has been operating since 1 May 1989. It is called the Access Beauty Salon and the planning permit lodged with the City of Malvern shows that the business is to be used as a beauty salon specialising in skin care, including facials, waxing and remedial/sports massage for both males and females.

I have done a company search on the Access Beauty Salon and it appears to be owned by William Andrew Allan, who has listed his address as 11 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern. That is the address of the Mayfield Centre, which is not a home address but a local community centre. Corporate Affairs Victoria registered the business on 18 May 1989. I have a copy of the *Sun* of 29 May this year which includes an advertisement stating:

MASSAGE AND RELAXATION

In comfortable surroundings. Call Christine for an appointment. Ph 509 4532.

Another advertisement in the same newspaper states:

ACCESS Centre offers a wonderful relaxation, anti-stress and therapeutic massage. Phone 509 4532.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Evironment)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member for Malvern to inform the House from which newspaper he is reading.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—If the Minister were listening he would have heard me say that I was quoting from the *Sun*.

Mr Roper—Which edition?

Mr LEIGH—Do you want the telephone number?

The SPEAKER—Order! At an earlier stage the honourable member for Malvern indicated the newspaper from which he is quoting and its date of issue.

Mr LEIGH—I have investigated this matter, as has the Malvern City Council. Representatives of the council have visited the premises with the Victoria Police, but they found no evidence of any beauty equipment. The other day I walked in and got around the screen at the front, and it did not look like a beauty parlour to me.

This business is established in the heart of the commercial centre of Malvern, and its location is even more inappropriate because it is situated only two doors from a maternity wear shop. It is wrong that such a centre can be established in my community. It is nothing other than a massage parlour under another name! The company is getting around the system by claiming that the business is a beauty centre.

I believe the council is opposed to the business, but if it becomes established, I shall set up cameras at the front and back entrances and photograph people going into the premises. The Minister has a responsibility in this matter, and perhaps he will be caught in a photograph!

This is a most inappropriate use for a premises in the commercial district of Malvern, and I am opposed to it. It is disgraceful that the Cain government is allowing such premises to be established under the legislation that was introduced by it.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Transport the setting of grain freight rates for the coming harvest. I understand that the rail system has lost some key personnel. Dan Murphy and Maurice Barklay—who had good knowledge of the negotiating skills needed—have either been moved sideways or have gone. Kevin Shea is another person who has gone.

I ask the Minister whether it is correct that he has failed to appoint persons to the advisory committees for the Roads Corporation and the Public Transport Corporation. The Premier is chuckling, but the relevant legislation was passed by Parliament some three or four months ago during the last autumn sessional period. The legislation was supported by the Opposition and various interest groups were to be represented on the advisory committees.

I am interested to know whether those committees have been put in place and what role they have played in coordinating important matters such as the announcement of the grain freight rate so that the total transport system has some knowledge of the direction likely to be pursued by the Roads Corporation and the Public Transport Corporation.

I should have thought that the advisory committees were an important part of the legislation. I ask the Minister whether they have been appointed so that such matters as grain freight rates are made public.

Mr KENNEDY (Bendigo West)—I ask the Minister for Transport to indicate the possibility of involving the Bendigo area in the ·05 campaign. As the Minister is aware, I have recently made representations to him on behalf of the Kangaroo Flat Football Club, which is keen to obtain sponsorship through the ·05 campaign being run by the Roads Corporation. I would be happy to hear the possibility of the campaign being developed in the Bendigo area.

I commend the responsible approach being taken by Kangaroo Flat Football Club in wishing to be involved in the project. It displays a responsible attitude to the drink-driving issue. The club is keen to take part in the program. It wants to assist in the campaign to reduce the number of road accidents and deaths associated with drink-driving.

The Bendigo club is an enterprising one. Recently I had the pleasure of working with it to obtain a $30 000 grant from the Local Government Department to enable it to complete a project involving extensions and the development of its rooms for multipurpose use in conjunction with the Marong Shire Council. The club has attractive grounds that are popular. It believes, as it is associated with a number of other clubs and sporting associations, that there is a strong possibility of wide appeal for the ·05 campaign. Some 200 people in the junior and senior ranks use the club each week. The club wants to use the ·05 campaign to put forward positive measures to the many people with which it is associated.

I appreciate the position the Minister has taken in responding to the representations I have made. He has said that the ·05 campaign is designed to maximise the benefits to the community through spending public money in an attempt to reach areas or events that have large attendances and the possibility of large-scale exposure to the media, especially television.

I should like this program to the developed in the Bendigo area. I commend the initiative undertaken by the government because it is a sound approach. Obviously, on the question of road safety a whole range of measures need to be taken. This program is positive because it involves sporting groups in a responsible association with health and driving, and endeavours to reduce the road toll by projecting an image of sporting bodies such as football teams that can be seen by young people who will emulate them in acquiring good habits. This can be achieved through good role models such as successful sports people, particularly football players.

The program operating in Victoria and involving two senior football clubs has been successful, as have a number of programs being presented under the banner of the

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. I hope the Minister will take steps to allow the development of this program in the Bendigo area.

Mr BILDSTIEN (Mildura)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, but before doing so I assure the House that the title of the book in the possession of the honourable member for Malvern, *Morning Glory*, has nothing to do with the subject he has just raised!

The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister concerns the financial crisis being experienced by the Sunraysia Growers Advisory Group. The group was established in 1984 and as a result of its success in the Sunraysia region it sparked an Australia-wide program. The group employs a rural counsellor, who is responsible to a committee of management. The committee consists of representatives from a wide range of community services and growers. The primary purpose of the rural counselling program is to assist growers experiencing severe financial problems.

At present the organisation receives 50 per cent of its funding from the Federal Department of Primary Industries and Energy on the proviso that it raises the remaining 50 per cent either in cash or in kind. The three-year contract with the department concluded on 30 September this year and is now under review. It is highly likely that the Federal assistance will continue but the group is now suffering a chronic shortage of funds because the local community has been unable to raise its share.

In September last year the then Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Evan Walker, assured the Chairperson of the Victorian Association of Rural Counselling Groups that he would support the groups on a case-by-case basis. To this end the Sunraysia Growers Advisory Group, in conjunction with the Murray Valley Rural Industry Group, prepared a submission for the conservation and environment committee of Cabinet. Unfortunately, that deputation was cancelled. This afternoon I received correspondence from the group's rural counsellor, Mr Chris Robb, stating that the group now has only one month's supply of funds left. If there is not an injection of funds at the end of that one-month period the group will have to close its doors. That would be a tragedy.

Under the department's contract the group is expected to raise half of its $7000 a month contribution in cash or in kind. If it does not, the department's contribution is refundable. At the end of December this year the group will owe the department about $12 000; by the end of June next year it is anticipated that it will owe $30 000. At this stage, without further prospects of funds being raised, it would be irresponsible for the group to continue to trade unless severe cuts are made in its expenditure and a large proportion of in-kind contributions found.

I raise this matter for the attention of the Minister because there is no more worthy cause than this group. It would be a tragedy to see it collapse because the group was established to assist growers.

Recently I had in my office a fruit grower who owes more than $312 000. This man has been under severe stress, stain and emotional trauma. These are the people the group has been assisting. From January to June this year it assisted 21 growers.

As the Minister will be aware, all horticultural industries are going through an extensive period of structural adjustment, and some casualties will arise. I ask the Minister to examine the position of the Sunraysia Growers Advisory Group to ascertain whether he can assist it between now and the end of December, or, alternatively, provide the growers with an indication of where they can turn to ensure that this worthwhile and valuable program continues to service the fruit growers of Mildura.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I raise for the attention of the Attorney-General a most important issue for country people. It concerns the proposal in the Budget Papers that a large number of courts be closed throughout Victoria, particularly in country areas. In the Murray Valley electorate the courts involved are at Rutherglen and Yarrawonga. I have also received representations from the Shire of Beechworth about the courthouse in that historic town, which is on the fringe of the electorate I represent.

The Attorney-General has arranged for representatives of his department to visit these areas to meet with local residents. I was involved in arranging for these officers from the Attorney-General's Department and the regional manager meeting with representatives of the shires of Rutherglen and Yarrawonga, the legal profession and development associations at Rutherglen some weeks ago when the department's position and the rationale behind the closure of country courts were explained.

Honourable members will recall some years ago the former Attorney-General, now the Minister for Transport, indicated there would be a large number of court closures in country Victoria. At that time it was proposed to close approximately 70 courts, but following representations to the Minister a number of courts were left open to service people in small country areas throughout the State.

The community has been through that exercise and country Victorians fought to retain a number of those courts. Following the release of the Budget Papers, the Attorney-General now says that a large number of additional courts will be closed in rural Victoria. The rationale used for the closure of these courts is that they are not being used for a large number of days each year. These courts provide a service to country people and they are concerned that the Ministry is not prepared to face the music and talk to them directly.

If the Minister wishes to take this decision and believes courthouses should be closed because they do not provide services to country people he should leave his Ministerial office and meet with country people to discuss the issue. I admire the officers from the Attorney-General's Department who came to Rutherglen and talked to the people there about the concerns that they had. Those were frank and honest discussions. The departmental officers put forward the rationale for the closure of the courts. Local people did not agree with them; in fact, they totally opposed the views that were put forward. Local people put forward strong arguments why these courts should be retained in the future.

It is incumbent on the Attorney-General to visit country areas and talk to the people who are directly affected. He should tell them why the government is taking this step. The departmental representatives are directed by the government. Country people are entitled to receive the services.

The closure of courts in smaller country areas will mean that solicitors and people attending the courts will have to travel long distances, at a cost to them. The Attorney-General's Department may save some money in the provision of services with magistrates and court facilities, but people facing the courts will have to pay more.

I ask the Minister to meet the representatives of country people at Yarrawonga.

Mrs GARBUTT (Greensborough)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Planning and Environment two matters encountered by local groups engaged in recycling. For many years local groups in my electorate, scouts, schools, cubs and so on have been collecting waste paper for recycling. The Eltham scouts have a large collection point in central Eltham. People from a wide area deliver waste paper to that paper and bottle dump. Over the years scouts have relied on this collection service for a considerable portion of their income and it provides many facilities for scouts and other organisations.

The Eltham scouts have been selling their waste paper to APM Ltd. Recently, with the worldwide public interest in environmental problems, including the greenhouse effect, the public response has led to a great upsurge of interest in recycling. This has contributed to a glut of waste paper. The scouts have been advised by APM Ltd that it can no longer buy their waste paper and they have no other market for the collection of their waste paper.

The Eltham Diamond Valley recycling centre is also situated in my electorate. It collects a range of products including glass, paper, plastics and aluminium cans. It disposes of its waste paper to a company which still accepts the paper, but that company is not able to increase the volume that it accepts. The recycling centre has run into a separate problem in disposing of its plastic waste. Until recently, it sold all its plastic waste to Smorgon Consolidated Industries, which has recycled the plastic waste into a plastic product called syntal, a product similar to wood, which is marketed as posts, park benches, poles and so on. Smorgon Consolidated Industries has advised the recycling centre that it is no longer able to accept plastic waste. The centre still has a market with other companies, but they are particular about the type of plastic collected and the collection by those companies often involves considerable sorting of plastic.

The great advantage of Smorgon Consolidated Industries was that it took all types of plastic and there was no sorting of the waste plastic people brought into the centre. More plastic is now being recycled than Smorgon Consolidated Industries can use and they are limited by how much of the end product they are able to sell. Marketing, of course, has always been the Achilles heel of recycling. Even if people are interested in taking the effort to sort through the waste and take it to collection points, unless the market supports the end product recycling will not continue.

These two developments are of great concern to the community. Ordinary people have seen recycling as a practical way of them personally contributing to energy conservation and to reducing the greenhouse effect on the environment. It is something to which each householder can contribute. The Shire of Eltham is about to start a nature strip pick-up collection for four types of product, glass, paper, plastic and aluminium. These developments are a threat to that type of scheme.

I ask the Minister to examine ways in which the government can overcome the problems in the collection of these products and to take all necessary steps to overcome them.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—I raise for the attention of the Premier, and in his absence the Minister for Planning and Environment, matters relating to the politicisation of the Public Service and I ask the Premier to take action to overcome the problems created by massive politicisation over the period of his government.

There are many examples of political appointments to the Public Service of which we are all aware. The issue I raise today concerns the appointment of James Brumby to the position of Deputy Director, Office of the Director-General, a senior executive service level 2 position.

Mr Brumby's brother, Mr John Brumby, represents the Australian Labor Party in the House of Representatives as the member for Bendigo. That is not necessarily a disqualification for appointment to the Public Service but honourable members are aware that for the past few years Mr Brumby was the personal assistant to the Treasurer and my understanding is that he was to be appointed to a permanent position in the Public Service prior to the State election last October so he would be in a senior

position if the government was not returned to office this year, but something went wrong with that appointment and he was not appointed until 29 August 1989.

The position was advertised but I have explained on previous occasions that advertising of a position does not prevent a political appointment from being made. On the last occasion I raised the matter with the Premier, he went on at some length about how political appointments could be prevented through the appeals system. I was somewhat surprised by that because, in respect of the matter I raised on that occasion, there was no appeal available. There might have been an appeal in the case to which I refer tonight, but in most cases no appeal can be made when an appointment is made from outside the Public Service.

I have now received a letter from the Premier which confirms what I have just said: he says that there are no appeals against the appointment of people who have come from outside the Public Service.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—The Deputy Leader of the National Party raised the matter of grain freight rates and V/Line. He ought not to make any derogatory comments about V/Line which, in my view, has performed very well: it has been and continues to be well managed. Ironically, some of the people he named in fact never worked with V/Line! Unlike the Liberal Party, whose members have a road fixation, the government is committed to keeping as much grain freight on rail as it can. Members of the Liberal Party love heavy traffic; they have a truck fixation; they want to put it all on the roads! The government agrees with the thrust of getting the freight onto rail and we will be making a helpful announcement about that in the future.

The honourable member for Bendigo West raised the matter of the ·05 sponsorship. I congratulate him for his continuing interest in the Kangaroo Flat Football Club and also for the club's interest in the ·05 road safety campaign.

The government is reviewing the Roads Corporation sponsorship to be distributed next year as to whether there should be distribution to places like Bendigo and to clubs like the Kangaroo Flat Football Club. The government will take the matters raised by the honourable member into account before the final decision on the issue is made.

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—The honourable member for Mildura raised a serious matter in respect of the Sunraysia Growers Advisory Group and the problems its members face in raising of an equivalent amount of funding on a 50–50 basis to meet the needs of a financial advisory group. As I understand from his comments, the growers are required to find some 50 per cent of the funding and the balance of the funding is provided by the Federal government through the Department of Primary Industries and Energy.

I understand also the needs of the industry in the area, particularly horticulture industries that are facing significant change not only now but in the years ahead. The change is due particularly as a result of the change in industry policy at Commonwealth government level. The Industries Assistance Commission's report into the dried fruits industry will result in a significant restructuring of the industry. In those circumstances, the needs of the many thousands of growers must be met so that they can survive and can look to alternative areas of investment and employment. Services such as those provided by a financial advisory group must be made available to growers to facilitate the changes necessary in the economy, particularly in the Sunraysia area. The matter is the direct responsibility of the Commonwealth government as funding comes from that level of government.

I recognise the honourable member's concern that the service be maintained. I shall make inquiries in respect of the service and I shall honour the commitment made by my predecessor, the current Minister for the Arts, to consider each case on the basis of individual analysis, so that any support that needs to be provided will be considered. I would appreciate it if the honourable member for Mildura could provide me with any other material he has so that analysis on a case-by-case basis can be undertaken.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—The honourable member for Murray Valley raised the matter of court closures and specifically mentioned Rutherglen, Beechworth and Yarrawonga. It is a bit ironic that the National Party wants the government to cut public spending and public employment but its members want the maintenance of services in rural areas, particularly in respect of country courthouses.

I indicate to the House, as I did on a previous occasion, the hours of sittings conducted in the courthouses to which reference has been made. During the entire 1988 year, the Rutherglen courthouse was open for 26 hours; the Beechworth courthouse was open for 63 hours of operation over the whole year; and at Yarrawonga the courthouse was open for 47 hours.

The courthouses that were listed for closure as announced in the Budget were all open for that order of sitting time. Nobody can justify the expenditure incurred in maintaining those buildings and in losing the benefit of regionalising courts in country areas, so providing a full range of services and a much more efficient operation of the resources of magistrates, court registrars, and other officers, and therefore processing cases more effectively and efficiently.

The government is not original in being involved in the business of closing courts. In its last years the previous Liberal government closed more than 50 courts. It is important for the future of the Magistrates Court system in this State that the courts have the benefit of computerisation and regionalisation.

The decision is final. Officers of my department have made themselves available to meet groups at the request of the honourable member for Murray Valley and other country members who have invited me or officers of my department to meet with groups. The officers have given full and clear explanations of the benefits of the closures and have explained that the government is committed to putting additional resources into regional courts.

They have explained also the other matter of interest which is still being discussed, that is, what will happen to the court buildings. I have indicated to the honourable member for Murray Valley that the buildings are available for negotiation and offer through the Department of Property and Services and that if worthwhile uses and activities are suggested they can be so negotiated.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—The honourable member for Malvern raised the issue of what he alleges are massage parlours in his electorate servicing the needs of his electors. If there are particular businesses operating in his electorate——

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I believe the Minister for Planning and Environment is being somewhat frivolous. The businesses are not servicing my electors; I suspect they are servicing the needs of some of his mates!

The SPEAKER—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—I was about to make the point that, if there are uses that are against the provisions of the Malvern Planning Scheme, the Malvern City Council is the appropriate body to examine the matter. The

council can take action through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to deal with what the honourable member for Malvern believes are illegal and improper uses.

I suggest that if the honourable member believes there is a business in his area that is practising outside the provisions of the planning scheme he should take up the matter with the mayor and councillors of the City of Malvern and he should exercise the rights available under the Planning and Environment Act passed by this Parliament.

The honourable member for Greensborough raised the significant issue of recycling, particularly in respect of paper and plastic. I am very much aware that significant problems are being faced currently in the recycling area.

With the world glut of recycled newsprint, traditional Australian markets are under threat. I am discussing the newsprint arrangements with the managing directors of the Melbourne newspaper companies and I will then discuss the matter with the company that produces the great bulk of newsprint in Australia. The industry must bear a large part of responsibility in this area for the product that it sells to the community, and which it has increasing difficulty in recycling. The responses from two major Melbourne newspapers have been that they agree that it is a problem and they wish to discuss how we can collectively overcome it.

In relation to plastic recycling, I understand the attitude of Smorgon Consolidated Industries in regard to the collection of plastics from municipalities but then finding that municipalities do not wish to purchase the product produced from that plastic. Councils receive a significant benefit from the recycling of plastic. They do not have to pay as much for the cost of landfill if they do not collect the plastic products in their normal garbage collections and thus contribute to their citizens' strong supportive recycling programs. But then one finds the conservatism of local councils whose engineers say, "Of course, we really just want to use the traditional wooden products".

I am about to write to the 210 municipalities throughout the State to urge them to examine the ways in which they can use the recycled plastic product in a whole range of services that local government provides such as posts along roads, in car parking areas and for park benches and so forth. I am well aware that there is a problem because in my area where there has been a significant effort to begin a plastics recycling scheme, the local council has decided, for a range of reasons, that it is not keen on purchasing the resultant product from recycled plastic. That is a classic case of a council that should totally review the situation so far as the environment is concerned by changing its attitude to using this product rather than using the wood which perhaps has been imported from tropical forest areas overseas.

The honourable member for Kew directed a matter about the Public Service to the attention of the Premier. I was interested in her final comments when she made the point that a particular position occupied by the officer was in fact——

Mrs Wade interjected.

Mr ROPER—That is not what the honourable member for Kew said. She said that it was a position in which there could be an appeal. I can take into account only what was said by the honourable member, in which case appropriate activity should occur. I note that she did not say that the particular officer was not qualified for the particular job. I shall direct her concern to the Premier, who will respond to her.

The House adjourned at 11.44 *p.m.*

Thursday, 12 October 1989

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Ken Coghill) took the chair at 10.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

STATE BANK VICTORIA

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—As the government, including the Treasurer, has continually refused to take any responsibility for the unprecedented losses of State Bank Victoria, will the Premier inform the House who is ultimately responsible for the bank's results last year?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition was yesterday when I answered a question that was asked by the apologist for Joh in Queensland.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! There is too much interjection. The Premier does not require the assistance of honourable members on the government backbench.

Mr CAIN—Yesterday I answered in some detail a question asked by the Leader of the National Party who wants to bring Queensland-style politics into Victoria; who two years ago wanted Joh to be Prime Minister; and who belongs to a party that removed the then Leader of the National Party from its how-to-vote ticket and put Joh on it. That is the kind of party he is in.

Mr PLOWMAN (Evelyn)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the question asked of the Premier was very clear: where does the buck stop? Queensland politics has nothing to do with it. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to direct the Premier to answer the question.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is impossible for question time to proceed in an orderly manner when honourable members are interjecting.

Mr W. D. McGrath interjected.

The SPEAKER—Order! I direct the attention of the Deputy Leader of the National Party to the Standing Order that requires honourable members to remain silent while the Speaker is on his feet. It is impossible for questions without notice to proceed in an orderly manner if honourable members commence interjecting immediately a Minister—in this case the Premier—commences his reply. I uphold the point of order; the Premier was departing from the point of the question. But I make the point that he was very much provoked by the interjections of the Leader of the National Party.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I was endeavouring to put the question in context. I explained very clearly yesterday what the record of State Bank Victoria has been and its performance in being a bank that is attracting huge customer support and providing housing loans of a quantity and quality that far exceeds anything the private banking system can provide. It has been the servant of the people of this State and will continue to be the servant of the people of this State.

It is a corporation that acts in the commercial world, and properly so, and is supported I believed—past tense—by both sides of this House. The bank should be out there competing in the commercial banking system. It is competing. Like all

contenders in the commercial banking system, it incurs losses in respect of particular loans.

The State Bank will continue to operate in the way it has in recent years. As I said yesterday, the government maintains an arm's length relationship with the bank. It is competing on commercial terms; it is paying salaries on commercial terms; and it is competing with the general banking structure.

I repeat that the government never had any relationship with Tricontinental Corporation Ltd. If the Opposition wants to continue undermining a bank that has served the people for 140 years, and continues to support——

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I raise the issue of the relevance of the answer to the question asked. The question was precise and very direct. The government has continued to deny responsibility for last year's losses of State Bank Victoria. The question is simply: who is ultimately responsible if the government continually refuses to take such responsibility? The Premier has not started to address the question; his answer to date is not relevant to the question asked. I again suggest, Mr Speaker, that the Premier should be directed to answer the question on the basis of relevance. Who is responsible for the losses of the State Bank if the government will not take any responsibility whatsoever?

The SPEAKER—Order! The practices of this House, the Standing Orders and previous Speakers' rulings provide that a Minister may answer a question in the manner in which he sees fit, subject to the answer being relevant to the question. I have listened to both the question and the reply and in my view the Premier has been seeking to establish the manner in which the State Bank is administered and the various lines of responsibility. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I should have thought that even the Leader of the Opposition—certainly his predecessor did—understood the relationship enjoyed by the State Bank and Victoria. The State Bank is out there competing as was provided by statute in this Parliament—as I recall it was supported by all sides.

If members of the Opposition believe in the free enterprise system, as they say they do, they will accept the proposition that the bank is out there competing with other banks and is not—as the Leader of the National Party would wish—running a corrupt, crooked operation as politicians do in Queensland; he supports those politicians. The bank is out there doing the job for the people of Victoria and it will go on doing it.

Opposition members can make all the bald assertions they want. The Leader of the Opposition has been in the trenches for months and the first time he put his head up was to deny the assertions made by all members of his party about tobacco in this State, and to deny what the honourable member for Frankston South and other honourable members had done——

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest the Premier return to the point.

Mr CAIN—I repeat that the Leader of the Opposition and backbenchers seem not to understand. I excuse those on the backbenches because they are inexperienced and are generally clones of the new right in this House, but the Leader of the Opposition and his predecessor——

Mr DELZOPPO (Narracan)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I direct to your attention Standing Order No. 127 and put it to you that the Premier is debating the question rather than answering it. I ask you to bring him to order.

The SPEAKER—Order! The question was short but it raised broad issues concerning the administration of the State Bank and the Premier has been attempting to present

information explaining the manner in which the State Bank operates in Victoria. I do not uphold the point of order, but I ask the Premier to keep his reply relevant to the question and to round off his answer.

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I repeat that the administration of the State Bank is clearly enunciated in the statute passed by this Parliament. I believe it is understood by most people in this place and in the outside community. In the past six years the bank has been out there vigorously competing and it will go on doing so in conforming with the statute under which it operates, and which was supported.

CANNED FRUIT EXPORTS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton)—My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs——

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! It is impossible for question time to proceed with the level of interjection which has been going on during the asking of a question by the honourable member for Shepparton. Most of the interjections have been totally unrelated—or so it seems—to the question he is seeking to ask. I particularly ask the honourable members for Carrum and Murray Valley to cease interjecting.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I refer the Minister to a deputation I introduced to him two or three weeks ago from representatives of the Australian Canned Fruits Industry Council. The Minister would recall the tariff problems that have affected the import of Australian canned fruits into Canada because of the recent negotiations between the Canadian government and the American government. The Minister undertook to have discussions with the Prime Minister about this matter because of its serious concern to the fruit growing industry. Will the Minister advise the House whether he has had the opportunity of having discussions with the Prime Minister and, if so, the result of those discussions?

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—The honourable member for Shepparton did introduce a deputation about this important issue. Canned fruit exports from Australia to Canada are worth some $40 million annually. They are in jeopardy at the moment as a result of the protocol arrangement between Canada and the United States of America which tramples on the free trade agreement—CANATA—between Australia and Canada. That important export industry is basically centred around the Goulburn Valley area.

At the deputation I told the representatives of the Australian Canned Fruits Industry Council that I would write to my Federal counterpart. I did so and pointed out the importance of the industry to Victoria and the importance of maintaining that export market. I am pleased to inform the House that I ascertained late yesterday that the Prime Minister will be raising the matter directly with the Canadian Prime Minister at the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government—CHOGM—this month. That will be an important opportunity for a breakthrough in resolving this important issue.

The industry in Victoria is not looking for a handout; it wants to participate on an equal footing with the Americans. The agreement that has been entered into between Canada and the United States of America imposes a 15 per cent discriminatory barrier against exports from Australia. It is important that the matter be resolved by the Australian and Canadian Prime Ministers at CHOGM and I hope it will be a satisfactory outcome for the benefit not only of Australian exports but also of the industry in the Goulburn Valley area.

WOMEN'S BUDGET

Mrs HIRSH (Wantirna)—In view of the widespread interest in recent years in the publication of a women's budget, will the Premier inform the House of the progress that has been made towards the publication of a similar document in the current year's Budget?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—I thank the honourable member for her question and for her continuing interest in issues that affect women. There will be a document similar to that published in previous years because the government is determined—unlike the Opposition—to continue to address the problems that women face. The government has a strong tradition of raising women's status.

This successful program is in its fourth year and it ensures that government programs and services are targeted to the needs of women. One of the key initiatives is a continuing program, the Choice and Opportunity Plan, which will receive an additional $1·3 million in this Budget. As honourable members will be aware, that program gives women the opportunity of making a genuine choice to stay at home or, if they wish, to seek employment or undertake some training program that will assist them in the transition back to work, full or part-time.

Government members and, I believe, all honourable members are aware that the government is expanding employment opportunities in this State. The participation rates have remained high with some 270 000 jobs having been created in the past five years. That will continue.

Through that women's budget document the government wants to convey to all women that there are choices open to them through the Choice and Opportunity Plan. It is not the government's role to choose what women do, but they should not be inhibited from returning to or taking part in the work force simply because they are looking after families at the same time. The government wants to offer those women the training or education they need to get jobs. It also wants to provide child-care support, if required, at neighbourhood learning centres or technical and further education colleges, if that is what is needed to get women into a position where they can consider returning to the work force.

In recognition of the fact that neighbourhood houses are a vital step for women wishing to reach out into the community, in 1989–90 an additional $1 million will be provided for neighbourhood houses. That brings the total expenditure on the 190 neighbourhood houses to $4 million, and that is a massive increase from 1981 when only approximately twenty houses existed.

There is a continuing silence from the Opposition on matters that affect women and the role they play in society. One often hears strident and insulting interjections from members of the National Party, but one needs only to look around the Chamber to see the paucity in numbers of women in the opposition parties to understand the reason for that silence. The Labor Party has done a lot to encourage women to take part in the operations of Parliament. In contrast, the opposition parties, particularly the National Party, have failed miserably.

The women's budget document to which I have made reference will be available next Tuesday when a formal launch will take place. The launch will provide Ministers and me with the opportunity of providing a document that will continue to monitor the government's successes in raising the status of women in this State.

STATE BANK VICTORIA

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—In view of State Bank Victoria's $198 million loss and its $103 million loan to the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division), has disciplinary action been taken against any responsible officer of State Bank Victoria; and if not, why not?

Mr Cooper—Kiss of death!

The SPEAKER—Order! Honourable members are interested in hearing the answers to such questions. The running of question time is not assisted by a barrage of interjections from the likes of the honourable member for Mornington. I ask honourable members to allow the Treasurer to reply uninterrupted.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The first point that should be made clear to the honourable member for Brighton is that last financial year State Bank Victoria achieved a profit of $165 million. The Leader of the Opposition should read the bank's annual report.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I have just asked the House to hear the Treasurer in silence. I again ask the honourable member for Mornington and, on this occasion, the Leader of the Opposition to enable the Treasurer to reply without interruption. If they wish to ask further questions, there will be an opportunity later in question time.

Mr JOLLY—I repeat that, in relation to its own activities, last year State Bank Victoria achieved a profit of $165 million. The problem with the State Bank group arose because of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and, as I have made clear in the past, the management of that organisation is totally responsible for the decisions made.

I point out that, over the past seven years, despite the impact of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd and the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Branch), the State Bank Victoria group as a whole has accumulated profits of more than $450 million. During the last seven years of Liberal Party government in this State that figure was only $232 million. There has been a dramatic improvement in the bank's performance overall.

Despite the attempts of the Opposition to denigrate and undermine State Bank Victoria, I point out that during the past three years the State Bank group as a whole has been operating extremely well and from a good profit position. Its capital base is more than $1500 million, an increase of 42 per cent on last year, which is a strong position.

In relation to the National Safety Council of Australia—NSCA—loan, honourable members will appreciate—because certainly it is the philosophy of the Liberal Party—that State Bank Victoria should compete on equal terms with the private sector. The bank makes commercial decisions and assesses loan applications in accordance with appropriate prudential procedures, as occurred in the case of the NSCA loan.

Honourable members also will be aware that the matter is subject to court proceedings; not only was the State Bank caught out because of the activities of the NSCA but also 25 other banks were caught out in that event.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Treasurer has been doing his tap-dance routine for several minutes. The question was quite specific; it was not about losses but about whether disciplinary action had been taken, and whether as Minister he is imposing any accountability. He has not said one word in any way relevant to the question, and I ask you to require him to direct his remarks to the question.

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member for Brighton asked a question relating to whether disciplinary action had been taken about certain decisions. The Treasurer has been providing information as to the responsibility for those decisions and the manner in which those decisions were administered within the structure of the State Bank. As such, the Treasurer seemed to be seeking to explain the context in which any disciplinary action may be appropriate.

I do not uphold the point of order, but I ask the Treasurer, in completing his answer, to indicate the relevance of the point he has made to the question asked.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—As I said, Mr Speaker, State Bank Victoria had to assure me that it had operated within the appropriate prudential guidelines not only in relation to the NSCA loan but also for all loans. The guidelines were examined by the Reserve Bank of Australia, in consultation with the State Bank, and certainly were approved.

The State Bank was not the only organisation caught short because of the NSCA; many other banks operating within Victoria, and nationally, were caught. I asked for a report to ensure that the correct prudential requirements were followed in respect of the loan, and I was assured by the bank that they had been so followed.

ROAD TOLL REPORT

Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool)—In view of the government's professed commitment to reducing the road toll, will the Minister for Transport explain why the recent multimillion dollar package of repressive measures announced by the government failed to allocate even 1 cent to alleviating the acknowledged cause of 30 per cent of major accidents on country roads, as detailed in a specially conducted study undertaken by the Minister's department, which has revealed that unsealed shoulders on Victoria's country roads are the major cause.

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I thank the honourable member for his question and for his continuing interest in transport—unlike the Liberal Party, which runs away from this issue and perpetually avoids this issue during question time!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr KENNAN—I cannot remember the names of the spokespersons for the Liberal Party.

Unfortunately, I have to disagree strongly with what the honourable member for Warrnambool has said. I do not think there can be anything more irresponsible in our community than a suggestion that it is other than human fault and illegal behaviour that is responsible for the overwhelming majority of road trauma.

Mr W. D. McGrath—Have you read the report?

Mr KENNAN—I have read the report and I understand it. I do not misquote it. Reports like that indicate that in 30 per cent of accidents road design and construction and design of intersections may be a contributing factor, but the vast majority of accidents are caused, in the first place, by driver error and fault in leaving the road.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr KENNAN—The Opposition may find driver fault in relation to accidents and the whole issue of the horrific increase in the road toll a matter for entertainment and mirth but, apart from the honourable member for Burwood, who has supported the government's measures, we have heard nothing on the road toll from the Opposition. The honourable member for Burwood, in an article in the *Sun*, topically and candidly supported the measures undertaken by the government.

Mr Pescott interjected.

Mr KENNAN—Yes; I can see the honourable member for Bennettswood's discomfort and I sympathise with him to some extent because, with or without gel, he was on the spot on this occasion.

It is a great pity that the honourable member for Warrnambool refers to road surfaces being the cause of accidents when he ought to be attacking bad driving. The National Party ought to know that, during the past year or so, the government has doubled the allocations for the accident black spot program and is now spending $16 million a year on addressing those sorts of issues.

Fundamentally, road deaths are a community responsibility and we must crack down on bad driver behaviour through a whole range of measures: education, stricter policing and tougher laws. The government will continue to do that and the irresponsible contribution by the National Party is not welcome.

TRANSPORTATION OF WHEAT

Mr KENNEDY (Bendigo West)—Will the Minister for Transport inform the House what arrangements have been made by the Public Transport Corporation and the Grain Elevators Board in relation to the transport, storage and handling of the forthcoming wheat harvest?

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I thank the honourable member for his question and for his ongoing commitment to the rail system in country Victoria, a commitment that is shared by the National Party but not by the road freight fixated Liberal Party, which would transfer as many passengers and as much grain and other freight as it could onto the road system and have B-doubles and large freight trucks rumbling through country towns and suburbs.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I suggest that the Minister direct his comments to the question asked.

Mr KENNAN—Thank you, Mr Speaker; I was distracted by the barrage of Liberal Party questions and interjections! The government has a commitment to see that as much freight as possible is carried by rail.

At the time the Commonwealth measures for deregulation were announced, the government indicated that in this respect it would make every endeavour to capture what it could for the rail system. V/Line has been negotiating with the Australian Wheat Board since June this year in an endeavour to secure the carriage and storage of wheat for export.

Mr W. D. McGrath interjected.

Mr KENNAN—The Deputy Leader of the National Party says that it has not succeeded. It is my pleasure now to announce that it has succeeded. V/Line has now reached agreement with the Australian Wheat Board to capture all the wheat for export in Victoria.

V/Line has been able to offer the Australian Wheat Board a rate which is an average of 11·5 per cent lower than the rates currently charged by V/Line; despite the knocking and whinging of the Deputy Leader of the National Party, V/Line has captured that market. The Australian Wheat Board's decision is a considerable vote of confidence in the efficiency of V/Line. Honourable members would be aware that the government has invested approximately $140 million in grain handling and the transport system

over the past five years. V/Line has been able to offer growers a reduction of 24·7 per cent in real terms in its carriage rate, as a result of this investment.

It also gives me considerable pleasure to announce that the Grain Elevators Board charges for wheat handling and storage for the coming harvest will continue the successful system of disaggregated charges which has enabled the board to add to the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the system, which members of the National Party would understand privately. Overall charges will increase by an average of 6 per cent, which is well within the increase in the consumer price index.

The proposed increase will maintain the government's policy of no real increase in charges, which policy has been in place since 1986–87. Growers of grain for the domestic market will, therefore, enjoy a substantial reduction in their costs and the Grain Elevators Board expects that the new charges will produce a trading surplus.

PETITION

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

Personal Emergency Service

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

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria, respectfully shows that we are gravely concerned that the Office of Psychiatric Services has determined that it can no longer justify its level of its current support to personal emergency 24-hour crisis telephone counselling service and that this support through a clinic will cease at the end of this calendar year.

Personal Emergency Service deals with more than 28 000 calls per year, and specialises in assisting people with psychiatric problems. We the undersigned believe that the psychiatric services decision will seriously disadvantage these 28 000 Victorians.

We therefore beseech the Parliament of Victoria to immediately:

direct psychiatric services to continue to allocate sufficient financial resources to PES; and

direct psychiatric services to consult with the PES volunteers before making the decision to make any changes to Personal Emergency Service.

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

By **Mr Kennedy** (21 signatures)

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

PAPER

The following paper, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, was laid on the table by the Clerk:

National Tennis Centre Trust—Report for the year 1988–89.

GRIEVANCES

The SPEAKER—Order! The question is:

That grievances be noted.

Mr BROWN (Leader of the Opposition)—Today I grieve about the fact that this government, which has been in office now for some seven and a half years, prior to forming the government of Victoria promised that there would be honest, open and

accountable government and that nothing could be further from the truth of what is happening today in this State.

I go back to the first Minister who fell, the former Minister for Economic Development, Mr Landeryou. When the Premier decided to get rid of Bill Landeryou, he said:

> Ministers carry a particular obligation to exercise the responsibilities of their commissions and their duties under statute in a manner in which the public can have full confidence. Frequently they cannot behave in ways that other sections of society may regard as acceptable.

The Premier said of Mr Landeryou:

> Higher and different standards are expected of them.
>
> Accordingly, I have asked for Mr Landeryou's resignation.

The former Deputy Premier, the honourable member for Footscray, who was Deputy Premier for some seven years, also fell foul of Ministerial responsibility. Although he steadfastly refused to take responsibility for what was happening under his administration, ultimately that sword of Damocles fell and his head rolled.

In relation to Ministerial responsibility and accountability, I quote again from what the Premier said. In an interview on radio station 3AW, after having been asked to explain Ministerial accountability and what it stood for, the Premier said:

> It's what you choose to make it I suppose . . .

The Premier went on to outline his newfound and changed assertions as to what Ministerial responsibility now means.

Mr Baker—This is embarrassing!

Mr BROWN—It is embarrassing for you, I understand that! The honourable member for Sunshine interjects and says that it is embarrassing. I understand that it is because he knows what the Premier said eight years ago, before he was the Premier of this State. I quote directly from what the Premier said when he was in opposition. On 21 March 1978 the honourable member for Bundoora—now the Premier—said in Parliament:

> I think the most apt and down-to-earth definition of what Ministerial responsibility is can be found in the Melbourne *Age* editorial of 15 March. It is quite simply expressed, but it is beyond the capacity of the government backbencher to understand. The editorial said that in the Westminster tradition, a Minister is accountable not only for his own lapses but for the serious mistakes and failings of his underlings.

It is important for the House to hear what the honourable member—the Premier—went on to say:

> If $4·5 million down the drain is not enough to call into account and make responsible a Minister, I ask this House what is? Is $5 million enough, or is it $6 million? At which amount does one start.

The now Premier said that in Parliament a decade ago. He asked whether the loss of $4·5 million was enough to raise the government's concern about whether Ministers were competent to handle their responsibilities or whether it would have to reach the extreme amount of $6 million before a government should be held accountable and Ministerial responsibility questioned. As the Opposition spokesman on planning matters, on 21 March 1978, the honourable member for Bundoora said:

> Ministerial responsibility may be a harsh doctrine, and honourable members may quarrel with it, but it is a doctrine which has prevailed in our system for a long time. . .
>
> The notion of Ministerial responsibility is with us for good reasons. If it were not so, incompetence and crime would flourish.

The Premier's remarks on this matter are on record. So far as he was concerned a decade ago, Ministerial responsibility was a reality.

The former Deputy Premier defended his actions relating to the Victorian Economic Development Corporation and there was considerable press exposure about that. The matter ran in Parliament prior to the State election but when the stench of the incompetence of the government and its losses of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money started to seep into the nostrils of the wider community, the government went to an early election before the reality of the situation was known. That occurred despite the fact that it was the government's first four-year term. After the early election that was held approximately twelve months ago, a number of scandals came to light involving the government and, in particular, the responsibility of the Treasurer, which is now clear for all to see.

Mr Delzoppo—A con job!

Mr BROWN—It was a total con. The government has amassed losses, debts and liabilities which it said two months ago exceeded $31 000 million but which now appear to exceed $32 000 million. The Khemlani loan affair pales into insignificance when compared with the incompetence, dishonesty, lying and cheating schemes that the government has implemented.

As a result of the debacle with the Victorian Economic Development Corporation, which is now known—after last year's early State election—to have cost taxpayers at least $111 million, the then Deputy Premier, the honourable member for Footscray, was forced to the back bench. It took the Opposition, community outrage and finally an interest by the press to highlight what was happening, and the honourable member was removed from his Ministerial position. Mr Fergus Ryan conducted an inquiry into the VEDC and produced a report, which led to the demise of the then Deputy Premier; Mr Ryan suggested the VEDC's operation and management were flawed in the following respects:

insufficient and poor prudential and general financial standards and procedures;

a failure to correctly split up responsibilities for lending, monitoring and collection;

insufficient concentration on quality by the VEDC's lending processes;

inadequate internal audit procedures;

the failure of the general manager, Mr Beattie, to ensure that the proper procedures were put in place; and

a failure of the board to fulfil its role adequately.

An identical situation exists with State Bank Victoria today; the same comments I have quoted from the Ryan report apply to the State Bank.

For the first time the State Bank, which has had 143 years of proud tradition, has suffered a loss. That is a scandalous position. Why did that occur? Because of the incompetence of the bank's management which was dictated to by the Labor government. The government ensured that programs were implemented and that high-flying, "you beaut", modern money management techniques and systems were put into place. Unfortunately, all that ensured was that much needed money has been lost.

On this government's initiative, only last year the State Bank Act was amended. People are trying to mislead the media, Parliament and the community that the Treasurer has no responsibility for the State Bank. Yet section 8 (2) of an Act of

Parliament that the government introduced last year, and which Parliament passed, states:

The Board shall consist of not less than eight and not more than nine directors appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister . . .

Namely, the Treasurer:

. . . of whom one shall be appointed as Chairperson of the Board, one as Deputy Chairperson and one as a representative of the Treasurer.

This man, who supposedly has no responsibility for the State Bank, is responsible for the appointment of the board and has his own representative on it. It is scandalous to suggest, as the Treasurer and the Premier continue to do daily, that the Treasurer has no responsibility.

Section 20 (1) of the Act, which the Labor Party government introduced only one year ago, states:

The Board must . . .

It says "must", not "may":

(*a*) cause minutes of all proceedings of meetings of its directors to be entered, within one month after the relevant meeting is held, in books kept for that purpose; and . . .

(*c*) cause a copy of the minutes of each meeting to be given to the Minister and the Treasurer within five days after the meeting at which they are so signed.

Not only does the Treasurer appoint the directors of the board but also he has his own man on it and receives minutes of the board meetings. Section 29 (1), which covers policies and prudential standards of the board, states:

The Board must, annually or at such other intervals as the Minister determines, inform the Minister of its banking policy, its prudential standards and any other policy matters of which the Minister requests the Board to keep the Minister informed.

It goes on chapter and verse. The board must even ensure that effect is given to the policies and prudential standards determined by the Minister. Section 44 states:

The Board must give to the Treasurer such information as the Treasurer requires . . .

It even goes as far as referring to guarantees. There is no doubt that the Treasurer of this State is responsible, under an Act of Parliament, for State Bank Victoria.

Day after day, despite the scandalous mismanagement of the State Bank, the Treasurer refuses to be held accountable, and the Premier backs him up! Despite a series of questions, one of which concerned who is responsible for the losses, the Opposition has not received an answer. If the Treasurer is not responsible—and he is, because an Act of Parliament stipulates it—there is only one other possibility, and that is the leadership of the bank—the senior directors of State Bank Victoria.

In the report handed down this week I was flabbergasted to read that one of the senior directors of the bank received a salary in excess of $410 000 for the year just ended. The Opposition has asked the government which director received such a high salary, but the government refuses to answer. Again I ask: which of the directors responsible for State Bank's first ever loss received a salary of $410 000? Who are the three directors that received salaries of more than $200 000 in the past twelve months? Those directors run a bank that lost $198 million in the past financial year; they run a bank that owned Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, which lost $374 million. Who are the directors who received salaries higher than the Prime Minister during the past twelve months—none of whom will take responsibility for the bank's losses?

I tell you this, Mr Speaker: under the incoming Liberal government someone will take responsibility and will be held accountable. The people at the top—not junior tellers in branches—will have to account for the miserable failure of State Bank Victoria. It is intolerable that none of the directors is prepared to accept responsibility for the first ever loss incurred by the bank. Proper processes ensured that the former Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, the honourable member for Footscray, was brought to account for the losses suffered by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation. The former Minister lost his job and now sits on the back bench.

There is a change of mood in the community. It now perceives how incompetently the government is managing the State's finances.

Mr Cooper—They reckon they're on the nose.

Mr BROWN—They know they are on the nose. Unfortunately, this tragic situation was not fully understood by the electorate prior to the last State election; but the electorate understands now. The electorate wants Rob Jolly removed from his position as Treasurer—as he should be. Mr Speaker, I assure you that the Opposition will be absolutely relentless in its pursuit of Rob Jolly until he is removed——

The SPEAKER—Order! The Leader of the Opposition should refer to the Minister by his correct title.

Mr BROWN—The Opposition will pursue the Treasurer until he is removed from his portfolio. Yesterday during question time the Premier had the gall to say that:

> . . . the bank's performance has been superb. It is serving the needs of the people of this State, and it will go on doing so. The government will maintain the arm's length relationship that it has always maintained with the bank. I emphasise that the government has never had any direct relationship with Tricontinental Corporation Ltd.

The relevant Act makes it clear that it is not an arm's length relationship: the Treasurer is responsible. Tricontinental, which lost $374 million last financial year and which has a loan portfolio of $4500 million, will again incur losses during this financial year, so the State Bank will have another case to answer in its next annual report.

Time and again the government refuses to answer questions asked of it in the House. Time and again Ministers refuse to accept responsibility for their actions. Under the Westminster system the buck stops with the relevant Minister. Under the previous Liberal government Ministers lost their jobs because they did not act responsibly under the Westminster system.

To the media's credit it is now taking a direct interest in the actions of the Treasurer. A headline in yesterday's *Herald* states: "Jolly should resign—or be sacked". The opening paragraph of the article states:

> It's our money Rob—the $400 million plus that went straight down the State Bank gurgler—and you have to take the rap.

That is true. The Treasurer is responsible. He changed the Act. His actions are the common thread running through the losses, debts and liabilities of the government that exceed $32 000 million. By comparison the Khemlani loans affair pales into insignificance. The Treasurer's head must roll. Without exception the Opposition will use every avenue to ensure that what the community is now clamouring for comes to pass: the Treasurer must lose his job, either by resigning or by being sacked.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The matter I direct to the attention of honourable members concerns a question asked during question time today by the honourable member for Warrnambool about the rate and cause of road accidents. In answering, the Minister for Transport pontificated about what a good job the government is doing

in coming to terms with the causes of road accidents and fatalities—but I believe the government is not prepared to recognise where the blame lies.

I shall refer to a study carried out by the former Road Traffic Authority on single vehicle accidents in rural areas. The report shows conclusively that the failure of both the State and Federal governments to provide adequate road funding is one of the major contributing factors—if not the contributing factor—to the number of road accidents and fatalities that occur in Victoria. It is all very well for the Minister to say what a good job the government is doing. He would do better to take account of the money that governments take from motorists and truck operators not only in Victoria but also throughout the Commonwealth.

The money both State and Federal governments take from motorists is not being spent on necessary roadworks, which is one of the reasons for the number of accidents and fatalities that occur on our roads. The Federal government receives 28 cents for every litre of fuel sold, for which it gains revenue of approximately $7 billion per annum; but only approximately 5 cents a litre of fuel sold is spent on the construction and maintenance of our roads. The Budget Papers show that the State government raises in excess of $250 million per annum from the business franchise fee on the sale of petroleum and diesel fuel: it gains 4 cents a litre of petroleum sold and 7 cents a litre of distillate sold. Again, nowhere near that amount of money is being spent on our roads. Governments both State and Federal are using the money they raise from motorists for purposes other than improving our roads, controlling traffic and improving traffic flows.

Over the past couple of weeks the government has been telling us that it will not permit P-plate drivers to carry more than one passenger. That will adversely affect the capacity of P-plate drivers in their movement around the State. For example, if a group of young people wishes to travel from a small country town to a larger regional centre on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening for entertainment, rather than the one driver being allowed to carry four or five passengers in the one car to travel the 60 to 80 kilometres, those young people will have to travel in two or three cars. In that example, what is the most dangerous situation? Is it the number of vehicles that will be required or is it the single vehicle carrying the four or five passengers? I suggest that the most dangerous situation is the three vehicles.

Not all P-plate drivers are between eighteen and twenty years of age; many are 30 or 40 years of age. A P-plate driver can be a person with two or three young children and the limitation imposed by the government of the day would mean that the family cannot go out on a family outing. Another example would be that the parents of an eighteen or nineteen year old might like to go on an outing with their son or daughter on a Sunday afternoon; the young person who is a P-plate driver will not be able to drive the family car and, therefore, will not get the driver experience with his or her parents in the car because there will be more than one passenger.

The government's knee-jerk reaction is ridiculous. The number of road deaths in Victoria is tragic and of concern. The government should accept what the National Party has been saying in this place over the past four to five years. There has been a decline in the funds being made available for the road network, and the standard of pavement and roads in our rural communities is the most significant contributing factor to road accidents and deaths. Yet the government is not prepared to accept its responsibility; it is not prepared to carry out the minor alterations. All it has done is to reduce the speed limit from 110 to 100 kilometres an hour on some divided freeways. Some sections of the freeways provide six lanes for traffic and the statistics show that the number of road deaths on those particular sections of road is low, yet there is only a knee-jerk reaction from the Premier and the Minister for Transport.

I seek leave to incorporate two tables from a study of single vehicle rural accidents. It is the Accident Data Report of a *Study of Single Vehicle Rural Accidents* by the then Road Traffic Authority.

Leave was granted, and the tables were as follows:

Table 12.1
PROBABLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Factor	*Number of Accidents*	*Per Cent*	*95 per cent Confidence Interval*
Traffic lanes	17	11·6	6·4–16·8
Unsealed shoulders	48	32·6	25·1–40·2
Shoulder condition	26	17·7	11·5–23·9
Batter Slopes	41	27·9	20·6–35·1
Roadside objects	40	27·2	20·0–34·4
Drains	14	9·5	4·8–14·3
Driver fatigue	31	21·1	14·5–27·7
Driver error	47	32·0	24·4–39·6
Speed	26	17·7	11·5–23·8
Alcohol (*)	21	14·3	8·6–19·9
Weather	29	19·7	13·3–26·1
Vehicle defects	10	6·8	na (+)
Non use of seat belts	7	4·8	na
Animal	11	7·5	na
Other vehicles	10	6·8	na
Roadworks	6	4·1	na

Table 12.2
POSSIBLE AND PROBABLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Factor	*Number of Accidents*	*Per Cent*	*95 per cent Confidence Interval*
Traffic lanes	17	11·6	6·4–16·8
Unsealed shoulders	48	32·6	25·1–40·2
Shoulder condition	30	20·4	13·9–26·9
Batter slopes	41	27·9	20·6–35·1
Roadside objects	40	27·2	20·0–34·4
Drains	14	9·5	4·8–14·3
Driver fatigue	48	21·1	14·5–27·7
Driver error	54	36·7	28·8–44·6
Speed	37	17·7	11·5–23·8
Alcohol (*)	21	14·4	8·6–19·9
Weather	35	23·8	16·9–30·7
Vehicle defects	10	6·8	na (+)
Non use of seat belts	7	4·8	na
Animal	11	7·5	na
Other vehicles	12	8·2	na
Roadworks	6	4·1	na

* Alcohol data was only available for 105 cases. For discussion see section 9.2.

+ na Number of cases too small for 95 per cent confidence interval to be estimated.

Mr W. D. McGRATH—The tables highlight in percentage terms where, how and what areas are contributing factors to the single car accidents on rural roads, such as traffic lanes, 11·6 per cent; unsealed shoulders, 32·6 per cent. The second table of possible and probable contributing factors show shoulder condition, 20·4 per cent; batter slopes—the shoulders leading down from the road pavement into the table drain—27·9 per cent; roadside objects, 27·2 per cent; driver fatigue, 21·1 per cent;

driver error, 36·7 per cent; alcohol, 14 per cent, and speed that we are all led to believe is the real contributing factor accounts for only 17·7 per cent.

As the honourable member for Berwick interjects, it is about half that of the unsealed shoulder condition. In answer to the honourable member for Warrnambool, the Minister for Transport said that he had read the report, but the Minister has not understood it; he should take it home and study it for three or four days.

At page 117 the report deals with roadside design, and states:

Roadside objects were shown to significantly increase the severity of 33 per cent of the accidents investigated. Many of these objects were less than 5 metres from the traffic lanes and over 80 per cent were less than 10 metres from the traffic lanes. A cleared area of 10 metres (including the shoulder) from the traffic lanes would therefore be expected to decrease significantly the number of single vehicle, rural accidents.

At page 118, the report states:

A major contributing factor was the presence of unsealed shoulders. Vehicles strayed into the shoulders for a variety of reasons; the drivers then reacted by over-correcting and losing control of the vehicle. There are three possible countermeasures to this problem; a program of sealing road shoulders could be carried out, alerting devices could be provided to warn drivers that they were about to leave the traffic lanes, or drivers could be educated in the appropriate behaviour after straying onto an unsealed shoulder.

With regard to driver factors, the report states:

The major driver factors identified were alcohol and fatigue. The involvement of alcohol in the accidents investigated was slightly less than would have been predicted from earlier studies, but it was still a major factor.

The National Party has no sympathy for those who drive while under the influence of alcohol and penalties related to a driver who breaches the ·05 legislation should be dealt with in a proper and severe manner. If one is driving in poor road conditions one's ability to be alert is diminished and fatigue sets in. The conclusions at page 120 of the report state:

The road and roadside factors identified as most commonly contributing to accidents were trees close to the traffic lanes and the presence of unsealed shoulders. Other important but less frequent factors were steep cut and fill batter slopes and roadside drains.

This report from his own department—the former Road Traffic Authority—spells out pretty strongly and clearly to the Minister that a significant amount of money needs to be spent on the road network in Victoria.

There is no suggestion that the government has to increase taxes on motorists to raise the money. Some $250 million has already been raised through the business franchise fee imposed by the State government and further money comes from licence fees, traffic infringement fines, and so on. There is an enormous pool of money so the resource is already there.

The government must decide where to spend that money and the report clearly states that the government needs to examine its preferences. Can it accept the responsibility for the increasing number of deaths from road accidents in this State? If it is prepared to accept that it must do something.

People do not want to see the carnage on the roads continuing in the way it is at present. Nobody likes to arrive at the scene of an accident. I pity the police and ambulance officers who are continually called to traffic accidents where there are smashed bodies and people who have been fatally injured. They have to pick up the pieces; then they have to report to the families. That is a horrid situation and yet there is a report from the transport Minister's own department that, in a sense, damns him

for the amount of money he has been able to get from the Budget for roads in this State.

I ask that the Minister take heed of this report, return to the Department of Management and Budget and say, "We have to do something positive to save lives on our roads".

I turn to another matter: the Grain Elevators Board—the GEB—in Victoria. Five years ago the State government imposed on the board what it termed the public authority dividend. Over that period some $21 million has been contributed to the State government. With compounding interest, added, some $35 million should have gone to the Grain Elevators Board, but it has been lost.

Because of many different government policies, the board has a debt of some $87 million and loans from yesteryear coming due which will have to be rolled over. It commenced those loans at 6, 8 and 10 per cent interest rates, and now it is probably paying 16, 18 or 20 per cent interest.

In New South Wales there has been a move by the Liberal–National Party coalition to wipe off the $320 million debt of the Grain Elevators Board in that State. That will provide an opportunity of encouraging the wheat system in the Riverina. It will be lost from the rail network in Victoria. I agree with the Minister for Transport that we need to attract the grain freight back to the rails in this State.

The government should pay back the $21 million that it has taken from the GEB over this period. The board would then have a greater opportunity of competing in the marketplace and attracting graingrowers' produce. It would allow farmers to make commercial decisions to participate in the Victorian system rather than the New South Wales system.

The export earnings for this State from agricultural produce are about 45 per cent of total earnings. Unless the government keeps a close eye on what is happening with the agricultural distribution, that rate of export earnings cannot be maintained. It will filter into South Australia and New South Wales, and Victoria will be the loser. Victoria will be the loser not only in relation to export earnings but also in respect of the jobs associated with it.

The Minister for Water Resources, who is at the table, was very supportive of the union movement in his time but he will have to go out there and battle for jobs for the people affiliated with unions—for example, the railway unions—because the jobs will not be there. This comes back to the fact that his government's policy has not assisted in ensuring that the produce of Victoria stays in Victoria and is transported throughout the State for the well-being of Victoria as a whole.

Mrs GLEESON (Thomastown)—I refer to public housing assistance for disadvantaged groups and specifically to matters within my electorate. It is causing great concern locally and I hope the Minister for Housing and Construction will pick up some of the suggestions that have been passed on to me.

The problem with public housing in an electorate such as Thomastown, which is an outer urban developing electorate, is the composition and the needs of the population. While Thomastown has 91 per cent home ownership, it does experience a high proportion of marriage breakdowns. Thomastown also has one of the largest youth populations aged between 15 and 24 years throughout Victoria—which is about 10 per cent higher than the State average—and a growing number of aged people. The aged population is in excess of 3000—on the 1986 census figures—but within the City of Whittlesea that is growing daily because people are moving there, due to the new housing estates, and bringing their elderly parents with them. This is placing a strain

on the housing resources for the aged in the area. There was a total of ten granny flats for older people in the whole City of Whittlesea, which comprises something like 24 000 established homes.

The government needs to consider ways to assist people with innovative programs. Prior to the election of the Cain Labor government there was absolutely no public rental housing stock in Whittlesea. This mainly affects the people in my electorate, which has 75 per cent of the population in the City of Whittlesea. We are not doing brilliantly but we have made great gains.

Since the election of the Cain Labor government, particularly in the later years, public housing programs have been implemented in the area and we now have a total of 226 housing units of various types available. However, at the same time we have a waiting list of 774 people which is indefinite. With regard to public housing, I should like to go beyond the traditional concept of the family to the specific groups within the electorate that require particular attention because, as I said earlier, we need to be aware that electorates like Thomastown have variances within their populations. In fact, it has been assessed as the seat with the second highest diversity of population within its boundaries following Brunswick, which is No. 1. One cannot necessarily expect the normal programs to apply.

I shall mention public housing provisions for single parent ethnic families because of the growing need within the various ethnic communities for this housing. The marriage breakdown phenomenon is becoming more prevalent. The youth population is increasing and some gains in youth housing have been made although more provision is needed.

I should like to speak specifically about the aged and about some of the cases that have been brought to my attention. The Italian community is one of the oldest settled communities in this State and Thomastown and Lalor have a large ageing Italian population. Often one parent is left in the Thomastown area but the family has moved away. Those people are losing language skills and are disadvantaged by living on their own. They are not able to contact relevant services, such as meals on wheels. What is needed is an ethno-specific directed service.

I hope the Ministry of Housing and Construction will favourably consider my proposal for a project partnership cluster housing scheme. I envisage that scheme would be entered into by the Ministry of Housing and Construction and other groups drawn from local government, churches and non-profit community organisations. The scheme would provide joint ventures for vacant land sites or existing buildings that may require upgrading, adaptation or demolition.

The Ministry and individual groups may wish to develop such projects jointly. The Ministry would retain a large say in what is happening because it would be the major partnership developer. However, if a local group or council invested up to 20 per cent of the cost of the operation it could receive up to 50 per cent of access to that public rental stock. That would overcome the difficulty of waiting lists and provide a solution to a pressing need in the Thomastown area.

It would also be an innovative approach to housing. I mentioned cluster housing-type development because that would cater for the more mobile aged community. They could move out of their current homes and have those rented out to families. That would raise access by families to the private rental stock and at the same time group together people who share a common language and culture. It would also allow those people better accessibility to services.

Mr Maclellan interjected.

Mrs GLEESON—I am not talking about ghettos, I am talking about a humane approach to housing people with specific needs so that services can be provided to them rather than having them isolated in the community in accommodation they often cannot afford even if they have access to it. I am not talking about acres and acres of similar accommodation, which was the philosophy of the previous Liberal government and was a most inhumane approach to housing people and established ghettos; I am talking about small groups of houses in a cul-de-sac or a courtyard to house five or six people, although that could be broadened to five or six families with specific ethnic grouping if, for instance, marriage breakdowns occurred.

The problems associated with having something like 37 or 38 different languages spoken in an area, a huge range of age groups and a large geographic spread within the community are enormous and they compound all the other aspects that contribute to isolation. Services cannot be delivered to the hidden needy. The honourable member for Berwick obviously does not have such disadvantaged people in the electorate he represents.

I should like to refer to a case in question. An elderly Italian gentleman came to my electorate office and said he would like access to public housing. He had been taken in by his family who had renovated the garage for him to live in. As one would expect, he was unhappy about that. For one thing he was not part of the family unit on a day-to-day basis and he had not expected to experience that in his later years. Had he been able to be housed with people of a similar age group, language and culture he would have had access to services as well as the support of people within that group.

My proposal is not a new approach. I know it has already been instigated in Warrnambool although it was attached to a hostel for the elderly so it did not have the independent component that my proposal has. I am talking about the people who are not old enough for the direct services needed by the frail aged; I am talking about those who are still socially active and need the companionship that families are able to provide.

A project partnership scheme as applied to cluster housing would be suitable for most of the ethnic families I have in mind. I have recently had dealings with the north-east Turkish welfare community committee which has been concerned with marriage breakdowns. The committee has spoken to me about two families in particular who had no English language skills. The mother of one family was rehoused with her children in Blackburn and the other mother and her children were rehoused at Geelong. The welfare committee had only one part-time welfare officer whose time was taken up with travelling to Blackburn and to Geelong. That meant that other needs within the community were not able to be met by that welfare worker.

Specific groups should be able to enter into a cluster housing situation. That could be done through a cooperative arrangement. These people have common language and culture and they are newly arrived in this country. They need encouragement and they can best get that from within their own community. Single-parent families could be mixed in with traditional families that have not broken up and receive support from them.

Blackburn and Geelong have no Turkish welfare organisations to help Turkish people. It is too time consuming for a part-time worker to travel long distances to ensure that the families in those areas are surviving. Public housing in a cluster arrangement would provide appropriate and affordable housing to these people.

Those people have not been in Australia for long enough to have much money. The Turkish community in Thomastown is relatively new and it is growing. I should like this matter to be handled humanely. The welfare worker has done a lot, but difficulties

arise in relation to housing. Some 774 people are currently on the waiting list in the area. In the past some families have had to be moved away from their schools, resources and backup support to obtain accommodation. They are then expected to survive in unfamiliar situations were the backup support is not provided.

Innovative work with regard to youth is taking place in Thomastown. That is necessary because of the large youth component in the area as well as a large diversity of cultures. Some schools have up to 89 per cent of students who come from families where English is not spoken in the home. That sometimes presents problems with culture clashes as the children grow up.

Hard work was undertaken to establish a youth housing program in the area. I take this opportunity of congratulating the Whittlesea Housing for Youth project committee. It has worked extremely hard and now has three houses, having only recently purchased the third one. It has a full-time worker and has a plan to purchase seven houses and employ two coordinators to run the program. That is certainly not an excessive number of houses and there is no way that it will meet the demand for youth housing in that growing area. However, the committee is able to assist young people.

The cluster housing concept is an idea to which local groups could contribute. Some of the major churches are just beginning to establish in the Thomastown area. Earlier this year the Uniting Church in Australia established itself in the area. On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church in Thomastown is closing. Traditionally church groups and the like would have helped to establish youth services and so on by entering into. partnerships. However, the Thomastown electorate has not had the luxury of that type of arrangement. It is a growing area and is relatively new. It is only catching up with some of the services that the more established suburbs take for granted.

That fact must be remembered when discussions about partnership arrangements and entering into cooperatives take place. It is difficult to undertake such projects when the traditional units within a community are not available. It is all very well to talk about the rate of home ownership in Thomastown being 91 per cent.

Mr Maclellan—Mr Acting Speaker, I direct your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mrs GLEESON—What the honourable member for Berwick has just done is one of the most obscene acts I have seen in this House. I was talking about an important project, and he sought to deny my right to speak.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Evans)—Order! The honourable member for Berwick was acting within the forms of the House when he called for a quorum.

Mrs GLEESON—He may well have been, but he waited until I had only 2½ minutes left to speak, thereby denying me the opportunity of making concluding comments on an important matter. He has the luxury of representing a privileged section of the community and he does not understand the needs of a community such as Thomastown.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—Victoria is soon to buzz with a new motto—Jolly must go. This House should take the lead in ensuring that the Treasurer is held accountable for the scandalous waste of taxpayers' money. It is interesting to see how members of the government are busy leaving the Chamber. No-one rallies to support this washed up Treasurer; no-one rallies around to explain and justify his actions. No-one will explain how Cain's cathedral—the National Tennis Centre—lost $16 million in less than eighteen months.

I remember being in this place only a matter of two years ago listening to the Treasurer tell the House that he had had costings undertaken and that the National Tennis Centre would pay its way and generate revenue to meet the interest bill on the debts created to build the centre. The Liberal Party said that that was not true; it analysed the figures, did the sums and worked out that the tennis centre could not pay its way and that the interest on the debt created would not be met by the revenue the centre would generate.

The Treasurer and the Premier stood in this place and misled the House and the people of Victoria about the cost of the National Tennis Centre. We were told that it would cost less than $50 million. I well recall putting it to the House that the figures were old and unreliable and that the tennis centre would cost far more than $50 million to construct. I remember the ridicule successive speakers from the Opposition had to face from members of the government, particularly the Premier and the Treasurer, about projections as to the true cost of the tennis centre.

I concede that the Opposition was wrong—it underestimated the scandal that was being created by Cain's cathedral. It now stands as an enduring monument to the financial incompetence of John Cain and Rob Jolly; it stands as an enduring monument to the financial incompetence and dishonesty of the Cain government. It is a monument for which future generations of Victorians will have to pay.

The scandal does not end there. When it became apparent within one year of the commencement of the operation of the tennis centre that Parliament and the people of Victoria had been told lies, what did the government do? What did the mickey mouse financial management experts—the Dr Sheehans, the Dr Strangeloves, closeted over at the Department of Management and Budget—do? They dreamed up another funny money, dishonest, money-go-around scheme. They created a lot of trusts and subsidiary companies that were beyond scrutiny. The companies did not have to be audited by the Auditor-General. They neither had to report to Parliament nor file reports with Corporate Affairs Victoria. They were secret organisations with tens of millions of dollars.

These companies and organisations hung themselves around the neck of State Bank Victoria. In its annual report, the bank accurately described itself as one of the most important financial institutions in Australia but it has been turned into nothing more than a slush fund. It is an Australian Labor Party political slush fund, and it is being used to bail out the government from politically embarrassing scandals of its own creation. These people are a bunch of crooks, and Victorians are coming to see them for what they are.

We will know when the people take up the cry; when it is not only Terry McCrann in the *Herald* but also the people in the streets, in the shops and in their homes, saying: "This mug must go, this scandal must stop, this rorting must stop, this trying to buy votes at the expense of our children must stop! These people are a bunch of crooks and are not fit to run the State for another minute!"

The government was elected on a fraud, and on lies. The government hid the truth about the Victorian Economic Development Corporation; it covered up the losses of the National Tennis Centre and of the Victorian Investment Corporation. It refused to acknowledge the scandal it created at the State Bank and in Tricontinental Corporation Ltd.

Who is the mug who stands at the very head of this scandal? Who is the one who has done the most to con Victorians; to lie to the people of Victoria and create this financial mess? In only seven short years who has lost nearly $32 000 million? No-one else in the history of the Western World comes anywhere near the Victorian Treasurer!

He must go! If he will not go of his own accord; if the Premier is too weak to sack him; if he must be stood over by the left wing members who stood over the Premier to get rid of the former Deputy Premier—the honourable member for Footscray—where now are those government members?

Where are the people who hate these men? Where are the people who resent them? Where are the people who in 1982 thought, "We have power"? Where are the people, the socialist left, the friends of the honourable member for Sunshine? Where are the people who then said, "The glorious revolution has come"; those who saw 1982 as a new dawning and the creation of the glorious socialist society; the people who sublimated their ideology to obtain political power?

Where are those people now? They are the ones who have been conned because the Treasurer and Dr Sheehan told them, "Modern money management will work". "Most importantly," they said, "it will work politically". This is not a debate about economics or finances but a debate about politics. There is a tension within the Labor movement. The honourable members for Richmond, Springvale, Wantirna and Thomastown are burning with the fire of the Labor movement and a desire to do something to help the people who need the support of the remainder of society.

However, the Treasurer has said, "No, we are building a new political constituency". It is Dr Sheehan's vision, mapped out in his own writing—this was the modern Labor Party; it had to adopt the rhetoric of those who regard the private sector and individual liberty as the key to progress within society. The rhetoric of those people has been adopted.

They said to the honourable member for Sunshine and to his cronies on the left—the old-fashioned Labor people, the shellbacks who fled Parliament at the last election—that it was a matter of, "Let us con the people; we will publish glossy documents; we will use modern language; we will employ rhetoric". These people did not trust the others; they did not believe it would work; but they were crushed by the arrogance of Dr Sheehan and the likes of the Treasurer. The Treasurer and Dr Sheehan won lasting emnity by forcing them to back down and to accept "modern money management". Now, they are in open revolt. Yet where are the honourable members for Sunshine and Richmond?

Mr Maclellan—Where is the Treasurer?

Mr STOCKDALE—Where is the Treasurer now? Where are the people who want to be rid of the Treasurer? Why are they not moving against him like they moved against the honourable member for Footscray in his former capacity as Deputy Premier—they will be brought down as well!

The Treasurer is driving the government into the ground. Last week it was WorkCare; yesterday it was the State Bank; today it is the National Tennis Centre; what scandal will it be tomorrow?

Mr Maclellan—The world!

Mr STOCKDALE—All that did not happen by accident. We can see why the State Bank made the losses announced yesterday. In last year's annual report, State Bank Victoria announced a record profit; it acknowledged that it was acting according to the policies of the Treasurer and of the Cain government. Not then did we hear the bank saying, "It is us, the directors"—there were no hairshirts in 1988! We did not hear the Treasurer saying, "It has nothing to do with me, the bank has achieved that glorious profit on its own". What did they say when the profits were being made;

before the chickens came home to roost; before the financial scandals had been sheeted home to those people? I refer to the 1988 annual report of State Bank Victoria:

> The coming of deregulation early in the decade led to decisions to progressively expand the bank's role into that of a full service commercial bank.

That was the root of the evil; that is how the problem came about. It went helter-skelter along the VEDC route; it rapidly grew—more rapidly than anyone could control.

Mr Maclellan—I thought it was a savings bank.

Mr STOCKDALE—It departed from functioning as a savings bank and went into the heavy high-risk area. Surely all honourable members will remember the advertisements on television; advertisements showing people on building sites saying that they had taken their business to the new bank, to the new charter; and advertisements showing the new logo designed by the Treasurer. The Treasurer changed the essence of the bank to make it a high-risk lender. He wanted to make that claim constantly. He was not content that he had the biggest, the best and the riskiest merchant bank—Tricontinental Corporation Ltd—that he had acquired in 1985 to embark on that course; he said so in his 1983 and 1987 economic strategy documents.

What did the bank say about going down that high-risk route? What did it say about why it had gone into new commercial areas; why it had become involved helter-skelter in the VEDC style at a rate no-one could manage; or why it grew from having 2 per cent of Victoria's commercial lending to more than 10 per cent in only a few years?

The chairman of the bank stated:

> This course was encouraged by the Victorian government's 1983 economic strategy and was endorsed this year by the Parliament of Victoria with the enactment of the State Bank Act 1988, which came into effect on June 9.

It was no historical accident; no incompetence alone at the bank or at Tricontinental, in management or on their boards. It was a matter of government policy and a matter of the government's economic strategy. I have not said that—the Treasurer said that in his economic strategy documents; *The Next Step* and *The Next Decade.* The Treasurer said it!

It was not only the Treasurer but also the State Bank that recognised it was not implementing government policy, stating: "We did it because the Treasurer told us to do it, because it was government strategy that we should do it". It was an implementation of the government's plan. Everyone rallied around and took credit when the bank made a profit.

What is this mug doing now? This year, is he standing in this House, saying, "This is the result of the glorious socialist revolution?" No; he is saying, "It has nothing to do with me, it is Tricontinental—those sordid characters down there—and the mugs at the State Bank". What about the mugs at the State Bank? Who appointed them? Did they drop like manna from heaven? Did they mysteriously emerge from nowhere?

They were elected to the board because the Treasurer put them there. There are ten reasons why the Treasurer is personally responsible for this scandal.

One, his economic strategy.

Two, he designed the Act; the problem only came about because of the new Act. The problem was not there before—it is his legislation that has created the problem.

Three, the Treasurer appoints the board. The people whom he now blames for State Bank Victoria's loss, the people the Premier condemned yesterday, were appointed by

the Treasurer; but he now says that they have nothing to do with him, he is not responsible!

Four, some people are more equal than others. Indeed, one of the directors is by law, by Act of Parliament, the Treasurer's representative. He has nothing to do with the Treasurer, mind you; he is just his representative!

Five, the board of the State Bank, the Treasurer's men, not only were appointed to the board of Tricontinental Corporation Ltd, a 100 per cent subsidiary of the bank, but also were actually the board of Tricontinental. A lot of the blokes were on both boards. Nevertheless, they did not know anything about the losses at Tricontinental. The board of the State Bank says: "It had nothing to do with us; it was Tricontinental. We just took it over. We did not even know what was going on". They are condemned out of their own mouths. Do you think a director in any public company in this State or in Australia—indeed, throughout the Western World—would get away with that defence in court if he said it was a subsidiary company of his group of companies, owned 100 per cent by the principal company, with directors of the principal company on the board and the other directors appointed by the principal company, nevertheless, it had nothing to do with the directors!

It is laughable that the Treasurer has the gall to say that in Parliament and to go on television and talk this crap—it cannot be described in any other way. It is absolute nonsense. I notice your hesitation, Mr Deputy Speaker, but that is what it is.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Norris)—Order! I did hesitate because there are words that are unparliamentary and "crap" may be one of them.

Mr STOCKDALE—It may be unparliamentary, but it is true.

Six, the Treasurer acquired Tricontinental Corporation Ltd. Tricontinental did not suddenly come out of the woodwork. This mug purchased the company in 1985 because he wanted to take on merchant banking and play with the big boys. The Treasurer wanted to go to Tokyo, to London and to New York and tell the people there that he owned a bank, that he was a big boy. It is a typical failure of men of short stature, who think short, who think of themselves as little men, that they need big toys to make them look big. That is why there was talk about the New York office and the Cayman Island office. That is why the Treasurer has to have these toys around the world—to show others what a big fellow he is because he owns a bank.

Seven, section 29 of the State Bank Act states that the State Bank must report to the Treasurer. It must report its financial banking policies and its prudential standards to the Treasurer. It has to report to the Treasurer the two critical things that determine its performance financially, and the Treasurer introduced a Bill to insert that provision in the Act.

Eight, if he does not like the policies being perused by the bank or if he believes the prudential standards are insufficient, the Treasurer has power, under section 29 of the Act, to issue directions to the State Bank. What has he done? Has he told Parliament that he has issued any directions? No. The Treasurer's stance is to speak rubbish in Parliament, as he did today: that the bank made a profit, that there is nothing to worry about, that everything is fine! The State Bank has just lost $197 million! Nothing could more roundly condemn this fool than that.

Mr BAKER (Sunshine)—On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, the House has been most tolerant in allowing this small man to use the language of the gutter. During the course of this appalling speech the honourable member for Brighton has referred to the Treasurer as a mug, as a crook and as a fool. He has cast reflections upon the

Treasurer's physical stature in a most unusual way, because the honourable member himself is quite short.

I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to take all those matters cumulatively and, in accordance with Standing Orders, to issue the honourable member with a stern direction that he should not refer to the Treasurer in that manner.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Norris)—Order! I have listened carefully to the remarks made by the honourable member for Brighton and I have heard those terms used in the House during other debates. I ask the honourable member to have regard to what has been said, but there is no point of order.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—I do, however, regret having called the mug a Treasurer.

Nine, the Treasurer has not hesitated to claim credit when the State Bank performs well, so he must accept responsibility when the bank performs poorly.

Ten, in relation to the National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division), the Treasurer was directly and personally involved when the television *Front Page* program asked him to investigate the debts recorded against his own department in dealings with the National Safety Council of Australia. We have here not just a question of Ministerial responsibility, but also a direct and personal involvement in the biggest loss of the State Bank itself.

Victoria is about to ring with the phrase that appeared across the top of the front page of the *Herald* yesterday, that was on the sides of every *Herald* truck yesterday afternoon, "Jolly is to blame—Jolly must go". That will be the slogan that will save Victoria and install a Liberal government which will start to repair the damage that this incompetent bunch has done.

Mr J. F. McGRATH (Warrnambool)—During the grievance debate the House has heard clear and compelling arguments why a State election should be held. Some of the major problems Victoria faces today have occurred because of financial mismanagement, as clearly enunciated by previous speakers. Many other areas of government administration clearly indicate the government's inability to grasp the nettle on difficult issues.

The Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Brighton spoke clearly about the financial mismanagement. The *Hansard* report of years ago contains references to the lands scandals and allegations of a projected $4 million misuse of taxpayers' money.

The Australian Labor Party, when in opposition, said that something must be done about that scandal and that the then Liberal government was not fit to govern.

Mr W. D. McGrath—That was only $4 million.

Mr J. F. McGRATH—Yes. Ten years down the track Victorians are faced with losses of billions of dollars. The former Deputy Premier, the honourable member for Footscray, was removed from his office by a faction of his own party, not by the Premier.

The Treasurer has masterminded the largest losses in the Western World, but he is still on the frontbench of the government, riding in his chauffeur-driven car and enjoying the perks of government at taxpayers' expense. That is not being responsible to the public of Victoria, to the men, women and children who must pick up the tab. If an election were held today, Victorians would take a different view from the view they took in October last year. They were deceived last year and were not told the

truth about the many financial enterprises connected with the government that were facing collapse. Government propaganda clouded the issues.

Victorians are concerned about the road toll, road safety and the government's response to road safety. It is my contention that one cannot speak about road safety unless one speaks also about driver education, legislative control, and the condition of the roads.

Mr E. R. Smith—And the attitude.

Mr J. F. McGRATH—As the honourable member for Glen Waverley interjects, and the attitude. He is right because driver attitude underpins the major problem faced in this State, that is, the road toll. Driver education is very important.

None of the factors can be removed from the equation, and in particular the condition of the roads cannot be ignored. During question time this morning and earlier today in the grievance debate, the Deputy Leader of the National Party referred to the *Study of Single Vehicle Rural Accidents* in Victoria. The Minister for Transport rubbished the report, which was undertaken by the former Road Traffic Authority. He virtually said that the study is not worth the paper it is written on.

Some of the statistics that appear in the study are staggering. Before the Minister went off onto his raving tangent, he said that possible or probable effects were being referred to. The probable and possible effects are referred to in the report. It indicates that alcohol is the cause of 14·4 per cent of single vehicle accidents. Speed was mentioned as a cause of accidents and the report indicates that it causes 17·7 per cent of them.

The government has reacted to those two causes, speed and alcohol, in addressing proposed legislative change. The government has said that it must do something about those causes and all honourable members would support the government in that. However, if the government seeks to justify legislative change by the use of statistical data, surely the more compelling argument relates not to the 14·4 per cent or 17·7 per cent but to the 32 per cent of accidents that are caused through unsealed shoulders on roads. More than twice the number of accidents caused by either alcohol or speed are caused by difficulties encountered through drivers having to cope with unsealed shoulders of roads, yet the government attempts to justify its position of not allocating sufficient funding to rectify that problem.

As the honourable member for Glen Waverley said, the road toll problem revolves around driver attitude. Unless driver attitude on the road can be addressed, the government and Parliament will be reacting for ever and a day. Parliament will pass draconian legislation that carries with it long licence suspensions and heavy fines. We have already done that and we have been doing it for the past four or five years. The result has been that this year Victoria has the highest road toll that the State has ever experienced. It is absolutely horrific! We must be doing something wrong.

It is obvious that the first thing that must be done is that a committee should be convened along the lines of the previous all-party committee which considered road safety and recommended useful initiatives. The Road Safety Committee should be re-established so that Parliament can investigate and recommend through an all-party committee the sorts of changes that need to be made, rather than Parliament having to deal with the knee-jerk reactions that honourable members have seen from the Premier.

As soon as there is a bad weekend on our roads, the Premier jumps up, appears on television and makes all kinds of statements, like the one about P-plate drivers each

carrying only one passenger in their vehicles. He did not think about that too much! I invite honourable members to consider the implications if such a law were passed. What if a country youth wants to go to town and wants to take his mother and father or his brother and sister with him? The Premier's knee-jerk reaction will not fix the problem of the road toll. Parliament must consider the whole picture.

I refer to a matter which I have been pressing for some time and which I will continue to press. My firm belief is that, when a child is old enough to throw his or her leg over a bike for the first time, that is the time when education on road use should start. We must start with little children so that they realise the dangers involved in using a public thoroughfare and are aware of the need to be conscious of other users of the public thoroughfare. Unless education starts with very young children as part of their school curriculum, Parliament will never be anything but reactionary in respect of the road toll.

Mrs Barker interjected.

Mr J. F. McGRATH—It is a good program but it is not comprehensive enough if we are to address all the problems.

The statistics indicate that the main victims of road accidents are 18 to 25-year-olds. We are not educating them well enough; we are not giving them the opportunity of equipping themselves to go out and drive the sorts of vehicles they will drive on the sorts of roads they will use. We are not equipping them to drive in the sort of traffic there is on those roads.

The education programs must begin in the primary school system and extend into the secondary education system. Small children must be brought through the education system into the period when they are L-plate and P-plate drivers. They must be introduced to driver education very early and that must be extended right through the education system. As the honourable member for Glen Waverley said when he interjected earlier, driver attitude is the problem that has created our road toll.

The complete arrogance and sometimes ignorance of some drivers is demonstrated by the way that some people drive. Some people completely ignore—sometimes with contempt—other road users. One of the main reasons why Victoria has an horrific road toll is driver attitude. Driver education must be far more intensive. Is it really driver testing to give drivers licence applicants a book from which to learn the rules, take them to the Roads Corporation office to answer questions on a certain percentage of those rules, and then ask them to drive the car around three or four city blocks? Is that really equipping drivers to get into a car capable of travelling at 200, 150 or 100 kilometres an hour on the open road, with one car going north at 100 kilometres an hour and another car going south at 100 kilometres an hour, divided by one 3 inch white line? Is that sufficient training and education? We are giving drivers a licence to kill—themselves or someone else. Driver education must be more intensive. We must ensure that drivers have reactionary skills so that they can drive on wet or gravel roads. Drivers must be able to drive at night and must know the difference between stopping on a wet road, a dry road or a loose surface. These matters are not being addressed and they form part of the reason why Victoria has such an horrific road toll. We have never bitten the bullet. We have never been prepared to make the necessary investment.

A sprinkling of driving schools similar to that at Shepparton should be established throughout Victoria. Not all the schools might need to be as extensive as the school at Shepparton but all drivers, both young and old, must be given the opportunity of being educated so that they are capable of handling what is really a dangerous weapon, which is what a motor car is if it is not handled properly. The reaction in this House

is sometimes self-defeating. Driver education is an essential element in reducing our road toll.

I move from driver education and legislative control to the encouragement of good drivers. People who respect others on the road should be provided with an incentive. Those with a good driving record should be encouraged through some sort of financial incentive or a special licence so that they can be recognised as an example in society. All that we are doing at present is belting people over the head with bigger and bigger fines, and that policy is not really working. The reality is that it is not working!

An excellent example of improved road safety occurred two weekends ago when there was a greater police presence on the roads. The presence of police cars on our roads—not unmarked cars—has a tremendous impact on road safety. There was an all-out police blitz two weekends ago because of the horrific road fatalities during the previous weekend. All overtime was cancelled for the Victoria Police Force and all available men and women were in cars on the roads. Three people still lost their lives, but when one compares that figure with that of the previous weekend one notes a tremendous improvement.

I argue that it was the police presence on the roads that made the difference because it caused a change in driver attitude, which is a significant factor in road accidents. All honourable members who drive will have experienced the reaction, on seeing a police car when driving along the road, of easing off the accelerator. That is an automatic response even if one is driving well below the speed limit. A police presence has a sobering and/or stabilising effect.

Police should not be used to sit behind desks doing clerical work; clerical staff should be hired from within the Public Service or the public sector to do that. Police who have chosen that career and who have been trained to enforce the law and look after and communicate with the public should not be sitting behind desks; it is a sacrilege for this to happen. Priorities should be re-examined so that the police are in cars on the roads and on the streets, talking to the community.

During the past twelve months the Warrnambool Technical School has had a policeman allocated to it from the Warrnambool police station. He is there, not for disciplinary purposes, but rather to make students aware of a policeman's role. The program has been an outstanding success, so much so that recently the Chief Commissioner of Police, Mr Kel Glare, visited the school especially to watch the program in action and to see and hear for himself the students' responses and views on the role of the Victoria Police Force.

Instead of listening to the civil libertarians who want to push the police into the background, it is high time that the Victoria Police were recognised in a positive role. They can play that role by going out into the community, walking up and down the main streets of such places as Dandenong, and talking to the citizens.

On the roads, careless and arrogant drivers are suddenly jolted into gear because of a change in attitude towards the speed at which they drive, or the way in which they drive. This is an important way to address the road toll. It is not only a matter of making legislative changes—some of which are necessary—but also it is a matter of doing something about the fundamental problems by educating young drivers to be responsible.

Parliament is responsible for the situation because it sets the rules. It has said to young people that they can go out, after passing a simple test involving driving a car and answering a few questions, buy the car of their choice and drive anywhere in Australia. However, we are not giving them the skills they need. We are giving them a licence to kill.

Parliament, the Premier and his government must address the gut issues of driver safety. It is not possible to divorce road safety from the state of the roads. If one speaks to drivers such as Allan Moffat, Peter Brock and even Jack Brabham, they will tell one that the most important parts of a vehicle are the four tyres, only small parts of which come into contact with the road surface at any one time.

The *Study of Single Vehicle Rural Accidents* reports that a high incidence of accidents occur on unsealed shoulders of roads where because cars lack contact or grip with the road surface, they run off the road and hit fixed objects such as SEC poles or trees—or if the driver is lucky, he or she may end up in a paddock upside down. The report shows that 32 per cent of accidents are caused by contact with these unsealed shoulders of roads.

One cannot address road safety without taking account of driver education, appropriate legislation, or the condition of roads. Parliament must address these critical issues and something positive must be done about those young people who are moving through the schools so that they may be given the opportunity of obtaining the great benefit and luxury of driving and owning motor cars, but not of going out in their cars and losing their lives or injuring themselves.

It is a challenge that Parliament has been reluctant to face, but time is running out. The matter should be approached seriously. I hope the government will re-establish the all-party Parliamentary road safety committee.

Mrs RAY (Box Hill)—Today I grieve for those Victorians who, because of intellectual disabilities, ignorance, fear and the prejudice of others in the community, have spent their lives apart from the rest of the community. I grieve that there has been so little understanding of the needs and rights of intellectually disabled people. As a result we have denied ourselves contact with people because we believe they are significantly different and are worth less than us.

It took the children in our schools to discover the benefits to themselves of daily contact with their disabled peers through the integration program and to demonstrate that it is not simply a matter of the rights of intellectually disabled persons but also a new understanding in the non-disabled which comes from the interaction that takes place.

I grieve for those parents who, over many years, have had so little emotional or practical support from the rest of us and who must relentlessly care for dependant children, who later become dependant adults, which places a great burden on them in their old age. However, I am pleased to be a member of a government that has begun to redress this neglect, in which we have all played a part.

Since 1982, significant achievements have been made in the area of intellectual disability services. These began under the first health Minister in the Cain government, who made significant efforts to increase the Budget funds available to this sector. The responsibility for the provision of services to intellectually disabled people was then moved into Community Services Victoria, which is the more appropriate department to provide these services.

The expansion of the number of intellectual disability teams to cover the eighteen regions—one team in each region—has resulted in the provision of support for approximately 13 500 intellectually disabled people. Unfortunately, one must travel overseas to hear about the closure of St Nicholas Hospital, which was a symbolic and significant act by the government in 1983–84. As a result of that action 100 residents were relocated from the St Nicholas Hospital to houses in the Victorian community.

Some were located in the metropolitan area and many were situated close to relatives and families in the country.

I recall Jan Harper who worked in the then Mental Retardation Division, having great difficulty purchasing twenty houses to suit the needs of people with both severe intellectual and physical disabilities. We have learnt a great deal since that project. But it has had little acclaim or recognition in terms of strong statements being made about the capacity of disabled people to live in the community if governments are willing to supply them with adequate support.

The proclamation and implementation of the Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986 was a significant landmark in that it legislatively separated the whole area of intellectual disability from mental health, and was responsible for informing the community that the needs of people in these two categories were different. As a result of that Act, which clearly enunciates the rights of people with intellectual disabilities to live a normal life in the community with the rest of us, there has been a dramatic expansion in residential services. At the same time the Ten Year Plan, which was first referred to in a White Paper providing for services to intellectually disabled Victorians, formed the basis of the first widespread community debate held in Victoria on this subject for many years. It exposed some of the areas of anxiety and considerable dissatisfaction with existing services. It led to the development of the State plan for the development of intellectual disability services which the Minister for Community Services released yesterday. The Budget for 1989–90 provides for an increase in funding for intellectual disability services to $217 million.

I turn now to residential services which are the foundation stone of any comprehensive service to a community group. Since 1982 I have been a member of a committee that manages residential units in the inner-eastern region. Over the years progress has been slow, but there has been a development from the former inflexibility of the system to an increase in the level of training for hands-on carers. The development has been mirrored in 170 community residential units across Victoria. Together with the community residential unit program a variety of options have been developed including the Home Board Program and the Home Assistance Program, which provide boarding accommodation and in-home assistance to families who are managing intellectually disabled children.

The Equity Housing Company has already provided 25 houses to people who are willing to contribute financially in conjunction with the government to this cooperative purchasing scheme. Of all the housing options, the constituency in the inner-eastern region believes this is one of the more helpful measures in reducing what are disturbingly long waiting lists for people supporting their children or other relatives in the community.

Eleven community living support services have been devised to enable people to move into housing in which they have a direct financial interest. The inner-eastern region looks forward to the placement of a community living support service operating out of the former Kew Children's Cottages.

In the adult services area it is pleasing to note some significant movement in the attitude of the community towards intellectually disabled people being placed in open employment. Even those who viewed the developmental capacities of people in this category most optimistically believed open employment programs were over ambitious. Jobs have been provided for some 170 people, in what has been a pioneer period for the implementation of this service.

In both the outer eastern and inner-eastern regions the development of project workers cooperating with industry and commerce has led to people with mild

intellectual disabilities earning real money after eight weeks on-the-site training in open employment. That is a measure of the community's acceptance. Until the community is prepared to offer open employment to people with mild disabilities, many of our policies are only token gestures.

The residential institutions have already experienced the relocation of 1000 residents into the community. The State plan issued yesterday by the Minister for Community Services will significantly accelerate the movement of people out of these institutions. There seems to be a mistaken view that this is the beginning of the movement of all disabled persons out of institutions. What was being celebrated yesterday with the release of the State plan was a commitment by the Cain government to providing $90 million over the next three years to accelerate the movement of these people into the community. At the same time disabled people on long community waiting lists will be able to have some of their needs met.

In a daring summary on pages 31 and 32 of the State plan the key targets are listed under three headings. The first objective is to expand programs and services in the community to provide more opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities and for their families. The second objective is to reduce overcrowding and improve services in large residential facilities. The final objective is to increase the effectiveness of programs and services.

I direct to the attention of the House the provision of housing required for the first two objectives. For example, the target providing for the expansion of programs and services in the community will include the purchase of houses to accommodate 40 children, the establishment of eighteen additional houses for respite care, and over the next three years the obtaining of public rental housing through the Ministry of Housing and Construction for 55 adults in the community.

In the large residential facilities it is proposed to obtain access to public rental housing and equity housing for up to 630 adult clients who are currently residing in large institutions. The government also intends to purchase houses for 60 children.

Dr Napthine interjected.

Mrs RAY—I have just compared what the government will provide for people in the community and for those in residential institutions. One of the characteristics of the plan is the balance that it preserves between living conditions in institutions and addressing long waiting lists in the community.

Dr Napthine—It does not help the community!

Mrs RAY—One of the key components in the plan involves the establishment of behaviour intervention services which will offer specialist support for clients with specific needs. Some people believe those with severe behavioural problems should not be allowed to live in the community, but many examples can be cited where institutions have been closed and people with challenging behaviour have been left until last.

Last year I had the opportunity of observing at first hand the results of the closure of an institution in Bristol in the United Kingdom where five adult men who were severely disabled, had no speech, and displayed very challenging behaviour, had been denied access to living in the community until a secluded room was provided on the site. It was said that these men had always required restraint and seclusion and that some provision for them must be made in the community.

However, it was found that when those men moved out—with a very high staff-to-resident ratio to begin with: eight staff moved out with five men—none of them needed to resort to the seclusion unit. The mere movement of the men into what

might be called an ordinary setting was sufficient to stimulate cooperative behaviour. That shows that behaviour can be modified and skills can be learnt in such situations, especially with the training of hands-on staff.

The sitting was suspended at 1.1 *p.m. until* 2.2 *p.m.*

Mrs RAY—Before the suspension of the sitting I referred to the behaviour intervention teams that are a particular feature of the State plan launched yesterday by the Minister for Community Services. It is proposed that three teams will be established during each of the next three years, the roles of which will be to provide treatment, training and direct support for both staff and families.

Little direct support for families has been provided, which has had the effect of giving parents little incentive to continue to carry out the full-time care of their disabled children. Specialist training in behaviour modification will complement the increased availability of training for hands-on staff that is now available in eleven TAFE colleges in both the metropolitan and rural areas. Prior to that the only training offered in this area was for highly specialised mental retardation nurses. Developments in training for community residential staff has made a dramatic difference to both the services offered to clients and the confidence of the wider community in those services.

The State plan was developed by Community Services Victoria, with input from a Ministerial committee comprising representatives of peak organisations with a direct interest in intellectual disability. The honourable member for Preston and I represented the government on that committee. It also included: representatives of the Victorian Council of Residential Associations for Persons with Intellectual Disability—VICRAID; the Victorian Association for Intellectually Disabled Citizens—REINFORCE; STAR—and most honourable members would be familiar with this organisation's advocacy on behalf of intellectually disabled persons; the Victorian Trades Hall Council; the Municipal Association of Victoria; the Victorian Public Service Association; and, officers of the Hospital Employees Federation No. 2 branch, the union that represents the largest body of employees in this area.

The coming together of those committee members was valuable. I hope there will be a further development of the cooperation that exists between those peak organisations and that the same degree of cooperation will be established between professional workers and parents of the intellectually disabled, which will bridge the gulf that appears to have existed between those two groups. Parents who have borne the burden of caring for intellectually disabled children have gained insights that professional workers could benefit from listening to, especially if the best possible service options are to be made available for families. The State plan acknowledges the urgent need to provide relief for those families who too often have cared for dependants or relatives without support.

I thank the people who, after I was elected, suggested that I should focus my energies on this field. It has given me a great deal of satisfaction to act as an advocate for intellectually disabled Victorians both in the community and within government. I acknowledge the leading role that Peter Allen and Allan Hall, both CSV officers, have played in the development of the State plan. I also acknowledge the skill of Mr Michael Arnold in the way he directed the committee's activities. I shall conclude my remarks with the closing paragraphs of the report:

> The State plan draws upon the expertise of the past eight years. At its conclusion, there will be a considerably enhanced capacity within the community to support intellectually disabled people as well as an improvement in the quality of life of those who remain in residential training centres. In addition, those working with people with intellectual disabilities will be better able to meet daily challenges and to plan ahead.

Efficient and sensitive implementation of the first State plan will establish firm directions well beyond the plan's three year life and will provide the impetus for the next phase of the redevelopment of intellectual disability services in the form of the second State plan.

I congratulate Cabinet for taking the daring step of publishing a plan with specific targets, as well as its daring step of committing money for a three-year period at the rate of $30 million a year.

Mr HAYWARD (Prahran)—I grieve today about Barry Pierson who held positions of trust within Community Services Victoria. There are a number of important questions I shall ask about this matter.

Firstly, I shall recap on the sad history of the matter. Barry Pierson was sought for molesting children in the United States of America before he came to Victoria last year. He sought employment in various positions in the community services area. In particular, he applied for a position at the St John's Homes for Boys and Girls. Sensibly that organisation checked on Pierson's qualifications and references and found them to be fraudulent. The organisation warned CSV about the discovery. When Pierson applied to CSV for a job, his application form was marked "Beware!".

Despite the warnings Pierson was appointed to a position at the Baltara Reception Centre for small boys; he was also appointed as a senior child protection officer in the Western Region. Although the Minister for Community Services later claimed that Pierson had had no direct contact with children, it was subsequently shown not only that he had had direct contact with children but also that he had sexually interfered with a number of them. In effect, the department gave Pierson the access and the authority that enabled him to exploit small children in the care of the department. Tragically it was later discovered that Mr Pierson has contracted AIDS.

After excellent investigative work, my colleague, the honourable member for Glen Waverley, discovered that CSV delayed notifying the police of Pierson's sexual assaults on children in the care of the department. In particular, the honourable member discovered that the department significantly delayed notifying the police of Pierson's sexual assault of an eight-year-old boy——

The SPEAKER—Order! Will the honourable member advise the Chair whether the matters to which he is referring are the subject of any criminal charges; and, if so, will he advise the House of the present status of any such matters?

Mr HAYWARD—Mr Speaker, I can respond to your request clearly and with much concern. The whole point of the matter I have raised is that no charges have been laid. That is the problem. It is absolutely outrageous.

I repeat: Community Services Victoria delayed until 4 April before notifying the police of the sexual assault by Pierson on an eight-year-old boy at the western suburbs CSV reception centre on 22 March. Why was notification delayed? Was the delay caused by CSV wanting to cover up the assault? Pierson was arrested and gaoled in Victoria on credit card fraud charges. While he was in gaol, considerable information came to light about his sexual assaults upon young children in the care of the department while he was a child protection officer in the Western Region. I repeat: CSV appointed this man despite warnings that his qualifications and references were fraudulent. The department put him in a position where he had access to small children which enabled him to exploit those small children and sexually assault them.

Returning to the matter you raised, Mr Speaker: the point of my remarks is that Pierson served a sentence for fraud at Pentridge Prison. However, after he had served the sentence on the fraud charges no charges were brought against him for his sexual assaults upon the small children while he was a child protection officer. Eight weeks

ago when he was released from Pentridge he was spirited out of the country without those charges being laid against him. That is a shocking situation.

This whole sorry episode raises many disturbing questions. Why was Pierson spirited out of the country before charges could be laid against him for sexually assaulting young children while he was a child protection officer? Was this done to save embarrassment to the Cain government over his appointment as a child protection officer? Who made the decision not to prosecute Pierson? Is there still some cover-up going on in Community Services Victoria?

Can the Cain government give an unqualified denial that there are no paedophiles in senior positions in CSV or other sections of the government or judicial structure? Would the prosecution of Pierson on the sexual assault charges have put those paedophiles at risk? These are all serious questions which require answers. It is extremely dangerous for our society if our judicial system is manipulated to protect individuals to save embarrassment for the government. Why were the charges not laid against Pierson? Was the government trying to save itself from embarrassment arising out of his appointment as a child protection officer in CSV despite the fact that the department was warned he was a fraud and that he was a United States of America child molester? Was it to save embarrassment from political interference in the judicial process to protect individuals in the government who facilitated Pierson's appointment to those positions?

Mr E. R. Smith—A cover-up.

Mr HAYWARD—It is a serious situation. There is nothing more important and so crucial in our society than our judicial system; that system should not be exploited to save government embarrassment or to protect individuals. It is a serious situation.

The government must answer those questions; it is a matter of ongoing concern. It refers not only to this specific instance but also to a number of other instances. I demand that the Minister for Community Services and the government immediately provide the Opposition with answers to these vital questions. Until we receive those answers we will continue to be disturbed not only about the situation in CSV but also about our judicial system.

Mr SEITZ (Keilor)—I grieve today about the banks and, in particular, the services they provide in the suburbs since deregulation and the amalgamation of a number of the larger banks. When the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney and the Bank of New South Wales amalgamated, the two branches in my area were formed into one branch and only one facility is now provided. One reads in the newspapers about the waiting times and the queuing at banks. We are all aware that the business of banks has increased. I would not call them banks in the suburbs; they are small money shops carrying out small transactions.

If one applies for a loan in the suburbs these days, one is referred to a regional banking centre that runs the area. Today pay cheques are transferred electronically into one's bank account. I know most honourable members avail themselves of that facility but it is necessary for them to go to the bank to obtain cash, and in doing so they must wait in a queue. The banks now apply charges to everything. Money is being transferred to the banks electronically and it is estimated that $10 billion is held in old savings bank accounts at 3·5 per cent.

However, when one obtains a housing loan the interest rate is 17·5 per cent. The banks have the $10 billion at 3·5 per cent and should not charge high interest rates for home loans, particularly for people on fixed incomes and pensions. The banks have reduced staff and one newspaper reporter has told me that at one particular branch

one picks up a card with a number on it and one then has to wait for that number to be called.

Banks were proud institutions at one time, providing service and competition. I should have thought with deregulation there would be more competition and better service to the community, but that has not happened. The banks have become greedy by reducing staff and not providing a service.

With the advent of electronic transfers the banks have increased their profit margins and are not prepared to provide extra branches and staff. The banking system knows when it is pay week because people rush in to withdraw their money. The banks now have the facility to make payments for motor registration, electricity bills and other services, and they receive a commission for that. Banks could provide a better service in the suburban areas by opening up new branches and employing more staff to service the community instead of becoming money transaction shops.

One cannot apply for a loan at one's local branch because the bank manager is restricted in the decisions he can make. He has to go to a district manager to sort out those matters. However, the small accounts of people in the suburbs make a large contribution to the profits of banks.

I raise this issue especially on behalf of the new growth areas where transport to banking facilities is limited. The banks have been slow to provide services to those areas.

In the good old days, blue-collar workers were able to get their pay-packets at the end of the week and they were paid in the companies' time. If the pay was not there, they were paid time-and-a-half while they waited for it. Part of the recent second-tier national wage rise and productivity savings negotiated by the unions involved electronic transfer of salaries directly into the banks. The banks did not have to go out and compete, lobby or advertise; if one has an account with a bank, that is where one's money is transferred. The banks received a big windfall with that move. Service has not increased or improved because of those extra customers and transactions.

In my electorate there are not many banks where one can sit down to wait for service. Elderly, frail pensioners have to stand in queues for hours before they are served and, if they sit on chairs, they lose their places in the queues and must start all over again. The queues do not reduce and, as has been pointed out to me, people say, "I could not stand any longer and I had to rest, but I lost my place in the queue".

Many such customers have small transactions, such as house payments, electricity, motor registration payments and cash withdrawals to do their shopping; and often middle-aged or elderly people have not yet adapted to the system of plastic cards for withdrawing money from automatic telling machines. They believe in face-to-face communication with bank staff.

This brings me to the subject of staff. Tellers are invariably young and there is great pressure and strain on them in that job. They have to put up with the frustrations of people in those queues. Should the account not balance confusion ensues and the people concerned, who may have been waiting for an hour to be served, naturally will not be in a good frame of mind. Tellers are the innocent victims; I have witnessed it myself. Banks are understaffed—which did not occur in the past—and I challenge honourable members to have a serious look at this situation.

I have not observed it in State Bank Victoria or the Commonwealth Bank. They have all of their tellers on duty at peak hours. The private banks are trying their best. I wish to place on record that I think our banks have enjoyed a tremendous windfall and have posted record profits.

Honourable members interjecting

Mr SEITZ—I take up the interjections——

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Evans)—I remind the honourable member for Keilor that interjections are disorderly and I ask him to address the Chair.

Mr SEITZ—Banks have an obligation to the community. I have been with the same bank since 1956——

Dr Napthine—Which one?

Mr SEITZ—The Commercial bank, which was the forerunner of the Westpac Banking Corporation. In those days it was a case of starting off with a small account with one bank and not changing banks. However, I am seriously considering taking my account away from that bank unless the services improve.

I am hoping a new branch will be established in my electorate, which is a growth area. I should like other private banks to open branches in similar areas—for example, in Keilor Downs and Taylors Lakes—to be parochial—where many people are stranded by lack of transport. I refer particularly to women who are at home during the day. If husbands take the cars to work and wives need to go to the banks before doing their shopping, it is very difficult for them to get to the shopping centres where bank services are located.

Most salaries today are electronically transferred into the banks which creates an inconvenience and a cost to people. The blue-collar workers have been the last to accept this method of direct transfer of salary to the bank. The banks gave an undertaking to consider the hours they would open and the provision of services where the people are located, when these issues were negotiated with the unions. However, they are lagging very much behind in the new growth areas.

I sympathise with my constituents who bring this issue up time and again. Going to the bank has become almost as bad as going to the doctor or the dentist. The queue is just as long and, even if one has an appointment, one might have to wait.

A similar situation is occurring with the banks that do not provide customer service because they are saving on staff and on renting premises and are not extending their services within districts. Even in the older established areas the number of branches has been reduced and the number of staff in the remaining branches is fewer. Banks in my area that have facilities for nine tellers at one time have only four tellers at the counter during the busy periods. That is insufficient for the needs of the banking public.

I implore the private sector to improve service to customers. The customers of banks may be only little old ladies with small accounts. However, as I have already pointed out, the total amount held in small accounts in Australia is $10 billion. Those deposits attract only 3·5 per cent interest. Because the amounts in those accounts are small, people cannot transfer them into investment accounts bearing higher interest. That is a windfall to the private banking system. The public should shop around and change their low interest bearing accounts to higher interest bearing accounts at banks that give good service.

One problem faced by people with small accounts is that banks insist on a certain amount to be deposited at any one time to obtain a high interest rate. Pensioners cannot afford to have a minimum deposit of, say, $500 in an account because they need that money to live on. The banks are the winners because pension cheques and weekly pay cheques are automatically transferred to bank accounts and the bank then has the use of that money.

Banks are exploiting poor people and the people on fixed incomes who are not able to place their money in high interest bearing accounts. These people do not have ready access to building societies and credit cooperatives that are accessible to people in the cities of Melbourne and Geelong. I would welcome the provision of building society and credit cooperative branches in the electorate I represent because it would give the banks in the area more competition.

In previous days banks had to give people more consideration or they would take their accounts elsewhere. However, with salaries and pension cheques being automatically transferred direct, banks do not have to worry about their customers. We are creatures of habit and we continue to go back to the banks with which we have our accounts even though we may be disillusioned by the service we receive each time we go there. In fact, there is not much point in changing banks because they all operate in much the same manner. Honourable members should take time to visit the banks in their electorates to see what services are provided.

Mr COLEMAN (Syndal)—I wish to grieve about the continuing problems of the government because of the activities of the Treasurer. When he came to office he was going to shake the hollow logs and tip out the money. He has certainly emptied the hollow logs of money and people have turned them into tom-toms and are beating the message for him to go.

One of the institutions the Treasurer will hear about for a long time is Wallace International Ltd, which has taken the government for a considerable amount of money. I wish to speak about the directorship of that company, in particular, two directors. The first is Dr Morris Barr, who is mentioned as a director in the prospectus of that company of 28 October 1987. The second is Professor Kenneth Jubb who was also on the board.

Dr Barr was brought from England by the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources at some considerable expense to advise on the establishment of technology precincts. The City of Werribee appointed a technology and economic development advisory group to push the benefits of Werribee as an ideal site for the development of one of these technology precincts. Eventually the advisory group recommended that Werribee should be the site for a biotechnology precinct. A considerable amount of expense was incurred by the City of Werribee in obtaining that biotechnology precinct. Included on the advisory committee that made the recommendation were two directors of a company with a beneficial interest in this rezoning. They were Professor Jubb and Mr Bruce Wallace of Wallace International Ltd.

It did not rest there because Professor Jubb and Dr Barr were also involved in a separate venture organising the establishment of a drug and chemical safety evaluation centre in the area. Professor Jubb took considerable interest in a number of proposals put forward when this rezoning took place based on Wallace International Ltd's occupation of the site and based on the prospect that the toxicology laboratory would be established. The government was coerced into erecting a significant structure over the Princes Highway to provide access to the chosen site. The bridge has already cost $6·3 million and is not yet finished.

Wallace International Ltd has collapsed and its debris is left behind. Professor Jubb was one of the directors of the toxicology laboratory that was subsequently to be shifted from Werribee by the government. A press release on 17 May 1988 stated:

> The State Government today announced that the international contract research group Applied Bioscience International Inc.—APBI—would join with the Victorian government to establish a drug and chemical safety evaluation centre in Victoria.

That centre was to be placed at the Monash technology park but it did not go there. The Hooker organisation then wanted it to be placed at a technology park it owned. It did not go there either and the venture has since collapsed. A considerable loss has resulted from the handling of this exercise by Professor Jubb.

More recently Professor Jubb has been appointed to the Zoological Board of Victoria. At the inaugural meeting of that newly appointed body two members were not present. I understand Professor Jubb was subsequently elected as chairman on his own nomination.

His record in financial matters should have precluded him from being the chairman of that organisation. Professor Jubb's involvement in the toxicology laboratory, which had planned facilities to use no fewer than 100 000 animals a year for testing, makes him unsuitable to be the Chairman of the Zoological Board of Victoria. The toxicology laboratory is based purely on the use of animals for research, and that places Professor Jubb in a position of conflict.

Another concern I have is that not only is Professor Jubb the Chairman of the Zoological Board of Victoria but also he is involved in the administration of Werribee Zoological Park. Honourable members will be aware that Werribee Park is partly devoted to the State Equestrian Centre and partly to the extension of the zoo.

Some weeks ago I sought the intervention of the Premier to ensure that an independent committee was appointed to administer Werribee Park because the State Equestrian Centre is having trouble negotiating with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works on matters regarding access. I hope Professor Jubb's chairmanship of the zoo does not lead to him being given the overall chairmanship of Werribee Park because that would be detrimental to the State Equestrian Centre.

Professor Jubb has been appointed for a three-year term. Two members of the committee were not present when he was elected, and the previous chairman, Miss Feilman, who had a good record in promoting the zoo and ensuring its financial viability, has been removed as chairman. The Minister must address the zoo's financial viability. The term of office of the outgoing committee had to be extended by two months before the new one could be appointed simply because of the difficulties in finding suitable people to be appointed to the board. As I understand it, one vacancy has still not been filled. That reflects badly on one of Victoria's major tourist attractions.

One can only hope that the zoo, under Professor Jubb's chairmanship, will not suffer from the same financial troubles as every other organisation with which the professor has been involved. I hope some action is taken to ensure that an investigation is carried out.

Mr E. R. SMITH (Glen Waverley)—I wish to grieve about the gross maladministration of Victoria's suburban train system. Railway staff morale is at an all-time low and a feeling of passenger frustration and intimidation is at an all-time high. During the past two days there have been typical examples of what happens in the railway system.

Yesterday morning at the Glen Waverley railway station the 7.49 a.m. train left for the city and the next service—the 7.58 a.m. train—was cancelled because the train that was stabled at Glen Waverley had already been used to cover a previous cancellation.

When the train to replace the 7.58 a.m. service arrived at the station, every window in the rear carriage was broken and the train could not be used to take passengers to the city. Hundreds of people were waiting at the station. I asked why the other carriages on the train could not be used and I was told that there was no-one available

at that station or at other stations along the line to tell passengers not to board that carriage because it was dangerous. The train was then returned to the city empty. That explanation is fair enough, but it is an example of the lack of coordination and order in the railway system that allowed this intolerable situation to occur.

The hundreds of people who had been waiting for the 7.58 a.m. and the 8.03 a.m. services were then required to wait for the 8.16 a.m. train. Some travellers had been waiting for 18 minutes and more than 1000 people were waiting at the station to board the 8.16 a.m. train to the city when it arrived. The train was packed not only with workers but also with children with their usual schoolbags and paraphernalia. The train was packed to the gunwhales.

I subsequently learned that people were up to 1 hour late for work. The problem even affected people waiting to board the train at stations along the line closer to the city. The wife of my research officer, for example, was waiting to board the train at Glen Iris station. However, it was so crowded that she could not get on. As a result, she did not arrive at work until some time after 10 a.m. The system is out of control.

Some weeks ago I was approached by some gentlemen who work for the railways. They said they were appalled by the announcement made by the Minister for Transport headed "We are riding with you on the Met". That is a boast of the highest order about the safety of the railway system. The Minister claims to be increasing the number of railway patrols, but the men told me that that was hogwash. They informed me that the patrols on the trains are done in two ways: the patrol teams board a train or watch other trains from a parked car or the platform and count them as part of the patrol. I said to the men that no-one would believe that story and that I would require the mobile duty returns for a full week to prove their claim.

Some 119 returns were given to me and photocopied. The media has seen them, but if any member of the government wants to look at them to authenticate them, I shall be happy for them to do so. The returns show some remarkable statistics. The returns are for the week of 10 to 16 July this year and show that 286 trains were physically patrolled and 288 were visually patrolled, which is approximately half the trains.

I have also been provided with returns for the tramways so that some comparisons can be made. For the same period, 52 trams were physically patrolled and 194 were visually patrolled. I presume that the physical patrols would have been undertaken for revenue-collecting reasons. On a number of grounds the figures give no cause for satisfaction.

I shall refer again to trains. During the week 10 to 16 July 1989 the Transit Police dealt with 314 offenders who committed 357 offences. I shall explain the way the patrols are made up, and I shall refer to the government's handout which appeared in every newspaper in Melbourne on 25 September this year. A transit patrol comprises a team of three Victoria Police officers and two transit officers. The team leaves its headquarters and patrols four or five trains in groups. The teams are under the control of the Victoria Police. Normally I would be supportive of the police running this type of operation. However, in this case, most of the police officers being used in the patrols are probationary constables. They find the work a chore and believe it is beneath their dignity to put their hearts and souls into working with the Transit Police.

I have had many conversations with officers who have worked on the transit patrols, and it is evident that the situation is not at all harmonious. The mobile duty returns disclose that the transit patrols recorded 314 offenders who committed 357 offences during the week to which I have referred.

At the same time, Victoria Police officers dealt with 97 offenders who committed 122 offences. The report also discloses that between 20 and 25 per cent of all tasks

carried out by the patrols were off railway property; they had nothing to do with railway offences.

The inference to be drawn is that a lack of motivation has led to Victoria Police officers not pulling their weight, for the reasons I outlined earlier. That seems to be contrary to the policy published by the government. Fifteen per cent of offences had nothing to do with railway property.

Decent, law-abiding officers have approached me to expose the sham. They say the relationships between Victoria Police and the railways branch are not good, and that there is no trust between the two services. The practice of merely counting trains and not travelling in them is not encouraged by officers, whether they be from Victoria Police or the Transit Police. The system was devised by the government so that the Minister for Transport can claim he has doubled train patrols, and that trains are now safer to travel in. He ought to try travelling on the Glen Waverley line on any Saturday night—the patrol officers are nowhere to be seen on that line on a Saturday night!

Another promise made by the government when it published its agenda before the election—and which it has now broken—was for a high profile for train guards; that they would move up and down the train aisles. That has not happened. The guards stay in their cabins, at the centre motors, and concentrate on train safety. Some cynics say that the guards are concentrating on their own safety but that is beside the point. They are not moving through the corridors of the trains.

The government promised to clean up the graffiti. This problem is a most disgraceful episode in Victoria's railway system. The transport authorities have said they would need to use the track maintenance staff to properly clean the trains, including the removal of graffiti—that has not happened to any extent. However, on many occasions trains have had to slow down while crossing certain sections of track because the maintenance has not been carried out; the maintenance staff are being required to clean up graffiti on the trains and stations.

I suggest the government should use convicted graffiti artists and vandals to clean the graffiti from the trains and stations. I would also use others—for example, those subject to community-based orders—to clean up the results of the ever-increasing defacing of suburban trains.

Mr Micallef interjected.

Mr E. R. SMITH—That is probably something the honourable member for Springvale could do—clean up the graffiti. He would be an expert at graffiti on trains!

The government has said it will improve safety at railway stations; the Glen Waverley station was to have video cameras installed. Actually, that is happening this week; one camera is being mounted to cover each platform, and another is being installed in the waiting room. But there is nothing in the stabling paddock. As most who have the slightest amount of commonsense would know, vandals need only to use spray paint cans over the cameras, and the cameras are rendered useless. The installation of the cameras is a waste of money because of the lack of patrolling staff.

The staffing situation is interesting. Figures have been given to me by the railway transit patrol officers.

Mr Micallef—We haven't got all day.

Mr E. R. SMITH—The honourable member for Springvale may be interested. The staff shortage is compounded by cuts in the Public Transport Corporation budget which has affected station manning and Transit Police patrol activities, thereby influencing public safety. The limitation of staff overtime compounds the situation in

that the operations of the transit patrols will be reduced by approximately 9500 operational shifts a year—about 76 000 man-hours a year.

Mr Micallef—Person-hours.

Mr E. R. SMITH—A most revealing statistic so far as this debate is concerned is that some transit patrol data was deliberately destroyed in a move to new accommodation. Criminal offences on railway property are no longer listed in the transit patrol summaries but are included in the Victoria Police crime statistics. Therefore, in future train offence statistics will be difficult to compile.

Also, from 21 September to 24 September, unknown offenders—vandals—damaged 73 railway carriages which cost $23 000 to repair, and caused untold inconvenience to the public. From 10 September to 23 September, a group of up to 30 youths travelled on a train on the Williamstown line and assaulted three passengers. They attempted to burn two unmanned stations; stole passes from unattended platforms; and broke 31 carriage and station windows. In the first six months, 163 assaults, including one murder, were committed on Met property; also, 30 assaults on Met employees; 23 indecent assaults, including two rapes; and 35 wilful and obscene exposures. The police managed to catch one offender.

The figures are appalling. Those associated with train security will attest to the fact that the system was better before it was taken over by the probationary constables and others within the Victoria Police Force.

Another interesting statistic is that before the amalgamation with Victoria Police in 1987, up to fifteen personnel from the former railways investigation system were available, day and night, to patrol the Met system.

A most important statistic is that, depending on grouping, that usually led to the manning of five or six cars to operate throughout Melbourne—but that was not good enough. Imagine having only five or six cars! Under the new system, with mixed teams of State police and transit patrol officers, restrictions on overtime—as instructed by the Treasurer—mean that only eight personnel are available to man two motor vehicles. They are required to cover the entire metropolitan area. The police can divert those vehicles, even though the transit patrols have assigned tasks.

I know of a case where one police car, supposed to be protecting railway property, was sent to the outer suburbs of Melbourne to take part in a drug raid. The mobile duty return shows that a police car went to St Kilda to evict squatters when it should have been protecting the travelling public.

This is a disgraceful situation that the government must address. It is almost too late to correct. There is gross maladministration within the public transport system. The morale of the staff of the railways is at an all-time low and passenger frustration and intimidation are at an all-time high. I call on the government to take urgent steps to correct the security system within the railway administration, because the entire rail service is intimidatory to the law-abiding travelling public.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I join with my colleagues in grieving about the problems facing country Victorians. The government does not have a true understanding of the difficulties facing country people. Government policy is formulated according to where people live and most people live in metropolitan Melbourne. If that policy continues country people will receive fewer services and benefits because rural Victoria has a smaller population. The government provides less assistance to people who live in areas outside metropolitan Melbourne.

Members of the National Party and members of Parliament representing country electorates generally have raised this concern many times. Country people should get

special consideration because of the problems they face. If the government continues with its policy of providing more funding to the major population centres because that is where the votes are, country people will suffer further reductions in the assistance that is available at present.

The government is concerned only about the major population centres because that is where the votes are. They do not believe there is much to gain in assisting people in country areas.

The Attorney-General is a typical example of a government Minister who does not have an understanding of the problems and difficulties of country people. The government talks about social justice, but it is social justice only for people living in the metropolitan area of Melbourne and is a policy designed to keep the government in power.

The Attorney-General has just enunciated his policy on the closure of Magistrates Courts in country Victoria. He has not bothered to speak to country people about their specific problems. He argues on the basis that some country courts do not operate for long periods when compared with courts in the larger provincial centres of Victoria and in metropolitan Melbourne. People living in rural Victoria are entitled to receive services provided by a decentralised court system, not a system that is based on reducing the number of courts operating in small country towns.

It is typical of the attitude adopted by the government in rationalising services. It disregards the effect of its rationalisation policies on country people. Government Ministers should travel throughout Victoria to gain an understanding of the problems of country people—not just the problems of people living in metropolitan Melbourne—who are disadvantaged in many ways by living in country Victoria. I hope the Attorney-General will take notice of my comments and visit the major rural centres to discuss the problems of country Victoria.

Officers of the Attorney-General's Department met with people in my electorate and attempted to explain the rationale for the rationalisation of the court system in rural Victoria and the provision of court services, but the people want to meet with the Minister.

Mr McCutcheon interjected.

Mr JASPER—If the Attorney-General supports the policies of his government he should meet with the people in country Victoria and explain those policies. The Minister does not have an understanding of rural problems.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has said that the government will close one-man police stations.

Mr McCutcheon interjected.

Mr JASPER—Country people want justice. The Attorney-General says by way of interjection that country people want to pay lower taxes but still want the provision of services in country Victoria. The Minister is totally wrong. He does not have a real understanding of balancing services throughout Victoria. The social justice policy should operate for all Victorians.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services initially said that not one one-man station in country Victoria would close. The Minister now takes the attitude that it is up to the administration of the Police Force to distribute its resources as it sees fit. Like Pontius Pilate, the Minister washes his hands of the problem. The Minister is wrong. He has not responded to the many requests for him to visit country Victoria and meet with municipalities and organisations to discuss the issue of one-man police

stations. The Minister was pleased to go to Rutherglen to join in the grape treading competition conducted as part of the wine walkabout. I will be slow to present him with his prize for winning the grape treading competition unless he visits my electorate to collect his trophy. As Minister for Tourism, the Minister has visited rural Victoria and has discussed many issues relating to tourism. I welcome that, even though I disagree with many of the views that he has expressed, but the Minister will not visit rural Victoria to discuss the closure of one-man police stations.

The Premier said that the government would not proceed with the amalgamation of municipalities, but the government has endeavoured to carry out its policy in another way. The Premier is ensuring that amalgamation occurs by reducing funding to country municipalities, particularly smaller municipalities in rural areas. Funding is allocated on the basis of population. That is the key to the government's policy. Where are the votes? It is not one vote, one value; it is one vote, one person. Value has nothing to do with it. Social justice has nothing to do with it.

Country municipalities are pleading for sufficient funding. A councillor in a municipality in my electorate has indicated that his municipality is severely disadvantaged through having had its revenue grants and road funding reduced. A large number of municipalities in my electorate have contacted me on the matter. One municipality directed my attention to a reduction of more than 60 per cent in its road funding over the past couple of years. How can that large municipality maintain a satisfactory road network if its funding is reduced?

Those municipalities have had their funding reduced because they do not have the same populations as do the larger municipalities or those in metropolitan areas. They are concerned that country municipalities will be forced to increase their rates to a level that they fear will be unacceptable to their ratepayers. At the same time, many metropolitan municipalities have money coming out of their ears. They have more money than they need to provide a reasonable range of services to the people in their areas. So it goes on.

I refer to the direct assistance given to country Victoria. In 1982, $50 million was provided specifically for industry in country areas. The government has now revised and changed the policy. It has become difficult to determine how much money is provided for industry in country areas. In fact, no money is provided; the government has indicated there will be no special assistance for industry in country areas. I suggest that will result in a disaster for people in country Victoria.

In the lead-up to the last State election, the National Party highlighted the figures that indicated higher levels of unemployment in country areas compared with metropolitan Melbourne. Despite the comment of the Minister for Labour that the figures were wrong, his own department's figures now support the contention put by the National Party that there has been a huge increase in unemployment in country areas when compared with metropolitan Melbourne. The figures indicate that unemployment in country areas has increased by 100 per cent as compared with metropolitan Melbourne, where a very slight decrease in the level of unemployment has occurred since 1982. So it goes on.

Comment can be made on area after area. Comment can be made on the various aspects of activity controlled by government departments and the effects on country people of reduced funding for different needs.

I refer to a matter of critical importance to country people: fuel prices in country areas as compared with prices in metropolitan Melbourne. I have raised this issue in this House on many occasions. Mr Acting Speaker, you will be aware of my concern for country people. I invite honourable members to consider what members of

Parliament who represent country electorates should reply to people who contact them and ask why fuel in country areas is not discounted in the same way as in metropolitan Melbourne.

I do not suggest that huge discounting should be applied across the State, but a uniform price should apply throughout Victoria. That is the key to the argument of the National Party on fuel pricing: all Victorians should have fuel available at a uniform price.

The situation regarding fuel prices has become quite drastic and serious for country people. In recent times, the price of fuel in country areas has risen to 60 cents more a litre, compared with varying prices in metropolitan Melbourne where, depending on the discount at the time, it is often available at 50 cents a litre. Often there is a differential of up to 15 cents a litre between the price of fuel in metropolitan Melbourne and the price in country areas.

The same applies to the price of automotive gas, except that the differential is even more stark. The price for gas in country Victoria varies from 27·9 to 28·9 cents a litre and above, whereas in metropolitan Melbourne gas is available at less than 14 cents a litre. LPG used in motor vehicles is often half the price in metropolitan Melbourne when compared with the price in country Victoria. That situation cannot be tolerated; it must be changed.

The Victorian government put a submission to the Prices Surveillance Authority during its inquiry into petroleum prices. It is interesting to consider the information put to the Federal authority in the course of that inquiry. The Victorian government gave the State's fuel pricing background and referred to earlier action taken by it in setting the maximum wholesale price under the Fuel Prices Regulation Act 1981. The government went on to talk about its action in respect of the trigger price but it did not refer to problems experienced in country areas. It described the overall situation but it did not point out that the policy on the trigger price did not work at all to the advantage of country people. Although it worked extremely well in the metropolitan area, it operated to the disadvantage of country Victorians because the trigger price assisted in keeping prices lower in Melbourne while prices were very much higher in country Victoria.

The government's submission to the inquiry contains reference to the annoyance of customers in country areas because they appeared to have missed out on lower prices. That is the understatement of the year! Country people have been faced with a differential in pricing and have missed out on the lower fuel prices altogether.

The government's submission refers to the rack price and the price posted on the gate of the oil companies. The submission indicates that there appeared to be little competition at the local level and that country dealers were not passing on the lower fuel prices. That is absolute rubbish! From my experience and from talking to the people involved in the industry, it is no good blaming the retailers for the higher prices in country areas. Because they do not receive a discount from the oil companies, they cannot sell at a lower price.

The government submission refers to the disparity between fuel prices in metropolitan Melbourne and those in Sydney. The government should not be putting forward any such argument but should argue for a uniform price throughout Victoria and, indeed, across Australia.

The submission refers to the lack of discounting in smaller country towns. It touches on the issue but does not come to grips with the problem.

On page 15 of the government's submission a reference appears to the disparity in fuel prices on Melbourne and Sydney markets. The submission suggests an investigation should be conducted into what steps should be taken to promote competition in country areas and to consider the price differential between standard and high octane unleaded fuel.

The key issue has not been addressed. The government should have put forward a submission that attempted to achieve a uniform fuel price for all Victorians.

Fuel is too important a commodity to allow governments or the oil companies to manipulate its price so that such a wide discrepancy exists between fuel prices in metropolitan Melbourne and those in country Victoria.

I suggest to the House and to the Minister for Prices that under the Fuel Prices Regulation Act 1981, he does have the ability to provide for lower uniform fuel prices for motor vehicles; if he and the government had the gumption, they could do that.

This is a critical issue for Victoria. People living in country areas have many difficulties and greater recognition of them is warranted from the government, which espouses social justice, in an endeavour to provide to those who live in the country the equality afforded to those living in the metropolitan area. Uniform fuel prices should be put in place in line with city prices. The government should act on this vital issue to the economy of Victoria.

Mr SHELL (Geelong)—I grieve about the Program of Aids for Disabled People service that is provided under the auspices of Community Services Victoria, which provides facilities for those people who have disabilities and wish to remain in their own homes rather than being institutionalised. Under the program all sorts of necessary equipment is provided for disabled people to enable them to move about within their own homes and in their communities. Various equipment is needed by these people so that they are not a burden on society and so that they can live life to the fullest.

The PADP scheme in Geelong is administered by the Grace McKellar Centre for Rehabilitation and Extended Care. Funding is derived from Federal and State government sources. However, an anomaly exists for a disabled person who moves away from his or her home to a community residential unit. These units are designed to assist disabled people to live full lives, without being institutionalised, when their parents are no longer able to look after them. I remind honourable members that these children are actually adults who have reached the age of 40 years or more and whose parents are in their 70s, who have become frail and are not able to look after their disabled children.

Should such a disabled person move from home into a unit, he or she is no longer eligible to receive the grants or access to facilities provided under the PADP scheme. I shall refer to a specific case of a person who lives in Geelong. Because this person is living in a unit and not receiving PADP support, that person has been excluded from particular work programs. The person concerned suffers from incontinence and, as a result, requires the necessary equipment, which costs approximately $2700 a year, to be able to move about freely. For a person on an invalid pension, such a cost becomes an extreme hardship. I remind honourable members that under the PADP scheme that cost would be borne by the program, but because the person is living in a unit that person is not eligible for the grant to cover the cost of the equipment.

That problem is difficult enough without the added disadvantage of a disability. The person is the subject of ridicule from the peer group, and staff are apprehensive about taking the person out because of the risk of car seat covers being soiled. This is detrimental to the person who must also suffer a bulky appearance because of the need to accommodate the necessary equipment. The person suffers from continual urinary

tract infections and problems with breakdown of skin as well as a loss of dignity and privacy through the constant battle to toilet train and maintain hygiene. It is inappropriate that the PADP scheme does not apply to people placed in residential units.

The special equipment needed includes two Incare leg bags, which cost $13.60 each, and which must be replaced every three months; two Incare leg bag straps costing $10.60 each, which must also be replaced every three months; and two extension tubes with connectors which cost $5.50 each. This and other equipment is applied at 7 a.m. daily and is removed prior to bathing at night. The equipment cannot be used at night because it is not economically feasible. If it were used at night the cost would be doubled. A person on an invalid pension cannot afford that cost.

I ask the Minister for Community Services to endeavour to resolve this problem so that those people who move out of their own homes because their parents are not able to care for them may continue to receive the facilities and grants that they require so that enormous cost and suffering is not experienced by them.

Mr COOPER (Mornington)—I grieve about a matter that I am sure is of concern to many people in the community: the lack of commitment by the government to the work of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). I refer particularly to the Melbourne Maritime Museum situated on the Yarra River which houses that magnificent vessel the *Polly Woodside.* The museum is a project of the National Trust of Australia and it is one of the major tourist attractions Melbourne has to offer and I hope that will continue for many years to come.

I refer also to a vessel with a long history, the HMVS *Cerberus,* which honourable members would be aware acts as a breakwater off Black Rock in an area adjacent to the City of Sandringham. That vessel has tremendous historic interest to Victoria and to the world. It has been sitting in the water as a breakwater for many years, and is slowly but surely rusting away.

A number of organisations have shown significant interest in preserving the HMVS *Cerberus,* and foremost among those have been the Melbourne Maritime Museum, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), and the City of Sandringham. After a considerable amount of lobbying—and with due deference to the National Trust of Australia—which has been led by the City of Sandringham since 1985—a committee was established under the auspices of the Victorian Tourism Commission to investigate the value and future of the remains of the HMVS *Cerberus* and to ascertain what, if anything, could be done.

From July to December 1987 that committee met regularly to conduct its investigations. Following those investigations a series of recommendations were made. Those recommendations have never been made public; I submit it is important that they be made public.

I direct to the attention of the House the fact that the review committee was representative of the following organisations: the Victorian Tourism Commission, the Melbourne Maritime Museum, the Department of Industry, Technology and Resources, the Ministry for the Arts, the City of Sandringham, the Port of Melbourne Authority, the City of South Melbourne, the Ministry for Planning and Environment, the Victorian Government Major Projects Unit, the Museums Advisory Board, the Historic Buildings Council, the Department of Management and Budget, and the Melbourne City Council. It was certainly not a lightweight committee. Almost every organisation that one might think would have an interest in preserving the HMVS *Cerberus* was involved in the investigations.

As a result of the investigations that took place in 1987, eleven recommendations were made; five of those recommendations were carried unanimously. It is important that those unanimous recommendations should be directed to the attention of the House:

1. That HMVS *Cerberus* is an item of major international historical value worthy of preservation.
2. The vessel should be salvaged . . .
6. The *Cerberus* be moved before it collapses.
7. A new breakwater be built to replace the *Cerberus*.

   A rubble type breakwater appears to be the most desirable type, currently estimated to cost $627 020 as most acceptable.
8. Work should proceed on *Cerberus* in defined stages over approximately a two-year period.

The original involvement of the Victorian Tourism Commission in conducting the HMVS *Cerberus* investigation was based on overseas experience whereby museums and historic ships have proved themselves as massive tourist dollar earners. That can be seen in the United Kingdom with the *Victory, Mary Rose, Warrior* and the *Cutty Sark*. The opportunity for this vessel to be a tourist dollar earner was one reason why the Victorian Tourism Commission was involved, but nothing has happened since then. The recommendations have never been published. The issue appears to have been left to die.

If the Victorian Tourism Commission intends to sit on those recommendations, or if it finds itself in no position to play a leading role in the preservation of the vessel, it should pass over the committee's findings to some other government organisation. The government should encourage that organisation to publish the findings and to offer some response as to whether it will play a part in preserving a vessel that has been described as "an item of major international historical value worthy of preservation".

The government cannot continue allowing the Victorian Tourism Commission to sit on these recommendations in the hope that they will go away. Many people involved in historical societies throughout Victoria—people who support the work of the National Trust of Australia and those who want to preserve matters of history in this State and the world—would be shocked if the HMVS *Cerberus* were allowed to continue to rust away and to fall into the water.

The advice I have received is that it would cost $2 million to take the vessel away from its present site, build a replacement breakwater, and put the vessel somewhere so that preservation work could commence. It is incumbent on the government to say whether it is prepared to make the $2 million available for this important project. I recognise that bread-and-butter issues are important—and I often argue for them in this Chamber—but other issues are important to this State and nation, and this is one of them.

The second issue affecting the Melbourne Maritime Museum involves its future as a tourist attraction and the role and involvement of the government and the Victorian Tourism Commission in the future of this important part of Melbourne.

In early 1988 the Melbourne Maritime Museum approached the Victorian Tourism Commission seeking funding for future development. It was told by the commission, and quite properly, that prior to any consideration of funding being made available the museum should have a business plan prepared. The commission provided funds for the employment of consultants to prepare a business plan and from early 1988 until September 1988 the consultants got to work.

In September 1988 the business plan was tabled; it called for the formation of a Melbourne Maritime Trust to ensure the future of the *Polly Woodside* and the Melbourne Maritime Museum as tourist attractions. The plan suggested that a Melbourne Maritime Trust should be established with a triple partnership between the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the State government, and organisations from the private sector that would be prepared to play some part. The National Trust of Australia and the Melbourne Maritime Museum were encouraged to establish the trust.

In September 1988 the Victorian Tourism Commission promised a seeding grant of $1 million to the museum which was to be provided at the rate of $500 000 over each of two years. With the guarantee of a seeding grant and in the knowledge that not only would the future of the Melbourne Maritime Museum be assured but also it would grow in importance as a tourist attraction, the museum decided to proceed with the establishment of the Melbourne Maritime Trust, and that has been done.

In April 1989 the museum became concerned about the fact that, although it has kept its side of the bargain, there was no sign of the money. Representatives of the museum asked for a meeting with the Minister for Tourism, who met them on 13 April and promised to examine the issue and get back to them.

It took some time for the Minister to set up that response, but he finally set it up through Miss Katie Lahey, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Tourism Commission, who wrote a revealing letter to the trust. In her letter of 6 September 1989 she said:

> I refer to your trust's meeting with the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Steve Crabb, MP and other interested parties, seeking assurance to implement the business plan for the *Polly Woodside*.
>
> The Minister offered to approach on the trust's behalf other government bodies, and I have only just received their replies.
>
> The organisations are unable to commit specific financial contributions from the 1989–90 Budget, however, the Port of Melbourne Authority has offered to provide research and statistical information, plus an article in their corporate publication *Panorama*, which I consider appropriate.

The promise made by the government to the Melbourne Maritime Museum was broken—another of the Cain government's famous broken promises.

Instead of the promised $1 million an article about the matter was published in the Port of Melbourne Authority magazine *Panorama*. I am sure that magazine has a wide circulation and is read throughout the world with great interest! Nevertheless, the article is no substitute for the promised $1 million. The government has blatantly broken another promise, a promise made just prior to the last State election and broken less than twelve months later.

Cynicism reigns supreme among Cain government Ministers. The government cannot do anything right: the wheels are wobbling and they will soon fall off. It is incredible that the government has spat in the face of the National Trust of Australia. The government's time of reckoning will come. Organisations such as the National Trust of Australia, which have been friendly towards the government over the past few years, should behave in an unfriendly way in the future because of such government action.

Mr HAMILTON (Morwell)—The matter I grieve about today concerns problems confronting the people of the Glendonald community, an estate in the suburb of Churchill. This evening a meeting will be held in that community to discuss problems it has with the bussing of children to the nearest local primary school. There are three major aspects of the problem: firstly, overcrowding on the buses that take those pupils to the Churchill Primary School; the timetabling of those buses; and, thirdly and most importantly, the costs associated with travelling to that school on the bus.

The Glendonald estate was built by the then Housing Commission to cater for the expected growth in population in the Latrobe Valley prior to the construction of the Loy Yang power station. Some 250 houses were built, and when the boom did not come they were allocated to needy families. As a result, there is a large number of single parent families living in the estate. As often occurs, very few services were provided for those families—although over the past five or six years a number of services have been provided by the Federal, State and local governments. The community still lacks the essential service of a primary school. The nearest school is the Churchill Primary School, which is approximately 3 kilometres from Glendonald.

The school is separated from the community by the Midland Highway, which dissects the town of Churchill, and on which cars travel at high speed. It is dangerous for children to cross the highway on their way to and from school. There is an underpass but that necessitates the children taking a slightly longer route. Children being children, they do not always take the safest but less direct route; more often than not they try to cross the highway and face the hazards of high-speed traffic. In my younger days I walked or rode my bike an equivalent distance to school. But in those days there was far less traffic, I did not have to walk or ride through an urban community and certainly I did not have to cross a major highway on my way to school.

Because children live less than 4·8 kilometres from the school they do not receive free bus travel and have to pay similar fares to those paid by children in the suburbs. Such problems are exacerbated when, for example, five-year-olds who have just started school have to find their way to and from school along indirect and often unfamiliar routes. Often parents cannot accompany children to school because there are young ones at home who need care and attention and cannot be left on their own. Inclement weather adds to the difficulties experienced by single mothers—and most single-parent families in that community are headed by mothers. In the wet winter months of the third term, it is difficult for children to find dry paths along which to walk; and on rainy days it is difficult for them not to arrive at school wet and cold.

A large proportion of the single-parent families receive social security benefits. Generally many of them cannot afford to run motor cars. Driving children to school is not a problem for well-off families with two cars, but that is not a luxury enjoyed by the majority of this group of sole parents.

A bus service is provided by the Valley Transit bus company. The local police sergeant, who has taken an active interest in this matter, has told me that on many occasions there are too many students on the buses. As a result it is uncomfortable for little ones, in particular, who are likely to be pushed aside by pupils in grades 5 and 6 and, as a result, they have a less than pleasant trip to and from school.

There is also the associated safety factor which is governed by transport regulations. This matter is being investigated by the local police sergeant. That acts as a deterrent for a number of young children who head off to school. Sometimes when the child says that he or she does not want to go to school, to save an argument within the family the child is allowed to stay home. It is difficult—particularly with a number of socially disadvantaged groups—to create the right attitudes within the family to encourage a child to go to school.

We are all aware that it is important that young children develop good educational habits. One of the most important educational habits is not only to attend school regularly but also to attend school on time. That introduces the second problem of the timetabling of buses. The Latrobe Valley bus system revolves around the transport of the work force to and from the State Electricity Commission workplaces and those same buses, having finished the work runs, then pick up the schoolchildren for the

school runs. The school runs are then taken in some form of priority with the school buses picking up the rural children first. There is a commitment to pick up the post-primary children from Churchill to go to Morwell. The next priority, and the last priority for the bus company, is in effect a town bus service which the primary schoolchildren use to travel from Glendonald to the Churchill school. Often the school bus arrives 15 minutes after school classes have commenced. That causes problems for the school in that the children who have arrived late—it could be 60 or 70 children—miss out on that schooling.

Teachers are concerned not so much that the children are arriving late but that they are not getting into the habit of being punctual and settling down into class. I have had approaches from the teachers in the school about that problem and the effect it has on the opportunities for those children of participating in the education system. They, probably more than other children, need to have access to and participate in the school programs and to have the opportunity in the education system of advancing their social status and becoming adults who are able to contribute to society in a more advantageous manner than they and their families are able to do at the moment.

Generally through no fault of their own but of a number of circumstances they have no control over the situation. The most serious concern, and one which acts as a deterrent to the children attending school regularly—a number of children have not been able to attend at all—are the costs associated with the bus trip. Currently it costs 45 cents a trip, which is 90 cents a day because the children must travel back to Glendonald by the town bus service. Ninety cents a day is $4.50 a week, and for a person who is already on social security benefits that $4.50 represents a large slice out of an already tightly stretched budget. It is not unusual for families to have a number of children attending the primary school and some families are paying up to $13.50 a week to send their children to school. That is a large amount of money to find on a very tight budget for a group of people who are struggling. Often the parents will not have the 90 cents to give to the child in the morning and that in itself creates another opportunity for the child to miss a day at school or to be in an embarrassing situation where the child tries to use the bus service which has not been provided with the scratch tickets that will become availabe on the Met. It has caused a great deal of concern in the community. That problem is one that the government must recognise, given that a review of the school bus transport system has been implemented by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport. That review will examine a number of issues associated with school buses.

Being from a rural electorate, I am conscious that a large number of students need access to easy, suitable and appropriate transport to enable them to participate in the education system. I appreciate the equity arguments of this issue. Students who live in the metropolitan area and who have transport available less than 4·8 kilometres from their schools have to pay to travel on the transport system, but in rural Victoria, and certainly the part of Victoria in which I grew up, a free bus service was provided by the government. For families in reasonable circumstances the cost of transport to and from school each day may not represent a significant part of the budget. In the review that is being undertaken, the government must take account of those families who are disadvantaged and where the imposition of a transport cost for their children to go to and from school is a burden on an already stretched budget. That will not be in the best interests of the children.

It is easy to blame children for the faults of their parents, but the government should take note of the interests of children and ensure that it adopts a series of policies that will ensure that schoolchildren are not disadvantaged because of the circumstances of their parents. The government should take note of the problems I have raised on behalf of the community in Churchill and, more importantly, in terms of the review

it should introduce a system that will be not only equitable but also fair. We must realise that there is a large number of different financial and economic circumstances among many people in Victoria, and at various times those circumstances will be different for each group of people who are affected.

Mr LEIGH (Malvern)—I refer to a matter that I raised on 6 September concerning the activities of the Footscray City Council and its involvement in so-called business ventures. That night I accused the council—I make the point that I did not accuse the chief executive—of what I regarded as virtual blackmail and extortion tactics in ensuring a building development program was able to get off the ground.

On 26 May 1988 the Premier, on a boat trip down the Maribyrnong River, launched what was to be known as the City Link project. This was the second time the project was launched. To pay off the debts of the first launch, if you like, I believe the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd donated—I say "donated" because it claims it loaned the money but everyone knows how it operated—between $2 million and $4·5 million.

One has to remember that at that time the then Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources was the local member and was in charge of the VIC when the deal took place.

I do not care two hoots about the City Link project or the developers involved because it is a private company and, so far as I am aware, it has done nothing against the law. It is not my role as a member of Parliament to question the activities of a private company. However, it is my role as a member of Parliament to question the use of either taxpayers' or ratepayers' money in ventures.

I suppose I am here to restate my position. On 9 October the council passed a resolution directed at me from which I quote:

> That council demands that Mr Leigh back up his claims of extortion, blackmail, the misleading of Parliament and actions bordering on corruption at a meeting of the council and citizens of Footscray, and further demands that if he is not prepared to do this, he publicly apologise and retract his statements.

I do not retract my statements; I stand by them. The fact is that this council claimed it was going to make a $1 million profit. I claimed it was going to make a loss of $2 million.

The council now claims it is going to make a loss of $200 000. If one combines the original profit with the now admitted loss, one comes up with a figure of $1·2 million. The fact is we are $800 000 apart. The ratepayers of Footscray are the ones who are going to have to foot the bill. No matter what they do, they are going to lose money on this. I stand by my claim about a loss of $2 million. In fact, I suspect that it will be more than $2 million.

The reason I got involved in the use of terms like "extortion" is that there is a handful of people yet to sell properties and until the council is able to put together a package and obtain a planning permit, it cannot pass the land onto the developers. They need this land desperately. It is costing them about $90 000 a month in holding costs to keep this going. It is now nine months after the development was supposed to have started, so that amounts to $810 000, according to the council, for a start. This is one of the Premier's brilliant schemes.

The council is desperate, $810 000 later, to solve the problem so it is trying to squeeze the last handful of people involved to get its hands on the property. I do not understand why a council has to involve itself in development ventures.

If anybody is to make a profit, in my view, it should be the owners. If it were my property, why should the council acquire it from me to flog it to somebody else? It should not! It is my right to make money out of it, not the right of the council.

In my opinion, the council is screwed up—and I use that term deliberately—because, at the same time all this is going on, we have a council whose commitment is to spend $1·6 million on the Footscray Football Club. An article in the *Sun* of 6 September states:

> . . . A $600 000 cash injection . . . A $400 000 commitment to upgrade grandstands . . . Negotiations on Footscray's behalf to secure a minimum $600 000 sponsorship . . .

I am not necessarily a Footscray supporter—nor am I against the club—but I do not understand what the business of this council has to do with spending ratepayers' money on the Footscray Football Club. The roads in the municipality are falling to bits and social services are under extreme pressure. What is the alternative—To play games with a football club! Let's get it right! What is wrong is that the council is not prepared to do the things it is supposed to do. As I said, I think it is somewhat screwed up.

I return to the activities of the Minister for Local Government. I approached her about this and received a letter from her spokesperson stating:

> On behalf of the Minister, the Hon. Maureen Lyster MLC, I acknowledge your letter regarding the above.
>
> The matter you raise in your correspondence is receiving attention and a detailed response will follow as soon as possible.

The Minister has already put out a press release in the local paper saying she is going to do nothing. Here is a council which has virtually lost $2 million, which is trying to pick off individuals and acquire their properties and which wants to spend money on a football club, and the Minister says that everything is hunky-dory and she does not want to participate in the investigation of this council! The fact is that this council has gone off-stream.

One of the councillors, June King, said the council had been running a witch-hunt against her since December in a bid to cover up its own incompetence. That is one of the councillors of Footscray saying that, not me. A whole series of things are going on in Footscray which the council is trying to hide. Some of the problems do not relate to the present chief executive and I accept that. But, how can one get involved in things like building developments when one does not know the cost? It has received $1·5 million from City Link and will have to carry the cost until 1992.

There are many developers in Melbourne who say this concept is marginal but, leaving that aside—that is not my business—the fact is the council is getting itself deeper and deeper into trouble. Indeed, what the local ratepayers are saying is interesting. The Footscray ratepayers association says it is most concerned about the activities of the council and wants to know what ratepayers' money has got to do with a football club.

When it comes to the nitty-gritty, who is one of the biggest creditors of the Footscray Football Club? It is none other than the Footscray City Council. Once again, there is a series of activities and malpractices of Labor administrations because they think they are so safe in their own arrogance in these types of communities that they can get away with anything.

I should like to compare Footscray, with the City of Oakleigh. Do honourable members know how many Australian Labor Party councillors are left there—and it is still a safe Labor seat? One! The very power brokers in that city lost office. What I

consider to be their corrupt practices and misuses of power resulted in the ratepayers throwing them out.

In conclusion, I predict that the City of Footscray and its ratepayers will pay for a very long time indeed for the incompetent administration in the running of that city and, the sooner the Minister for Local Government decides to earn her salary and stand up to some of her factional colleagues and get on with the job of defending the ratepayers and representatives in local government—which is her job—the sooner we might have a council in the City of Footscray that is a bit more representative of the activity that local government ought to be proceeding with.

I think it is a disgrace that so far the Minister for Local Government has done nothing but sit on her bottom. It is time she took some action and if she did, we might find the Labor Party out of office—in the City of Footscray, admittedly—but she might have done the public a service.

The question was agreed to.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Government Employee Housing Authority Act 1981 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

CRIMES (FAMILY VIOLENCE) (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Crimes (Family Violence) Act has been in operation since December 1987. The Act empowers magistrates to make intervention orders in cases of family violence. Since the Act has been in operation, over 5000 intervention orders have been granted. This statistic highlights the prevalence of family violence in our community and also reflects the usefulness of the legislation.

Over the past 22 months of the Act's operation, it has become apparent that several issues require legislative clarification. The Bill addresses those issues. Its main purposes are: to facilitate the making of intervention orders to protect children, young people and people with disabilities; to expand the category of people who can seek an order to include people suffering abuse from relatives and those who are not "ordinarily members of the household"; to broaden the criteria for issuing warrants and interim orders; to clarify the means of service of a complaint and to provide that an order is to be deemed to be served in certain cases; and to clarify police powers to seize firearms.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Those who work with the Act have identified particular issues related to protection of children and young people. At present a child under eighteen years cannot apply for an intervention order in his or her own right. An application can be made on behalf of a child by a member of the Police Force, a parent of the child or any other person with the written consent of a parent of the child.

The Bill seeks to provide further protection for children and young adults in three ways. Firstly, it changes the definition of "child" from someone under eighteen years, to someone under seventeen years, making it consistent with the Children and Young Persons Act. A seventeen-year-old will thus be treated as an adult for the purposes of the Act. Secondly, it gives fourteen to sixteen-year-olds standing to apply for an intervention order in their own right. Community legal centres and women's advocate groups have indicated that a range of young people have the confidence to seek intervention orders without assistance from a third party. Lastly, it provides for a third party to be empowered to apply for an order on behalf of a child with leave of the court. Experience has revealed a need for a mechanism to enable a third party to apply for an order on behalf of a child without parental consent. A parent may not be prepared to consent to an order against an abusing parent or against an abusing sibling.

This third amendment will allow for friends and relatives outside of the immediate family to apply for an intervention order on behalf of a child without parental consent to the application. Likewise, child protection workers and other protective interveners will be enabled to assist children and young people without parental consent. Of course, leave to make an application will not be given automatically to third parties; the court will grant leave only if it considers that it is in the best interests of the child to do so.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

If the victim of violence is an adult with a mental or intellectual disability rendering him or her incapable of consenting to an application for an order, the victim's guardian—as appointed under the Guardianship and Administration Board Act 1986—will be empowered to apply for an order. In cases where the guardian is unwilling or unable to take out a complaint for an order, the Bill provides for third parties to seek leave of the court to do so. Again, leave will be granted only if that is in the best interests of the victim.

BROADENING THE DEFINITION OF FAMILY MEMBER

The Bill expands the definition of family member. The effect of this will be to broaden the category of persons against whom a victim of violence can obtain an order. This category will now include relatives of the victim and a person with whom the victim is having or has had an intimate personal relationship. The New South Wales legislation governing family violence was extended to include both these categories in 1988. Inclusion of relatives is of particular importance for ethnic communities with close-knit and/or extended families.

A range of advocate groups and service providers have consistently identified difficulty in gaining protection for persons who are having or have had an intimate personal relationship with their abuser. The Bill affords protection to such people. An intimate personal relationship may be a girl/boyfriend-type relationship, or alternatively a "friendship" between people who are not sexually intimate. It could also include persons who have had a "one night stand" which results in continued harassment, molestation or advances from one of the parties.

URGENT PROTECTION OF PROPERTY

To address the need in some cases for urgent protection of property, the Bill makes provision for the issue of a warrant or an interim intervention order where damage to property is threatened or is likely to occur. At present an interim intervention order or a warrant can be issued only if the personal safety of the victim is at risk.

Many instances of violence occur in the absence of the victim. Victimisation can occur in varying ways. For example, a victim may return home to find car tyres

slashed, or the house and garden damaged. Alternatively, the victim may be inside the home when doors and windows are smashed, but not be physically assaulted. These forms of violence can be as equally intimidating and painful as physical assault and indeed may create an unrelenting state of fear.

It is not intended that incidental damage to property would justify the issue of a warrant or an interim intervention order. Instead, what is envisaged is malicious damage to property with the intent to frighten or hurt the family member, or relatives or friends of the family member.

SERVICE

The Bill seeks to clarify issues related to service of complaints and to provide that an intervention order is to be deemed to be served in certain cases for the purposes of breach proceedings.

The principal Act requires a defendant to have been served with a copy of the intervention order before it has effect, and before penalties for a breach can be enforced. This requirement has created unnecessary disadvantages for the victim. If a defendant is in court when an order is granted, the magistrate must explain the conditions of the order to the defendant. In some instances the defendant leaves the court without a copy of the order. Unless the order is subsequently personally served on the defendant, action in breach of the order will not constitute an offence under the Act. Many defendants avoid service knowing that they cannot be guilty of breaching an order if it has not been served.

To address this problem the Bill provides that once the defendant has had the conditions of the order explained to him or her by the court, the order will be deemed to have been served for the purposes of breach proceedings. A copy of the order will still be required to be served on the defendant. The Bill also clarifies that the court can make an order for substituted service if the normal processes of service cannot be effected.

SEIZURE OF FIREARMS

The final amendment made by the Bill is in relation to seizure of firearms. At present the principal Act empowers a member of the Police Force to seize firearms if he or she is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that there are grounds for the issue of an intervention order. The Bill clarifies that if an intervention order is already in force, police can seize firearms whether or not firearms are mentioned in the order.

CONCLUSION

The Bill has been drafted after extensive consultation with legal centres, women's advocacy groups, police and other service providers. Amendments made by the Bill will provide more effective protection for victims of family violence. Sadly, such protection is still all too often required.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

I ask whether the Opposition can be briefed on the matters raised in the Bill.

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I am happy to provide a briefing to the Opposition.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This package of amendments to the Environment Protection Act will provide the Environment Protection Authority with enhanced powers to ensure that industry improves its environmental performance and that, in line with the State conservation strategy, the polluter-pays principle is more effectively reflected in fees, charges, and penalties under the Environment Protection Act.

The proposed changes will enable the EPA to respond more efficiently and effectively to increasing community concerns over environmental protection issues and to adopt a more pro-active stance. The amendments will ensure that the rapidly increasing costs of regulating and monitoring industry to achieve necessary standards can be met without imposing an ever-increasing burden on public resources.

Although the Bill includes a wide range of amendments, a principal focus is to ensure that, potentially environmentally damaging chemicals are carefully managed to minimise the risk of environmental harm. To achieve this objective, it is intended to extend existing controls so that those chemicals which are regarded as being particularly environmentally hazardous can be regulated under the Environment Protection Act.

Current EPA controls over the use or handling of chemicals are based upon a restricted definition of "notifiable chemicals". Notifiable chemicals at present include only those chemicals for which there is not available in Victoria any satisfactory facility for disposal or destruction. This limited definition fails to encompass the wide range of chemicals which can pose a serious risk to the environment.

The government, therefore, sees it as essential to expand the definition of notifiable chemicals to enable the EPA to act where necessary to control a broader range of environmentally hazardous chemicals. Accordingly, the Bill provides for such chemicals to be regulated as "notifiable chemicals", enabling the application of powers which already exist in the Act to require firms which use more than the prescribed quantity or concentrations of these chemicals to notify the authority and to comply with the rules and requirements of relevant industrial waste management policies. This will be a major step forward in ensuring the application of the "cradle to grave" philosophy of waste management which underpins the government's industrial waste strategy.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Dangerous Goods Act provide for the protection of human health and property from the adverse effects of industrial chemicals. This amendment will ensure that the environment is protected as well.

To avoid any overlap or duplication of requirements under the Dangerous Goods Act, and to minimise unnecessary administrative burden on industry, the two responsible agencies—the EPA and the Department of Labour—will clearly delineate areas of responsibility to ensure that duplication or overlap of function is avoided.

In special circumstances, it is essential that urgent action can be taken to avert a threat of severe environmental degradation. The Bill, therefore, provides a fast track mechanism to control certain chemicals. This provision is intended for use only in exceptional circumstances where there is the immediate danger of serious, adverse environmental effects. This mechanism involves declaration of a substance as a notifiable chemical and immediate application of appropriate controls through order of the Governor in Council. This mechanism will complement similar provisions in

the Agricultural Chemicals Act, which allow for rapid control of sale and use of substances.

The discovery of severely contaminated soil on residential blocks in Ardeer has demonstrated the need for new mechanisms to protect the community. The Bill establishes certificates of environmental audit which will provide a general mechanism by which planning authorities, government agencies and the private sector can be readily and authoritatively assured that land is free from contamination. Such certificates can be prepared only by approved environmental auditors. Where appropriate, these certificates may be called upon through other legislation.

The licensing of industrial premises and the various monitoring and works approval provisions of the Environment Protection Act have gone a long way towards minimising the risk of gross contamination of the environment by routine industrial operations. However, serious environmental contamination can still occur as a result of accidents and spills. Obviously, major accidents involving fires, explosions or road transport spills will be rapidly brought to the attention of the EPA through the emergency services network.

There are, however, a large number of industrial accidents which do not pose an immediate hazard to human health or property but which can cause significant environmental damage. Such accidents very often do not involve the emergency services. The Bill, therefore, provides for mandatory reporting to the EPA of significant spills of environmentally hazardous substances. Such spills must be reported as soon after the incident as possible, so that appropriate clean up or remedial measures can be instigated.

The list of chemicals covered by this requirement will be broad and, in the first instance, will be based upon the chemical listing of the United States of America Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. All notifiable chemicals will also be reportable. This provision will complement section 32 of the Dangerous Goods Act, focusing on environmental protection rather than injury to property or humans.

An important component of the Bill aims to encourage industry to adopt a more responsible and responsive approach to meeting community expectations of improved environmental performance. Some industries by their nature are more likely to have a major impact upon the environment and for those industries the authority will be requiring a greater degree of responsibility and care. The type of industries which require such additional responsibility will be declared from time to time by the Governor in Council.

Firms within these industry groups will become subject to much tighter scrutiny by the EPA and to more stringent licensing provisions. Rigorous environmental monitoring and audit by independent environmental auditors will be required. Results of such monitoring and audit must be published in local newspapers or other appropriate media, representing a timely step towards ensuring that the community has access to information relevant to its health and welfare.

Information on the firm's environmental performance supplied by such firms to comply with these conditions must be certified by statutory declaration of the company chief executive officer. Severe penalties will apply to any false declaration.

Provision is made to enable the EPA to exempt individual firms from these stricter licensing requirements if they adhere to the provisions of an Environment Improvement Plan—EIP—approved by the authority. Plans would require compliance with all relevant policies, licences and regulations and must include adequate

monitoring arrangements and mechanisms for ensuring community participation in performance evaluation.

The vigilance of the community in ensuring that industry meets current expectations of sound and responsible management of discharges and wastes is essential if the overall environmental performance of industry is to be improved.

There is now a growing awareness within the community of the immense harm done to our environment by the indiscriminate use of packaging materials and by the excessive use of disposable products. Such products add to an unsightly litter stream, take up scarce landfill space, and unnecessarily consume natural resources.

Despite the potential of many packaging materials and single use disposable products to cause considerable environmental damage, to date the EPA has had only limited powers to regulate or control their introduction or use. Moreover, as has been recently shown in the case of photodegradable plastic bags, such products may require careful evaluation to determine their overall environmental effect.

The Bill, therefore, gives the authority power to require preparation of environmental impact reports on potentially damaging products and also provides a head of power to regulate the use of such products.

In addition to these vital measures designed to prevent environmental contamination, the government will introduce a series of measures which will ensure that it is polluters and not the community and taxpayers who bear the costs of protecting our environment.

In line with this "polluter-pays principle", the Bill provides for the introduction of an environment protection levy implemented via a "surcharge" on licences. The 3 per cent surcharge will apply to industries with significant potential to degrade the environment, particularly those scheduled premises which produce, store, or handle prescribed industrial wastes and/or notifiable chemicals.

Unlike licence fees which are currently paid into consolidated revenue, levy funds will be used to activate the Environment Protection Fund—established in 1970—and will be used solely for the purpose of protecting the environment. The activation of this special fund indicates this government's commitment to ensuring that all possible measures are taken to protect the environment, and demonstrates its willingness to adopt innovative strategies to achieve this end.

In 1988 the government acted to reduce the risk of long-term contamination of sites involved in the storage and treatment of industrial wastes by introducing financial assurance provisions into the Environment Protection Act. These provisions require occupiers of such sites—along with applicants for permits to transport prescribed waste—to provide the EPA with a satisfactory form of financial guarantee to cover the potential costs of any clean-up of the site. Not only does this reduce the risk of contamination, but also it ensures that, if the worst happens, the polluter and not the taxpayer pays. Options for such financial assurances are varied, but include such traditional methods as insurance or bank guarantee.

Clearly, while waste storage and treatment sites are of particular concern, there is an urgent need to extend financial assurance provisions to include other sites where there is a potential need for site clean-up. Such sites will be designated as schedule five premises, and will include petroleum storage depots which handle large quantities of materials in a manner which poses an inherently high risk of long-term environmental contamination, and which could cost many millions of dollars to clean up. Many of these sites will already be licensed premises, and it is not intended to require additional licence fees.

Industry and local government bodies affected by this extension of financial assurance provisions will be able to discuss with the EPA the most effective and efficient means of providing a satisfactory form of assurance. Sufficient flexibility exists to prevent an unduly onerous burden being imposed, particularly in the case of local government, since municipalities have assured long-term continuity of existence.

Pollution abatement notices—section 31A; noise control notices—section 47; and clean-up notices—section 62A, are issued where there is evidence of pollution occurring, or where the activities at a premises have the potential to cause pollution. Generally those premises subject to pollution abatement orders are quite small, and are, therefore, not already licensed. However, the task of supervising these premises is both costly and time-consuming, requiring inspection and review to ensure that necessary abatement works have been carried out.

The Bill, therefore, provides for premises subject to such notices to be designated as supervised premises in a new schedule to the Act. As scheduled premises, they would be required to pay a licence fee for the period during which they are under supervision of the authority. Typically, this period would be the duration of the notice, but could be extended—subject to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

This mechanism will ensure that some of the costs of supervising such premises can be recovered from the particular firms involved. As such, it represents another important step towards ensuring that it is polluters, and not the community at large, who pay the costs of environmental protection. In addition, this provision will provide a strong incentive for firms to rapidly respond to pan or clean-up orders.

The upper limits on licence and works approvals fees in the present Act over the years have led to many large companies not paying their way in an environmental sense. To address this problem, the Bill abolishes these limits. This will provide the flexibility that is needed to ensure that fees accurately reflect both the potential environmental impact of a firm's operations and the government resources required to regulate it effectively. All too often, firms found guilty of offences under the Act are awarded bonds rather than fines by magistrates. One large company has received five bonds and one trivial fine since 1984, totally negating the deterrent effect Parliament had intended when setting the maximum penalties for offences.

In future, to ensure that Parliament's intentions are better reflected in sentences, the Bill establishes minimum penalties, firstly, in cases where, within any five-year period, an offender is convicted of a second offence; and, secondly, in cases where a person or firm is convicted of intentionally or recklessly polluting the environment.

It is with regret that the government feels compelled to introduce minimum penalties. However, it is essential that polluters no longer be able to avoid their responsibility to the community. Moreover, for those industries willing to adopt a responsible attitude to the environment and to the management of their wastes, there will be no impact from these changes.

Another change, designed to ensure that polluters do not evade their responsibilities, involves amending the Act so that licence holders, charged with a pollution offence, who wish to use the defence of compliance with their licence must prove they were within their licence, rather than as at present where such firms can choose to shelter behind an assertion of complying with an existing licence, in order to avoid conviction. This in no way alters the fundamental requirement for the prosecution to prove the charge.

The Bill includes a large number of amendments which will improve efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. These include: the introduction of staged works

approvals and combined licences, and rationalisation of the existing system of scheduled premises to bring schedule three premises under the works approval system.

Other changes address various anomalies and loopholes. Such amendments affect motor vehicle pollution controls; penalty provisions for breach of waste transport regulations; and authority approval of regional refuse disposal groups' general plans.

This package of amendments demonstrates the government's continued commitment to ensuring the best possible environment quality for all Victorians. Despite the great progress made in recent years towards establishing sound environmental controls in Victoria, I should stress that the government will not be resting on its laurels, and will continue to review and evaluate all options to ensure that Victoria has the best possible system of environmental controls. Protecting the environment is a matter of crucial importance, and these amendments address issues which must be acted upon without delay.

I commend this Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr LEIGH (Malvern), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, October 24.

The motion was agreed to.

HOUSE CONTRACTS GUARANTEE (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

When I proposed the House Contracts Guarantee (Amendment) Bill 1988, I foreshadowed that further amendments to the principal Act would be required and were being worked upon. Since then, we have consulted with the various interested parties, such as the Housing Industry Association, the Master Builders Association, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and, of course, the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd which is the approved guarantor under the Act. The Bill before the House reflects the input from that consultation.

One of the objects of the Bill is to close several loopholes in the Act. A major area of concern has been with tradesmen who have not provided a guarantee on home building work worth more than $3000 because they have split the job into two or more contracts. This can be done by writing separate contracts for the installation of different items, or by issuing one contract for supply of materials and another for installation.

As a simple example—a home owner ordering a new kitchen may be asked by the contractor to sign one contract for $12 000 for cupboards, benchtops and appliances, and another for $2999 for installing those fittings. Such arrangements will now be covered by the legislation and the contractor will have to be an approved builder, register the job with the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd and provide a seven-year guarantee. It will now also be an offence to use such means to attempt to avoid the legislation.

The Bill will also tighten loopholes in sections relating to owner-builders. People who are not approved builders will be allowed to build a house only if they intend to live in it and the house is not built in the course of carrying on a business of building houses. Until now people have been able to register several houses at once with the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd as owner-built houses, and there has been no way of stopping them from doing this regularly. I recall an instance where there were nine owner-built houses built by the one owner-builder and presumably he stayed one night in each.

The government is concerned that such people are in the business of building and should be subject to the same laws as other builders. At the same time, we do not want to stop genuine owner-builders from building their own homes.

From now on, people who sell houses as owner-builders and are actually found to be in the business of building will be liable under the Act for any defects in the houses. For example, if the Housing Guarantee Fund pays out on a claim against it for defective tiling, it will be able to claim that amount from the builder. Until now it has been able to claim money back only from approved builders but not from illegal builders, who are more likely to produce shoddy work.

There will be a further tightening of provisions relating to supervision contracts. Some builders have persuaded home owners to notify the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd that their house will be constructed or renovated by them as owner-builders, although all supervision and management of the work will be done by the builder. Such arrangements are rarely in writing and are designed to avoid the legislation.

The changes will mean that supervision contracts will now be required to be in writing and to contain particulars such as the names of the parties, the agreed price and the commencement date. A supervisor will also have to register a contract to supervise the construction or improvement of a house with the Housing Guarantee Fund Ltd and provide a seven-year guarantee.

The Bill will not affect such people as interior decorators who merely supervise interior decoration, unless there are alterations to the structure of the house or rigid fixtures integral to the functioning of the house are installed or replaced. A guarantee would be required if a person supervised the removal of a wall or installation of a new doorway, because such work is structural. A guarantee would also be required if a person supervised the installation of a new bathroom because baths, basins and toilets are considered rigid fixtures integral to the functioning of the house. However, there will be no need for a guarantee for supervising the laying of new carpet, painting either inside or out, wallpapering or the installation of wall units or wardrobes.

There has been some argument that not all purchasers of house and land packages are protected by the Act. This has been raised where the vendor of the package, usually a developer, is not a builder, and the purchaser has only signed a contract with the developer. The Bill deems a contract to exist between the builder and the purchaser, and thus ensures that the purchaser will be covered for any failure by the builder. It should be noted that the guarantee will cover the builder's contractual obligations, but not the vendor's. Like all real estate buyers, the purchaser of a house and land package will still run the risk that the vendor cannot or will not settle the sale for reasons that have nothing to do with the builder.

The Act will now cover the conversion of factories or warehouses into homes and will also cover situations where a builder completes the work of another who is unwilling to finish the job.

The Bill clarifies the rights and obligations of mortgagees, trustees or successors in title to owner-builders who want to sell an owner-built house that is less than seven

years old. Such people may sell owner-built houses, provided they follow the same steps that owner-builders must follow when they sell their houses.

At present the Act provides that, where a builder constructs three or more houses for a person, that person is not covered by a guarantee, although any subsequent purchaser of the house will be. The Bill provides that where that person is the Director of Housing, a guarantee will now be provided.

For the first time, the relocation of old houses will be covered, whether or not services such as lighting, heating and water are connected to the house.

The Bill will allow the Housing Guarantee Fund to issue conditional certificates of guarantee which state that a house will be covered by a guarantee upon completion of the sale of the house. People will be permitted to sell a house which is not yet covered by a guarantee. Provided that they have obtained a conditional certificate of guarantee, this will resolve a conflict that now exists between sections 5 and 6 of the Act.

Builders sometimes enter into contracts that include both work that is subject to a guarantee, and other work that is not—for example, a contract to construct a house extension and an outdoor swimming pool. The Bill provides that a builder must set out in writing the price of the work guaranteed, and the price of the other work.

If the foundations or footings of a house move, the Bill clarifies that the approved builder who laid them will be considered responsible, not any sub-contractor. Monetary limits will now be able to be increased by regulation so that inflation adjustments may take place more regularly.

Contracts will now have to state the date when work is to begin and an estimated date of completion. Until now many builders have not provided this information. This has meant that it has been difficult for a consumer to claim damages in the event of deliberate delays in beginning or finishing the work.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mrs WADE (Kew), the debate was adjourned.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

Mrs WADE (Kew)—The Bill will require detailed consideration. At first glance it appears to be an authoritarian Bill as it imposes considerable additional obligations on a variety of people, including people not presently covered by the legislation.

The Minister has obviously consulted widely and has given details of some of the people whom he has consulted, and it is likely that the opposition parties will also wish to discuss the proposed legislation with those people and other people. I have had a number of complaints about the existing legislation.

I seek an assurance from the Minister that a briefing will be available and additional time will be provided if required.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Consumer Affairs) (*By leave*)—I, as a matter of course, provide opportunities for briefing to the spokespersons of the opposition parties and will certainly do so again in this instance. I imagine it is unlikely that the Bill will be debated in two weeks' time. I shall certainly discuss any extension of time with the honourable member for Kew if that turns out to be necessary.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

WILDLIFE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

PURPOSE OF BILL

The Bill proposes amendments to the Wildlife Act 1975 to simplify wildlife licensing provisions and rectify current inadequacies in the Act which relate to possession and trade of wildlife in Victoria.

These amendments will provide the foundation for the development and implementation of a revised wildlife licensing system and, for the first time, provide the Director-General of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands with the power to control the movement of wildlife in and out of Victoria.

The amendments will not impede legitimate possession and trade of wildlife in Victoria but will strengthen the legislative basis for detection and prevention of illegal activities.

BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of a wildlife licensing system is for the protection of wild populations. Licensing the possession, trade and movement of wildlife provides a mechanism which allows the government to monitor these activities and to ensure that wildlife from illegal sources does not enter private or commercial trade. It is important that this objective is appreciated. The link between licensing captive stock and the protection of wild stocks is not always clearly understood.

By licensing persons involved in the possession and trade of wildlife and requiring those persons to be accountable, the government has the mechanism to monitor the source and movement of wildlife and protect indigenous fauna against illegitimate acquisition or disposal.

Without these controls on possession and trade, the potential exists for wildlife to be taken unlawfully from the wild for commercial gain without any mechanism for detection. Unlawful actions may range from the removal of eggs or dependent young from the nest to the inclusion of illegally shot kangaroo meat in consignments of kangaroo products from interstate. These activities may have a marked and detrimental impact on wild stocks, particularly if rare or endangered species are involved. There have been cases where illegal activities have significantly affected wild populations on a local basis.

A successful licensing system requires appropriate legislation and appropriate administrative systems in order to achieve its objectives. It must provide for legitimate possession and trade while including sufficient checks and balances to protect stocks of native fauna in the wild.

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The current wildlife licensing system was introduced in 1980, five years after the proclamation of the Wildlife Act 1975, which provides for possession and trade of wildlife for commercial and private purposes. There are seventeen different licence categories in the Act which cover a range of activities conducted by private wildlife fanciers, wildlife dealers, wildlife processors, taxidermists, wildlife parks, and so on.

Approximately 8500 persons are authorised under the wildlife licensing provisions of the Wildlife Act to keep birds, mammals and reptiles. However, since its introduction, the current licensing system has become progressively more complex and difficult to administer, presenting difficulties for the Department of Conservation,

Forests and Lands, licensees and other interested parties. These difficulties have arisen due to a combination of administrative problems, legislative inadequacies and High Court interpretations of section 92 of the Constitution, as it relates to interstate trade in wildlife.

The current licence categories include a complex system of endorsements for numbers and species which are difficult to understand and time consuming to administer. These have contributed to the present situation and are a source of frustration to many licensees. These problems were further exacerbated by having the licence categories and entitlements specified in the Act which did not afford flexibility in addressing these problems.

This situation led to widespread criticism of the present wildlife licensing system. This criticism included allegations that, because of a lack of sufficient controls, Victoria was becoming a centre for the distribution of illegally obtained wildlife. That is, the system was not achieving its objectives of protecting wild stocks.

As a result of this, in April 1987, the previous Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands initiated a review of wildlife possession and trade. The aim of this review was to produce a revised wildlife licensing system which is less complex to administer or understand, which protects wild populations of animals and which provides for the legal possession and trade of wildlife in Victoria.

That review, which involved an extensive public consultation process, identified a number of areas which require legislative amendments. The amendments put forward in this Bill will provide flexibility within the licensing system, permitting the system to be progressively modified in the future, to accommodate changing community attitudes and changing conservation status of wildlife species. The amendments will also provide the department with the necessary mechanisms for monitoring wildlife possession, trade and movement in Victoria.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGISLATION

An important aspect of the review process was the consultation with both government and private parties, in Victoria and interstate. There have been two rounds of public consultation to date, and many of the submissions received have been of great value in clarifying contentious issues and proposing appropriate action.

After the first round of consultation, a report was prepared and circulated to all persons who had made written or verbal submissions. Further input as a result of this report has been incorporated into the final review document.

CONTENTS OF THE BILL

The amendments proposed in this Bill rectify the legislative inadequacies identified by the wildlife possession and trade review and introduce flexibility in prescribing licence categories and entitlements.

The amendments will remove from the Act reference to specific licence categories and establish a head of power for the director-general to issue wildlife licences for commercial or private purposes. Actual licence categories will be prescribed by regulation and will be subject to conditions, limitations and restrictions. These regulations will be subject to the regulatory impact statement process. This will resolve the problem of having redundant licence categories in the Act which the department has to continue to administer, or having to amend primary legislation in order to implement new licences.

One of the major shortcomings of the present wildlife licensing system is the inability of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands to adequately monitor the

movement of wildlife in and out of this State. The Bill provides for the establishment of an import-export authorisation system. The implementation of such a system has the support of conservation agencies in other States and Territories and will not operate to impede the movement of lawfully acquired and held wildlife. Persons holding wildlife will be required to apply to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands for approval to move wildlife into or out of this State. This will provide the department with the opportunity of ensuring that stock has been legally acquired and held in the State of origin.

The penalties in the Wildlife Act were largely set in 1975. These will be amended to reflect the conservation status of species and to provide a deterrent based on current market values of the particular wildlife species. For example, many bird and reptile species may be valued at up to several thousand dollars. Penalties for illegal taking and trading must provide sufficient disincentive to deter such activities and accordingly protect wild stocks. The penalties will also be converted to penalty units.

The amendments will make it clear that to "take from the wild" without a specific authority from the director-general is an offence; currently this is not clearly stated in the Act. The amendments will also make it an offence to be in possession of wildlife taken illegally whether in this State or in another State or Territory, even if the person holding such wildlife is licensed to hold that species in Victoria. Again, this will strengthen the department's ability to protect wild stocks of wildlife.

The Bill includes provision for appeals against decisions by the director-general to be made to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal instead of to the Minister, as at present.

To achieve the objectives of the new licensing arrangements the definition of wildlife will be expanded by the inclusion of reference to skeletal material and tissue—such as internal organs. There will be ample provision for further public input to the finalisation of the licence categories and entitlements during the regulatory impact statement phase.

CONCLUSION

These amendments to the Wildlife Act will provide the necessary framework to implement and administer a new wildlife licensing system for both private and commercial purposes. The amendments represent a significant improvement over the current system and will enable effective control over the trade, possession and movement of wildlife to ensure the protection of wild populations of birds, mammals and reptiles.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr COLEMAN (Syndal), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill proposes a number of amendments to the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982 to mirror amendments made by the Commonwealth in 1987. The Bill aims to improve the administration of petroleum exploration and development activities in Australian offshore waters and to correct some anomalies in the legislation.

In late 1985, the Commonwealth government announced the outcome of its review of the 1979 Offshore Constitutional Settlement—OCS. The outcome was that the Commonwealth government considered that the arrangements entered into by the Commonwealth with the States and the Northern Territory to administer activities in Australia's offshore waters were working satisfactorily, and, therefore, decided not to take action to regain title over the territorial sea and coastal waters.

Under the current legislation, a location can be declared over a petroleum discovery in an exploration permit only if the location contains a block in which an exploratory well has been drilled and from which petroleum has been recovered. This has led to the situation where a discovery which straddles a permit boundary, and for which only one exploratory well has been drilled, cannot be fully developed. This arises because a location can be declared in the permit in which the exploratory well has been drilled and, hence, subsequent production licences or retention leases cannot be granted over the whole discovery. Although the problem could be overcome by drilling a second exploratory well in the other permit, this practice may not be justified economically or technically.

A further difficulty with the current legislation is that the size of a location is generally set at nine blocks. In many instances this size is much larger than necessary to cover the discovery—although, on occasions, the nine-block location has been too small to cover some very large gas discoveries.

To overcome these difficulties clause 7 amends the current legislation to allow the Minister to declare a location over any block from which the Minister is satisfied petroleum can be recovered. The Minister will also be able to declare a location over as many blocks as it is necessary to cover the discovery. The Bill also provides for the expansion or reduction of a location area if further information indicates a change in the extent of the petroleum discovery.

The Bill will repeal what are known as "over-the-counter" awards of permits and production licences. If, following the advertising of invitations for the grant of an exploration permit or production licence over an area, the Minister decides not to grant a title or grants a title over part of the area, under existing legislation there is provision for the Minister to accept applications for the award of a title over the area or any remaining part of the area.

The Commonwealth believes the most efficient approach to the award of offshore titles is by competitive tendering. Given this principle and the regular release of offshore petroleum acreage, this government agrees, and it sees no need for "over-the-counter" awards of titles.

The amendments contained in clause 14 follow representations from petroleum companies. Under the existing legislation, applications to register a dealing affecting the interests in a title under section 81 of the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982 must be accompanied by an instrument evidencing the dealing and an instrument prescribed in regulations, if any. The instrument evidencing the dealing is available for public inspection and, as these instruments can contain sensitive contractual information, a number of companies have sought protection for this confidential information.

The Commonwealth government shares the industry's concerns and the amendments seek to provide adequate protection for confidential information while safeguarding the public interest. The Bill makes corresponding amendments to Victorian legislation.

Clause 17 relates to the 1985 amendments to section 118 of the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, which provided for the early release of basic data and

interpretive information supplied by titleholders to the government, subject to appeals provisions relating to the release of interpretive information after five years.

It was both the Victorian and Commonwealth governments' intention that these amendments to section 118 should apply to data and information supplied both before and after the amendments were proclaimed on 22 July 1985. The amending legislation was, however, defective in that the new section 118 provisions do not apply to data and information supplied before the date of proclamation. As the early release of information facilitates a better understanding of the petroleum potential of offshore areas and, consequently, encourages further exploration activity, the amendments rectify the situation and clause 17 amends the Act appropriately. Release of commercially sensitive information is subject to the usual appeals provisions set out in the Act.

The proposed amendments contained in the Bill have been the subject of consultation with the States, the Commonwealth, and the industry; and, with a few exceptions, the amendments have general support. The amendments are essential to the effective and efficient administration of the joint offshore petroleum legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr LEIGH (Malvern), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL (PLANNING) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

OBJECTS OF THE BILL

The purposes of the Bill are to make a number of amendments to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act and the Planning Appeals Act in order to increase the efficiency of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and to streamline the hearing of appeals.

Approximately 5500 appeals a year are currently lodged with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, of which 4350 are appeals against planning decisions. This represents an increase of 75 per cent in the number of planning appeals since the Planning Appeals Board was merged with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in 1987. The amendments made by the Bill are necessary in order to enable the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to handle the increased volume of appeals with the greatest possible efficiency and the minimum of delay.

FEATURES OF THE BILL

The Planning Appeals Act does not require a person who appeals against a decision of a responsible authority to grant a permit under the Planning and Environment Act to serve notice of the appeal on the responsible authority. Instead, the Registrar of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal serves a copy of the appeal document on the responsible authority. As a result, when the 21-day period for lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal expires, the responsible authority cannot issue the planning permit without making inquiries at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to discover whether an appeal has been lodged. The need to make such inquiries for every planning application to which an objection is made represents a significant burden on the resources of local authorities and results in delays in the issuing of planning permits when no appeal has been lodged.

The Bill amends the Planning Appeals Act to provide that the appellant must serve a copy of the appeal document on the responsible authority within the time prescribed for lodging the appeal. This requirement will not impose an additional burden on appellants, who normally obtain the appeal forms from the responsible authorities. The amendment will enable responsible authorities to issue a permit if no copy of the appeal has been served within the prescribed time, in the knowledge that a valid appeal has not been lodged. The resulting reduction in delays will significantly assist applicants for planning permits.

Another source of delays in planning matters is the requirement of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act that where a Planning Division is constituted without a legal practitioner, questions of law must be decided by the president or by a deputy president. Since numerous questions of law can arise during a hearing—including the question of whether a particular question is one of law—this requirement can result in considerable delay to both the case raising the question of law and to any case being heard by the president or deputy president.

The Bill addresses this problem by permitting a presiding member who is not a lawyer to decide questions of law with the consent of the parties. This will be appropriate when the question of law is of a minor or routine nature. Where the parties do not consent, the question may be decided by any member who is a legal practitioner and is nominated by the president, thereby increasing the pool of members available to decide questions of law.

For similar reasons, the power to grant declarations, which section 14 of the Planning Appeals Act confers on members of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal who are County Court Judges, has been extended to all deputy presidents of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, all of whom are full-time, legally qualified members. This amendment will reduce delays by increasing the number of members whom the president can assign to hear applications for declarations.

The Bill removes the requirement contained in sections 53, 53A and 54 of the Planning Appeals Act that the president must approve the tribunal's decision to permit the amendment of appeal documents or to overlook certain irregularities in the form or content of documents. The president has requested removal of this requirement, which causes considerable disruption and delay to the hearing of cases and provides no useful procedural safeguard.

In addition, the Bill makes a number of minor amendments to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act and the Planning Appeals Act in order to clarify ambiguities, to remove anomalies between the two Acts and to rectify drafting errors.

These amendments have been the subject of consultation with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Bar Council, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Royal Australian Institute of Planning. The amendments have commanded general support as measures which will increase the efficiency of the tribunal and reduce delays in the planning process.

I commend the Bill to the House.

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

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

Mr MACLELLAN (Berwick)—On the question of time, I ask whether the Attorney-General is willing to provide a briefing to the Opposition. The debate would be expedited if that were done, and perhaps a briefing could also be provided to the National Party, if it so desires.

Mr McCutcheon—Yes.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

BACKGROUND TO THE BILL

According to the Registrar of Probates, almost six out of ten Victorians die without leaving a valid will. Since an intestate leaves no legally valid indication of how his or her estate should be distributed, the Administration and Probate Act sets up a statutory scheme for the distribution of such estates.

The purpose of such a scheme is to ensure that, in the great majority of cases, the estate is divided between members of the intestate's family in the way a fair-minded person in the position of the intestate would have wanted.

The current scheme of distribution does not differ greatly from the one in force in the last century. Although it may have operated fairly given nineteenth century family structures, it fails to work justly in a great number of contemporary family situations. In particular, it does not deal fairly with the problems raised by divorce, by families with children from more than one marriage, or with de facto relationships. In many cases, family members with the highest moral claim to provision from the estate are left unprovided for. Lawyers practising in this field have brought to the attention of the government many examples of hardship resulting from the existing provisions. These issues have already been addressed by legislative reform in other jurisdictions, including Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales.

The Bill addresses these problems by introducing a new statutory scheme of distribution on intestacy and by widening the categories of people who are eligible to apply to the Supreme Court for provision from a deceased person's estate.

PURPOSES OF THE BILL

The main purposes of the Bill are:

- to amend the statutory scheme of distribution on intestacy in order to make provision for a wider variety of family structures;
- to widen the categories of persons eligible to apply for family provision;
- to ensure that anomalies do not occur, either as a result of the operation of a will or, on intestacy, when family members die together; and
- to amend the law relating to wills to provide that a bequest to a spouse is revoked by divorce.

FAMILY PROVISION

Part IV of the Administration and Probate Act gives the Supreme Court power to order that a deceased person's estate be redistributed, in order to make proper provision for certain members of the deceased's family when the distribution resulting from the deceased's will or from the rules of intestate succession have not achieved this. In making such an order, the court takes into account the needs of all persons entitled to share in the deceased's estate.

At present, the only family members who may apply for family provision are the deceased's widow or widower and children. A former wife—but not a former husband—who is entitled to receive maintenance pursuant to an enforceable maintenance agreement or order may also apply.

These provisions are the most restrictive in any Australian jurisdiction. They exclude several categories of family members who will often have a moral right to provision from the estate, including former wives who have not obtained maintenance orders at the date of their former husband's death, former husbands, stepchildren and de facto partners. Victoria is the only Australian jurisdiction which does not permit de facto partners, former husbands or stepchildren to apply for family provision.

FORMER SPOUSES

The death of a former spouse soon after the divorce has been finalised can leave the other party to the marriage unprovided for. Maintenance payments do not continue after the death of the spouse making the payment, and neither maintenance nor property claims under the Family Law Act can be commenced against the estate of a deceased person. Consequently, a divorced person who has not yet commenced property and maintenance claims under the Family Law Act can obtain nothing through the family law system, does not inherit anything if the former spouse died intestate, and is not entitled to apply for family provision, with resulting hardship and injustice in many cases.

The Bill addresses this problem by permitting a person of either sex to apply for family provision if his or her former spouse dies within twelve months of the dissolution of the marriage. This is the period in which a property or maintenance application under the Family Law Act could have been brought if the former spouse had not died. This change ensures a person who was entitled to bring such an application at the time of his or her former spouse's death can apply for family provision under the Administration and Probate Act instead. A former spouse who is receiving maintenance, or who is entitled to receive maintenance pursuant to a court order or agreement, will also be entitled to apply for family provision to replace the maintenance payments which ceased on the death of the former spouse.

These amendments will ensure that former spouses are not disadvantaged by the interaction of Commonwealth and State legislation, while preventing former spouses who have chosen not to pursue their rights under the Family Law Act, or whose rights have been finalised, from delaying the distribution of estates by seeking family provision.

STEPCHILDREN

As a result of remarriage, it is common for a child of a person's first marriage to live as part of the household of the second spouse, and to be regarded by the second spouse as his or her child. In recognition of this form of family, the Bill provides that a child of a deceased's spouse or de facto partner may apply for family provision, provided that the child lived in the deceased's household as part of his or her family at the date of death.

DE FACTO PARTNERS

The Bill also allows de facto partners to apply for provision from the estate. As many honourable members are aware, the position of a de facto spouse whose partner dies intestate is often a tragic one. A de facto partner has no right to share in the estate under intestacy provisions or to apply in the same way as a widow or widower for family provision. The Bill brings Victoria into line with other jurisdictions by allowing a de facto spouse to apply for family provision. The Bill does not prescribe a minimum

time for which the relationship must have existed before the de facto partner can apply for family provision. To set an arbitrary limit would inevitably mean some de facto partners would be left without provision because their partner died a few days too soon. The duration of the relationship is a factor which the Supreme Court would take into account in determining whether the de facto partner should be granted family provision.

INTESTACY

The current rules of intestate succession work injustice in many cases. The Administration and Probate Act currently provides that the spouse of an intestate inherits the whole estate if there are no children, and the first $50 000 plus a third of the remainder if the intestate also leaves children. The balance is divided among the children.

SPOUSE'S SHARE OF ESTATE

The purpose of the statutory legacy of $50 000 was to ensure that the spouse could purchase the matrimonial home from the estate or, if it were jointly owned, discharge the mortgage. This amount was set in 1977, and is now inadequate. The Bill raises the statutory legacy to $125 000 to cover the median price of a house in Melbourne. The Bill also gives a spouse an option to acquire the matrimonial home, where it was not in joint names, from his or her share of the estate.

DE FACTO PARTNERS

The exclusion of de facto partners from intestate succession results in grave injustice in many cases. Particular problems arise when couples have lived together as husband and wife for many years. Many such relationships commenced in the forties and fifties, when the spouse of one partner had disappeared overseas during the second world war. The cost of locating and divorcing the partner was often prohibitive. When divorce became more accessible in 1975 such couples were often deterred from marrying by fear of revealing their current status. Unfortunately, it is not widely known that de facto spouses do not inherit on intestacy, even if there is no legal spouse.

The first intimation the bereaved person—in the great majority of cases, a woman—may have that she has been left without provision is when a solicitor or the Registrar of Probates tells her that there is nothing whatsoever that can be done to assist her, and that the estate will pass to a distant relative of the deceased. The Bill permits a de facto partner to inherit the spouse's share of the estate in certain circumstances. Similar provisions have been enacted in South Australia and New South Wales.

The Bill defines the circumstances in which a de facto partner will inherit the share of the estate normally inherited by a spouse. The spouse will be entitled to inherit if there is a child of the relationship with the deceased. The de facto relationship is not required to be of any specific duration if there is a child, since the fact that a couple lived together and had a child together suggests that at the time of the deceased's death there was a serious commitment to the de facto partner. Where the deceased has no legal spouse and no children, a de facto partner will inherit if the relationship has lasted for at least one year prior to the death. However, where the deceased leaves a spouse or children of a former relationship, the de facto spouse will inherit only part of the estate if the relationship has lasted for at least two years.

A spouse who does not inherit because a de facto partner qualifies for the spouse's share of the estate can apply to the Supreme Court for family provision. Children who do not receive adequate provision because their deceased parent's second spouse or

de facto partner has inherited a large share of the estate may also apply for family provision.

INHERITANCE BY RELATIVES

Where an intestate leaves no spouse or direct descendants, the Bill limits the relatives who can share in the estate to parents, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and first cousins. At present there is no limit on the remoteness of the relatives who may be entitled to benefit on intestacy if there are no direct descendants. This has led to delays of up to ten years in the distribution of estates and to the dissipation of estates in the search for remote relatives.

SIMULTANEOUS DEATHS

Anomalies frequently arise, both on intestacy and as a result of the operation of wills, when family members die together. If a childless couple dies intestate at the same time, both estates pass to the relatives of the younger spouse to the exclusion of those of the older spouse. Similar problems arise when a couple who have children from former relationships die together.

These problems are avoided in a properly drawn will, which includes as a standard provision a clause that a beneficiary does not inherit unless he or she survives the testator by at least 30 days. However, homemade wills usually do not contain such provisions. The Bill inserts into all wills a clause requiring a beneficiary to survive the testator by 30 days in order to inherit, and makes a similar provision for inheritance on intestacy. Similar provisions have been included in the legislation of almost all Australian jurisdictions.

REVOCATION OF BEQUESTS TO FORMER SPOUSES ON DIVORCE

Under the Wills Act, a will is revoked on the marriage of the testator. However, there is no provision for the revocation of a will on the divorce of a testator, although it is equally likely that the change in circumstances will alter the way in which the testator would wish the estate to be distributed. The Bill amends the Wills Act to provide that the dissolution of the marriage of a testator revokes any gift in a will to his or her former spouse. This amendment was recommended by a working party examining the Wills Act, which included representatives of the Law Institute of Victoria and the Bar Council. It is based on a provision in the Queensland Succession Act.

THE VALUE OF WILLS

Although the amendments made by the Bill are designed to produce a fair outcome in the great majority of cases, no statutory scheme of distribution on intestacy can produce the ideal result in every case. Making a will is the only way to ensure that property is divided in the way that best meets the needs of family members. Many people are deterred from making wills by the belief that it is a complex and expensive procedure. This is not the case. Many solicitors will prepare a simple will for less than $100, as will the State Trustee. Most trustee companies prepare wills without charge for testators who appoint the company as executor. Many community legal services will prepare wills free of charge. I urge all Victorians who have not yet made a will to do so in order to ensure that their estates will be distributed in the way that they choose.

CONCLUSION

The Bill makes a number of changes to the law of inheritance, which will ensure that estates are distributed as fairly as possible between family members regardless of the type of family structure in which the deceased lived. The amendments seek to

balance the respective rights of spouses, former spouses, de facto partners and children of first and subsequent relationships, and to allow the Supreme Court to make orders according to the justice of a particular case.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr PERTON (Doncaster), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

TRANSPORT ACCIDENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purposes of the Bill are—

(*a*) to provide for the indexation of the maximum amount that may be awarded as damages in respect of the death of a person as the result of a transport accident; and

(*b*) to extend the application of Division 3 of Part 10 of the Transport Accident Act 1986 to pre-1987 accidents involving trains and trams and also motor cars where damages are payable by the Public Transport Corporation.

It is intended that all benefits and damages limits or ceilings under the Transport Accident Act be automatically indexed each year. To date, however, the maximum amount able to be awarded by a court in proceedings under the Wrongs Act 1958 for damages payable to dependants of persons killed in transport accidents has not been indexed. The Bill corrects this anomaly. This amount, which is currently $500 000 under section 93 (9) of the Act, will now be subject to yearly indexation. The amendment has a retrospective effect and restores the real value of this amount and ensures it will be indexed as a matter of course in future years.

The Bill also amends section 172 of the Act. Currently, that section provides that Division 3 of Part 10 of the Act applies to damages awards by the courts for death or personal injury:

... caused by or arising out of the use of a motor car if the whole or part of the award of damages is payable by the commission, an authorised insurer, the incorporated nominal defendant or the owner or driver of an uninsured motor car.

The practical effect of section 172 is that limitations are imposed on damages awards by the courts for accidents occurring before 1 January 1987, the date of the commencement of the transport accident scheme. For example:

the discount rate for a future economic loss component of damages assessed as a lump sum is fixed at 6 per cent—section 173;

the amount recoverable for nursing and domestic services is restricted—section 174; and

interest on damages is effectively confined to out-of-pocket expenses or special damages only—section 175.

However, section 172 does not apply to train or tram accidents and does not refer to the Public Transport Corporation. Non-inclusion of these types of accidents and failure to mention the corporation means that Division 3 of Part 10 of the Act is not extended to all those bodies or persons liable to pay damages for transport accidents occurring before 1 January 1987.

The Bill corrects this anomalous situation and ensures that the damages limitation provisions apply to accidents involving a train or tram. This is, of course, consistent with the classification of these types of accidents as transport accidents and their coverage by the Transport Accident Scheme since 1 January 1987. Also, the limitation provisions will apply to accidents involving a motor car where the Public Transport Corporation is liable to pay damages. This aspect has an unusual history which need only be briefly explained. It is sufficient to inform honourable members that the Metropolitan Transit Authority which has been succeeded by the corporation was, before the operation of the Transport Accident Scheme, not required to insure its vehicles under the then third-party insurance scheme operating in Victoria. The authority itself was required to meet claims arising out of the use of its vehicles. As the successor body, the Public Transport Corporation is liable for damages awards arising out of the use of Metropolitan Transit Authority vehicles before the commencement of the Transport Accident Scheme. Therefore, the corporation must be named in section 172.

It is pleasing to be able to inform the House that consultation has occurred with the Law Institute of Victoria which is not opposed to the amendments in the Bill. The opportunity has also been taken to include a number of statute law revision amendments in the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr COLEMAN (Syndal), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BILL

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has three major purposes:

1. to provide enabling legislation to assist agricultural industry groups to raise money for market promotion and research;
2. to repeal the Wine Grape Processing Industry Act 1978 and put in its place a mechanism to provide market pricing information for wine grape growers and winemakers in the Mildura and Swan Hill areas; and
3. to provide a way by which grower and processor groups could discuss and recommend a price prior to harvest similar to that proposed for wine grapes.

I shall provide some background on the Bill and then deal briefly with its major proposals.

BACKGROUND

In recent years agricultural industry groups have become increasingly aware of the need for greater investment in market development, promotion and research to compete successfully on domestic and export markets. A number of industries which are supported by statutory marketing arrangements have been able to raise funds for these purposes. Also, industries which are organised nationally have begun to take advantage of Commonwealth government support such as that offered by the Australian Horticultural Corporation. However, a number of smaller Victorian agricultural industries, particularly in horticulture, which are not supported in these ways recognise the need to increase promotion and improve the marketing of their

products. A number of horticultural industry groups have for several years requested simple statutory help to enable them to raise funds for marketing and research without the overheads or permanency of a statutory marketing authority. Enabling legislation to allow participating industry groups to raise levies for promotion and research is a major part of the Bill.

The other major component of the Bill relates to price negotiating committees and particularly to the setting of prices for multipurpose wine grapes grown in the Mildura and Swan Hill areas.

In 1987 the Public Bodies Review Committee recommended in its majority report that price-fixing of multipurpose wine grapes grown in the Mildura and Swan Hill areas should not be continued. Arrangements were made in 1988 to repeal the legislation under which these grape prices were set. However, following requests by wine grape growers for more time to establish an alternative market price information mechanism, the price-fixing legislation was retained for the 1989 vintage. Since that time extensive discussions have been held with affected winemakers and wine grape growers to develop an alternative to price fixing. In developing this alternative a framework has been established to provide options for the operation of other agricultural price negotiating committees.

LEGISLATION TO ASSIST AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY GROUPS TO RAISE MONEY FOR PROMOTION AND RESEARCH

Under this enabling legislation participating industry groups in a defined area may request that an industry development committee be established to administer fees collected from all growers in that area to assist with market promotion or research. Before a committee can be formed there are requirements for a public report, public meeting, submissions from affected parties and a poll of participating producers to be held. It must be clearly demonstrated that there is widespread industry support before an industry development committee can be established. Such committees would operate for a maximum of four years. Groups which have shown interest in this legislation include producers of stone fruit, berries, apples, nuts, table grapes and vegetables. This enabling legislation, however, is equally applicable to other agricultural industries such as deer, oats or cereal rye.

WINE GRAPE PRICING

This Bill will repeal the Wine Grape Processing Industry Act 1978 and replace it with a negotiating committee which will recommend likely market prices for multipurpose and other wine grapes grown in the Mildura and Swan Hill areas. Winemakers and wine grape growers will be involved in recommending prices prior to vintage which will be publicised in the production areas. These will be recommended prices only but should provide market information to the industry and provide the basis for negotiations between individual growers and wine makers. The negotiating committee will also be able to set terms and conditions of payment for wine grapes purchased in the Mildura and Swan Hill areas.

FRAMEWORK FOR PRICE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEES

This Bill provides a way by which grower and processor groups could discuss and recommend a price prior to harvest in a similar way to the wine grape pricing. This could be used as a general framework whereby the functions of existing price fixing committees could be simplified or limited in a similar way to that proposed for wine grape pricing. The legislation does not enable additional price fixing bodies to be established but allows for a range of options to be considered and implemented as the role of price fixing is reviewed in the future.

This Bill provides an enabling framework to assist participating agricultural industry groups to raise funds for market promotion and research; repeals the Wine Grape Processing Industry Act 1978 but provides support for the wine grape industry in line with the recommendations of the Public Bodies Review Committee; enables grower and processor groups to discuss prices prior to harvest; and provides a number of options which can be considered when agricultural price fixing committees are reviewed in the future.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr AUSTIN (Ripon), the debate was adjourned.

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—There are some fairly significant connotations in the proposed legislation, particularly in the first part, and I request extra time for the shadow Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and me.

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) (*By leave*)—I am more than happy to make available officers of my department to discuss this with both honourable members from the opposition parties as has been the practice of recent times.

The matters contained in the Bill have been canvassed in the past and are well understood and, I believe, supported by industry groups and by all groups within the Victorian Farmers Federation but I recognise the request of the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon)—I am disappointed in the Minister's answer on the question of time because these agricultural Bills cover a number of different segments of the industry. We must show the proposed legislation to those various bodies and in many instances board meetings need to take place before they are able to come to decisions about whether they have questions they want answered and amendments they would like to see made.

A fortnight is a short time for the Deputy Leader of the National Party and me to send these messages out and receive replies so I ask the Minister again to give us more time. We appreciate the fact that he is going to make officers of his department available. That is one side of the coin. However, I ask the Minister whether we could have more time in case we do run into trouble.

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs) (*By leave*)—There is widespread support for the Bill and I think the honourable member for Ripon and the Deputy Leader of the National Party will find that when they discuss the matter with industry groups. I suggest they wait and see what happens.

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—I cannot remember an occasion recently when a genuine request for time made of a Minister by the opposition parties was not granted. All the Minister had to say was, "Yes, more time will be given," and I suggest he does so.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

FARM PRODUCE WHOLESALE BILL

Mr ROWE (Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is the outcome of a major overhaul of the Farm Produce Merchants and Commission Agents Act 1965.

As part of the government's program of regulatory reform, a review of the Act was announced in January 1987. A review was overdue given changes to marketing techniques, transport and communications since 1965. Also, the success of the Act has been limited due to its complexity.

Initially designed to redress the imbalance of market power between wholesalers and producers, it is only well understood by wholesalers. As such, it has not assisted producers in the way intended.

Development of the Bill has involved extensive consultation. An initial discussion paper attracted significant comment from a wide range of industry participants. These views highlighted deficiencies in the legislation and assisted the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in developing a detailed options paper for public comment.

The revised legislation is intended to provide an environment in which producers and wholesalers of fresh fruit and vegetables, cut flowers, beeswax and honey can trade that produce in an economic, efficient, fair and competitive manner. While reducing the level of intervention by government when compared with the current Act, this new legislation provides a framework that will meet the above objective.

I shall now briefly outline the major changes proposed in the Bill.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

The methods of trading able to be used in the conduct of businesses have been changed and simplified. Revisions to the trading methods are the principal changes in the proposed legislation.

The 1965 Act provided that wholesalers could either be licensed as merchants or commission agents but not both. Both of these licences provided for the purchase of produce from a producer at an agreed price. However, where produce was received on consignment it had to be handled on either a merchant or agency basis according to the type of licence held.

The reasons for preventing a wholesaler from trading as both a commission agent and a merchant in the past rest in the fact that a wholesaler should not be able to determine, after produce is sold, the basis of payment to the producer which is most advantageous to the wholesaler.

At all times producers should be able to determine the method of selling applicable to their produce. The new system will allow producers the opportunity to take responsibility for their own trading negotiations.

In general, wholesalers who deal directly with producers will require a licence and be subject to the requirements of the Act. Following a request from a producer, a wholesaler will agree to trade on either a commission basis or a merchant basis. If trading on a commission basis, a wholesaler must indicate to the producer prior to the sale of the produce the commission rate that will be charged. If a wholesaler trades as a merchant, a price for the produce must be agreed with the producer prior to the sale of that produce.

The produce covered under this Act is often perishable in nature and the methods of selling must be flexible to take account of this. Producers will, therefore, be able to send produce to wholesalers on a commission basis and if they can agree on a price

within 24 hours of receipt of the produce they will be able to convert to a merchant arrangement. If no agreement is reached, the produce will be sold on an agency basis.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Under the 1965 Act protection against the financial failure of a wholesaler is available to producers by way of a guarantee fund. The level of protection currently offered is restricted to $50 000 for each licensed wholesaler. There is a need to increase this cover for the larger operations. However, there must be a balance between an appropriate level of protection and the cost of providing that protection. The Bill ties the level of protection to the turnover of the business up to a maximum of $150 000, with provision to increase this by regulation to take account of future changes.

The Bill also changes the way in which protection is provided. Protection is to be given by means of an indemnity lodged by the wholesaler with the registrar. It is expected that most indemnities will take the form of insurance fidelity bonds.

Money remaining in the guarantee fund after the present scheme is finalised will be used for educational or similar activities designed to assist the industry.

OTHER DEDUCTIONS

Another change being made relates to deductions. The 1965 Act enables wholesalers to deduct certain "allowable" deductions from returns to producers. This system has resulted in substantial confusion. The Bill makes it clear that producer responsibility for charges ceases once the produce is delivered to the wholesaler. All charges associated with the sale of produce must be met within the commission rate declared by the wholesaler or the price offered to a producer when a wholesaler trades as a merchant.

In addition, the proposed legislation will provide the capacity to require a wholesaler to collect, on behalf of producer organisations, charges generally agreed to by producers for the marketing or promoting of their produce. These charges will be deducted from payments due to producers and paid direct to the relevant organisations.

MARKET REPORTING

Lack of adequate market information was identified during the review of the legislation as a potential source of market failure. The government recognises the need to provide adequate market information to all participants in order to ensure that a fair, competitive and efficient market exists.

Responsibility for providing a reporting service will continue to rest with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs but the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market Trust will be responsible for financing the service. It is important that the department continue to provide the service so that the independence of the market report is maintained. It is also appropriate that the trust finance the service because market reporting information is essential to the functioning of a viable central market.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The government also currently funds the market inspection service as provided for in the Act. In implementing the new arrangements under the Bill, the government intends to move to full cost recovery for the market inspection service. Licence fees will be adjusted to reflect the true cost of providing this service. It is anticipated that a licence fee of approximately $600 a year will be required to meet the objective of full cost recovery.

The government sees the Farm Produce Wholesale Bill as an important step in its program of regulatory reform. The legislation will afford producers the opportunity of

taking responsibility for their own trading negotiations. The government is providing a climate in which both producers and wholesalers can trade produce in an economic, efficient, fair and competitive manner.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr AUSTIN (Ripon), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

STAMPS (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purposes of the Bill are to introduce stamp duty on the transfer of business, whether or not in conjunction with the transfer of land, to close recently revealed loopholes and to introduce several technical amendments.

The proposal to introduce stamp duty on goodwill was announced in the Budget. The proposal brings Victoria into line with other States and is estimated to yield $10 million in 1989–90 and $20 million in a full year.

The duty will be payable by the acquirer of a business at rates corresponding to those on land transfers. In all cases, duty on the value of the business transferred will be payable within three months of the acquisition. Where land is also transferred, the existing time frame for payment of duty on the relevant transfer document will not change, that is, within three months of the date of its execution.

Duty is payable on the aggregated value of land and business where they are transferred within twelve months of each other, unless the transactions are unrelated, When the last document relating to the transfer of business and land is lodged, duty will be payable on the aggregated value of the land and business, less any duty already paid on any earlier documents.

There are anti-avoidance provisions in the Bill to prevent various tax avoidance practices, namely: excluding property used in the conduct of the business transferred from the value of that business; entering into oral arrangements to defeat the Budget measure; and contract splitting where business and land are transferred.

As with conveyance duty, stock in trade, livestock, unshorn wool and growing crops transferred with a business are exempt. Family businesses transferred between lineal descendants and ancestors are exempted from the operation of the provisions. It is proposed that the duty apply to arrangements made on or after 1 November 1989.

The Bill also closes three potentially expensive loopholes. The first two involve nominee clauses in land transfer contracts and the use of unit trusts to avoid land-rich company provisions applying to land transfer duty. The third loophole involves the initial registration of vehicles under Commonwealth legislation for the stated purpose of interstate trade, thereby not attracting duty. The vehicle is then reregistered in Victoria for local use, but this registration is not dutiable because there is currently an exemption where the last registration in the current owner's name was in another Australian jurisdiction.

Technical amendments are made periodically to taxation legislation to rationalise and strengthen enforcement provisions, to remove anomalies and to maintain equities. The proposed technical amendments are explained in the explanatory memorandum attached to the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton), the debate was adjourned.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—I move:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton)—Mr Speaker, on the question of time, this Bill is highly controversial and it is vital in the interests of Parliament that there be extensive consultation. In relation to similar Bills we have had considerable difficulty in obtaining speedy responses from the large number of business organisations with an interest in the Bill.

In this case in particular, many of those organisations are small business organisations which are not possessed of full-time secretariats. In the light of those circumstances, I would request an indication from the Treasurer that if additional time is required, even on the basis of the Bill coming on, as I would expect, later than the two elapsed weeks, that the Treasurer would be agreeable to provide additional time for consultation.

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer) (*By leave*)—Certainly I would be willing to consider any reasonable application from the honourable member for Brighton or the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND TRUST BILL

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill is required to facilitate the construction of a new Southern Stand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Bill amends the MCG Act 1933 to incorporate the present trustees of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and to give that body, to be known as the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust, powers to borrow money and to grant leases for terms of up to 99 years over the ground.

The Melbourne Cricket Club initiated the proposal to replace the Southern Stand which is nearing the end of its structural and economic life. The government supports this development as it will substantially improve the facilities at the ground for the public and the Victorian Football League. It will also support Melbourne's 1996 Olympic Games bid.

The proposed new stand, will increase the capacity of the MCG to 109 000 and will accommodate 47 000 persons comprising 41 000 seated, and 6000 standing. Approximately 2000 additional persons are to be accommodated in corporate boxes.

The Melbourne Cricket Ground is vested in trustees, who are currently unincorporated and are, therefore, unable to contract or borrow as a corporate body. Under the regulations, they have delegated management of the ground to the Melbourne Cricket Club from year to year. The club, which is an incorporated body, acts as ground manager pursuant to this authority.

The club's role as day-to-day manager and its existing occupation rights under the Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 1933 are not disturbed by the provisions of the Bill. The present trustees propose that the club continue in its role as manager of the ground.

The government and the club have agreed that a joint project advisory board be established for project control of the construction phase. The trust's role as the primary controller of the ground is strengthened by its creation as an incorporated body and its powers to grant leases of the ground, borrow money and enter contracts relating to the ground. The power to lease will enable the trust to lease parts of the new stand such as that part to be used and occupied as offices by the proposed Australian Football League.

The Bill contains the powers necessary for construction of the new stand including those necessary to excise almost 1 hectare from Yarra Park and add that land to the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The land is shown by hatching on the plan in the schedule to the Bill. This will enable access paths, entrance steps and landscaping works to be constructed on that land. The provisions of the Bill prohibit the trustees from erecting any other structures on that land, thereby leaving it available for use as open space.

Power is also included in the Bill to enable construction of an overhang of the new stand above Brunton Avenue. Although used as a road, Brunton Avenue is legally part of Yarra Park. To achieve the authority for the trust to construct the overhang, the Bill authorises the granting of the freehold title of the stratum of the overhang to the trust. The Bill also enables redevelopment and use of the new stand without the application of planning requirements.

Provision is contained in the Bill for the Treasurer to provide support to the financing structure through a guarantee, indemnity or similar arrangement. It is anticipated that the development will be self-financing through increased ground revenues. The role of the Treasurer's support is to offer comfort to the finance providers.

The present trustees and the club have agreed to the proposed construction of the Southern Stand and the proposed legislative powers necessary to facilitate that construction.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr COLEMAN (Syndal), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

FISHERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

Mr COLEMAN (Springvale)—The Bill was introduced to the House on 26 May this year and there has been substantial comment on it. As I said, when the Bill was last debated, the Opposition received many comments about it which have raised a number of issues, some of which will be the subject of amendments to be proposed during the Committee stage.

When the Bill was last debated I informed the House that the Opposition had received correspondence from various parties, including a Mr Dreger, who wrote about the way scallop fishing is conducted in Port Phillip Bay. The letter states:

> It is common knowledge in amateur fishing circles that many of these Port Phillip scallop boats are now equipping themselves with nets and longlines. The problem facing us with this is not simply that fact. The problem is that we understand these fishermen also intend to fish the bay in this manner, as well as the open ocean outside the Heads, and will have permits to do so. The process of nets and longlines being used within Port Phillip or any other similar waters is abhorrent to the amateur fisherman.

That issue was the basis of a number of meetings organised by the Snapper Fighting Fund, which is anxious to ensure that the snapper stock in Port Phillip Bay is protected.

As a result of the meetings, recently the Minister passed a regulation preventing the use of mesh nets in Port Phillip Bay from October to the end of December.

That has raised the question of enforcement. At page 98 of the Arnold report, under the heading "Enforcement", it states:

Enforcement is a vital component of the State's fisheries management strategy but it must go further than the detection and prosecution of offences committed against the Fisheries Act.

At page 99 the report states:

The decline in the level of enforcement appears to be the result of a number of factors involving changes in the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands as a whole and the now-defunct Commercial Fisheries Branch.

Firstly, the aborted transfer of the Commercial Fisheries Branch to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs appears to have had an effect on the branch's morale and staffing level. It also served to break the contact between the branch and the officers who are responsible for fisheries enforcement and other field management functions and who remained in the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

That comment is reinforced in the August edition of *Fishing News*. Neil Baird outlines the illegal fishing activities that are occurring particularly in the shellfish and seaweed areas around Port Phillip Bay. His article states:

Much of the activity has occurred in Victoria although we have heard of numbers of instances in other States, particularly Western Australia.

It involves all kinds of inshore fish species and those that exist in our rivers, and their methods of fishing are of the "vacuum cleaning" kind so that they take everything from the given area with absolutely no thought for the future.

He is speaking of illegal fishing activities by particular groups that do not have the same thought for conservation as people who traditionally use Port Phillip Bay.

The article continues:

Virtually the whole of the Port Phillip coastline down to about six feet below the low tide level has been thoroughly denuded by these "gentlemen" of any kind of shellfish and much of the seaweed that flourished there before.

In less than ten years, this area has changed from one of quite prolific growth to virtual desert. That is from my own observation but I know that the situation is similar in many other parts of Australia.

It is imperative that the illegal activities in our fishing waters are properly scrutinised, and that the apprehension rate is improved. The imposition of penalties should act as a deterrent to potential offenders. The comment in the Arnold report, to which I have referred, deals with the attempted transfer of the former Commercial Fisheries Branch to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs; that debate continues, and has caused friction within the department and the industry.

A clear division exists between those who want that branch shifted to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and those who want it to remain with the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. It should operate for amateur and professional fishermen.

Enforcement of the regulations upon commercial fishermen also means enforcement upon those who claim to be amateurs, and vice versa. The Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands has not addressed the issue of how the enforcement provisions will operate if that branch is shifted from her department.

Enforcement officers have operated on behalf of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands since the restructuring of that department but they do not necessarily operate in the specialties for which they have been trained. Those who had fisheries and wildlife training may well be now enforcing activities in another area. It is imperative that the fishing industry has dedicated officers who are able to pursue those

who have poaching inclinations, and who are prepared to illegally trade, thereby using their catches for illegal sale.

Another matter of concern is the master fisherman's licences. The Bill contains a provision ensuring that applicants for the master fisherman's licence obtain a Marine Board certificate of competency. On 8 May 1989, the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands wrote to an applicant who wished to obtain a licence, and stated:

> This is to advise that your application for master fisherman's licence has been considered at the Fisheries Licensing Panel.
>
> The resolution of the panel was for refusal and this recommendation has been accepted by the Director of Fisheries.
>
> The refusal was based on no appropriate Marine Board certificate of competency. You are therefore advised to contact the Marine Board of Victoria on (03) 619 6652 to arrange for the appropriate certificate of competency examination.
>
> It is advisable that before resubmitting an application you must forward a copy of your certificate of competency, issued by the Marine Board, suitably endorsed for the areas in which you wish to operate to this office.

The department tried to use the same head of power which the amendment now provides. More than 100 applications have been received for a master fisherman's licence but they were refused on the same grounds. Those applicants—and honourable members—should receive an explanation as to why the applications were refused under a head of power which was not available to the department, but which is now sought to be included by clause 6 of the Bill.

The applicant to whom the letter I have quoted was addressed wished to provide a fresh fish service in a coastal Gippsland town; he believed as there were no other sources of fresh fish available in the town his application should have been acceded to on that basis. I am unsure how many other genuine applicants were endeavouring to make a legitimate living by using that licence but I am aware some have attempted to obtain the licence to obtain a taxation deduction for the costs of equipment and their boats.

That issue should be addressed by the Minister, and perhaps reference should be made to it during the Committee stage of the Bill.

The other matter of concern is the fishing of the orange roughy in Victorian waters. That is becoming the glamour fish of the industry; substantial quantities have been located in Australian waters. The orange roughy aggregates to spawn each year. The industry has been allocated a catch of 15 000 tonnes for fishing this year.

The orange roughy is caught in about 1 kilometre depth, thereby requiring a significant capital investment by the fisherman. The Victorian government has issued no clear guidelines, although the Commonwealth government has clearly stated its requirements in terms of fishing for that species, if the orange roughy is fished in Victorian waters. Victorian fishermen are catching the orange roughy in Commonwealth waters but nothing has been organised for its fishing in Victorian waters.

Debate on this Bill has been resumed today to allow me to conclude my contribution. I shall make further comments in the Committee stage of the Bill.

Mr COLE (Melbourne)—Licensing applications should be mandatory; there should be a guarantee that the Victorian Fishing Industry Council Act will be repealed. I am concerned at what can happen in the fishing industry.

Mr Pescott—What are they?

Mr COLE—The honourable member may be interested; one only has to look at what the Russians and the Japanese have done—fished out the seas!

I am concerned about the continual use of sexist language. It is inappropriate to call them "fishermen" because they should be "fisherpersons". Otherwise, the fact that women catch fish would be denied.

I accept that for the Bill to pass through the Upper House the expression "fisherman" and not "fisherperson" should be used. The proposed legislation will give the Minister the power to protect the industry. Professional fishermen may be required to register their catch and the Minister is empowered to stop the fishing of certain types of fish.

I can remember many years ago when I fished in the bay with my father and we found it extremely difficult to catch snapper because the professional fishermen had literally fished the bay dry of snapper. My father and I would go to the St Kilda marina and take a boat out into the bay. We could only catch flathead, which is reasonable to eat, but it is not as good as snapper and does not provide the same challenge as fishing for snapper.

It is important that the Minister adopt a responsible attitude for this industry. I am concerned about the use of nets and I am sure the Minister will ensure that nets are not used unnecessarily. The Bill will improve existing legislation and be of benefit to Victoria; and it confirms again what a great government this is.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The Fisheries Act is an example of legislation that must be reviewed from time to time. The report of the Victorian Commercial Fisheries Licensing Review by Mr Michael Arnold, makes several recommendations and was a wide-ranging review of the whole industry. It examined many aspects of commercial fishing in particular and recommended, in part, that the significant role of the management committee should be properly defined and that the appropriate management committee should collaborate with the proposed professional fishermen's advisory council. Many of the recommendations of the review, as incorporated in the proposed legislation, will assist the fishing industry.

Concern has been expressed that the fishing resource in Port Phillip Bay is diminishing. Consideration must be given to programs that conserve resources and foster the resource. That is so, not only in the fishing industry but also in the agricultural industry. Conservation in all walks of life is very necessary.

Many people are concerned about overseas trawlers that poach within Australia's territorial waters. Resources must be provided, perhaps from the industry, to ensure regeneration of this resource.

The honourable member for Gippsland East and I recently visited scallop beds just off Gippsland where scallops were being harvested. I was interested to note how that industry was protecting its resource and was conscious of the need not to overfish, so as to ensure continuity of the industry.

The Minister may wish to indicate how much Mr Arnold was paid to undertake the review. I am sure the honourable member for Syndal is interested in finding out about that.

The honourable member for Gippsland East will outline the National Party policy on the proposed legislation and the National Party will decide, during the course of the debate, whether it will support the proposed legislation both here and in another place.

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

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

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987, which completely overhauled Victoria's planning legislation, came into full operation on 16 February last year. It has been generally acclaimed as a great improvement on the former outmoded and confused legislation for planning.

Since then it has become evident that a number of changes to the Act would further improve the operation of the planning system. Legislative review is ongoing, and the changes the government now proposes to the Act are part of this process. Many of these changes are quite technical. I would like to direct attention to the more significant items.

Clause 4 changes the provisions about who is the owner of land. The Act at present uses a definition of "owner" based on the concept of the "beneficial owner". In line with other legislation, this is to be changed to the registered proprietor, who can be more readily identified. This will assist with notices and so on and in enforcement.

At the same time, the Bill clarifies issues of "ownership" of Crown land, to make it clear that for planning purposes, the Minister responsible for the land is the "owner", while any committee of maintenance is to be treated as an "occupier".

Numerous consequential changes flow from these changes. Section 96 of the Act requires that if the responsible authority has an interest in land, any application about that land be made to the Minister, rather than to the responsible authority. Clause 5 will now allow councils to make decisions about essentially local matters. This will be provided for by an amendment to the relevant planning schemes, made by the Minister.

Clause 6 amends section 6 (4) of the Act so that a planning scheme can require a use to conform with a code of practice approved or ratified by Parliament in accordance with another Act. This is important to allow the Code of Forest Practices to be effectively implemented on private land using the planning scheme. Plantations to be harvested over the next 20 or 30 years may have existing use rights, and this amendment will enable schemes to require that harvesting takes place in accordance with the code.

When a planning scheme is to be amended, the Act provides for submissions about the amendment to be referred to an independent panel, and for the planning authority to consider that panel's report before proceeding further with the amendment. Most panels report promptly, but to allow further progress where the panel has not reported, clause 10 provides that the Minister may allow the authority to proceed without that report if six months have elapsed since the panel was appointed, or three months since the panel completed its hearings, and the Minister is satisfied that the delay would have an adverse effect on the planning of the area.

Clauses 11, 16 and 21 work together to rationalise the general review provisions of the Act. The Planning and Environment Act 1987 introduced new arrangements for settling disputes about the way planning schemes are applied. The purpose of this was to allow quick, inexpensive resolution of disputes, however they arise.

Recently the tribunal has interpreted the Act as allowing it to direct a planning authority to place an amendment on exhibition. This places the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in the role of a planning authority, which was never intended.

The Act provides a separate mechanism of review of amendments by an independent panel, and amendments ultimately require the Minister's approval. The tribunal does have an important role in resolving disputes of a procedural nature—that is specifically set out in the revised section 39 of the Act. The proposed amendments make this quite clear, and set out the range of disputes to be resolved by the tribunal.

Clause 12 repeals section 46 of the Act, which effectively precludes planning schemes having any effect over land which is permanently reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. This provision was included to maintain the situation which applied under the Town and Country Planning Act 1961.

The government believes that Crown land should be subject to planning schemes, in such a way that normal management of the land is the clear responsibility of the agency managing that land. My Ministry and the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands are developing a series of planning scheme provisions for Crown land, to be introduced into planning schemes, and this amendment to the Act is to come into operation when these arrangements can be put in place.

Clause 17 makes an important technical amendment. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal has held that it is unable to cancel or amend a permit granted at its direction, even though there may be a failure to comply with conditions. It also follows that it could not amend a permit, even if the owner and the responsible authority agreed to the change. The amendment to the Act allows the tribunal to deal with all permits in the same way, whether they were originally issued by the responsible authority, or at the tribunal's direction.

A planning scheme is of no value to the community if it cannot be effectively enforced, and the Act provides for a new system of infringement notices for minor offences—a form of "on the spot" penalty.

The Act provides a safeguard to the rights of offenders, so that if an infringement notice has been served and the penalty paid, a person cannot be prosecuted for the same offence. That is a very important principle. However, many planning offences continue, to the great annoyance of neighbours. Under the present provisions of the Act, if the council were to serve an infringement notice, that use could be continued and the council and the neighbours could not do anything further about it. That was never the intended effect.

Clause 19 introduces a system to allow an infringement notice to require that to "expiate" an offence, a person may be required to take some positive actions to overcome that offence, such as stopping an unlawful use of land. Unless those steps are taken, the offence would not be expiated, and the responsible authority could take whatever additional steps are needed to rectify the situation.

Clause 20 is also to assist in enforcement, to allow an inspector to obtain a warrant to enter property, without giving an offender two days to conceal any evidence of the offence. Recently the Ombudsman investigated a case where a responsible authority was restricted in its enforcement of the scheme by the need to give such notice, and he suggested that the requirement be removed. The proposal gives a fair balance between the rights of a landowner and the rights of the community to have a scheme properly enforced.

The government is concerned at the escalating cost to councils and the Ministry of handling and examining scheme amendments, many of which are to benefit one or a very few landowners, and which would not be necessary if the schemes included proper flexibility in their structure. Since the introduction of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 last February, one outer metropolitan council has submitted some 70 amendments—almost one a week!

Clause 22 provides for cost recovery in accordance with regulations, which will of course be the subject of a regulatory impact statement. The Act already allows fees to be prescribed for amendments to planning schemes other than those proposed by the Crown or a planning authority or a public authority. The proposed amendments remove this constraint, and allow fees to be charged for stages in the planning scheme amendment process, including the recovery of the fees and allowances of any independent panel.

Members will be aware that many important projects are permitted by the amendment process rather than permits and it is only appropriate that the "user pays" principle should be extended into this area. Projects such as the Vickers-Ruwolt development, the Becton development known as Collins Exchange in Collins Street and the redevelopment for Sportsgirl in Collins Street have all been approved as planning scheme amendments. It would have been quite appropriate to pass on to the developer the cost of panel fees for developments such as the Sunshine District Centre or Runaway Bay Marina.

The Bill provides that if the proponent does not agree to meet the cost of the panel, the planning authority can abandon the amendment or part of the amendment. The new provisions widen the scope for the Ministry to require a planning authority, in appropriate circumstances, to meet the fees and allowances of a panel. They also allow a planning authority to ask a proponent of an amendment to meet these panel costs. If the proponent does not agree, the planning authority can abandon the amendment or part of the amendment.

Regulations will prescribe the fees, the circumstances where they are to be paid and when they can be waived or rebated. The intention is to recover costs from those who stand to make a financial gain by an amendment, not from communities seeking amendments to generally improve planning schemes in their area. I should make it clear that there is no provision for fees to be charged to community groups or individuals making submissions about a proposed amendment.

Following recent events at Ardeer, honourable members will no doubt be aware that it is necessary to introduce two further amendments to make explicit the need to consider not just the effects of a development on the environment, but also the effects of the environment on a proposed development.

At Ardeer, an industrial site which had been unused for some years and was located in a residential area was considered appropriate for rezoning to residential. It might have been considered that this would have a beneficial effect on the environment, and the Act currently makes provision for these considerations. However, as it now turns out, it was the effects of the environment on the proposed development which have caused the problems.

Clause 26, therefore, amends sections 12 and 60 of the Act to make it quite explicit that consideration must be given to the effects of the environment on the use or development proposed by an amendment or application, as well as the effects of the use or development on the environment.

The only other point to be particularly noted is the change to the Building Control Act. The Subdivision Act introduced a new open space formula for residential buildings. Further review of this shows it to produce excessive contributions in some cases, and the amendment puts back in a simplified form the old formula from the Local Government Act 1958, while the situation is reviewed.

Other changes proposed to be made by this Bill to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and to other Acts are of a more technical or administrative nature. Although

important to the efficient operation of the Act, they do not make substantial changes to its overall operation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr COLEMAN (Syndal), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, October 26.

ADJOURNMENT

Sorrento foreshore kiosk—Intersection of Arden and Curzon streets, North Melbourne—Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd—De-inking of waste paper—Voting in British elections—Pedestrian crossing for Booran Road, Caulfield—Sunshine Maltese community

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Dr WELLS (Dromana)—I direct a matter relating to the Sorrento foreshore kiosk to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands. With the effluxion of time, the lease on the kiosk has now expired and the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands has proposed the demolition of the entire structure and has called for public comment on that proposal.

Last Saturday, 7 October, a meeting was held of 150 people who spoke vigorously and voted virtually unanimously to overturn the proposal and to retain the entire structure, which consists of a jetty—now broken down—a kiosk, a tearoom, a fish shop—still functional—a fish cleaning room, and a residence for the couple who run the business there.

The structure was built by George Coppin in 1875. It has become an historic structure in Sorrento even though it is not of completely original design. It has been added to in a patchwork fashion over the years, but the ideas and the limited resources it offers are strongly supported by the people of Sorrento, Portsea and Blairgowrie. The community reaction in support of such a small matter as the retention of the complex is the strongest I have ever seen.

The Collins Riding Ratepayers Association has more than 1000 members and it stands resolutely behind the proposal to maintain the structure. I pay tribute to the work of Ms Kate Baillieu, a resident of Sorrento and a well-known Australian, who has campaigned vigorously in support of the complex being retained. I pay tribute also to Cr Alfred Bell from the Shire of Flinders and Mrs Patricia Stringer, president of the ratepayers association. These leading citizens and a large number of others support the retention of the structure.

It is not sufficient just to retain the structure and issue a licence for it when it is not in its historic style or in an acceptable state of maintenance. The kiosk has fallen on hard times. As it is situated in a leading tourist area on the Port Phillip Bay coastline and is one of the oldest structures and tourist attractions there, it is essential that the opportunity should be grasped not only of renewing the lease but also of rebuilding the structure in the historic Coppin style, which should include all the facilities and modest landscaping. It is proposed that it be called the George Coppin Rustic Retreat 1875, because that is what he originally named it. If it is rebuilt it will be a suitable tourist attraction and facility for all citizens in the area.

It is high time that Mr and Mrs Graves, who are most respected and loved by the local people, and who have cared for the facility for almost seventeen years, were

given a decent lease sufficient to enable them to adopt a proper commercial attitude to the proposals. So far, they have invested $30 000 of their own money in maintaining the structure.

I acknowledge the cooperation I have had from the Minister in this matter, but I seek an undertaking from her to settle the matter as expeditiously as possible, and to use her leadership to ensure that the matter is dealt with in an appropriate style so that all Victorians can be proud of this facility and use it in the most beneficial way. My support is for the historic structure, not for other kiosks along the Port Phillip Bay coastline.

Mr COLE (Melbourne)—I raise for the attention of the Minister for Transport the intersection of Arden and Curzon streets in North Melbourne. That intersection is dangerous because it involves two wide roads. Curzon and Arden streets—where a great football team once played—are wide, and the point at which they meet has experienced numerous accidents, many of them severe. Curzon Street has a reasonably steep hill and this lead to cars travelling at unduly high speeds and going through red lights.

At the end of last year I wrote to the Minister and, in turn, was given an undertaking that work could be carried out in June of this year to ensure that the traffic management measures proposed for that intersection were implemented before the end of that financial year. The proposal to restructure the intersection was undertaken in consultation with the Melbourne City Council. Some $57 000 would be involved in implementing the works, which seems to be an appropriate amount to ensure that serious accidents do not occur.

Unfortunately, I have been informed that the works will not be undertaken until late in this financial year, which will probably be June 1990. I am concerned about that because there is a strong possibility that some of these serious accidents could result in someone being killed. There is not only a problem with cars smashing into each other but also a danger faced by the residents of numerous flats on the corner of Arden Street. There are a number of own-your-own and rented flats, and their residents have expressed to me their genuine fear about cars coming through their front windows because of the dangerous intersection.

I ask the Minister for Transport to consider moving this matter up on the priority list to ensure that the problem of this dangerous intersection is remedied as soon as possible.

Mr CLARK (Balwyn)—I direct to the attention of the Treasurer a transaction connected with the disposal of the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd by the government that allegedly took place on 30 June 1989. In examining the Treasurer's statement of 1 August it seems to be a peculiar coincidence that the accumulated losses equalled the paid-up capital of the corporation. Information that has subsequently come to light indicates that the situation was not a coincidence but was engineered. It was not engineered openly—for example, as it might be in forgiveness of a debt—but by a funny-money shuffle that would turn any aspiring corporate entrepreneur green with envy.

A search of the Corporate Affairs Office records shows that on 30 June 1989 the Treasurer sold 1 million AMRAD shares to the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd. at $1.65 a share in exchange for 1·35 million VIC shares at par, or $1 a share, and $300 000 in cash.

This raised the paid-up capital of the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd from $25 495 900 to $26 845 900, which happened to equal the accumulated losses of VIC. What made it more remarkable is that the government then promptly sold its newly

acquired shares in VIC, together with other shares in that company, to State Bank Victoria for a grand total of $10—in other words, it was a straightout gift of $1·35 million of taxpayers' money to VIC to keep the corporation afloat.

The sorry story does not end there. The contract between the Treasurer and the corporation was not a written contract; it was an oral contract entered into on the last day of the financial year—a favourite device of scoundrels and tax evaders. I hope the Treasurer can assure the House that he genuinely entered into negotiations and entered a legally binding oral contract with a representative of VIC on that date. Even if that occurred, why did the Treasurer enter into an oral contract? What does the Treasurer have to hide in not reducing such an important agreement to writing?

The second interesting aspect of the matter concerns where the shares in AMRAD Corporation Ltd came from. Certainly they were not shares that the Treasurer was carrying around in his back pocket and waiting to dispose of. A search of AMRADs share register suggests that on 30 June of this year, on the same day that the Treasurer sold the shares, he acquired them from Victorian Medical Consortium Pty Ltd for $1.65 a share. It appears that the shares were held by the VMC on behalf of the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories and that that organisation had decided to bail out of AMRAD; therefore, the shares were available. One presumes the Treasurer paid good taxpayers' money for the shares.

The next question that arises concerns where the AMRAD shares went after they were purchased by the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd. On that same day they were sold by VIC to the State Trust Corporation of Victoria on behalf of the Crown for $1.65 a share, along with 14 million other shares in AMRAD. In one day this parcel of 1 million shares passed from the Victorian Medical Consortium Pty Ltd to the Treasurer on behalf of the Crown, then to VIC and then on to the State Trust Corporation, again on behalf of the Crown.

The obvious question arises: why did those shares not simply pass from the Victorian Medical Consortium Pty Ltd to the State Trust Corporation? It seems they were deliberately routed via the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd in an entirely artificial shuffle so that VIC could be made solvent and sold to the State Bank.

Some people may ask, "So what? $139 million has been lost by the Victorian Economic Development Corporation so what does $1·35 million matter?" However this $1·35 million was not lost either just through incompetence or risks taken on high-tech ventures. It involved a straightout cover-up of the spending of $1·35 million of taxpayers' money, given away in the sure and certain knowledge that it would not be recovered, simply to keep VIC afloat and to stop the Treasurer's chickens coming home to roost.

In other words, if the $1·35 million had not been provided the Victorian Investment Corporation Ltd. would have ended up in liquidation, and sooner rather than later it would have become apparent that a great deal of taxpayers' money had been put at risk—not only $26·8 million worth of equity but also loans of $65·7 million, a total of approximately $91 million.

I ask the Treasurer to find out exactly what happened, if he does not know already, and to ensure that nothing illegal occurred in the money shuffle. If illegalities did occur, I ask him to take action against the responsible persons.

Mr W. D. McGRATH (Lowan)—The matter I direct to the attention of the Minister for Planning and Environment concerns the need for the government to encourage private enterprise to establish de-inking facilities in Victoria to reduce the production of newsprint needed in Victoria.

Recently I read an article in the Casterton newspaper which said that the local Apex Club had collected a large amount of waste newsprint which it could not get rid of. There is no company either prepared or able to take on the recycling and de-inking of that waste paper. I know of a businessman in Horsham who does a great deal of work recycling newspaper, plastics, aluminium cans and stubbies. He is concerned that the profit margin he receives from his business is declining to such an extent that he fears it is no longer a viable proposition.

This matter was raised in the House last night by a government member. Labor is pushing the conservation issue because we face a problem with the declining number of trees in the State. By encouraging the de-inking process, not only would it provide opportunity and encouragement for recycled newspapers to be reused as recycled newspaper print, but also it would take the pressure off the forests that are under stress.

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—The matter I raise for the attention of the Minister for Property and Services is in regard to electoral matters. I have received corespondence from Lord Home of the Hersel, President of Conservatives Abroad. He has written to all British migrants and conservative politicians in Australia. In his letter he directs attention to the fact that in 1985 the British Parliament decided to allow British subjects who had left Britain over the past five years to vote in Westminster elections, but the concession was hampered by bureaucratic procedures.

Recently the British Parliament agreed to allow those who have left Britain over the past twenty years to vote in the Westminster Parliament elections and also the European Parliament elections.

The letter from Conservatives Abroad appeals to British clubs in Victoria and Australia to register those who might wish to vote for the conservative party in the coming elections in England.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr GAVIN—The letter was addressed to all British clubs in Victoria, including the Robbie Burns club. I was not aware that Robbie Burns supporters were conservatives; the conservative party is reaching out.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr GAVIN—Lord Home of the Hersel makes the point that anyone who is interested in voting should write to him and he will send out forms to the club or the group and the forms have to be posted to him by 10 October 1990 which, as honourable members who are well versed in foreign affairs know, is the national day for the Taiwanese and the celebration of the 1911 revolution in China by Sun Yat Sen.

It is a question of morality in allowing British subjects who are Australian citizens to vote in Westminster and European Parliament elections: it leaves a lot to be desired.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr GAVIN—There is the matter of legality as to whether Australian citizens should participate in elections in England and in the European Parliament. I do not wish to imply any disrespect to Lord Home of the Hersel and Sir James Spicer, a distinguished colleague.

I am simply asking the Minister for Property and Services to inquire into this matter and consult with Lord Home of the Hersel and inform Parliament of his reasoning. It is a matter of concern and the Minister should inquire into the matter urgently.

Mr TANNER (Caulfield)—I wish to raise a matter with the Minister for Transport and I am sorry he is not in the Chamber. Far too often Ministers of the government

are not in the Chamber for the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting and their colleagues who are here tonight do not have a responsibility to answer on behalf——

The SPEAKER—Order! The honourable member may raise a matter which falls within the responsibility of a Minister. So far the honourable member has not indicated a matter of Ministerial responsibility. If he wishes to make use of his opportunity, I suggest he addresses himself to such a matter.

Mr TANNER—I trust that the Minister for Transport, if he is in the building, will enter the Chamber to meet his responsibilities.

I wish to raise a matter on behalf of the Caulfield Secondary College. The college authorities are very concerned by the urgent need for the immediate installation of pedestrian-operated traffic lights outside the front gates of the school.

Caulfield Secondary College is in the unusual situation of having its grounds cut in two by Booran Road and honourable members who frequent the Caulfield Racecourse may be aware of it. It is a very busy road and in 1982 a traffic count found that on a week day there was a traffic flow approaching 15 000 vehicles. It is now estimated that on a week day the traffic flow along Booran Road past Caulfield Secondary College—not just past it, but through it—is up to 16 000 vehicles.

I say "through" because the school grounds—otherwise known as Palfreyman's Paddock—are across Booran Road from the main school gates. No matter what the school authorities do to encourage them to be safe, the reality is that at times eagerness to get to their friends or sporting commitments on the other side of the ground leads children not to pay due attention to traffic.

The college council has been in contact with the Minister's department—the Roads Corporation—and unfortunately for approximately three months earlier this year there was no reply to its correspondence.

It has now appealed to me to take up the matter with the Minister to urgently consider the situation and the danger to the pupils of the Caulfield Secondary College, of which there are approximately 320. They have to cross the school grounds from the buildings to Palfreyman's Paddock and although there is a pedestrian crossing with a traffic warden on it, that warden is not there during the day and, more particularly, during the luncheon and recess breaks. Of course, that is when the children are more likely to be crossing the road.

The traffic flows I have mentioned can be broken down into peak periods. There is anything in excess of 1000 vehicles quite regularly in the late afternoon period and I understand that between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. it is estimated that there are approximately 1500 vehicles passing the school and, immediately after the school breaks up in the afternoon, more than 1200 vehicles. The present crossing is not able to make some motorists act in a responsible manner and, because of their lack of consideration and the speeds at which they pass the school, it is a dangerous situation, even with the traffic warden on duty and one I fear that will not be rectified until one of the school children is killed.

I appeal to the Minister to pay urgent attention to this matter. It will be too late if one of these children is killed and then the pedestrian-operated traffic lights are installed. They need to be installed before a serious accident occurs.

Mr SEITZ (Keilor)—I raise with the Minister for Ethnic Affairs my concern about a report in a local newspaper of comments made at a council meeting by the Mayor of Sunshine, Councillor Don McKay, which were offensive to the Maltese community. Since that event there have been numerous letters in the newspapers and the episode

has turned into a slanging match. However, in this week's local paper, the mayor has threatened anybody who makes further comment on the issue. He said that he will shut them up by taking them to court. I am sure that will frighten off many people in the migrant community from expressing their feelings about the wrong that has been done to them.

I ask the Minister or the Ethnic Affairs Commission to intervene and liaise with the ethnic community and the local government. The Maltese community is the single largest ethnic community in the City of Sunshine and comprises 8 per cent of the population of Sunshine.

In the *Herald* this week the Victorian Commission for Equal Opportunity said that racism in Australia was still alive. That is obvious from the many television and radio broadcasters who make racist jokes. That is at a time when Australia's Prime Minister is asking the nation to develop a harmonious multicultural community.

Up until now the western suburbs have had no trouble with racist comments in the local media. That is why I was so shocked by the mayor's comments. The people of Sunshine have lived together harmoniously in a multicultural community. Some of the residents have immigrated from countries where the adjoining countries have been deadly enemies. Here in Australia they have been able to live, work and share sporting and recreational activities together. They have developed clubs and made provision for their youth, their elderly and for the education of their children.

It is disgraceful that a person in a prominent, responsible position, such as the mayor of a city with a predominantly ethnic community, should make such comments. I urge the Minister to look into this matter because the Maltese community, especially the Maltese soccer club and the Maltese western suburbs welfare community have been offended by his remarks. The Maltese community is willing to work with local government to raise funds for activities for the ethnic community. It wants also to have access to the mainstream services that are provided for the rest of our society and to be able to interchange their views and cultures with the rest of the community.

For the past 30 years that has been successfully done in the western suburbs. I have been shocked and horrified at some of the statements made by the new Mayor of the City of Sunshine. I did not think I would live to see the day that such statements would be made in the western suburbs. More than any other part of Melbourne the western suburbs is built on multiculturalism where communities successfully work and live together.

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The honourable member for Coburg referred to British citizens who had left Great Britain over the past twenty years being able to vote in elections for the Westminster and European Parliaments. That is a new procedure that will come into force in 1990. The honourable member referred to a letter from the Director of Conservatives Abroad, Mr David Smith. I shall investigate the matter and determine what can be done, especially with regard to British citizens who have become citizens of this country.

Mr ROPER (Minister for Planning and Environment)—The honourable member for Dromana referred to the Sorrento kiosk. I shall direct his comments to the attention of the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands.

The honourable member for Melbourne referred to intersectional works required at Arden and Curzon streets, North Melbourne and asked the Minister for Transport to examine how the works could be expedited. I shall direct his remarks to the attention of the Minister.

The honourable member for Balwyn referred to financial arrangements and asked the Treasurer to investigate them. I shall direct the matter to the attention of the Treasurer.

The honourable member for Lowan raised the serious and growing problem in Victoria of the difficulty of disposing of newspaper that has been put out by ordinary citizens and companies for recycling. Victoria has the highest percentage of newspaper recycling in Australia. The problem that now exists internationally of not being able to export much of the paper has meant that the bottom has dropped out of the market.

I have written to the managing directors of two major newspapers requesting a sharing of views on how the problem can be overcome. They accept that they have some responsibility in this matter; after all, it is their product that is causing the problem which, as the honourable member for Lowan said, stretches across the State from Brunswick to Nunawading to Casterton.

Over time many community groups have become used to making a small profit from recycling paper. One of the issues that must be considered is the development of an adequate de-inking process and plant. That would have a significant effect on Australia's balance of payments. Some 40 per cent of newsprint used in Australia is imported from overseas.

The government is exploring the possibilities of de-inking newsprint and is working positively with newspaper proprietors and private industry. The government does not believe it has the responsibility of setting up a de-inking plant. The government must continue working with a number of private companies to encourage recycling.

The honourable member for Caulfield raised the issue of the Caulfield Secondary College, in Booran Road. I am not one who goes to the gallops very often; I am actually not aware of the road but I think there is a welter at Caulfield named after the road. I think I have had a number of unsuccessful investments on horses in that event! I shall direct that matter to the attention of the Minister for Transport.

The honourable member for Keilor raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Ethnic Affairs. The matter concerned a statement made by Councillor McKay, Mayor of the City of Sunshine, which the honourable member described as racist, and threatening the very good race relations record enjoyed in the western suburbs.

If the reports of what Councillor McKay have said are correct, it is extremely regrettable that the civic head of a major city in Melbourne should attack a community group in that way. I certainly hope that the councillor apologises; and if he does not, that the council takes action to disown Councillor McKay because of that problem.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.11 *p.m. until Tuesday, October* 24.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

WORKCARE AND REDUNDANCY PACKAGE

(Question No. 110)

Mr GUDE (Hawthorn) asked the Minister for Labour:

Whether he will provide details of the special redundancy package negotiated with the Victorian Public Service Association Secretary, Mr Jim Young, for Mr Tom Hammer, a long term WorkCare beneficiary, and details of his WorkCare settlement?

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—The answer is:

This information has already been provided to the honourable member under the Freedom of Information Act.

WORKCARE AND SUPERANNUATION PAYMENTS IN VICTORIAN TOURISM COMMISSION

(Question No. 142)

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon) asked the Minister for Tourism:

In respect of each department, agency or authority within his administration since the commencement of the WorkCare program, how many ex-government workers, who were entitled to superannuation, are currently on WorkCare, indicating—(*a*) how many have been completely paid out of superannuation; and (*b*) have any agreements been drawn up in relation to these matters; if so—(i) what formulae have been used; (ii) what are the terms of these agreements; and (iii) on whose authority were they negotiated?

Mr CRABB (Minister for Tourism)—The answer is:

The only agency within the administration of the Minister for Tourism that has a former worker on WorkCare entitled to superannuation is the Emerald Tourist Railway Board.

The former worker of the board was completely paid out by the private superannuation fund concerned.

WORKCARE AND SUPERANNUATION PAYMENTS IN DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR

(Question No. 148)

Mr AUSTIN (Ripon) asked the Minister for Labour:

In respect of each department, agency or authority within his administration since the commencement of the WorkCare program, how many ex-government workers, who were entitled to superannuation, are currently on WorkCare, indicating—(*a*) how many have been completely paid out of superannuation; and (*b*) have any agreements been drawn up in relation to these matters; if so—(i) what formulae have been used; (ii) what are the terms of these agreements; and (iii) on whose authority were they negotiated?

Mr POPE (Minister for Labour)—The answer is:

This information has already been provided to the honourable member under the Freedom of Information Act.

RAIL FATALITIES

(Question No. 162)

Mr COOPER (Mornington) asked the Minister for Transport:

In respect of each of the years ended 30 June 1982–1988:

1. How many collisions there were between trains and motor vehicles involving loss of life, indicating how many lives were lost in each collision?

2. How many pedestrians were killed by trains in—(*a*) the Melbourne metropolitan area; and (*b*) country and provincial Victoria at—(i) railway crossings; (ii) railway stations; and (iii) other sections of railway line, respectively?

3. How many other persons were killed on railway property, indicating the circumstances in each case?

Mr KENNAN (Minister for Transport)—The answer is:

1. Information prior to 30 June 1985 is not on electronic retrieval systems and to provide it for that period would require considerable research and significant resources. Statistics for the period 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1988 are as follows:

Date	*Location*	*No. Killed*
1-7-85–30-6-86		
16-8-85	Pakenham	1
3-10-85	Bendigo–Swan Hill	1
11-12-85	Shepparton	1
29-1-86	Clayton	1
19-6-86	Trafalgar	1
1-7-86–30-6-87		
8-10-86	Rockbank	2
28-10-86	Dooen	1
29-11-86	Wangaratta North	1
13-2-87	Camperdown	1
20-2-87	Nar Nar Goon	1
7-3-87	Rosedale	1
23-3-87	Sale	1
1-4-87	Colac	1
29-4-87	Rockbank	1
1-7-87–30-6-88		
11-9-87	Camperdown	2
1-10-87	Lyndhurst	1
12-10-87	Lang Lang	1
22-11-87	Lang Lang	2
30-11-87	Balmattum	1
11-2-88	Creswick	1
	TOTAL:	23

2. Information prior to 30 June 1985 is not on electronic retrieval systems and to provide it for that period would require considerable research and significant resources. Statistics for the period 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1988 are as follows:

(*a*) Metropolitan area

1-7-85–30-6-86	*Railway Crossings*	
24-9-85	Sunshine	Struck by train
30-9-85	Lalor	Struck by train
8-10-85	Moonee Ponds	Struck by train
14-10-85	Noble Park	Struck by train
8-11-85	Edithvale	Struck by train

9-2-86	Thomastown	Struck by train
9-2-86	Kananook–Frankston	Struck by train
9-5-86	Royal Park	Struck by train
	Railway Stations	
20-6-85	Parliament	Alighting train between train/ platform
	Railway Lines	
19-7-85	Pascoe Vale	Struck by train
1-7-85	Aspendale	Struck by train
6-7-85	Ripponlea	Struck by train
5-7-85	Croydon–Mooroolbark	Struck by train
8-7-85	Brighton	Struck by train
12-7-85	Mitcham	Struck by train
2-8-85	Altona	Struck by train
8-9-85	South Yarra	Struck by train
29-1-86	Royal Park	Struck by train
1-3-86	Box Hill	Struck by train
1-7-86–30-6-87	*Railway Crossings*	
4-8-86	Westall	Struck by train
13-10-86	Seaford	Struck by train
17-10-86	Coburg	Struck by train
17-11-86	Greensborough	Struck by train
21-3-87	Thomastown	Struck by train
11-5-87	Boronia	Struck by train
31-5-87	Mitcham	Struck by train
6-6-87	Blackburn	Struck by train
21-6-87	Bonbeach	Struck by train
	Railway Stations	
31-7-86	Hartwell	Alighting train between train/ platform
2-2-87	Hawthorn	Fell in front of train—accident
	Railway Lines	
19-8-86	Ormond	Struck by train
26-9-86	Westall	Struck by train
17-10-86	Noble Park	Struck by train
7-11-86	Glenroy	Struck by train
27-12-86	Galvin–Paisley	Struck by train
3-4-87	Bayswater	Struck by train
21-4-87	West Richmond	Struck by train
11-5-87	St Kilda	Struck by train
23-8-86	Aspendale	Electrocuted on top of train

1-7-87–30-6-88

Railway Crossings

28-7-87	Noble Park	Struck by train
3-9-87	Moonee Ponds	Struck by train
6-11-87	Ginifer–St Albans	Struck by train
4-12-87	Merlynston	Struck by train
1-2-88	Macleod	Struck by train
1-6-88	Box Hill	Struck by train

Railway Stations

26-8-87	Seaholme	Alighting train between train/ platform

Railway Lines

4-7-87	Highett	Struck by train
20-7-87	Boronia	Struck by train
1-8-87	Croydon	Struck by train
26-8-87	Strathmore Heights	Struck by train
26-9-87	Newmarket	Struck by train
5-11-87	Victoria Park	Struck by train
10-4-88	Ringwood East	Struck by train
28-4-88	Lilydale	Struck by train
20-6-88	Albion	Struck by train

(*b*) Country and Provincial Victoria

1-7-85–30-6-86

Railway Crossings

10-3-86	Shepparton	Struck by train

Railway Crossings

NIL

1-7-86–30-6-87

Railway Crossings

12-7-86	Hoppers Crossing	Struck by train

Railway Stations

NIL

Railway Lines

29-8-86	Bairnsdale	Struck by train
20-3-87	Bairnsdale	Struck by train
22-3-87	Albury	Struck by train
6-9-86	Stawell	Person found lying near track
11-12-86	Morwell	Fell from train in motion

1-7-87–30-6-88

Railway Crossings

31-12-87	Yendon	Struck by train
4-3-88	Eaglehawk	Struck by train

Railway Stations

NIL

Railway Lines

7-9-87	Mildura	Struck by train
13-2-88	Shepparton	Struck by train
20-2-88	Werribee/Little River	Struck by train
16-5-88	Horsham	Struck by train
16-7-87	Benalla	Fell from train in motion

Each of the above incidents involved a single fatality. Altogether 69 persons were killed.

3. Information prior to 30 June 1985 is not on electronic retrieval systems and to provide it for that period would require considerable research and significant resources. Statistics for the period 1 July 1985 to 30 June 1988 are as follows:

MET

1-7-85–30-6-86

27-2-86	Thomastown	1 killed	suicide at station
9-3-86	Macleod	1 killed	suicide at station

1-7-86–30-6-87

7-11-86	Sandringham	1 killed	stabbed at station
9-12-86	Flinders/Spencer streets	1 killed	stabbed on train
9-12-86	Broadmeadows	1 killed	electrocuted on stanchion

1-7-87–30-6-88

12-7-87	Footscray	1 killed	suicide at station
5-8-87	Port Melbourne	1 killed	employee on duty
20-8-87	Footscray	1 killed	suicide at station
28-1-88	Kensington	1 killed	suicide at station
19-5-88	Ivanhoe	1 killed	fell from railway bridge

STA

1-7-85–30-6-86

13-9-85	North Dynon	1 killed	employee on duty
15-9-85	Albury	1 killed	fell from train in motion
19-10-85	Strathkellar	1 killed	employee on duty

1-7-86–30-6-87

13-2-87	Bendigo Workshops	1 killed	employee on duty

1-7-87–30-6-88

10-10-87	Geelong	1 killed	car fell from roadbridge onto tracks
27-1-88	Waurn Ponds	1 killed	person found near line
31-3-88	Tullamarine Loop	1 killed	jumped from railway bridge

POLLUTION IN BARWON COASTAL REGION

(Question No. 203)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands:

1. What submissions the department has received and acted on in relation to the effect of surfactants upon trees in the Barwon coastal region?

2. Whether she will advise what action, if any, has been taken, based upon overseas studies and experience, with plastic seaweed controlling rock erosion and its applications, where applicable, to the South Barwon coastal region?

Mrs SETCHES (Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands)—The answer is:

1. My department received oral and written submissions from local community groups and individuals about the effect of surfactants upon trees in the Barwon coastal region. It initiated a joint project in August 1987 with the Environment Protection Authority and the Geelong and District Water Board. An interim report, "Coastal Vegetation Damage and Airborne Surfactant Deposition in the Barwon Heads Area" was released in March 1989. Field testing will be repeated in spring, 1989 to assess changes following commissioning of the new outfall.

2. Officers of my department are aware of the plastic seaweed as used in the United States for the control of beach erosion. The technique is expensive and has not been trialled in Australia and, more specifically, Victorian conditions. The Minister for Transport is responsible for marine erosion control techniques, and any specific inquiries should be directed to him.

VALUER-GENERAL'S VALUATIONS—RURAL FINANCE CORPORATION

(Question No. 248)

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra) asked the Treasurer:

In view of delays in the Valuer-General's Office in providing valuations for the Rural Finance Corporation:

1. What have been the consequences and cost implications to date, because of those delays?

2. Which properties and projects have been affected?

Mr JOLLY (Treasurer)—The answer is:

The Rural Finance Corporation does not use the services of the Valuer-General's Office except in isolated instances of Ministerial direction. No delays have occurred.

COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF—MILDURA

(Question No. 276)

Mr BILDSTIEN (Mildura) asked the Minister for Community Services:

What the staffing statistics are for each department, agency and authority within his administration in the electoral district of Mildura for each of the years 1980–89?

Mr SPYKER (Minister for Community Services)—The answer is:

Staffing statistics in the electoral district of Mildura:

Year	No. of Staff
1980	18
1981	20
1982	23
1983	24

1984	25
1985	27
1986	41
1987	43
1988	55
1989	63

NOTE 1. For the year 1980 to 1985 the figures presented are approximate.

2. In 1986, as a result of machinery of government initiatives, the Office of Intellectual Disability Services was transferred to Community Services Victoria from Health Department Victoria.

3. In 1988 a community residential unit began operating within Mildura.

4. In 1989 additional resources have been allocated to Mildura in the areas of child protection, intellectual disability and resource management.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH ACTION CENTRE

(Question No. 298)

Mr LIEBERMAN (Benambra) asked the Minister for Education:

Whether the Community Research Action Centre, Monash University, in cooperation with Outrage and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, produced a book entitled *The Company We Keep;* if so—(*a*) what was the cost of producing the book; and (*b*) which government agencies contributed towards the cost of the book, indicating, in each case, the amount involved?

Ms KIRNER (Minister for Education)—The answer is:

Monash University in association with Outrage and RMIT did not produce the book *The Company We Keep.*

The book was produced by the Monash University Union, which has the following objectives:

to create opportunities for participation in non-academic activities;

to provide facilities for members; and

to provide catering and commercial facilities.

The union board reports annually to the council of the university but is responsible for the management of its own affairs.

(*a*) No money was provided by Outrage or the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology; however, assistance was provided for the design and artwork in the book.

(*b*) No government agencies contributed towards the cost of the book.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

(Question No. 299)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

In relation to all buildings owned or leased by the government and/or government agencies and which are used or intended to be used for office accommodation:

1. What is the address of each building, indicating the area in each building used or proposed to be used for office accommodation?

2. Which departments, agencies and authorities utilise such areas in each building?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

The time and resources to answer this question cannot be justified.

(Question No. 300)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

In relation to buildings or parts of buildings leased out by the Crown or its agencies—(*a*) what the address is of each building; (*b*) what the term is of each lease, indicating—(i) the name of each lessee; (ii) the expiration date; (iii) date of commencement; and (iv) the area under lease?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

The time and resources to answer this question cannot be justified.

(Question No. 301)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

In relation to buildings or parts of buildings not owned by the Crown but leased from other parties—(*a*) what the address is of each building; (*b*) who the owner is of each building; and (*c*) what the term is of each lease, indicating—(i) the expiration date; (ii) the commencement date; (iii) the area under lease; and (iv) the rental payable?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

The time and resources to answer this question cannot be justified.

(Question No. 302)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

How much money has been spent between April 1982 and 30 June 1989 by the government to purchase property used or occupied by government departments or agencies?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

The time and resources to answer this question cannot be justified.

(Question No. 303)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

In relation to the period April 1982 to 30 June 1989, what buildings occupied by government departments or its agencies have been sold by the government, indicating—(*a*) the location of each building; (*b*) the date of sale; and (*c*) the amounts which were realised on each sale?

Mr WALSH (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

The time and resources to answer this question cannot be justified.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

PUBLIC HOUSING IN DONCASTER AND TEMPLESTOWE

(Question No. 261)

Mr PERRIN (Bulleen) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Housing and Construction:

In respect of the availability of public housing in the City of Doncaster and Templestowe:

1. What the address is of each house, indicating on what date each was acquired and its purchase cost?

2. What value of improvements have been made for each house since acquisition?

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Housing and Construction is:

1. With respect to spot purchased housing in the municipality the required information is set out in the attached report No. 1.

2. With respect to spot purchased housing in the municipality the required information is set out in the attached report No. 2.

REPORT No. 1

Address	*Suburb*	*Actual-Settle*	*Actual Purchase*
			$
Talford St	Doncaster East	7.2.83	48 000.00
Lauer St	Doncaster	18.2.83	52 000.00
Darvall St	Donvale	15.2.83	58 300.00
Balmoral Ave.	Lower Templestowe	21.2.83	50 000.00
Manningham Rd	Bulleen	31.5.83	60 000.00
Harold St	Bulleen	23.3.83	65 000.00
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	23.3.83	65 000.00
Stanton St	Doncaster	8.6.83	55 000.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	30.6.83	67 000.00
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	30.6.83	47 000.00
Fir St	Bulleen	30.6.83	65 500.00
Estelle St	Bulleen	30.6.83	71 000.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	30.6.83	62 000.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	30.6.83	65 000.00
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	30.6.83	58 000.00
Fir St	Bulleen	30.6.83	69 000.00
Estelle St	Bulleen	30.6.83	53 000.00
Dale St	Bulleen	30.6.83	59 000.00
Dale St	Bulleen	27.5.83	69 000.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	30.6.83	57 000.00
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	30.6.83	50 000.00
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	19.9.83	53 600.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00

Address	*Suburb*	*Actual-Settle*	*Actual Purchase*
			$
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	23.8.83	45 875.00
Parker St	Templestowe	4.4.84	57 000.00
Thompsons Rd	Bulleen	17.4.84	62 000.00
Mitcham Rd	Mitcham	23.7.84	63 000.00
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	12.10.84	63 000.00
Dunoon St	Doncaster	7.6.85	78 000.00
Canara St	Doncaster East	29.5.85	72 000.00
Paula Cres.	Doncaster	20.8.85	75 000.00
Russell Cres.	Doncaster East	18.7.85	72 500.00
Talford St	Doncaster	19.7.85	68 500.00
Leeds St	Doncaster East	16.10.85	66 000.00
Trevor Crt	Nunawading	11.10.85	63 000.00
Florence Ave.	Donvale	8.10.85	67 500.00
Westend Rd	Warrandyte	9.10.85	76 500.00
Rupert St	Doncaster	2.5.86	81 000.00
Avocet St	Doncaster	9.5.86	74 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Firth St	Doncaster	17.11.86	60 000.00
Ireland Ave.	Doncaster East	29.10.86	81 000.00
Thea Gr.	Doncaster East	5.2.87	82 250.00
Florence Ave.	Donvale	21.1.87	87 000.00
Bellarra St	Doncaster East	9.1.87	81 650.00
Beverley St	Doncaster	10.7.87	81 000.00
Richard St	Doncaster East	24.7.87	82 000.00
Oregon Dr.	Donvale	21.7.87	85 250.00
Thea Gr.	Doncaster East	24.8.87	79 050.00
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	16.11.87	81 850.00
Braham St	Donvale	15.9.87	85 000.00
James St	Lower Templestowe	1.10.87	80 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00
Meader St	Doncaster	11.1.88	75 000.00

REPORT No. 2

Address	*Suburb*	*Expenditure Upgrade*
		$
Talford St	Doncaster East	6 145.36
Lauer St	Doncaster	2 234.71
Darvall St	Donvale	947.00
Balmoral Ave.	Lower Templestowe	4 756.00
Manningham Rd	Bulleen	11 945.00

Address	*Suburb*	*Expenditure Upgrade*
		$
Harold St	Bulleen	3 182.00
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	8 329.58
Stanton St	Doncaster	3 509.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	11 176.50
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	5 082.60
Fir St	Bulleen	4 253.50
Estelle St	Bulleen	4 906.10
Willow Bend	Bulleen	20 077.92
Willow Bend	Bulleen	4 521.72
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	10 461.18
Fir St	Bulleen	1 660.00
Estelle St	Bulleen	5 405.51
Dale St	Bulleen	6 288.95
Dale St	Bulleen	3 638.00
Willow Bend	Bulleen	20 077.92
Marjorie Cl.	Bulleen	10 586.80
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	5 580.00
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Lawford St	Doncaster	3 875.50
Parker St	Templestowe	3 902.10
Thompsons Rd	Bulleen	4 525.45
Mitcham Rd	Mitcham	7 053.10
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	4 686.21
Dunoon St	Doncaster	6 743.60
Canara St	Doncaster East	2 670.00
Paula Cres.	Doncaster	28.00
Russell Cres.	Doncaster East	9 516.65
Talford St	Doncaster	3 604.20
Leeds St	Doncaster East	16 816.00
Trevor Crt	Nunawading	16 257.00
Florence Ave.	Donvale	13 730.00
Westend Rd	Warrandyte	2 117.65
Rupert St	Doncaster	4 055.80
Avocet St	Doncaster	8 528.11
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Firth St	Doncaster	4 738.01
Ireland Ave.	Doncaster East	18 008.56
Thea Gr.	Doncaster East	8 468.54
Florence Ave.	Donvale	1 812.30
Bellara St	Doncaster East	6 288.41
Beverley St	Doncaster	3 413.34
Richard St	Doncaster East	7 845.61
Oregon Dr.	Donvale	5 175.47
Thea Gr.	Doncaster East	4 002.30
Blackburn Rd	Doncaster East	10 178.20

Address	*Suburb*	*Expenditure Upgrade*
		$
Braham St	Donvale	4 304.76
James St	Lower Templestowe	7 113.18
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01
Meader St	Doncaster	3 284.01

PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LIST

(Question No. 262)

Mr PERRIN (Bulleen) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Housing and Construction:

How many applications from residents of the City of Doncaster and Templestowe are on the waiting list for Ministry rental accommodation as at 31 March 1989?

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Housing and Construction is:

It is not possible to provide waiting list information on the basis of where applicants presently reside. It is also not possible to provide waiting list figures for the exact date nominated.

The waiting list for accommodation in the City of Doncaster and Templestowe on 13 July 1989 was 223. As the waiting list for this area is fairly static, there would be marginal change from 31 March.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION STAFF—MILDURA

(Question No. 284)

Mr BILDSTIEN (Mildura) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Housing and Construction:

What the staffing statistics are for each department, agency and authority within his administration in the electoral district of Mildura for each of the years 1980–89?

Mr McCUTCHEON (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Housing and Construction is:

Staffing statistics for the Mildura electoral district for each of the years 1980–89 are as follows:

Year	*Housing*	*PWD*
1980	2	2
1981	2	2
1982	2	2
1983	4	2
1984	5	2
1985	6	2
1986	7	2
1987	8	2
1988	11	Not applicable
1989	12	Not applicable

PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT CARS

(Question No. 344)

Mr DICKINSON (South Barwon) asked the Premier:

1. In respect of each of the financial years 1986–87, 1987–88 and 1988–89, what was the cost of transport provided for—(*a*) Ministers and officials of the government; (*b*) Leaders of the Liberal Party; (*c*) Leaders of the National Party; (*d*) retired Premiers; and (*e*) other eligible dignitaries?

2. Whether a government car was provided to the Honourable W. A. Landeryou, MLC., or the Honourable R. C. Fordham, M.P. after they ceased to be Ministers of the Crown; if so—(*a*) for what period of time; and (*b*) at what cost?

3. Whether government cars have been provided to any other former Minister, party Leader or officeholder, if so—(*a*) to whom; (*b*) for what period of time; and (*c*) at what cost?

Mr CAIN (Premier)—The answer is:

I am informed that: it has been a matter of convention that the government of the day extends the courtesy of some government car use to former Leaders, Governors and Premiers.

Information on the total cost of transport provided through the department of the Premier and Cabinet is annually provided to Parliament in the department's annual report. The 1988–89 report will be tabled this sitting.