FIREARMS (PROHIBITED PERSONS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 11) on the motion of Mr. Manson (Minister of State Development) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—This Bill is designed to extend the provisions of section 31 of the Firearms Act. It was a difficult process to have the principal Bill placed on the statute-book. The Minister of State Development was a member of the Statute Law Revision Committee when that committee examined problems associated with firearms. Previously, the laws relating to firearms were part of the Police Offences Act, and it was as a result of the deliberations and recommendations of the Statute Law Revision Committee that those laws were deleted from the Police Offences Act and a separate Firearms Act was enacted. The Opposition believes that process went a long way towards establishing the importance of the control of firearms.

Legislative provisions now make it easier than previously was the case for police and other authorities to supervise the issuing of permits to own firearms and to control their sale to some extent. Despite that control, firearms are being used increasingly in illegal activities in this State. Almost every day, newspapers contain reports of firearms being used in hold-ups. No matter how the sale and use of firearms are controlled by Acts of Parliament and regulations, criminals are somehow able to obtain them, and they use them to the detriment of people of this State.

When the Firearms Bill was debated in this House some time ago, a number of statistics which confirmed the need for additional control were cited. Surprisingly enough, in 1964, which was the latest year for which figures were available, there were 103 deaths resulting from the use of firearms. There were 58 suicides, 53 of men and five of women. There were 31 accidents and three homicides.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Does the honorable member consider that this information is relevant to the Bill?

Mr. WILKES.—Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER.—If the honorable member will read the Bill, which is short, he will see that it relates to the obtaining of a firearms certificate by a young person who has been detained in a youth training centre. That does not mean that the House may debate the whole wide range of firearms legislation. I invite the honorable member to look at the Bill again.

Mr. WILKES.—On your suggestion, Sir, I will re-examine it. The Minister agrees with you that the purpose of the measure is to extend the provisions contained in section 31 of the principal Act so that the regulations may cover a person convicted and detained in a youth training centre. He cannot obtain a firearms certificate or use a firearm for at least five years after he has been released from that centre.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—To carry out the crimes which you were attempting to mention.

Mr. WILKES.—That is so. As suggested by the honorable member for Sunshine, the purpose of this new provision is to prevent people from committing these crimes.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Which we cannot discuss.

Mr. WILKES.—That is so. It would be most undesirable that the regulations did not apply to a person who had been detained for a time, whether in one of Her Majesty's prisons, a youth training centre or any other place of detention. The
Opposition has strong views on the use of firearms, and those views have been fortified by happenings in recent weeks. This measure does not permit me to express those views, but, because it goes part of the way to control firearms, the Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Sunshine).—As the honorable member for Northcote rightly said, the Opposition supports this Bill, which goes part of the way to increase control over the use of firearms. You, Sir, in your wisdom—which we all recognize and support—would not allow any wider discussions, but I believe some observations are in order, if you rule that they are apropos the intention of the Government. The Bill prescribes that a person shall not obtain a firearm while he is serving his penance. As the honorable member for Northcote said, to the extent that the Bill prevents such a person from obtaining a firearm, it goes part of the way to meet the Opposition's wishes but it does not go all the way. If a person went into business as a second-hand dealer, he would have to obtain a licence. If he was subsequently convicted of stealing or of receiving stolen goods, he would lose that licence, and the appropriate authority would think twice before again issuing him with a licence. There would be no suggestion by the Government—and I am sure none by you Mr. Speaker—that this situation should not be closely examined by the responsible authorities and by Parliament. As the honorable member for Northcote pointed out, some misguided member of society may fall from grace.

Mr. MANSON.—A young person or an old person?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—A young person.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! Is the honorable member referring to the person mentioned in the Bill?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so. However, after five years that person can obtain a gun or a rifle on exactly the same terms as any other member of the community. The honorable member for Northcote made the point—which I am sure escaped you, Sir, because of the tumultuous murmur of fatigue that comes from Government members on a Thursday—that members of the public strongly believe that the community is entitled to some additional protection. The legal profession, too, holds strong views on this matter. A person can to-day buy a gas loader, a fairly powerful rifle using high-velocity ammunition. With the use of telescopic sights, it is capable of accomplishing a far greater range of destruction than the firearms which were available twenty years ago to the people mentioned in this Bill.

Mr. FENNESSY.—And with complete accuracy.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member is extending the argument.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I am expressing only a personal view; the honorable member for Northcote has expressed the opinion of the Opposition. If an ordinary member of the community wishes to obtain a gas loader or a carbine which the police have complained about—

The SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member must keep to matters contained in the Bill.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—The ordinary member of the public who wants to obtain a weapon with the destructive power of the modern rifle is no better treated than the person named in the Bill. He goes to a gun shop, and, if he wants to do the job properly he gets a rifle.
The SPEAKER.—Order! I must find that these remarks do not relate to the Bill, which deals with the question of those persons who have been detained in a youth training centre. It imposes a prohibition on their having a firearms certificate for a period of five years. Unless it is distinctly relevant to the Bill, the question of what the general public does cannot be admitted.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I accept your argument, Sir—I admire the way in which you put it. The young gentleman named in the Bill would do exactly as the Minister of State Development, yourself or even a more distinguished member of the Government—if that were possible—might do. He would get a rifle or a weapon without any further interrogatory or without satisfying anything more than a perfunctory inquiry asked of any member of the general public. I support the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in pointing out that, although the Opposition supports this Bill because it goes part of the way, it would not hurt the Government to have another look at it. I thank you for your indulgence, Sir.

The motion was agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: BANK-STREET STATE SCHOOL.

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next, at a quarter to Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—I wish to direct to the attention of the Minister of Education several problems which exist at a school in my electorate. The building is a little over 80 years old. The Public Works Department is to be commended for the work that it has undertaken to date, but a pressing need exists for the provision of playing space. The school concerned is Bank-street State School, No. 2608. There are 560 pupils attending the school, 330 of whom have new Australian parents who speak only some English, and 30-odd children speak very little English. Special assistance is required for the head master to teach these children English; it will be particularly necessary next year when he expects a greater influx of migrant children born overseas.

The playing area at the school of a little over a quarter of an acre has to cater for the needs of 560 children. The district is densely populated, and the present playground is probably the only playing space available in the area. I should like to be informed—I am sure the school committee would be grateful for the information—whether the Education Department has any plan for extending the playing space of the school, which would mean acquiring some of the older dwellings in the vicinity.

I have been asked to direct attention also to the fact that there is only a small staff-room at the school for seventeen teachers. It is expected that the staff will be increased next year. Further, the school committee has been agitating for many years for the provision of a general store-room in which all the paraphernalia of the school—ladders, brooms, and so on—may be stored.

Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—As the honorable member is aware, the Minister of Education has carried on the principle established by his predecessor of affording special assistance to migrant children in various
primary and secondary schools. I shall direct the Minister's attention to the needs at this particular school. So far as the extension of the school site is concerned, I shall be happy to accompany the honorable member on an inspection to examine the crowded nature of the site and the apparent need for a store-room and extension of the staff-room.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.7 p.m. until Tuesday, October 24.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, October 24, 1967.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett) took the chair at 4.56 p.m., and read the prayer.

WATER (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE (MEAT INDUSTRY) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. R. J. Hamer (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Education), was read a first time.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS.

The Hon. J. M. Walton (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister of Education—

Is it a fact that because of delays in appointing senior staff replacements, students embarking on teaching in 1968 will receive temporary appointment in city schools; if so, will he give consideration to expediting these appointments, as great difficulty and inconvenience are sure to be experienced by these new teachers in obtaining suitable accommodation later in the school year?

The Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

No, ex-college students will be placed as soon as the classifiers have finalized their work in connexion with the promotion and transfer of classified teachers.

KARINGAL STATE SCHOOL: CONSTRUCTION: TENDERS.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Education—

(a) What tenders were received for the construction of Karingal State School?
(b) In each case, what cost or costs were quoted?
(c) Who was the successful tenderer, what was the amount of the tender accepted and what is the cost of construction to date?
(d) Will he lay the file on the table of the Library?

The Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Education).—I have assumed the question relates to the extensions at the school currently proceeding. The answers are—

(a) and (b) The tenders and amounts for the extension of Karingal State School 4922 by four additional class-rooms and a library were as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tender</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. V. Jennings Industries (Aust.) Ltd.</td>
<td>$31,839</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. B. Tincknell Pty. Ltd.</td>
<td>$32,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. P. Finn Pty. Ltd.</td>
<td>$36,400</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(c) The successful tenderer was A. V. Jennings Industries (Aust.) Ltd., the amount of the tender accepted was $31,839 and the builder has been paid $14,485 for cost of construction to date.

(d) Yes.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLEX: DEFERMENT.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Education—

Has any decision been made to defer the projected senior-junior high school complex until 1970; if so, when will a final decision be made?

The Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Education).—The answer is "Yes".
COMPANIES.
VIVACO PTY. LTD., QUEENSLAND: ACTIVITIES IN VICTORIA.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—
(a) Has the Government made any inquiries into the Victorian activities of the Queensland mail-order firm of Vivaco Pty. Ltd. and/or its associated businesses?
(b) Is that company registered in Victoria?
(c) Will the Government issue a warning to the public concerning the unscrupulous activities of that company and its associated businesses, and circulate copies of that warning to newspapers throughout Victoria, many of which are publishing advertisements on behalf of that company in ignorance of the fraudulent nature of its activities?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—
(a) Vivaco Pty. Ltd. is a company registered in Queensland, the directors of which are Victor Colin Coote and his wife, Valmay June Coote, both residents of Brisbane. The Consumers Protection Council has investigated some complaints concerning Rowell & Co., Mail Order House of Australia, Regal Toy Wholesalers and Junior Playwear Distributors, all of which are apparently associated with Vivaco Pty. Ltd.
(b) No.
(c) As the firms in question are not within the jurisdiction of Victorian courts, it is not possible for the Government to take any direct action in the matter. However, it is understood that the Queensland authorities have the matter under consideration. In the circumstances it is not practicable to adopt the course suggested by the honorable member, but obviously the public should exercise great care in considering any claims made by these firms in their advertisements.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.
LAND ACQUISITION AT WESTERNPORT: PRICE OFFER.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—
(a) What price per acre is the State Electricity Commission offering for land acquisition for easements in Westernport districts following industrial expansion in that area?
(b) Is the price based on rural land values; if so, why is the price offered not closer to the value of land as industrial land?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—
(a) and (b) The State Electricity Commission is not at present acquiring easements for major power lines in the Westernport district, although it is expected that lines will be required in future. Compensation will be offered on the basis of assessments made by an independent valuer who would have regard for the current market value of the properties concerned.

HOME FINANCE TRUST.
MONEYS: LOANS GRANTED.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—
(a) What moneys have been made available to and/or obtained by the Home Finance Trust and how many loans have been made available for home construction in each of the past five years?
(b) From what source or sources have such moneys (if any) been obtained?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moneys Obtained</td>
<td>$1,900,000</td>
<td>$3,100,000</td>
<td>$2,300,000</td>
<td>$1,450,000</td>
<td>$1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Loans Made</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Mortgage</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Mortgage</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(b) All moneys obtained by the Trust were raised from savings banks and other institutional lenders.
POLLUTION.
CONTROL MEASURES.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the failure of the Government to take adequate measures to control environmental pollution in the State of Victoria, and to protect the public from the dangers arising therefrom.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 53.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—We must eat to live, and there is in Victoria a very efficient set of pure food regulations which protect the public on the quality and content of the food that we eat. We must also breathe to live, but the elimination and control by this Government, through its pitifully under-staffed and under-equipped Clean Air Section of the Department of Health, would lead us to believe that Dr. Henry Bolte and his laboratory assistant, the Minister of Health, are engaged in a thesis on asphyxiation, or how to reduce life expectancy through smog and smoke.

The same position applies in relation to our waters—the sea, the streams and the lakes; they are dying a slow death before our eyes. To see—I emphasize the word “see”—the photographic effects caused by air and water pollution is a saddening experience. Add to this the exposure to this pollution, and what do we have? A world that is standing still in terms of life expectancy and the ever-present danger—if measures for cure and prevention are not proclaimed boldly by this Government and other Governments throughout the world—that life expectancy may be considerably lowered not only in Victoria but internationally.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON.—Can you prove that statement?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—If our newly elected member will listen instead of interjecting, he will be furnished with proof. At the Third National Air Pollution Conference, which was held last December at Washington, D.C., 3,000 representatives from Governments throughout the United States of America, as well as educators and overseas visitors, gathered to discuss the progress and procrastination in air pollution control. The conference decided—

If the present rate of air and water pollution continues, in less than a century no human being will be able to exist on earth.

In a keynote address to the conference, Vice-President Humphrey quoted Samuel Johnson when he said—

Nothing concentrates a man’s mind like the imminence of his hanging.

This quotation should be well understood by the Government. Thus, the Vice-President warned against waiting too long before taking active measures to reduce air pollution.

I think every honorable member is prepared to concede that sometimes it is necessary to hit people between the eyes before they decide to do something to eradicate an injustice, a source of ill health, pollution, or a menace which surrounds them. Members of the Labor Party contend that this Government is literally standing still on the question of pollution.

Other members of the Labor Party will cover aspects of air pollution and water pollution. On the matter of clean air, the report of the Third National Air Pollution Conference states—

At the conference, one exhibit was a counter which recorded continuously the weight of pollutants released nationwide in motor vehicle exhausts alone. Based on statistical data, the counter showed that 1 ton was released into the atmosphere every 0.4 second and that for 24 hours, the total amounted to more than 240,000 tons. Of this, about 80 per cent. is of carbon monoxide.
To obtain the comparative figure for Australia, the figure is divided by 22. Therefore, in round figures, the quantity of pollutants released into the atmosphere in Australia per day from motor car exhausts is 12,000 tons. The report continues—

In terms of total air pollution from engine exhausts, the United States Public Health Service estimates that 96 million tons are released annually. This is 60 per cent. of the air pollution from all sources and 80 per cent. consists of 66 million tons of carbon monoxide alone, with the balance made up of sulphur, nitrogen-oxides, hydrocarbons and particulate matter, plus lesser amounts of fuel additives such as tetra-ethyllead.

This wonderful report which I commend to honorable members also states—

Tail-pipe emissions account for most of the carbon-monoxide and more than half of the hydrocarbons released by an engine. It is estimated that combined crankcase and tailpipe exhausts represent a loss of about 10 per cent. of all gasoline consumed, and 100 per cent. control could save the motorist 1 gallon of gas in 10.

The State of California has imposed crankcase controls since 1960. Australian manufacturers have been given until 1970 to install crankcase suppressors on motor vehicles in this State. I ask the Minister of Health to explain why it is not compulsory now for these suppressors to be fitted. The installation of a suppressor costs only $2 and many existing vehicles already have them. I refer particularly to Valiant motor cars. Why should it not be compulsory for manufacturers to install suppressors on motor vehicles immediately instead of their being permitted to defer installation until 1970? Because of the absence of crankcase controls in this State, more and more pollutants are being belched into the atmosphere. The conference report indicates that it is a colossal waste of money because a crankcase suppressor and tail-pipe emission suppressor can save up to 1 gallon in 10 consumed by the vehicle. When one considers the amount of money being spent on the importation of petroleum, surely this is worth urgent consideration by any Government.

One of the most unwelcome features of modern living is the mass of waste and refuse that it seems to produce. Refuse from all kinds of activity—industrial, agricultural and even recreational pursuits—has become almost a yardstick by which can be measured the degree of civilization reached by any given community or country.

Certain countries have developed a great sense of national responsibility in these matters, and I refer particularly to the Scandinavian countries. In Stockholm on quite a few occasions I saw a citizen casually throw onto the footpath an empty cigarette packet, whereupon a civilian tapped him on the shoulder, drew his attention to the fact and referred him to a receptacle nearby. Action of this sort is worthy of emulation here. The fact remains that in some countries there seems to be a greater public consciousness concerning cleanliness than there is in Australia. In this direction, Australians have much to learn.

I intend to make comparisons between the two major States of Australia—Victoria and New South Wales. The Minister of Education frequently makes comparisons between conditions in these two States; at the drop of a hat, he seems to love to refer to conditions existing twelve or thirteen years ago, and I suppose we cannot blame him for doing so. For almost two-thirds of a generation, Victoria has had a Government which lives on memories when it suits it to do so and when it is asked to suffer honest criticism. I am afraid that the Minister of Education is loath at any time to suffer criticism.

In Dr. Bolte's Utopia, there is very little to be proud of. In my opinion, the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health would put Cinderella
in the Rockefeller category because of the paucity of its equipment and the smallness of its staff. On the 19th of September I asked the Minister of Health—

(a) What staff is employed at the present time in the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health and what are their qualifications?

(b) What was the expenditure of the section for the year 1966-67?

(c) What is the capital value of non-expendable scientific equipment at present used by the section?

I was advised that the staff consisted of three scientific officers, a senior engineer and a laboratory assistant. That is the entire staff of the Clean Air Section for this State! I was informed also that expenditure for the year 1966-67 was $24,391 and that the capital cost of the scientific equipment considered to be non-expendable was approximately $21,300. That was the cost of equipment used to look after industrial machinery of a total capital value in this State of approximately $1,300 million yet the Minister of Health has the gall to make public announcements through the newspapers that the Government is getting on top of air pollution in Victoria. His smug sense of self-satisfaction amazes me, and it is amazing the populace. The Minister is becoming a maestro of the cover-up.

Let us study what air pollution means in New South Wales. The control of air pollution there originated under a Labor Government, but, although there has been a change to a Liberal Government, there has been no curtailment of the activities of the Air Pollution Control Division of the Department of Health in that State; rather, those activities have been increased, and for that I give full marks to that Government.

Concerning finance, industries in New South Wales which come within certain classifications—generally those emitting larger amounts of pollutants—are scheduled and are required to pay an annual fee, the amount depending on the size and type of the industry. In New South Wales there are about 800 establishments which come into that category, and about $100,000 per annum is paid in fees by them. That figure is a little less than 50 per cent. of the entire expenditure in this field for the last financial year, which is in the vicinity of $233,000. I emphasize that, by comparison, Victoria spends $24,391.

New South Wales has a staff of 25 scientific officers in this section of the Department of Health, and they are currently engaged in air pollution duties, both routine and research. This is extremely important, because the Minister of Health has admitted in this House that little or no research is conducted by the Clean Air Section of our Department of Health. It is felt that there might be duplication of the efforts of clean air officers across the border in New South Wales. It seems to me that Victoria is unashamedly attaching itself like a gummy shark to New South Wales on the question of air pollution. The New South Wales authorities have published many papers on this subject. The staff in that State is considered by the Department to be adequate for the present, although I believe preparations are in hand for a considerable increase in the existing staff of 25.

Regarding apparatus, the impressive scientific equipment possessed by the division in New South Wales is to be augmented soon by even more expensive and specialized equipment which will give the officers there an opportunity to measure not only fall-out but also air pollutants. I asked the Minister of Health how many tests for suspended dusts, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and other materials which affect human health were made on a comprehensive basis with modern continuously recording equipment in Victoria for the year 1966. I emphasize that it is important to human comfort, safety and existence that tests of this nature should be conducted. To that question the Minister answered "None".

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.
This is just not good enough. I am not blaming the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health. I am blaming the Government. Five officers are working with fantastically inefficient equipment, with out-dated dust gauges—almost everything is reminiscent of the Victorian era—yet Sir Henry Bolte and his laboratory assistant, the Minister of Health, say "All is well. We are getting on top of smog. Air pollution will be a thing of the past in this wonderful Utopia of Victoria.”

As regards routine testing, dust-fall, smoke and sulphur oxides are continuously monitored in many parts of New South Wales, particularly sulphur oxides, while ozone, nitrogen oxides and suspended particles are continually monitored. Many phases of research are conducted in laboratories from investigation into the use of new or novel methods of monitoring air pollution to the design and advice on construction of devices to control specific sources of pollution.

I can summarize the difference between Victoria and New South Wales by a reference to a recent report issued by the Clean Air Committee to the Government which said, "It is believed in New South Wales that more Federal activity is necessary." I concede, in all fairness, that that applies to Victoria as well, and not only in the matter of air pollution. The report suggested that this could be similar to activity in the United States of America, where control is organized initially on a State basis but where the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare conducts a large amount of research into pollution problems. In other words, there should be a cooperative deal.

The whole area of activity, reportage and also control, even to the point of prosecutions, contrasts with the run-down Victorian Clean Air Section, which is shockingly under-staffed and has virtually no equipment. It has only an infinitesimal value by present-day standards. The section is housed in a small room and a corridor in an old residential building. This is just not good enough. It is typical of the Government in almost every sphere of activity, particularly in matters that may not be vote-catchers, although, because of its importance to the health of the community this may develop into one of those things. Never is anything done on the scale needed, and as little is spent as possible and as infrequently as possible. This certainly applies to the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health of Victoria.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—How long do you consider that this has been an urgent matter in Victoria?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Mr. Hunt has asked a reasonable question. Increased industrialization brings with it pollution problems, and it is because of this increased industrialization that we might even concede that Victoria has attracted quite a large amount of industry. I shall deal later with the point of the percentage increase in industry in Victoria and New South Wales.

The fact remains that this has been a particularly urgent problem, not only in Victoria but throughout the world, since about the mid-fifties. One can take that as a general consensus of opinion in this direction. Nothing precipitate commenced until about 1954-55.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—In that event, it would have been possible for you to have given reasonable notice of this motion.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I am afraid that Mr. Hunt must have had a bad week-end, so I shall ignore his interjection. As my Leader once stated, there is really no incumbency on the part of the Labor Party to give notice of a motion of this sort.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Only as a matter of courtesy.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—In this case, notice was given.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Only half an hour’s notice.
Pollution.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Apparently, the Government must have adequate time. I even see nods of agreement from a Minister and I laud him for that because I know he is fair-minded. On the 3rd October I asked the Minister of Health—

How many visits to industrial properties were made by officers of the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health during the year 1966-67?

The answer was “Two hundred and thirty-three”. I further asked the Minister whether, as a result of the visits, any prosecutions had been launched, and he advised me that none had been launched. According to the Premier, the State cannot have industrialization such as he claims he has personally brought to Victoria without increased pollution. This is a typical, ill-considered outburst. Let us study the facts. Commonwealth Government figures covering the period from 1955 to 1965 show that the value of factory output increased by just on 184 per cent in both Victoria and New South Wales. Similar figures apply to Queensland and South Australia, whilst the figures for the smaller States of Western Australia and Tasmania were about 195 per cent. So where is all this high and mighty affluence that we hear the Government crowing about?

Output figures for Victoria and New South Wales have been almost the same. In New South Wales there has been a much more severe policing of the legislation than in Victoria. It is almost an impossibility for a person to be fined in Victoria under the Clean Air Act, and any fine that is imposed is so small that no one worries about it. This matter is either ignored or forgotten or the buck is passed between the Government, officers of the Department of Health and the municipalities. I have spoken to many health officers on this matter, and they have given up the ghost because they cannot see their way clear to proceed with anything for fear of the Clean Air Section taking the matter over and for fear of its fading into the Limbo of lost and forgotten things.

In the short term, on the factory figures that I have quoted, industrial expansion in New South Wales has not been decreased on the ground that there is more rigid control of pollution in that State. In the long term, Governments with enough guts to face up to industry, and to make companies, Government and semi-Government instrumentalities and individuals responsible, as far as it is possible, for combating pollution, will leave a legacy of longevity to which good water and clean air will fully contribute.

Surely that is a legacy which the Government should feel proud of in the year 1967. When I consider some of the magnificent buildings that were erected in the latter part of last century and the planning that was then made for parklands—which the people of this State and of other States have been inclined to prostitute—I reflect upon the fact that our forebears looked to the future boldly and with courage. But, in the year 1967, we are bowing too much to vested interests, and it cannot be denied that vested interests play a considerable part in the matter of air and water pollution. How can air pollution be controlled effectively by the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health with a staff of five officers and $20,000 worth of equipment? As usual, the self-justifying Minister of Health claims that the Government is getting the upper hand in the matter of air pollution in the State of Victoria. The honorable gentleman not only buries his head in the sand, as it were, but immerses himself in fanciful fact. This is revealed when the surface is scratched and the actual facts are produced.

Certain statements have been made by the Minister of Health and by the Premier and Treasurer concerning this matter, and I now quote from the Sun News-Pictorial of the 9th August, this year, which states—

Pollution “Not Serious”—Bolte.
Air pollution was less serious in Melbourne than in any other industrial city he had visited, the Premier Sir Henry Bolte said to-day.

I do not know how the honorable gentleman could make that determination.

"Melbourne is helped by being a windy city and this clears smog," he said.

That is not so. The average wind velocity in Melbourne is 8.1 as compared with 7.6 in Sydney, 9 in Perth, 7.4 in Hobart, 8.9 in New York and 7.4 in Los Angeles. In Melbourne we suffer many inversion layers, with a stagnant air condition. We do have hot blustery summer winds and occasional August gales which blow fences down, but we are inclined to forget that many calm days are experienced in the City of Melbourne.

Recently I had the privilege of viewing a series of photographs showing air pollution not only in Melbourne but throughout the State of Victoria. These photographs were really frightening. Some were taken from the top of the Royal Children's Hospital, and others were taken from the top of the Trades Hall building, from the University of Melbourne, from towns in the Latrobe Valley and in the Geelong and Newtown area. They were taken both on windy days and on still days, and were in full colour. The impact of smog and fall-out was clearly indicated, and, at such periods, the State of Victoria was a most hazardous place in which to live.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Was the air pollution worst above the Trades Hall building?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I regard Mr. Hunt's interjection as being in a humorous vein, whereas this is a very serious subject which affects the health of every citizen of the City of Melbourne and will eventually affect the health of every citizen in the State of Victoria. It cannot be denied that smog over the whole of the metropolis of Melbourne makes the city at times not a very pleasant place in which to live. I have before me an extract from the Herald, dated 24th August, this year, in which it is stated—

Alcoa tried "to beat" pollution.

Equipment to reduce air pollution was a large item in the over-all expenditure on the Alcoa of Australia Proprietary Limited power station at Anglesea, the Minister of Health, Mr. Dickie, said to-day.

Mr. Dickie said Alcoa had also tried to overcome pollution by building a chimney stack 350 feet high.

I reiterate what I stated earlier to the effect that, on numerous occasions, the Premier has accused the Labor Party of conducting a vendetta to sabotage Alcoa and of criticizing every stage of that company's development.

In any country of the world to-day where a smoke stack is considered to be necessary, the minimum height is 600 feet, and, with electrostatic or bag control, there should be little or no emission when the smoke is emitted. Our party levelled criticism at Alcoa because, on a still day, huge amounts of sulphur-dioxide were being emitted into the atmosphere. Indeed, we have been informed that a stainless steel lip is or has been constructed at the top of the stack because of the high acid content of the smoke. Many tons of sulphur-dioxide are being emitted in the form of smoke in the Anglesea area, which is a self-contained valley from which it is very difficult for the smoke to escape.

In most Scandinavian layouts, the chimney stack is situated on high ground, and a height of from 600 feet to 1,000 feet is not unusual for a smoke stack in most enlightened countries, where provision is made to obviate air pollution before an industry actually starts to produce. I do not blame Alcoa for what is happening at Anglesea. I blame an ignorant Government, which does not know what is required to police air pollution in this State.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—How many 600-ft. high smoke stacks are there in Australia?
The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Not enough. There is one such stack at Port Kembla but in that area there is a far greater wind velocity than there is in most Victorian districts. If the Minister of Health is attempting to justify himself, he is advancing a very poor argument. The honorable gentleman should realize that, as a Minister of the Crown and administrator of the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health, he is responsible for the eradication of air pollution in this State. I claim that the honorable gentleman has acted too much on the advice of people who, in many cases, possibly do not know their business, and previous Ministers of Health have done likewise. In many places throughout the State there is evidence of non-policing of the clean air regulations and of a lackadaisical attitude towards the control of air pollution in Victoria.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON.—Are you an authority on this matter?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Mr. Hamilton will have to be de-polluted. We shall have to do that by spraying his moustache.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province).—Mr. Acting President, I rise to a point of order. I consider Mr. Elliot’s remark a personal reflection upon me. Is my moustache polluted?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—I do not think Mr. Elliot’s remark was in the best of taste, but what Mr. Hamilton has said does not constitute a point of order.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—If Mr. Hamilton feels that he has been insulted by what I said, I apologize. It is truly amazing where microbes come from! It is alleged by the Government that air pollution is less serious in Melbourne than it is in other cities, but that is not so. In the north-eastern part of this city, the fall-out amounts to 40 tons per square mile as compared with a maximum of 20 tons and an average of 8 to 12 tons in the northern part of London and a maximum of 33 tons in Los Angeles.

By interjection, Mr. Walton has mentioned the Brunswick district. Our own advisers have made a close study of that particular area, and it has been discovered that some of the gauges which the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health has been utilizing have been placed inordinately long distances from the point of pollution. One such gauge was placed at a point about 2 feet from the top of a telegraph pole and immediately adjacent to the pole, so that much of the fall-out was prevented from being registered by the gauge because of the proximity of the telegraph pole. That is indicative of the attitude assumed by the Clean Air Section. It is generally considered that about 8 per cent. of all capital investment in industrial machinery and industrial buildings should be spent in the control of air pollution. I have already mentioned that a sum of about $1,300 million to $1,400 million has been invested in the form of capital outlay on such machinery and buildings in the metropolis of Melbourne. I should say that the sum of $100,000,000 should have been spent on the control of air pollution whereas the Minister of Health has claimed that several millions of dollars have been spent in this direction. That is not good enough.

The Premier has been reported in the press as having said, “You can’t have a quiet countryside if you have industry”. Rubbish! Most business premises aim to work at an efficiency of 99 per cent. eradication of pollutant potential. Pollution and noise, if excessive, should be wiped out from any area—not immediately, but as soon as such action is possible, and ruthlessly so in any new planning. The more one considers this matter, the more one realizes what a perplexing state of affairs exists in the State of Victoria. The Government will probably ask,
"Where are we to get the money to do what is needed?". It is necessary to bring to the attention of Parliament what needs to be done, because it must be borne in mind that if the present state of affairs is to be allowed to continue, we shall all eventually die because of air pollution. It must be remembered that bronchial complaints and lung cancers in a city such as Melbourne are twice as prevalent as they are among country dwellers. Statistics have proved that the city dweller who is a non-smoker is twice as likely as a non-smoker in a country district to develop lung cancer, but, if the person concerned is a smoker, he is from four to five times as likely as the country man to contract the disease.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Where do those figures apply?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—In Great Britain.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—The condition of which you speak does not obtain in the northern European countries.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—That is so. In the Scandinavian countries there is a greater measure of control over air pollution.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—The incidence of lung cancer is greater in the United Kingdom.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—The Minister of Agriculture may have facts and figures to substantiate that argument. If he has, I should be interested to study them. Generally speaking, the information I have received from the advisory committee of the Australian Labor Party on this matter indicates quite clearly that lung cancer is far more prevalent in cities with air pollution problems than it is in country areas. In other words, it is far more hazardous to live in Melbourne than in Ballarat or Bendigo. Evidence of this can be found from the results of post-mortem examinations conducted at the morgue on accident victims. Officials at the morgue can tell a city lung by its colour. This may sound humorous, but it is not.

I could continue speaking almost indefinitely on the failure of the Government even to get to first base in regard to air pollution. Gauges are inadequate and because of their location inaccurately record dust fall-out. One gauge, as I have already mentioned, is located near a telegraph pole, which gives it protection from dust fall-out. There is a complete lack of instruction and co-operation between the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health and municipal councils. There may be some evidence of co-operation, but I have visited ten municipalities in Melbourne, and I have found that there is very little or no co-operation. Councils will not take action because of the existence of the Clean Air Committee. When I have asked questions in this House as to what discussions have taken place, what instructions have been issued, what time allocations have been imposed so far as the correction of these faults are concerned, and so on, I have been given no satisfactory answer. If I am given an answer, it is invariably to the effect that no instructions have been given and nothing has been done.

I have spoken to many health officers who have indicated that this situation exists. In Victoria there is a provision under the Act for only minimum penalties, but in the United States of America, by comparison, the fines that may be imposed range from $500 to $1,000 a day when pollution continues to exist after the expiration of a time allocation that has been given to the industry or company concerned. If this is not complied with, there is provision for a gaol sentence. The position is Victoria is a disgrace, and is similar to that which exists as regards roads and freeways. The longer the problem is left unattended, the more it will cost in money and human life. Human life is precious to us all, and if something is not done about air pollution, many things
could happen. In December, 1930, a thick and stagnant fog enveloped a heavily industrialized section of the Meuse Valley, Belgium. By the third day many persons developed throat irritation, hoarseness, coughs, and breathlessness. Some were nauseated. Some died. The elderly and those already ill with respiratory disease or heart disease were most vulnerable.

In October, 1948, a similar fog blanketed the small industrial town of Donora, Pennsylvania. The miracle of Pittsburgh is something that any person interested in clean air should study. Out of the sludge, mud and smog of a completely industrialized town has come a place which is pleasant to live in. At Donora, before an afternoon rain cleared the fog away four days later, 6,000 persons of the town's 14,000 suffered one or more of an assortment of ills, including coughing, sore throat, chest constriction, headache, a burning sensation of the eyes, nasal discharge, and vomiting. Twenty persons died during a period of the year when Donora could expect only two to die. We have all heard about the London smog which killed 4,000 people. Later in 1962 there was a similar occurrence. New York, also, experienced difficulties in 1957 and 1962.

I quote these examples merely to pin-point and emphasize the importance of this matter. It cannot be brushed aside. It must be considered by everybody as one of the most important factors of our time and certainly one of the gravest legacies we are to leave to the world of the future.

With our water—sea and fresh—it is the same sorry story. The Yarra river, the Merri creek, the Maribyrnong river and the Stony creek have become so dangerously polluted that it is no longer safe to swim in these waters. Mr. Ronalds, the former chief engineer of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, told a meeting that the 3-mile Yarra swim had to be cancelled because of the high danger of infection. Mr. Walton will cover that aspect more fully later. Pollution is occurring at so many points on the Yarra river that it is disgraceful.

The Minister for Local Government is well aware of the health hazard caused by the Cowderoy-street drain. I give the Minister full marks for his acceptance of the problem, but I wonder when something will be done to overcome it. I have examined the work that has been done there recently and discovered that the drain had been scooped out, but the excess slush and mud has been left on the side of the drain and the effluent still goes into Hobson's Bay. People have to live with this nauseating smell which is most concentrated in an area of 2 square miles. However, it affects areas many miles away. I realize that the Minister may be unable to get an allocation of money to correct the position, but it is obvious that the drain has to be extended to the break-water which has created a greater problem than existed when there was only a pier in the area. What is the Port Phillip Authority doing about this? Has it announced anything about its intentions? Is it agitating in any shape or form, or is it standing still, doing nothing, and accepting the dictates of this Government? On 19th September of this year I asked the Minister for Local Government the following questions:

(a) What special means of disposal of effluents from the industrial complexes built or being built on Westernport Bay are envisaged by the Government?

(b) What measures are being taken to prevent oil spillages from the adjacent refinery polluting Westernport Bay?

The answers supplied by the honorable gentleman were—

(a) Effluent from the existing refinery is treated in a two-section single stage A.P.I. separator before being discharged into the waters of the bay.

(b) In addition to the provisions referred to in part (a), refinery pipe-lines are regularly patrolled and inspected and staff is always present at the jetty during transfer of oil products.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.
This Government amazes me. It sits by apathetically, vacantly staring into the wide blue yonder and says, "We have not yet studied the problem."

An adviser to a previous Government was most earnest in his entreaties that the waters of Westernport Bay and Bass Strait, because of their low mixing content, should be most rigidly controlled in order to prevent pollution from effluent. That state of affairs was confirmed about six months ago by the chief engineer of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Yet, in answer to a question the Government says that the method of treatment of effluent from future industries in an area which has been earmarked for fantastic industrial development has not yet been studied. If that is not a dereliction of duty, I do not know what it is. It is disgraceful, and it could be serious so far as Westernport Bay and the surrounding areas are concerned. It could develop into another Long Island Sound. Because of the low mixing content of the water and effluent going into it, the beaches of Long Island Sound have been ruined and marine life has been completely wiped out. Exactly the same thing will happen in Westernport Bay, and it has already happened at Corio Bay.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—That is not true.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Mr. Thom will have to admit that fishing in Corio Bay is now not a profitable undertaking. The whole thing is a sorry mess, and nothing will be done until it has to be done or is precipitated by a mass tragedy within the next few years. If the Government is not careful, many dead areas will develop in the Bay. Mr. Cathie will refer to this in greater detail. Salination is another problem which will cost this State millions of dollars if steps are not taken to remedy the damage being caused at present.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! I do not think this subject is referred to in the motion.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Salination is a form of pollution.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—I should not have thought so.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—I could quote from the report of the Environmental Pollution Panel of the President's Science Advisory Committee, which issued a 350-page report on pollution, and it referred to salination.

The Hon. M. A. Clarke.—It is a problem in northern Victoria.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Yes. Sir Percy Byrnes told me that if a ponding system is not installed immediately, the pollution problem will become so great that it will cost millions of dollars to overcome. Once again, the Government is not interested. What is needed is a Government with guts instead of one which sits complacently in its ivory tower. That is what this Government is doing. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that it has been the Government for too long, and it has removed itself from public opinion into an ivory tower of indifference. May be it will be rejuvenated by the injection of young blood, such as that which could be provided by Mr. Hamilton.

I repeat the words with which I opened this debate: If the present rate of air and water pollution continues, in less than a century no human being will be able to exist on earth. That is the challenge of 1967, and I contend that it is the challenge that this Government has miserably failed to meet.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of Health).—In his remarks concerning air pollution, Mr. Elliot said that in the two years that I have been Minister of Health and educating myself in relation to this problem, nothing had been done in Victoria to arrest the degree of air pollution or to decrease it. I assure the House that I have lived with this problem as a personal interest for about 30 years, and about twenty years ago I made a special trip to Europe, Great Britain and the United States of America with one specific task, and that was to study air pollution as it applied to industry.
Anything I say on this subject is based on my experience with the problem. Of course, industry is not the only source of air pollution. Pollution can be caused by motor cars or by nature when dust or other particles are blown into the atmosphere. However, industry is undoubtedly responsible for a good deal of air pollution. I should like to pose a question on this aspect, namely: What is the degree to which we are prepared to say, “That is as good as we can do”? There is no doubt that, irrespective of what preventive steps are taken, there will always be some degree of air pollution and the situation would never be reached in Melbourne, Sydney, Ballarat, Geelong, London, or any other city where it could be eliminated.

So far as industry is concerned, there are two main sources of air pollution. The first is from smoke stacks, and the other from odours emanating from a factory because of the product which is being processed. The regulations under the Clean Air Act allow for the fact that during every hour each industry is allowed to emit a certain amount of smoke through its smoke stack. There will always be smoke coming up a chimney stack.

The Clean Air Regulations permit periods for the emission of dark or dense smoke and a table sets out the maximum periods of these emissions. During the hour following the commencement of re-kindling of the fire in any fireplace connected to the chimney, when such fire has not previously on that day been re-kinded so as to emit dark or dense smoke in excess of the times set out, in a plant with only one boiler, two minutes are allowed in the aggregate for such emissions; in plants with only two boilers, three minutes are allowed; in plants with only three boilers, four minutes are allowed, and in any other plant, a period of six minutes is allowed. It is clear from these regulations that the Commission accepts the policy that it is not possible to eliminate the problem. There is automatically an emission of soot and smoke from each chimney stack and the blowdown that might take place four or five times in a working day. One of the problems in the City of Melbourne relates to the Melbourne City Council’s chimney stack and incinerator at the end of Spencer-street.
The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—What is it?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I should have referred to the council’s power station rather than an incinerator. The higher the smoke stack, the more people will notice what is being emitted from it. If there were scores of smaller chimney stacks around the community and each one was emitting the allowable smoke emission, no one would notice it. In regard to the Melbourne City Council’s high chimney stack, people tend to remember it more particularly if they happen to be looking at it when it is emitting the allowable amount of smoke, although the emission may last for only two or three minutes.

Information obtained from deposit gauge stations shows that there has been no appreciable increase so far as smoke emission is concerned. Altogether, 52 gauges have been established, some of which are in country areas, but most of them are in the metropolitan area. The majority of these gauges record a decrease. I shall select some of the readings at random between the period 1960 to 1966, from which honorable members will see that there has been a decrease rather than an increase.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—At what locations were the gauges placed?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—They were placed where it was considered that the greatest amount of fall-out in Melbourne would be detected. For the information of honorable members, I supply the following statistics concerning fall-out:—The fall-out recorded at Melbourne, city north-west, in 1960 was 10.5 tons per square mile per month, compared with 10.8 tons in 1966, representing a small increase of .3 tons; for Melbourne, city west, the fall-out was 12 tons in 1960, compared with 9.8 tons in 1966; for Melbourne, Carlton, the comparable figures were 13.5 tons in 1960, and 11.8 tons in 1966; for Melbourne, Jolimont, 7.8 tons in 1960, and 6.9 tons in 1966; for Dandenong South, 2.4 tons in 1960, and 4.5 tons in 1966, the fall-out being almost doubled in this case; for Dandenong East, 6 tons in 1960, and 5.5 tons in 1966; for Dandenong North, 5.8 tons in 1960, and 4.4 tons in 1966; for Footscray, Town Hall, 8.3 tons in 1960, and 7.2 tons in 1966; for West Footscray, 7.4 tons in 1960, and 10.7 tons in 1966, an increase at this location; for Footscray, Yarraville, 6.9 tons in 1960, and 6.5 tons in 1966; for Williamstown, Town Hall, 19 tons in 1961, and 17.2 tons in 1966; for Williamstown, Spotswood, 11.7 tons in 1960, and 11 tons in 1966; for Williamstown, West Newport, 9.5 tons in 1960, and 9 tons in 1966; and for Altona, Shire Hall, 7.9 tons in 1960, and 5.8 tons in 1966. The readings from other gauges reveal a similar pattern. Of every ten readings, eight or nine reveal a decrease in fall-out. In the over-all picture, there has been less fall-out during the past ten years than during the preceding period, and this trend will continue.

There is always a problem so far as old industries are concerned. Any person who wishes to establish a new industry must first submit plans and specifications to the Commission of Public Health. These plans and specifications are closely examined, particularly from the point of view of the industry’s power-producing capacity, with a view to ensuring that air pollution will be kept to a minimum. I assure honorable members that we read the riot act, so to speak, to new industries on this question of pollution.

As I stated previously, certain problems are encountered in connexion with old industries. All honorable members could refer to numerous chimney stacks around Melbourne from which a great deal of smoke has been emitted, but the Commission of Public Health has discussed the problem with every one of the industries concerned. There is no industry which is not under guarantee either to re-equip itself completely if it intends to remain in its present location, or to give an undertaking that it will be
moving out of the area into a region where any pollution will not cause problems for the inhabitants.

Honorable members may well ask how long it is proposed to allow these industries to continue operating in their present locations. The position in New South Wales has been cited, and I should like to quote the foreword to the clean air regulations of that State written by the Honorable W. F. Sheahan, who was the Minister for Health in the Labor Government which held office prior to the Liberal Government taking over. I wish to think that we are administering the clean air regulations in a way identical to that which Mr. Sheahan said would be adopted in New South Wales. The foreword reads—

I am well aware there are many areas in air pollution control where technology has not yet provided a complete answer and it will be possible that some industries will face almost insurmountable difficulties. It would also be unrealistic to assume that all of the emission limits could be achieved by 1st January, 1965, when they become operative.

This situation was foreseen in the drafting of the Clean Air Act and section 15 (1) under which the emission limits are prescribed also allows for exemptions to be granted in special cases. As I am determined that the Clean Air Act and Regulations will be administered with the utmost tolerance and restraint I shall not hesitate to make use of my powers of exemption where I am satisfied that genuine difficulties exist. There may also be very good reasons by way of topography or location which would justify a more lenient attitude than the Regulations would require.

Mr. Sheahan concludes his foreword with this statement—

I am firmly convinced that a reasonable approach by my Department will achieve as much if not more than the mechanical application of the Regulations.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—When did Mr. Sheahan say that?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—In March, 1964. I assure the House that by using the same tolerant attitude with industry in Victoria, my Department has obtained the complete co-operation of industry. It could be asked why we do not charge a licensing fee or a fee for registration as is done in New South Wales, I point out that Victoria seriously considered this question. In conducting a survey of industry in Victoria, my officers wrote to all industries which, in the past six years, had established plants in Victoria or which had replaced some of the old plant that was causing problems so far as emissions of smoke were concerned. Honorable members would be amazed to know that in the past six years industry in Victoria has expended $21,000,000 in complying with the clean air regulations and installing equipment to reduce pollution.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—You are arguing against a statement you made not long ago.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—At the time I made the statement, the final figures of the survey were not available. Those figures are available to me now. The amount of $21,000,000 has been expended, and the expenditure is increasing all the time. So far as odour from industry is concerned, I can say that industry is co-operating to the full. I recall, as a small lad, coming from Bacchus Marsh to Melbourne, through Kensington where all the boiling-down works, the abattoirs, and industries of that type were located. It used to be quite a joke. On the train, one would hold one's nose when passing through Kensington, and say, "Fancy anyone living in this place." To-day, there are no odours from those industries. Of course these things are improving.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Go through Brooklyn.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I am sure honorable members agree with me that industry has everywhere played a great part in reducing to a minimum the obnoxious odours from rendering-down works and such places. Of course, there will always be odours. The very type of product that is processed must produce an odour.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—What is the Government doing about them?
The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—The Government is gaining complete cooperation from industry without ruling with an iron rod and saying, "You have to do this, and you have to do that." One could talk for hours on this problem, but let me pass to another field of air pollution, that caused by the motor car.

I have read the scare statements—and they are scare statements—made by the representative of the Trades Hall Council on the Clean Air Committee, Mr. Colin Willman. Mr. Willman is one of twelve members of that committee. He has been outspoken in saying that certain things are not being done. The other eleven members of the committee believe that very real progress is being made. Mr. Willman talks like Mr. Elliot who, in his introductory remarks, spoke of life expectancy, and suggested that people will be killed off because of the degree of air pollution.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—That is what the Vice-President of the United States of America said.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I am talking about what is happening in Victoria; that is where our legislation applies. There is one thing about which, as Minister of Health, I am really pleased. The life expectancy of people in this community is increasing year by year—that is a wonderful thing.

Mr. Elliot spoke of bronchial complaints. I have checked with the Fairfield Hospital, and I find that over the past ten years, there has been no indication that, because of carbon monoxide or sulphur dioxide in the air, there has been any increase in bronchial complaints. The same reply will be given by all other hospitals.

The facts about carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide are interesting. It has been said that the density of sulphur dioxide in the air in the streets of Melbourne is alarming, that people do not know the degree of pollution with these gases of the air they are breathing, and that something must be done. I want to get the facts straight and get them into the press, so that the community will know just what the situation is.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—You are reporting to the House, not the press.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—In the press, I answer statements made in the press. They require an immediate answer to prevent a scare campaign in the community. It is an alarming situation that these things happen, but of course I make statements to the press when the public is told things which are entirely untrue. Under the Health Regulations, the maximum allowable concentration of sulphur dioxide, where it is a by-product of any process in any industry, is 500 parts per 100,000,000 parts by volume. A person can work in air with that concentration of sulphur dioxide for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and there will be no effect on his health at all. Sulphur dioxide is monitored at nine stations in the metropolitan area, and the concentrations found ranged from one part to ten parts per 100,000,000 parts. Yet, it is said that there is such a dreadful concentration of sulphur dioxide in our community that something must be done about it.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Does that include Anglesea?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I am speaking of the metropolitan area.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Get down to Anglesea. That is the only place we mentioned. You have not answered us.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I shall answer every point that Mr. Elliot has made before I complete my remarks, because they will be terribly easy to answer.

Obviously, carbon monoxide is another dangerous gas. The community hear about this as being something that cannot be smelt and something which creeps upon people. There are scare headlines about the concentration of carbon monoxide in the air, caused by heavy motor traffic in the City of Melbourne and particularly in the narrow streets. They are
said to be chasms of death. Under the same health regulations, the maximum allowable concentration of carbon monoxide in industry is 70 parts per 1,000,000 parts, by volume. A person can breath air with that concentration of carbon monoxide all day, every day, and it will have no ill effect on him whatsoever. It is an interesting fact that, in New York, policemen have been exposed to air containing an average of 65 to 85 parts of carbon dioxide per 1,000,000 parts for twelve to thirteen years without any ill effects at all. So, although our regulations provide for a maximum of 70 parts per 1,000,000 parts, it is on record that people can be subjected to air with 85 parts of carbon monoxide per 1,000,000 parts without ill effect.

Samples have been taken in some of the small streets in Melbourne, and near Flinders-street railway station, in peak hour traffic at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., and the concentration of carbon monoxide found has ranged from nil to 50 parts per 1,000,000 parts by volume. No concentration higher than 50 parts per 1,000,000 parts has been found in Melbourne. Yet the streets are said to be the "chasms of death" which are featured in press headlines. It is statements such as those which are most alarming.

I am glad that this adjournment motion has been moved to-day, because I do not know how else the allegations which have been made could have been answered. Unfortunately, the press gives headlines to the type of statement of which I have spoken. I only hope that what I have said tonight about sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide will be given some publicity, because there is not the dangerous content of these gases in the air in Melbourne, at Geelong, or in the country areas, that some people would like to have the community believe.

The sitting was suspended at 6.25 p.m. until 7.53 p.m.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.
incorporate this device in their forthcoming new models. That is why the Government has set 1970 as the deadline. Similarly, with regard to industry, restrictions would not be imposed when in fact new designs were to be produced. The Government will be as tolerant as was Mr. Sheahan in New South Wales.

Mention has been made of diesel buses. This aspect is important because the bus fleet of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board is predominantly diesel. People see fumes being emitted from the exhausts of these buses, and they say, "Look at those fumes; this pollution is hazardous to our health". The emissions from diesel buses do not add appreciably to the concentration of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere.

The Hon. Archibald Todd.—What about diesel trucks?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I shall refer to these vehicles as diesel burners. Mr. Knight agrees that they do not add appreciably to the concentration of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide in the air. The volume of those gases in the diesel-burning vehicle as compared with petrol-driven motors is almost negligible. Although the emission of diesel fumes can be seen, the hazard to health is almost negligible.

The Hon. I. A. Swinburne.—The people can see the diesel fumes more clearly.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—That is so, and they believe thereby more pollution is caused. The fumes from diesel burners may be obnoxious in the deposits they leave on windows, but, so far as health is concerned, they have very little effect. Again, we have taken the lead and have made strong recommendations that the exhaust pipes of diesel burners—whether they are diesel trucks or diesel buses—should be taken to approximately 6 feet above the cabin of the vehicle. The sooty product of the diesel-driven vehicle can never be eliminated—it is an unfortunate by-product of the burning of diesel fuel. Instead of this obnoxious soot being blown amongst the people, it will in the future be restricted to a degree by its emission into the atmosphere above the cabin. That may not appear to be a good answer, but our scientists and engineers are making good progress.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—What is this "our" and "we"? They are making progress.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I shall continue to use the term "we". We have a good record as a Government—in fact, a magnificent record. If ever an adjournment motion has misfired, it is this one.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! Mr. Elliot was heard in comparative silence, and the House should pay the same compliment to the Minister of Health.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—Thank you, Mr. Acting President. It is only because I have a soft voice that I can hear the interjections.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—What are you spending on research?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I shall inform the House what is being done. If smoke is coming out of a chimney stack, I do not need a scientist to tell me that. I can see it. If there are fumes coming out of a motor car, I do not need a scientist to tell me. I can see them.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—You are one of the old school.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I am, and it is a good school to be in. These days we are so keen to teach children the things that we did not know, that we are forgetting to teach them the things that we did know. That is why I am in the old school. We are forgetting to teach children the things that we knew in the past. Suddenly we have some airy-fairy ideas about things. I shall hark back to my own experience in
the food industry. It used to be the accepted thing if you manufactured a food, to have a large laboratory and to take people in to show them the equipment. These things the housewife does not possess. The only test a housewife can apply is to look at something, taste it, and decide whether it is good or bad. She does not require research or laboratory equipment.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Do you really mean that?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I do not need a staff of 25 persons in my Department to tell me about things which I know exist and which I know, with the co-operation of industry and all those who are making some contribution, are progressively decreasing. The Opposition has talked about staff, and how the Clean Air Section has a staff of only five men and is spending only $21,000. I aver that with my staff of five and the expenditure of $21,000 I am making more progress in this field in the State of Victoria than all the other States put together.

I should like to quote to the House what is happening in some of our worst industries in their efforts to overcome the problem, because this is very important. Honorable members say that they have given thought to this problem, because they lived beside a particular cement works, and so on, and Mr. May is aware of an example in the Latrobe Valley. I am aware of the problems in the Geelong district, represented in this Parliament by Mr. Thom and the honorable member for Geelong in another place. I am aware of the problems of industries in Brunswick and elsewhere. For the record, I shall list what is being done by these noxious industries to meet the problem. The firm of Davis and Baird Proprietary Limited in Brunswick has a number of short stacks. When one drives past, one sees horrible looking yellow fumes being emitted into the atmosphere.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Have you been there?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—Yes. As a matter of interest, the foundry was established about 1920. During the second world war, the company installed a converter plant for making steel castings. This process causes the emission of orange-brown fumes which last up to fifteen minutes, at fairly regular intervals. A number of investigations were made by departmental officers, and also a consultant, to see whether it would be possible to install equipment to control these fumes. At that time no practicable solution to this problem had been found anywhere overseas. The company finally decided that the only way to overcome the problem would be to install a completely new steel-making plant. This plant, which consists of virtually fumeless induction furnaces, is now being built at the company's site in Coburg, and it is expected that the plant will be completed by the end of this year. The company will then transfer all its steel-making operations to Coburg, and it is confidently anticipated that steel-making and the resultant fume emissions at Brunswick will cease completely well before the end of next year. Davis and Baird operate one of the worst industries from this point of view. I can see Mr. Walton is interested in what they are doing. I hope that out of this discussion I shall provide honorable members with valuable information.

Another example is Containers Limited of Northcote. This company operated three large lithographic baking ovens used in connexion with the printing and coating of tin plate. The resultant odours led to many complaints, especially because of the location of the factory at a lower level than the adjacent residential area. As a result the company, acting on the best information then available, installed an oil washing plant at considerable cost. This, however, proved to be ineffective, and after further investigations the company
proposed the installation of direct flame after-burners on all its ovens which, on the recommendation of the Clean Air Section, were approved by the Commission of Public Health. These direct flame after-burners have solved the odour problem by burning the solvent odours completely to inoffensive carbon dioxide and water vapour.

Similar units to control odours have been installed in a number of other plants such as the Australian Seal Company (Moorabbin), Cyclone Limited (Moorabbin) and Unbrako (Australia) Proprietary Limited (Nunawading). On new plants where it can be expected that similar odours may be emitted during a production process, either direct flame or catalytic after-burners are now required as a matter of course before the plant is approved pursuant to the Clean Air Regulations 1965.

Another interesting case is that of Abveg Products Proprietary Limited at Dandenong. This firm operated a small dehydration plant in Springvale for onions and garlic, which gave rise to most offensive odours and led to many complications. When this firm was taken over and its activities transferred to Dandenong, the dehydration ovens were provided with specially designed odour control units, which have proved entirely satisfactory, and no odour can be detected outside the works.

My next example is Reid's lightweight aggregate plant at Plenty. There is a terrific problem because of the nature of this industry especially with wind, dust and so on. This company engages in the manufacture of lightweight aggregate which is extensively used in prefabricated housing production. The high temperature operations involved gave rise to considerable dust emissions over a long period. The original dust control equipment proved to be unsatisfactory and led to justifiable complaints being received from a number of municipalities. Adequate control equipment has now been installed on this kiln and the position is considered to be entirely satisfactory. These are some of the things which, according to Mr. Elliot, we are not doing.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I did not say that.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—A further example is Australian Plaster Industries at Port Melbourne. Before the erection of its new factory, the operations of this company led to many complaints about the emission of gypsum and plaster dust. When the company decided to erect a completely new plant, fears were at first held by some adjoining property owners that the new works might lead to nuisance conditions.

A number of lengthy discussions were held between officers of the company and officers of the Clean Air Section. As a result, the company put forward extensive and detailed proposals for the erection of a modern plaster mill, which incorporated a large variety of the latest available dust control equipment. All the company's operations are carried out inside its building, which is held under light suction to prevent any escape of dust. Since starting operations, only one complaint has been received in regard to the company's operations. The company's engineers at once investigated the cause, which was then immediately corrected.

My next example is Evans Brothers, Scoresby. When this company's new tunnel kiln for the manufacture of bricks began operation, complaints regarding soot and damage to vegetation were received. By considerable modification to the firing system, the company has been successful in completely overcoming the soot emission. The damage to vegetation has been prevented by the installation of a tall chimney. The situation at this works is now considered to be entirely satisfactory.
I could go on quoting a number of instances like these, but I think I should advert to an industry which was specifically mentioned this evening, namely, Alcoa of Australia Proprietary Limited. Since Alcoa was granted its leases, the entire Anglesea project has been developed in close co-operation with the State Government and the local government authority concerned.

A document in my possession contains this statement—

Weather characteristics of the district and location of residential areas were considered carefully in the siting and design of the power station. A site was finally chosen as far away as practical from the township of Anglesea.

On approaching the design of the station and its smoke stack, the company commissioned the Meteorology Department of the University of Melbourne to study atmospheric conditions in the Anglesea area, including temperature inversions. The department's findings, based on studies over one year, were incorporated in the design of the station.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—What are you quoting from?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I am quoting from a news release from Alcoa, which was discussed with me.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—What was the date?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—This is only a copy, which is not dated, but it was released this year.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—You should not quote it if it is not dated.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—The matter was discussed with me and I am aware of what happened. The release continues—

The incidence of atmospheric inversions was noted and taken into account. As a result of the studies and conferences with government bodies, a 350-ft. smoke stack has been constructed. This equals the height of the surrounding hills. Together with control of exhaust velocities and temperatures, the height of the chimney ensures penetration of the inversion layer in virtually all atmospheric circumstances. The design of the chimney was approved by the Victorian Commission of Public Health.

In addition, electrostatic precipitators are being incorporated in the station's exhaust system to remove dust and fly ash before these can enter the chimney. The precipitators are guaranteed to remove these materials.

Now I should like to refer to the trouble that occurred at the Traralgon and Geelong cement works. The position in regard to Geelong is very important, and I should like it to be clear on the record because a lot of airy-fairy things have been said on these matters. The new kiln at Geelong has been installed in accordance with plans and specifications approved by the Commission of Public Health. The Commission has directed that two old kilns, which were responsible for excessive emissions, must either cease operation or operate within the limits laid down by the regulations by the end of September, 1967. It is considered that positive action is already being taken in this case, and it is fully expected that the works will operate within the limits laid down by regulations.

So far as Traralgon is concerned, the Commission has required the company to install extra bag filters on the raw meal mills, and these will be installed by 31st October, 1967. In addition, the Commission has required the company to install an electrostatic precipitator on the vertical kiln. This has been ordered. It is expected that a pilot unit will be in operation at the end of September and that the electrostatic precipitator will be installed by September, 1968. Certain industries in our community are obnoxious because of the type of product they manufacture. When I was Minister of State Development, representatives of municipalities would come to me on deputations and ask, "Why cannot we have such-and-such an industry in our town; why cannot we have a cement works in our town; we are prepared to accept everything that is obnoxious about them provided that you can give us the industry in our town." Again, I can quote an
industry with which I have been closely associated in Bacchus Marsh for twenty years.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—It is going bad.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—It may be going bad, but at least for twenty years, notwithstanding the fact that every care was taken by management and that modern equipment was installed, it was shooting ash all over the town because it was burning brown coal. Because it was an important part of the town's economy, residents of Bacchus Marsh still wanted the industry and all the obnoxious features associated with it. The same position applies in regard to the cement works at Traralgon and Geelong. The Geelong cement works did not move to the people, the people moved towards the works. The works were established 40 years ago in a rural area, so why should they not be allowed to continue if residential subdivisions develop on the boundaries of the works?

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—One cannot change the site of the natural resource.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—The natural resources are there and in other country towns, and, whether we like it or not, the economic value of an industry is important to the rural community. When I was Minister of State Development, and people were told that such an industry would be obnoxious, they still wanted the industry to be established in their area. In the development of Portland, the Department of Health proposed such strict conditions on one industry that the industry said that it would not establish itself in the town under such conditions. The municipal council was apprehensive that it could well lose the industry. Where does one strike the happy medium in these things? Of course, we want industries to be established in country towns, and the residents who want the industry are prepared to accept its obnoxious features.

I know that I have painted a rosy picture. I accept the fact that Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Smith, or somebody else may say that every Monday morning her washing is covered with black soot or that the spouting has to be repainted. This is not confined to Victoria; it is happening all over the world. If the State wants an industrial community to provide employment for working men, it must unfortunately accept the obnoxious features associated with industry. In Victoria, with the full co-operation of industry, the sum of $21,000,000 has been spent to comply with clean air regulations. I thought that was the question Mr. Cathie was going to ask.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—I wanted to ask whether you were a company director.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—No. The Government of Victoria can be extremely proud of its efforts to control air pollution. Over the past ten years, its efforts bear comparison with those of the New South Wales Government, which Mr. Elliot likes to cite. I only hope that the falsity of the alarming statements that life in Victoria will be cut short because of pollution of the atmosphere will receive some publicity in the press. Melbourne is a wonderful city in which to live, and our rural communities are wonderful places. I assure the House that one can stand in the narrowest street of Melbourne and breathe in the air for 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year, and still live to be 100 years old, provided that the rest of the body keeps good health.

The Hon. A. W. Knight (Melbourne West Province).—The Minister of Health commenced his exposition and tirade with the amazing statement that the boiler stack at the end of Spencer-street was an incinerator stack. It amazes me that he is so ignorant that he calls a boiler stack an incinerator stack. It amazes me that he is so ignorant that he calls a boiler stack an incinerator stack. The Minister stated that there was no pollution in Victoria, but I give the lie to that statement. The honorable
gentleman failed to mention the pollution from the carbon black factory at North Altona and the briquette dump in that area. I show the House the effect of carbon black on a baby's napkin, and I ask the Minister to visit North Altona and speak with the people in the area who are affected by the carbon black factory and dust from the briquette dump. He will then realize his ignorance in regard to this matter. It is like a lot of the rubbish that is spoken by the Bolte Government.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Labor Party members are going down fighting!

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Thom should be looking after the fishermen at Geelong who are in financial difficulties because of the effect of pollution on the fishing industry in Corio Bay.

The Minister of Health made certain statements about pollution from powerhouses. I have had longer experience in powerhouses than Mr. Dickie will ever have. When one reads the statements be made during the debate on the Clean Air Bill, which was introduced by the late Mr. Buckley Machin, it is a wonder that he ever obtained a boiler attendant's certificate. If there were a re-examination to-morrow, the examiner would withdraw the Minister's certificate. Some of his statements in regard to power stations surprised me. The honorable gentleman supplied the House with some figures in relation to clean air.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton.—They were impressive.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—They were impressive, but I should like to read the rest of the figures.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton.—Are you denying that they were true?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The half of the figures that were quoted were true.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I read the figures as they appeared; you can have the document and read them, too.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—I do not desire to go over them again. I have studied the figures on air pollution as they have been made available to the municipal councils, and it is possible to see the increase in air pollution. The Department of Health places gauges on top of telephone poles to catch pollutants. The Altona Shire Council has purchased $2,000 worth of equipment, whilst the Department is under-equipped. Instead of policing air pollution, the Department foists this responsibility on to the municipalities.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—This is only in relation to smoke pollution—the municipalities have always had this power.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Minister should ascertain how the departmental inspectors carry out their work with the equipment that is provided. The Government is forcing the ratepayers to provide this highly technical equipment which must be imported from overseas. The Minister of Health spoke at great length about what the Government is doing and the establishment of Alcoa in this State. But what is the Government doing in relation to the abrasive process carried on at the Alcoa works? The Minister did not speak about that.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—If Mr. Knight had asked me, I would have provided the answer.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Minister does not know the answer; he knows nothing about what is going on. His ignorance stands condemned.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I have heard nothing about pollution there.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Thom should look after his own electorate, because my colleague in another place knows about it; he looks after his electorate.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Your colleague has never mentioned that.
The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! There are far too many interjections from both sides of the House. Mr. Knight should be permitted to continue his speech in silence.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—The development of the sanitary services in this country over the past 100 years has effectively prevented the spread of cholera, typhoid and typhus in our midst. This Government has created a far greater problem by air and water pollution than was ever caused by those evils. The Minister referred to the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, but he should have known that bronchial diseases are not notifiable.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—Your knowledge of hospitals is very limited, because the other night you said that women do not get cytology services for nothing, and you spent half an hour on the subject.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I am still waiting for the Minister to give me an answer by letter.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I gave you an answer.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—I ask Mr. Knight and the Minister to discontinue the crossfire, and Mr. Knight to continue with his speech.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL.—Will you do something to control the bull dust?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I ask for withdrawal of the statement by Mr. Nicol, which I regard as derogatory to me and unparliamentary.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—I did not hear the statement.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—He said, “Cut out the bull dust”.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—I think that is an unparliamentary statement, and I ask Mr. Nicol to withdraw it.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL (Monash Province).—Mr. Acting President, I willingly withdraw the statement. I may have been misled by the aura of dust.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—I still have the bills, and I have more with regard to the cytology test.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! I fail to see how Mr. Knight relates these statements to the motion.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—As a result of an interjection, Mr. Acting President, I wished to put the record straight. In the United States of America, the power industry has spent $750,000,000 to prevent air and water pollution. What has been done here?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—The United States of America has a population of 192,000,000.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—Money spent in Australia has been in dollars which have been depressed by Federal and State Liberal Governments and which now have reduced purchasing power. I have referred to the past ten years, a period mentioned by the Minister of Health. Since 1966 petroleum industries have expended $10,000,000 on research. I do not hear any comment from the Liberal members.

I was interested to hear what the Minister of Health had to say with regard to gasoline vapours, and I agree with his statement concerning diesel fumes. He could have said that the big worry was the damage caused to women’s nylon stockings.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I referred to that.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—The Minister did not. I agree with his remarks concerning the emission of gasoline vapours, and I agree with his statement concerning diesel fumes. He could have said that the big worry was the damage caused to women’s nylon stockings.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I referred to that.

The internal combustion engine is the most useful and economical means of propulsion ever devised for land transportation. However, it generates quantities of gases
Pollution. [COUNCIL.] Pollution.

and vapors; in sufficiently high concentrations, some of these are unpleasant or harmful in themselves and others react photo-chemically in the atmosphere to create smog. Wherever and whenever air pollution becomes a serious problem, many questions arise. Do more cars on the road inevitably mean more smog in the air? Must we do without automobiles in order to do away with pollution? Are there any solutions?

The article continues in this vein. It would be useful to have further matter in the article incorporated in Hansard, but unfortunately it is not possible to have photographs included in the records of our Parliamentary debates.

A means has been devised in the United States of America of passing unburned petrol vapours into the exhaust system, giving motor vehicles a greater mileage from the petrol, and nullifying the effects of harmful gases that create photo-chemical smog, which has caused serious problems in many great cities, including Los Angeles, New York and London.

The House has heard from Government supporters squeals, like those emanating from the slaughtering section of the Richmond abattoirs, to the effect that they did not have time to consider the terms of this motion for the adjournment of the House.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I was sure of my facts.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Merrifield telephoned the Leader of the Government in this House.

The Hon. G. J. Nicol.—At what time?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—At a quarter to four. There is nothing in the Standing Orders—

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! This is not relevant to the debate.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—A reference to this matter was made by one of the Ministers, and I want to put the record straight. The Opposition communicated with the Minister of Agriculture, but there is nothing in the Standing Orders of the House providing that notice must be given of intention to move the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of public importance.

The Acting President.—I ask Mr. Knight to relate his remarks to the motion.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Idle statements have been made by the Minister of Health regarding air pollution caused by motor vehicles. Volume 49, issue No. 2 of The Lamp publishes an article in which the following passage appears:

The automobile laboratories in Detroit are using instruments to-day that can measure exhaust components in parts per million. The mass spectrometer is being applied to the different task of detecting and measuring oxides of nitrogen. Other instruments that did not exist ten years ago are now in routine use. Engine intake manifolds, which for more than half a century have been designed largely on a trial-and-error basis, are being more carefully tested, analysed, and re-engineered.

This journal is published by one of the great benefactors of the Government, the Esso organization, at its New York headquarters in Wall-street. The petroleum industry is vitally concerned in these matters. I can quote further in respect of the problem that the Minister of Health so lightly touched on; he said there was no problem with respect to carbon monoxide.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I did not; I put it in its proper perspective so far as the Department of Health is concerned.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Minister’s statement was amusing. He tried to mislead the House by saying that there were no problems in respect of this matter.

The Hon. G. L. Chandler.—It was above you.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—I do not think it was above me. I shall discuss the matter with the Minister of Health any time he wants to talk about it, in this Chamber, or anywhere else, and I shall back my knowledge against his. Electrostatic precipitators and
other devices will stop the emission of grit and smoke from industrial plants. If the fuel placed in boilers is combusted properly, the problem will be largely solved. The Government has run away from a problem which rightly belongs to it, and it has placed the onus on municipalities. The Minister shakes his head.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—The Department of Health has always policed the smoke abatement regulations.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Minister stated that the responsibility has been placed upon municipal councils.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—Power was delegated to them.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Many streams are polluted by effluents, including Stony creek in my electorate, and the Government has taken no action in this matter. Polluted waters continue to flow down the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers. Municipal councils affected have agitated strongly and have asked that special remedial action be taken. This is a disgrace to the Government when the health of the people, and particularly of children, is at stake.

The stench of effluents that flow from factories into Stony creek is a blot on the Government. The same comments can be applied to the smells that emanate from petrol refineries and carbon black factories and to the dust emitted from briquette depots, yet nothing has been done by the Government. I was pleased to hear what the Minister said regarding some of these matters. He said it was hoped that all these problems would be solved. His statement is contrary to that of his colleague, the Minister for Fuel and Power, in another place.

The briquette depot at Paisley causes great pollution to the atmosphere in Altona, and it is thought that this menace will continue until the power station in Newport is closed and all fuel reserves are used.

As regards emission from Gippsland cement works, I am amazed at the pollution that takes place in the Latrobe Valley. The Government has done nothing about that.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I told you what had been done.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Government has done nothing about it. The Minister has ridden on the backs of private enterprise and tried to take the kudos, as he always does. Industry, not the Government, has taken action in this regard.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—I will admit that. Why should the Government take action when private industry is co-operating and spending $21,000,000 in Victoria, and a similar sum in New South Wales?

The Hon. Archibald Todd (to the Hon. V. O. Dickie).—Where did you get your figures?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie (to the Hon. Archibald Todd).—From a survey taken by the Commissioner of Public Health.

The Hon. Archibald Todd (to the Hon. V. O. Dickie).—I should like you to give the figures for the individual companies and to name the plants on which the money has been spent.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—I call on Mr. Knight to continue.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Minister of Health cited figures on air pollution. I have all the figures relating to the City of Williamstown. The chief health inspector of that municipality, for whose capabilities I have great respect, made a statement on the 8th December, 1966, to the Williamstown City Council, in which he said—

I do not think that many people take into account the substantial increase in pollution caused by such factors as:
(a) The heavy increase in motor traffic.
(b) Increased wear in roads.
(c) Increased wear of tyres, releasing particles of carbon and rubber into the atmosphere.
(d) The marked increase in domestic heating by briquettes, oil and gas.
(e) The general increase in the number of dwellings and factories, &c.
That sums up the situation very ably.

The progressive steps that should be implemented to reduce the pollution to a minimum are as follows:

1. The requirement of all industry, large and small to install pollution reducing equipment (whether it be for odours, smoke, grit, dust, &c.) within a stated period. This also to apply to all Government concerns.
2. The requirement that all motor vehicles, tractors, compressors, &c., be fitted with pollution prevention equipment in their exhaust systems.
3. All localized shipping to be similarly equipped.
4. All railway engines (diesel and otherwise) to be similarly equipped.
5. The Health Act to be amended by deleting the exemption of domestic chimneys, section 43 (j) so that appropriate action may be taken.
6. Stricter control over quarries and other sources of dust, such as coal, briquette dumps, &c.
7. Research into the prevention of dust, &c., from roads.
8. Far more vigorous action by the Government in the realm of "Clean Air" and support to Councils both legal and financial.

It is interesting to read what is stated at page 164 of the publication, Local Government Administration 1936, vol. 12, No. 4, August, 1967. The article in question is headed "Los Angeles Battles the Air Trap", and it is written by S. Smith Griswold, Associate Director for Abatement and Control, National Centre for Air Pollution Control, United States of America. Mr. Griswold states—

An Air Pollution Programme—What it should contain.

Development of a public policy on air conservation.

An organization framework and a staff capable of operating along functional lines (e.g., engineering, technical services, field services) and the funding support.

What can be done in one, three, five years.

Assessment continually of existing air quality and preparation of estimates of the future situation.

Assessment in depth, on a continuing basis, of the emissions from all existing pollution sources and those expected to exist in the future.

Development of the necessary information about factors that influence the transport of air pollutants.

Assessment of the effects of ambient air quality of a community or region on man and his environment.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.
Pollution. [COUNCIL.] Pollution.

has been going on over a period of years, but a halt must be called somewhere. It is necessary not only to control air pollution but, in the interests of the health of the community, to protect water supplies. Sewage must be sent underground wherever that is possible. Many diseases can assume epidemic proportions if proper control measures are not applied.

The firm of Davies and Baird, in Brunswick, was mentioned by the Minister of Health. Considerable quantities of yellow fumes are emitted from the premises occupied by that company. Irrespective of whether the smoke in question carries poisons, the breathing of those fumes by human beings must be harmful. Tests conducted by the Clean Air Committee in relation to the smoke emitted from those premises were made well away from the premises concerned. Private tests taken close to the factory revealed that the amount of fallout from the smoke emitted from that particular factory was in the region of 100 tons per square mile per month, and I would not doubt the correctness of that figure. The fumes from that factory affect not only the people living nearby but also those who reside up to a mile away. The Minister of Health stated—and I hope this is reported in the newspapers—that if we want industries we must put up with them. That is the usual Liberal philosophy, and it is also a strong reason why members of the Opposition have to speak so often in their attempt to seek protection for the community from what the Government foists upon it.

Some time ago, through the Coburg City Council, it was necessary to write to the Government in regard to an overflow of liquid from the Pentridge Gaol into the Merri creek. The effluent was not raw sewage, but it was alleged that it emanated from septic tanks in the institution. However, the bacterial count was very high. First, the Government denied that the effluent was escaping into the creek, but later agreed to take action to rectify the matter. However, it took a long time to get the matter attended to, and even now I do not know whether it has been completely fixed. The Minister for Local Government might be in a position to inform me on that point. In Victoria there has been a continual exploitation and manipulation of our environment. Man will eventually reap the consequences of this either by disease, food shortage, loss of wildlife or by some other means. The booklet to which Mr. Elliot referred—Restoring the Quality of our Environment—is worth reading.

When we walk out of the front door of this institution, we think we are breathing clean air, but it is polluted by fumes from industry and motor cars. It is said that cigarette smoking shortens life by ten years, and, in my opinion, industrial fumes and emissions from cars have the same effect. If industrial wastes and effluent are continually poured into our rivers, eventually saturation point will be reached. The same applies to the oceans. If raw sewage is poured into the Bay, eventually the Bay will be seriously affected. Mr. Cathie will deal with that matter.

I could quote for hours people who have spent far more time than the Minister of Health in the study of this problem. Some of them have made several world trips to investigate the problem.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—You and I have made one each.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Did the Government send the Minister overseas to investigate this problem?

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—No, I went on my own account.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—If the Minister had made a report of his tour, it would have made interesting reading. Perhaps he has changed his views over the years. The rich natural heritage of our State should be a source of pride and we, as legislators, have a special duty to protect this heritage.

The Hon. J. M. Walton.
acknowledge that. The history of private members' Bills reveals that the Government accepts such measures only when it finds itself in a corner and, on the occasion to which I refer, the Government was in some difficulty concerning air pollution. However, when the Government set up the Clean Air Committee, the activities of that body were restricted by its being allocated only a miserly amount of money each year with which to carry out its task.

Harking back to the factory operated by Containers Limited, I point out that hundreds of residents signed a petition of protest concerning the smoke nuisance arising from those premises, yet it took them and the Northcote City Council four years to get anything done, and even then what was achieved was not completely satisfactory. Almost every day, one reads in the newspapers headlines such as "Smoke Eats Paint Off Motor Cars", "Soot Covers Houses", "Death in the Air", "Beach Weed Oil Soaked", "Half Corio Bay Fish Tainted", "Fish Die by Thousands in the Coburg Lake", and so on, ad infinitum.

The Minister of Health has certainly done something to combat the problem, but he has not kept pace with the times. Indeed, the Government is slipping farther behind in this matter. The situation is somewhat like that brought about by atomic radiation, inasmuch as it affects all of us, and also our wives and children. No one is immune except, perhaps, members of the Country Party, who are noticeably silent concerning this matter. They are indeed fortunate to live in country districts where they do not have to put up with the nuisances that have been mentioned to-night. The matter of air pollution is not confined to fumes emitted by diesel engines. The fumes emitted by smokers contribute considerably to the problem. We can all withstand small doses of these fumes, but cumulatively we cannot do so, and all forms of air pollution help to shorten our lives.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—You do not mean to tell me that I must put a strainer on my pipe?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Probably one of the most uncomfortable nights one can spend is to sit in a smoke-filled room occupied by inconsiderate smokers. Often I have sat behind smokers in buses and in committee rooms, where the atmosphere was so polluted with smoke that it was impossible to see clearly and one's eyes watered continually. Such pollution of the atmosphere would probably be more harmful than the air pollution outside those places.

Mr. Elliot indicated that I intended to deal with the subject of water pollution. I point out that the adjournment motion is not restricted to pollution of the air but includes the pollution of our whole environment. This takes in the use of insecticides and the pouring of effluents into rivers and streams and onto the land. The Government has admitted that each year, when there is a heavy tax on the sewerage system of the metropolis, large quantities of raw sewage are poured into the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers and into the Merri creek. This takes place, particularly, in times of heavy rain, and, when the water in the streams recedes, a residue of raw sewage remains on the banks. This menace to public health is brought about by the failure of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, which is a Government instrumentality, to provide proper sewerage facilities.

When John Batman came up the Yarra and finally decided that this was the spot to establish a village, there was a layer of rock forming a bar across the Yarra river in the region of Queen-street and residents drew their water supplies from above that bar. Imagine anyone, nowadays, trying to draw drinking water from that spot. The water there is now so polluted that one could almost cut it with a knife. The matter of water pollution is a gradual process that
The Hon. G. W. THOM.—Who said that?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—I am saying it. The time for action is short; the time for action is now. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province).—The broad terms of the motion moved by Mr. Elliot cover aspects other than air pollution. Apparently no Government supporter, other than the Minister of Health, intends to participate in the debate. Whilst the fact that a Minister of the Crown has entered into a public debate on a matter of public interest is most welcome, it is regrettable that members of Her Majesty's Opposition are left with the task of producing speaker after speaker without the benefit of a reply from the Government.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—It would not be possible to have a more authoritative speaker than the Minister of Health.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—The interjection by Mr. Thom seems to indicate that there is no case to answer. Previous speakers have indicated that members of the Liberal Party are concerned with many of the broad issues involved in the quality of our natural environment. I was pleased to hear that the Minister has resigned his company directorship, because I do not think any Minister of the Crown should be in a position—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! That is not relevant to the motion.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—The Minister of Health said that he was happy with the co-operation he was receiving from industry. If that was so, why was it necessary for the Minister of Public Works to appeal to industries because the Government was concerned about oil pollution in Port Phillip Bay and Westernport Bay? I suggest that what is required is not half-hearted appeals by members of the Government to their friends in the great oil corporations but a statement to their friends in these industries that profit should not come before public interest. It is the role of a Government to take decisive action against acts of pollution which, on the admission of the Minister of Public Works, is causing the Victorian Government great concern. Yet, the only speaker on behalf of the Government has said that there do not appear to be any serious problems. Apparently this is not the unanimous view of Cabinet.

The debate there has been no indication that the Victorian Government has taken all measures necessary to control and prevent pollution.

I want to relate my remarks to the dangers of pollution of the waters of Port Phillip Bay, not only because of the importance of the Bay to the residents of Melbourne who use it for enjoyment and recreation in their leisure time, but also because of the important part it plays in the life of Victoria. One of my colleagues has already stated that the water of the Yarra river has been known to change colour on many occasions. The same comment could be made about the waters of Port Phillip Bay. At particular periods of the year, anybody driving around the foreshores of the Bay can determine the extent of the pollution by noting the colour of the water. We are concerned with the serious problems which arise when men congregate in cities. This inevitably leads to the pollution of streams, creeks, watercourses, lakes and bays.

The Minister of Health stated that he was happy with the co-operation he was receiving from industry. If that was so, why was it necessary for the Minister of Public Works to appeal to industries because the Government was concerned about oil pollution in Port Phillip Bay and Westernport Bay? I suggest that what is required is not half-hearted appeals by members of the Government to their friends in the great oil corporations but a statement to their friends in these industries that profit should not come before public interest. It is the role of a Government to take decisive action against acts of pollution which, on the admission of the Minister of Public Works, is causing the Victorian Government great concern. Yet, the only speaker on behalf of the Government has said that there do not appear to be any serious problems. Apparently this is not the unanimous view of Cabinet.
An examination of the creeks and watercourses around Port Phillip Bay clearly establishes that there are serious problems involved in the discharge from septic tanks and of household sullage, which eventually finds its way into the Bay. Pollution has reached such a stage in other countries that it is accepted that only action at the national level can cope with the enormity of the situation. I make this point because it has been suggested by the Minister of Health that the control of pollution can safely be left in the hands of the municipalities. From where are the municipalities to get the money to undertake this task? The Minister did not inform the House of this.

I shall quote from the excellent document referred to by Mr. Elliot, *Restoring the Quality of our Environment*, the report of The Pollution Panel by the President’s Science Advisory Committee in the United States of America which pointed out how direct action is required at the highest level—

The pervasive nature of pollution, its disregard of political boundaries including State lines, the national character of the technical economic and political problems involved, and the recognized Federal responsibilities for administering vast public lands which can be changed by pollution, for carrying out large enterprises which can produce pollutants, for preserving and improving the nation’s natural resources, all make it mandatory that the Federal Government assume leadership and exert its influence in pollution abatement on a national scale.

This is a report by a committee in another system of Federal Government within the Western nations of the world. The problem referred to is so serious and has reached such an extensive stage that restoration can be achieved only by action at the Federal level. Such action will enable this pollution to be checked and allow the quality of the environment to be restored.

I do not know what attempts the Victorian Government has made in this direction. I do not know what approach members of the Cabinet have made to the Federal Government in this matter, because the only Government speaker during this debate dealt with the narrow aspect of air pollution. Experience in the United States of America—probably the most heavily industrialized and urbanized country in the world—is that there is a serious deterioration of the quality of water in lakes, bays, streams and watercourses. It is not yet too late for us to learn from the experiences of our colleagues in the United States of America.

Mr. Thom suggested that there are no problems associated with pollution in Corio Bay or Port Phillip Bay. That is not the experience of fishermen or experts who have examined the quality of the water in Port Phillip Bay. The writer of a letter published in the *Herald* recently, on behalf of the underwater diving groups who use Port Phillip Bay, objects to the amount of industrial waste being discharged and the fact that it is being discharged into many different parts of the Bay. The Government has said that members of the Labor Party have been unable to provide evidence of serious pollution.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—The Prime Minister has been diving to test the water himself.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—I am sure he has first-hand experience of this pollution because he has examined the ecology of the Bay. About two months ago, a report appeared in the daily press that thousands of fish had been killed—probably poisoned—as a direct result of illegal dumping of toxic substances in the Bay. In that case, thousands of white bait were washed up on the beach at St. Kilda. Is not this serious evidence of pollution and its harmful effects on the Bay? Even such an eminent authority as the chief engineer of the Board of Works—the authority which is most responsible for the discharge of these waters into the Bay—said on this occasion that he believed this had come down
in one of the Board of Works drains near St. Kilda. For Mr. Thom's benefit, I point out that Mr. Sealey of the Geelong Professional Fishermen's Association certainly does not accept the view that has been put forward, and I hope Mr. Thom will not remain seated during the whole of the debate but will participate in it and deal with the point raised by the fishermen's association.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Are you tempting me?

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—It is for Mr. Thom to decide whether he will participate in the debate, but my belief is that another member of the Government ought to take part in it.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—What did Mr. Sealey say?

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—I shall quote what that gentleman said, as reported in the Age newspaper of 23rd May, 1966. He said—

Industries at Geelong were allowed to discharge effluent into Corio Bay whilst they were in the "teething stage", but these industries' expansion, and the vast quantities of waste they discharged, had become almost prohibitive to successful fishing.

A further authority I wish to quote briefly is the fishing expert of the Sporting Globe, who, I presume, is an expert so far as fishing is concerned. I am not an angler, but I should think this man would know what he was talking about. He said—

It's getting to the stage where any fish caught in estuaries around Port Phillip Bay is likely to be inedible. Low waters are bad enough, but when this condition is added to pollution, then the results are disastrous.

That is typical of the experience of those people who, through their own livelihood, are intimately connected with the problem of pollution in Port Phillip Bay. Yet, the only Government member to speak shrugged his shoulders and said that the Government is doing a magnificent job and that he does not believe there are any serious problems. I do not think this is good enough. In many cases, treatment of pollution is non-existent.

One has only to look at the various creeks and water-courses that discharge into the Bay to understand what the sources of pollution are and to be able to define the extent of the pollution. The Kananook creek at Frankston, which is in my electorate, is badly polluted, and I suggest that Mr. Thom should take time to read through the local newspapers circulating in this area and study the justifiable complaints of the residents in the district. The present sewage treatment plant at Rowville is discharging into the Kananook creek. The Patterson river at Carrum is in a similar position, and because the Department of Health has refused to take action to protect the health of the people in this district, the local municipality, under the authority of the local health officer, has been forced to erect a notice to the effect that it is dangerous to health to swim in these waters. The notice warns people of the serious consequences of swimming in the highly polluted waters of the Patterson river.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—What is the foreshore committee doing about it?

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—It is all very well for the Government to give these powers to municipalities, but the Government does not provide the essential funds which are required to carry out essential anti-pollution measures.

A third stream which is polluted is the Mordialloc creek. The residents have justifiably complained about the strong smell which comes from this creek. The essential works that have been undertaken higher up in the Dandenong valley, which is the catchment area of this stream, have had serious consequences upon people who live in the lower portions of the catchment area. Drainage works have stopped the flow of the stream and, in fact, have created a stagnant pool. The Government is not prepared to find out the extent of the pollution in this stream,
but the Mordialloc council is ready to do so. I propose to refer briefly to two reports. The first one is the report of the medical officer for the City of Mordialloc, who stated—

The above condition of the Mordialloc creek in my opinion, not only constitutes a public nuisance but also a serious health menace. Children paddle and bathe in these filthy waters and are unlikely to be completely deterred by prohibition notices. Boat owners frequently wade in handling their craft.

The Mordialloc council, too, has been forced to erect notices warning the people of the grave dangers of pollution because of the highly-infected nature of this stream. The health inspector also submitted a report on the matter on 12th October, 1965. The Government is well aware of these reports, but two years have passed during which nothing has been done, and the condition of the streams has even more seriously deteriorated. In his report, the health officer said—

The creek at present is little more than a foul water drain and it is essential that some water movement be made available to prevent siltation and subsequent stranding of the decomposable matter.

When matters of this type are raised with the Government, what happens? There are so many Government Departments involved that each one tries to pass the buck. Furthermore, the Government will not accept the financial implications that are involved in these problems. It is clear that what has happened to the Mordialloc creek is partly the result of unsewered areas stretching right back to Moorabbin. The discharge of household sullage, bath water, seepage from septic tanks and even raw sewage into these creeks, when no water is flowing down them to flush them out, is a major cause of pollution. All this is going on at a time when hepatitis and other diseases are prevalent.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt.—Where is the raw sewage coming from?

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—At the back of Mordialloc. Mr. Todd has also shown me a letter written by the town clerk of the City of Preston, in which he states—

My council has expressed concern with regard to the apparent lack of interest by the Clean Air Division of the State Health Department in the operation of air pollution gauges installed in this city, and I am directed to forward herewith, copy of a report in the matter by the senior health inspector which is self-explanatory.

I have supplied clear evidence of water pollution on the one hand and air pollution on the other, and, although many examples of pollution have been submitted to the Government, no action has been taken, nor can Government members be induced to answer these serious charges during the debate. In a report relating to air pollution, the senior health inspector of the City of Preston stated—

Deposit gauges were first installed, at the request of the Clean Air Division of the State Health Department, about four years ago. Two sites were chosen—one on the roof of PANCH and one in a private house in Keon-parade, Reservoir. The operation of the system was that on the 1st of each month, we would place clean bottles in the stand at the two sites, and convey the polluted bottles to the laboratory of the Clean Air Division in South Yarra. At the same time we would pick up the two bottles which had been left the previous month, but which were, by then, processed and clean.

In practice, however, on many occasions when a delivery of used bottles was made to South Yarra, the bottles which had been left one month before, were not processed, and so we were obliged to make an extra trip to South Yarra so that clean bottles would be available by the 1st of the next month.

I invite honorable members to consider this report, particularly having regard to the statements of the Minister of Health in justification of his Department. Although it is passing the buck to the municipalities, the Government cannot even provide a reasonable service in return to the municipalities. The report proceeds—

In November 1966, polluted bottles were taken to South Yarra for exchange, but no clean bottles were ready. Later in the month, another visit was made to South Yarra, but clean bottles were still not available.
What a record of service to the people of the community! Apparently the Government does not agree about the serious effects of pollution or the effects that it has on the quality of our environment and the health of our women and children. The senior health inspector's report proceeds—

We were getting a bit "fed up" with this poor service and a complaint was made, by telephone, to Mr. Leyton, a senior officer of the Clean Air Division. He promised to make a delivery of clean bottles to the town hall within a few days—we have not yet received these bottles, and the ones which were placed on the stands last November, are still there, as far as we know.

So much for the impassioned defence of his Department by the Minister of Health. The honorable gentleman should examine what is going on in the Department of Health to ensure that the municipalities obtain a reasonable service for the excellent job they are doing, particularly in view of the fact that the Government has passed the buck to them. The report concludes—

Some 4-5 months ago, a senior officer of the Department rang to say that he had noted that we had not been returning bottles for some time, and inquiring if there was any trouble. We explained our difficulty with the supply of clean bottles and added that as the Department did not appear to be greatly interested, we could not be expected to show any great enthusiasm for this project. Since that time, nothing more has been heard of it.

With those words I shall conclude. Treatment is important, but treatment is also costly.

Because the Government is prepared to shelve its responsibilities, particularly in finding money, when a member raises a question such as pollution of the Mordialloc creek, he gets nowhere. He is told to try the Public Works Department through the Ports and Harbors Branch. In turn, this body says, "We have only a little responsibility near the entrance to the creek; try the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission". The Commission says, "We have given our responsibilities away now; it is a matter for the Dandenong Valley Authority". When the member approaches that Authority, he is told that three municipalities are involved, namely, Springvale, Mordialloc and Chelsea. When the member takes up the matter with the municipalities, he is informed, "It is not our job; how about the Lands Department?".

I could proceed ad infinitum. The Government has not shown that it has taken decisive action. For those reasons, I fully support the motion for the adjournment of the House moved by Mr. Elliot.

The Hon. G. W. THOM (South-Western Province).—I join in this debate because many irresponsible statements have been made tonight, even after the Minister of Health had adequately dealt with the terms of the motion. I shall be surprised if, ever again, this House debates an adjournment motion which deals with the administration of any of the Ministers who sit in this Chamber. I must pay tribute to Mr. Elliot. Either he collected, or the research department at the Trades Hall collected for him, a lot of information on this matter. I am certain that he must have been rather surprised to find the close personal knowledge the Minister had of the problem and of the steps being taken to combat it. As Mr. Hunt has so generously indicated, "and with such short notice being given to him."

Every honorable member is conscious that pollution is a great problem of a world-wide nature. No one would be foolish enough to believe that the problem does not exist. If industry is to provide employment, society must be prepared to accept some of the consequences of its being established. One of these establishments in Geelong which receives constant uninformed criticism is the cement works. Those works were established towards the end of last century. They have provided employment for very many people over a great number of years. They are situated close to the deposits of raw material necessary for the production of cement, and no one forced
people to come and live in the locality. There is complaint after complaint from the local municipal council about the dust from the cement works, and I can appreciate the concern of the residents of the area. However, the extent of the measures which the company takes and the expense it incurs in attempting to eradicate the dust nuisance should be known. The Minister of Health has informed the House that the old kilns at the cement works are being replaced.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Not before time.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Mr. Knight can say that, but someone has to find the money for these things. The action that is being taken indicates that the directors of the company are conscious of their responsibility to the community, even though people came to live in the vicinity after the works had been established. No matter what steps are taken to control the dust nuisance created by the production of cement, there will, because of the nature of the industry, always be some dust from the works. If the company is to continue to provide employment in that location for many people who live in Geelong, the community must put up with a measure of inconvenience.

The Hon. Archibald Todd.—I'll bet that it is not in your street.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I live about 2 miles from the works.

The Hon. Archibald Todd.—You or the Minister should answer the complaint of the City of Preston.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! Mr. Cathie was heard in silence and Mr. Thom should also be heard in silence.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I appreciate your consideration, Mr. Acting President. Interjections are upsetting when one is speaking. The consequences of industrial development, including the disadvantages, must be appreciated if this State is to continue to become more highly industrialized. At the same time, as the Minister of Health has indicated, every step must be taken to minimize nuisances by the best possible proven methods. A great deal of experimentation is taking place all over the world. Pollution is not only a local problem. Tremendous amounts of money are spent on research in many countries, because the world is moving towards greater industrialization at a faster rate than at any other time in its history except for the period at the beginning of the industrial revolution.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—The fallout here is greater than that of London.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I have only Mr. Elliot's word for that.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—You would doubt my word?

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Unless Mr. Elliot produced irrefutable evidence to me, I would certainly doubt it—with respect, of course.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—You will apologize then, will you?

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Not until Mr. Elliot produces evidence that I am wrong. Reference has been made to the fact that tainted fish have been caught in Corio Bay. One of the colleagues of members of the Opposition, sitting in another place, made some rather extravagant statements to the effect that fish taken out of Corio Bay by professional fishermen—

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! The honorable member may not refer to discussions in another place.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I am not referring to what was said in another place. As one of my colleagues confirms, the gentleman made the statement to the press that 50 per cent. of the fish taken from the Bay were tainted. I have it on the best authority that that statement is completely wrong. I am informed that officers of the Fisheries and Wildlife
Branch have been investigating this complaint, and that only a minute percentage of the fish have been found to be tainted. The type of statement to which I have referred is published but is not substantiated. I have in my possession a letter from the Chief Secretary which indicates that the figures given by the gentleman who takes his seat in another place are completely wrong.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—You have an admission there that they are tainted.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—That interjection indicates the type of statement which members of the Opposition are prone to make and by which they give a completely misleading impression. The statement made by their colleague indicated that 50 per cent. of the catch was contaminated and was ordered to be condemned. The information I obtained indicates that, of fish taken from one particular area of the bay, one-tenth were tainted but that, generally speaking, fish taken from other areas of the Bay were completely free of contamination.

No one denies that the problem of pollution in its various forms is one of great concern, but the Minister of Health has convinced this House that he is conscious of the problem, and that the Government is taking definite steps to keep pollution under control and is conscious of the steps being taken throughout the world to combat an ever increasing problem. The Government has indicated that it is well qualified to deal with the problem that everyone agrees does exist.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—Mr. Thom has indulged in his usual practice of sitting back during the debate and then, when he considers the time is ripe and every other member has made his contribution, jumping up like a jack in a box.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie.—What are you doing?

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I inform the Minister of Health that I would not have taken part in this debate except for the information which was brought forward in the latter part of the debate, and which directed his attention to the fact that his “Rip Van Winkle” Department has been asleep in some municipalities. It is a great pity that the Minister was not in the Chamber when correspondence and the attached report from the chief health inspector of the City of Preston was read to the House. It was pointed out how active his people were in regard to the famous bottles that they have placed here and there, particularly one which was located near the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital. If he had been in the Chamber to hear what was said, it would have caused him great concern. The same comment applies to Mr. Thom.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—What about?

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I am speaking about the neglect of the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health to carry out certain functions that it started to undertake in the City of Preston. Everybody agrees that pollution in any shape or form is harmful in the community, and, whether we like it or not, as a result of the use of an ever increasing number of chemical processes, it is becoming worse. To give credit where it is due, I remind members that legislation dealing with clean air in Victoria was first introduced in 1957—before Mr. Thom made his appearance in this Chamber—in a private member’s Bill brought forward by the late Buckley Machin, a member of the Australian Labor Party. I quote from what Mr. Machin said at the time. This is reported at page 516 of volume 251 of Hansard, of the 8th May, 1957—

All parties, I am sure, will give it the earnest and serious consideration that it merits. If adopted, it will conduce to the health and happiness of the people and ensure that the cure of air pollution goes hand in hand with the industrial growth
of Victoria. If the health of the community is to be safeguarded, three things are essential, namely, pure food, a clean water supply, and pure air.

Eventually, after Mr. Machin’s Bill passed through this House, it was adopted in another place by the Government, which recognized, although grudgingly, that the Bill contained merit. However, it was some years before any action was taken by the Department of Health. Mr. Machin continually asked questions as to what staff was being employed from time to time in connexion with the abatement of air pollution. In 1962 he compared the expenditure in Victoria with that in New South Wales. When the New South Wales Bill was introduced in 1960, Mr. Machin highlighted the meagre expenditure in Victoria. In those days, five people were employed by the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health, and since that time it has not been considered essential to increase that staff. Insufficient attention has been given to the question of air pollution. The Government has rested on its laurels and has merely cited what has been done here and there. I shall again quote the correspondence read by Mr. Cathie, because the Minister of Health is in the Chamber, and I wish him to hear it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! Mr. Cathie has read the correspondence, and it will appear in *Hansard*.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I should prefer to read it so that the Minister can hear the views of the City of Preston. The letter is addressed to Mr. Walton, who represents Melbourne North Province, and reads—

> My council has expressed concern with regard to the apparent lack of interest by the Clean Air Division of the State Health Department in the operation of air pollution gauges installed in this city, and I am directed to forward herewith, copy of a report in the matter by the senior health inspector which is self-explanatory.

> The matter, therefore, is respectfully referred to you and your three Parliamentary colleagues for the city and it would be appreciated if the matter could be taken up in any manner which you deem advantageous.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—What is the date of the letter?

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—It is dated the 17th October, 1967.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I hope the letter will be placed before me so that I can examine it. My Department is continually examining complaints. Mr. Todd has had a week to forward this letter to me personally, but he has not done so. These representations are supposed to be important, but they have not been directed to my attention!

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Unfortunately, the Minister is bawling across the Chamber. I recollect his impassioned plea to the members of the press gallery to print his remarks. I hope the gentlemen of the press will publish what I have said.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—You also want to get into the act.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—The Preston City Council wants to get into the act.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! This correspondence has already been read to the House. I ask Mr. Todd to read only extracts from it. It has already been reported in full by *Hansard*.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I wish the Minister of Health to hear this correspondence because I am sure that he will not read *Hansard*. The report of the senior health inspector of the City of Preston attached to this letter reads as follows:—

> Deposit gauges were first installed, at the request of the Clean Air Division of the State Health Department, about four years ago. Two sites were chosen—one on the roof of PANCH and one in a private house in Keon-parade, Reservoir. The operation of the system was that on the 1st of each month, we would place clean bottles in the stand at the two sites, and convey the polluted bottles to the laboratory of the Clean Air Division in South Yarra. At the same time we would pick up the two bottles which had been left the previous month, but which were, by then, processed and clean.
In practice, however, on many occasions when a delivery of used bottles was made to South Yarra, the bottles which had been left one month before, were not processed, and so we were obliged to make an extra trip to South Yarra so that clean bottles would be available by the 1st of the next month. In November 1966, polluted bottles were taken to South Yarra for exchange, but no clean bottles were ready. Later in the month, another visit was made to South Yarra, but clean bottles were still not available. We were getting a bit "fed up" with this poor service and a complaint was made, by telephone, to Mr. Leyton, a senior officer of the Clean Air Division. He promised to make a delivery of clean bottles to the town hall within a few days—we have not yet received these bottles, and the ones which were placed on the stands last November, are still there, as far as we know.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! I ask Mr. Todd not to continue to read something that has already been placed before the House.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I shall finish in a minute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—I ask Mr. Todd to discontinue reading now.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—With respect to you, Sir, the Minister of Health was not in the Chamber when the correspondence was first read.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—That is not the point. The letter has been read once to the House and should not be read twice.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—The correspondence was read, not for my benefit, but for the benefit of the House.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—The letter has already been read. Mr. Todd may make some passing reference to it.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—The report contains charges against the Minister's Department.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—We can't win them all.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Mr. Thom and the Minister of Health said to-night that if industry annoys people by depositing oily smut over their linen and laundry, it is just bad luck.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I said nothing of the sort.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Mr. Thom did make those remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! Mr. Todd should be heard in silence. My remarks apply to honorable members on both sides of the Chamber.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—In debating Mr. Machin's Bill in 1957, the Government said that industry should not be forced to install preventive appliances unless it could be proved that they would be a success.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—A lot of progress has been made in ten years. I was present when the Bill was debated in 1957, and I know what was said.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—The Minister said what a great job his Department had done in negotiations with Australian Plaster Industries. A great deal of work was done before his Department attempted to deal with that nuisance.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I accept that statement.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—The local people had to put up with a great deal of inconvenience, and they could get no action from the Department of Health. When the local people knew that Australian Plaster Industries wanted to move into an area amongst food processing plants and fine engineering works, they believed everything should be done to ensure that there would be no air pollution which could affect those products. The Port Melbourne Council took up the matter and reached an agreement with that company. Australian Plaster Industries has been most co-operative with the council, but not with the
Clean Air Committee. The Department has not advanced because it has received no encouragement from the Government.

The honorable gentleman stated that Mr. Willman, who is a member of the Clean Air Committee, made some outrageous statements. It is of no use attacking a man here; he ought to have taken up the matter with Mr. Willman because he would have been prepared to debate the matter at any time. The Opposition wants some definite action. I cite the case of the cement works at Traralgon where, from 1965 to the present time, the company has virtually been given a licence to cause a nuisance. During this time it has had the opportunity to eliminate the cause of complaints. The local people have asked why the Clean Air Committee has not taken action.

In answer to questions asked in this Chamber, the Government has said that it has given the firm a certain time to correct the nuisance. It is now more than two years since it was first reported that this company was contravening the clean air regulations. However, the Government is careful how it deals with large industries. If the industry is a big fish in the pond, it is all right, and it will not be disturbed. However, if it is small fry, the Government shows its teeth.

Despite the Minister's pleas to the press to publish his statements, the Opposition believes it is justified in bringing this matter forward. The staff of the Clean Air Section of the Department of Health must be augmented; modern equipment must constantly be added to that section; and additional inspectors must be employed to patrol the Melbourne and metropolitan area to ensure that air pollution problems are corrected.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I did not.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Then he should have. In its treatment of effluent, the BP refinery is a model of what should be done.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I mentioned the projected development, which was the exact opposite.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I shall come to that matter in a moment. It is true that Westernport presents a particular problem in the treatment of pollution. Looking at the matter geographically, although it may not seem obvious, there is not a great transfer for water from inside Westernport to the ocean through the movement of the tides. This problem was fully appreciated. BP exercises a strict and rigid control and, with the co-operation of the Commission of Public Health and the Fisheries and Wildlife Department, a plan has been adopted to ensure that, so far as it is humanly controllable, no effluent can escape from the refinery to the sea. Up to date the measures adopted, although expensive, have been entirely successful.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I even quoted what BP was using; but the Government said that it had done nothing in relation to the projected development.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—The same approach will be adopted in relation to future industries that may be sited in Westernport.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Why were we not told that in answer to questions?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—If Mr. Elliot will permit me to finish, I shall explain. The co-ordinating committee, which has been in operation since last April, includes the leaders of the Government and semi-governmental authorities concerned at Westernport, and the Director of Fisheries and Wildlife, Mr. Butcher, is also a member of this committee. When it is known what the industries intend to do, it is the purpose of the
committee to ensure that the same kind of protection undertaken by BP will obtain. I give that assurance to the House. The Government recognizes, as does Mr. Elliot, that there is a problem in Westernport.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—Why wasn’t I given that answer?

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—I thought Mr. Elliot was given the answer.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—I was not.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—I have now given him the answer.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—This is inefficiency. You should have given it to me before.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—At all events, that is the position in relation to Westernport. Mr. Walton mentioned the Yarra river and its tributaries. He correctly said that, over many years, there has been an increasing build-up of industrial wastes and pollutants escaping into the streams. It is the firm policy of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, fully supported by the Government, to eliminate those outlets, and substantial progress towards that end has already been made.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—What about the Burke-road bridge?

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—As Mr. Elliot is probably aware, that is the first stage of the south-eastern sewerage scheme, which will eventually collect the sewage from the south-eastern and eastern suburbs and carry it down to Carrum.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—And where to from there?

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—That remains to be seen. Five points on the river system have already been closed, and it is the purpose of the south-eastern scheme to close others. This is a firm policy. This is the first Government which has adopted this policy and supported it through thick and thin on behalf of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. As honorable members are also aware, considerable progress has been made in the elimination of the discharge of industrial waste, and the Board of Works has become progressively tougher with industry. The Board will not allow any new discharge into the river, but requires the discharge to be made into the sewerage system. This is because the Government, as well as the Opposition, recognizes that the pollution of these streams cannot be tolerated and must be eliminated. We have all inherited the results of a century of neglect during which time these streams have been used as outlets for noxious wastes and pollutants, and it takes time to eliminate this misuse.

Mr. Cathie mentioned the streams which flow into the east side of Port Phillip. I think the honorable member agrees that the main cause of pollution is the unsewered premises which are scattered about, particularly sullage waters from kitchens and bathrooms and in some cases from septic tanks. There is only one answer—to provide sewerage. It is the policy of the Board of Works, supported by the Government, to sewer all premises in the metropolitan area. The Board is making progress; it is more than keeping pace with the growth of the metropolis and is overtaking a very considerable lag year by year. I hope the Opposition will join the Government in encouraging this approach. It is the only way in which the pollution of these streams can be dealt with.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—I hope you will mention Cowderoy-street, St. Kilda.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—To my knowledge the Cowderoy-street drain in St. Kilda has been a problem for upwards of 30 years. Every now and again a stench arises on the West St. Kilda beach about which there has always been dispute as to the cause. I imagine it is probably caused by seaweed getting mixed with whatever comes down the drain from time to time, thus causing...
hydrogen sulphide to be released. The cause does not matter; a solution has to be found.

The Port Phillip Authority was mentioned, and I am glad to say that the Authority is undertaking, as one of its primary tasks, the calling of a conference to try to reach a permanent solution to the problem of the Cowderoy-street drain. In the meantime, the Board of Works has been engaged in cleaning out the outlet from the drain, so that at least there will be some flow from it into the sea. I recognize that this is a considerable problem. It is an example of what can be inherited.

I think the main debate has taken this course: The Opposition has submitted a proposition that pollution, of the air, the water and the environment generally is a serious worldwide problem. The mistake the Opposition has made is in assuming that the Government is not aware of it and is not acting accordingly. I believe the Opposition has been fully answered on the air pollution side by actual figures.

So far as the water question is concerned, I hope I have indicated that considerable progress is being made on an enlightened course for the first time to try to eliminate pollution from the water systems and to make the State as agreeable as it was in the first place many years ago.

The motion for the adjournment of the House was negatived.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (PRE-PACKED ARTICLES) BILL.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Weights and Measures Act 1958 with respect to the regulation and control of packaging and sale of pre-packed articles, the marking of packages containing such articles, the prohibition or restriction of the use of certain expressions on such packages, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to. The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MILK AND DAIRY SUPERVISION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part II. of the Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to. The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VETERINARY SURGEONS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to. The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

DAYS AND HOURS OF MEETING.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I desire to give notice that on the next day of meeting I will move—

That so much of the sessional orders as provide that the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be half-past Four o'clock and on Wednesdays Four o'clock, that on Wednesday in each week private members' business shall take precedence of Government business, and that no new business be taken after half-past Ten o'clock be suspended until the end of December next, and that until the end of December next the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be Four o'clock, and on Wednesdays Two o'clock and Government business shall take precedence of all other business.

I indicate that the usual assurances will apply; the interests of those members with private Bills listed on the Notice Paper will be safeguarded.

ADJOURNMENT.

COMPANIES ACT: ACTIVITIES OF VIVACO PTY. LTD.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I move—That the House do now adjourn.
The Hon. A. J. HUNT (South-Eastern Province).—To-day, I asked for certain information concerning a company known as Vivaco Proprietary Limited and its associated businesses. In the question, I used the words "unscrupulous" and "fraudulent" with relation to the company. These were not idle words. The answer by the Minister of Agriculture on behalf of the Attorney-General referred to a number of subsidiary companies, namely, Rowell and Company, Mail Order House of Australia, Regal Toy Wholesalers and Junior Playwear Distributors, but these are by no means all of the fraudulent mail order organizations associated with Vivaco Proprietary Limited. In addition, there are the Victoria Book Company, Dorothy Grey Sewing Agency, Arizona Arms Export Company, Queensland Glamour Productions, Miss Della Lingerie, Lucky Shop Distributors, Astra Enterprises, Rotolux Rubber Stamp Manufacturing Company, and Australian Rubber Stamp Manufacturing Company.

All the businesses conducted under these names constitute a fraud on the public. They operate from post office boxes at Mater Hill and West End, Brisbane. One ought to be very wary of a business which operates entirely from a post office box number without showing an actual address. I understand that this particular matter is at present under consideration by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and I hope that some action will be taken because people who are not prepared to disclose their correct address generally have something to hide.

I should like to mention the various categories into which the businesses conducted by this group fall. First, there is Rowell and Company, which advertises extensively in the Victorian country press that people can make a lot of money at home by investing $48 to buy a wire coat hanger machine. Some members may have seen these advertisements. The sort of people who put in money are those who are confined to their homes, mainly mothers or invalids who need to earn a little extra income. One of my constituents has shown me this so-called machine which is a machine by no stretch of the imagination. It consists of a board with eleven rivets in it and the operator is supposed to twist wire around the rivets to make a coathanger. In its advertisements and other advertising material, the company guarantees to supply a person with wire at a certain cost and to purchase the coat hangers, provided that they meet a certain standard.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—Which they never do.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—That is about the position. Another matter is that once the person pays for the freight on the wire that is supposed to have been sent from Brisbane and pays the freight on the coat hangers back to Brisbane, he would come out about square.

Junior Playwear Distributors advertise that for $10 deposit they will forward a kit for making junior playwear. The kit, as one receives it, consists of a pattern for children's shorts or some other garment and enough material to make one garment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Does Mr. Hunt believe this matter relates to Government administration?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—I do. Then, for a further $14.50 they will send enough material to make four dozen garments, for which they say they will pay $21.70 if they come up to standard. Again, there is a doubt whether anything does come up to standard. The person who makes the garments finds in any event that there is no profit in them.

There are two other businesses in the clothing field—Dorothy Grey Sewing Agency and Miss Della
Lingerie. The same scheme exists in regard to these two businesses. With the business known as Regal Toy Wholesalers, a person is supposed to be able to earn a profit from making toys at home. Two others—Victoria Book Company and Queensland Glamour Productions—deal in pornographic literature and photographs. If a person answers one of the advertisements, it seems he is put on the mailing list for the other businesses. They are skilled in catching “suckers”.

I ask the Minister to ensure that the activities of this unscrupulous firm are widely publicized throughout Victoria because country newspapers, in particular, have been publishing its advertisements, not knowing about its activities. I ask that the statement by the Minister be circulated to these newspapers. Since receiving the reply to the question, I have spoken with the Attorney-General, who assures me that he will consider the matter further. I hope that he will do so, and that the answer to my question, and my remarks, will be circulated throughout Victoria to country newspapers with a view to obtaining the widest possible publicity for the fraudulent nature of the activities of this company, in the hope that the newspapers will in future desist from publishing its advertisements and that the public will be well warned of the nature of its activities.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, October 24, 1967.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie) took the chair at 2.20 p.m., and read the prayer.
There are no anomalies in the recent Act. The Victorian Government is not able to match the Commonwealth Government in its recent provision regarding the updating of pensions, and the availability of surplus will be the factor which determines the extent of any future up-dating. In this regard the present amendments before the House provide for actuarial valuations every three years that the next will be carried out as at the 30th June, 1968.

SOCIAL WELFARE.

PUBLICATIONS: RESEARCH WORK.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. What publications have been produced by the Social Welfare Department in each of the years 1964, 1965, 1966, and in this year to date?

2. What articles have been published as a result of research carried out by the officers of the Department?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—

The answers are—

1 and 2. During the period 1964-66, annual reports have been published, and a number of training manuals prepared.

Other publications include—

1964—Survey of Child Care in Victoria 1962-64.


The Research and Statistics Division has supervised a number of unpublished studies in the youth and parole fields, and students at the Department's Training Division prepared the bulk of the material for a study sponsored by the Housing Commission—Community Facilities in Urban Renewal.

Work is also in progress on a report for a survey of youth needs in the City of Doncaster-Templestowe.

ALLAMBIE RECEPTION CENTRE: STAFF:

QUALIFICATIONS: RESIGNATIONS.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. What is the current staff of Allambie Reception Centre?

2. What are the qualifications of the staff?

3. How many staff resignations occurred in the last two years?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—

As the answers are tabulated, I suggest that, with the leave of the House, they be incorporated in Hansard without my reading them.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

1 and 2. The following table shows details of the staff establishment at "Allambie":—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Number of Positions Authorized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class &quot;C2&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class &quot;E&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent, Class O.P.20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Superintendent, Class O.P.16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker, Class S.W.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and General Division and Temporary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matron</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matron, Deputy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matron, Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Officer, Senior</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Officer</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward Sister</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Mother</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundress, Senior</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundress</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook, Senior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handcraft Instructor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Reliever</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chauffeur</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Assistant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Foreman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storeman, Grade II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand Writer and Typist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant (Female) Grade IV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant (Female) Grade I (part-time)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The total number of resignations between the 1st July, 1965 and 30th June, 1967, is 213.
ABORIGINES WELFARE BOARD.
LAKE TYERS ABORIGINAL STATION: APPOINTMENT OF FARM MANAGER.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. In the last fortnight, what staff appointments the Public Service Board made in respect of the Aborigines Welfare Board from—(a) outside the Service; and (b) within the Service?

2. What positions any such appointees previously held?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

1. (a) None. (b) One. On the 13th October, 1967, an officer was appointed Farm Manager, Lake Tyers.

2. Marketing Inspector, Department of Agriculture.

1966 ANNUAL REPORT.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Housing—

If he will ascertain and inform the House—(a) who compiled the annual report of the Aborigines Welfare Board for the year ended 30th June, 1966; (b) how many Board members were present when the report was adopted; and (c) whether each Board member was supplied with a copy of the report before its adoption?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

(a) A draft was prepared by the superintendent and revised by the chairman.

(b) The report was not submitted to a meeting of the Board.

(c) No.

ROBINVALE SETTLEMENT: SUB-STANDARD HOUSING.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. How many sub-standard dwellings are occupied in the vicinity of the Aboriginal housing settlement at Robinvale?

2. How many of these are occupied by Aboriginal families, and how many individuals comprise these families?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answers are—

1. Three.

No houses in the Robinvale area have been declared by the Housing Commission to be sub-standard. In the opinion of the Aborigines Welfare Board, these three houses are sub-standard.

2. All are occupied by Aborigines, who number eight individuals.

Two of the sub-standard dwellings have been occupied by the present families only in the past few weeks.

SOCIAL WORKERS.
SHORTAGE IN VICTORIA.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

What communications the Government has had with the Melbourne University Social Studies Department on the subject of the apparent shortage of social workers in Victoria?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

There has been no direct communication, but the Director-General of Social Welfare is a member of the Board of Social Studies.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

DRIVERS' LICENCES: EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONARY POWERS.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

On how many occasions during the last two years the Chief Commissioner of Police exercised his discretion under section 25 of the Motor Car Act 1958 by refusing to issue a driver's licence, cancelling a driver's licence, and suspending a driver's licence, respectively?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cancellations</th>
<th>Suspensions</th>
<th>Refusals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 (to 30th September, 1967)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LAW DEPARTMENT.

COURT LISTS.

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West) asked the Attorney-General—

What is the present lag in the hearing of cases in all lists of the Supreme Court, the Melbourne County Court, and Courts of General Sessions sitting in Melbourne, respectively?
Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General).—The answer is—

I assume that the honorable member means by "lag" the time elapsing between committal and trial in the criminal jurisdiction, and in respect of the civil and matrimonial causes jurisdictions, respectively, the time elapsing between the filing of the certificate of readiness, or the date of setting down, and the hearing.

The periods set out in the following answer are estimates based on this assumption and show the present situation in the various jurisdictions. However, it should be noted that the periods could vary considerably from month to month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Case</th>
<th>Approximate Time Elapsing before Trial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supreme Court:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil juries</td>
<td>Ten to twelve months</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil causes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Six weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bail cases</td>
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As the honorable member will appreciate, the considerable lapse of time which may occur between the date when the cause of action arose and the filing of the certificate of readiness in civil cases is a matter for the parties to the action and is not the responsibility of the court.

STRATA TITLES ACT.

TRANSFER FEES.

For Mr. RING (Preston), Mr. Wilton asked the Attorney-General—

Whether he is aware of the high cost of transferring titles of a block of flats to comply with the Strata Titles Act 1967; if so, whether he will give consideration to applying a special charge for the transfer of such properties?

Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General).—The answer is—

As there is no distinction between the fees charged on transfers of units in a subdivision under the Strata Titles Act 1967, it is not apparent to me what problem concerns the honorable member.

If the honorable member will let me have a detailed written statement on the matter, I will give his submissions careful consideration.

MUNICIPALITIES ASSISTANCE FUND.

REVENUE: GRANTS.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Minister for Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. What is the source of revenue of the Municipalities Assistance Fund and what was the revenue in 1965-66 and 1966-67, respectively?

2. How much each municipality or other body received from the fund in each of the above years?

3. For what purpose grants were made during those years?

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—The answers supplied by the Minister for Local Government are—

1. (a) The revenue of this fund consists of one quarter of all motor car drivers' licence fees, less cost of collection and one half of all motor driving instructors' licence fees, less cost of collection, plus a contribution from the Loan Fund.

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## Municipalities Assistance Fund

### 2. Allocations to municipalities for the two years are as shown in the following table:

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### Shires—continued.

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### Municipalities Assistance Fund

**Municipalities Assistance Fund—continued.**

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<th>1966-67</th>
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<th>1966-67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Country Fire Authority (Act No. 6228)</td>
<td>690,970.00</td>
<td>834,526.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Casual Fire Fighters Compensation Fund (Act No. 6228)</td>
<td>5,133.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 690,970.00 839,659.30

3. Allocations to municipalities were for the erection of public conveniences in various townships and for general improvement works at recreation reserves, including the following:

The construction of toilet blocks (including sewerage and lighting, paths, &c.) the development of ovals (filing, grading, levelling, top dressing, drainage, grading), fencing (boundary and oval), erecting pavilions (tennis, basketball, table tennis, general recreation), kitchens, umpires' rooms, kiosks, dressing rooms, parking areas, spectators' areas, cycle tracks, fire brigade training tracks, tennis courts (including surfacing and sealing) basketball courts, tanks and stands, scoreboards, storerooms, connecting State Electricity Commission power, planting trees.

Payments to the Country Fire Authority were towards the operating costs of the Authority and to the Casual Fire Fighters Compensation Fund, in accordance with section 64 of the Country Fire Authority Act.

### ROAD PROJECTS

**St. Kilda Junction by-pass, Tullamarine and South-Eastern Freeways: Costs: Completion Dates.**

**Mr. WILKES** (Northcote) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. Whether there has been any increase in the estimated costs of the St. Kilda Junction by-pass, the Tullamarine Freeway, and the South-Eastern Freeway, respectively?

2. When it is expected that each of these projects will be completed?

**Mr. PORTER** (Minister of Public Works)—The answers supplied by the Minister for Local Government are—

1. No.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES: INDUSTRIAL USE OF WATER: RATES: RE-USE.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. What Government Departments and instrumentalities in the metropolitan area use more than 10,000,000 gallons of water a month for industrial purposes?

2. Whether this water is supplied free or at concession rates?

3. Whether any of these users re-use any of the water supplied; if not, having regard to the present water shortage, whether the Government or the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has any plans for this to be done?

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—The answers supplied by the Minister for Local Government are—

1 and 2.

Department or Instrumentality | Nature of Charge
--- | ---
Victorian Railway Department | Free under the Board’s Act
State Electricity Commission of Victoria | 25 cents per 1,000 gals. (normal charge)
Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria | 25 cents per 1,000 gals. (normal charge)
Commonwealth Department of Supply | 25 cents per 1,000 gals. (normal charge)
C.S.I.R.O. | 25 cents per 1,000 gals. (normal charge)

3. The Board’s by-law requires that water used for cooling purposes must be recirculated. The various Government Departments and instrumentalities referred to in items 1 and 2 above recirculate cooling water in accordance with the Board’s requirements.

Private Industry: Industrial Use of Water: Re-use.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

Whether, as 380,000,000 gallons odd of water is used by those private industries using over 10,000,000 gallons a month in the metropolitan area, the Government has any plans to require these industries to install equipment to re-use the water to alleviate the present shortage?

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is—

The Board has sought the co-operation of the industries concerned and has commenced a programme of visits to the premises of these major industrial users by technical staff members to discuss the possibility of reduction in water consumption by re-use of water.

It has been found that such consumers are already investigating water re-use and the water consumption at some premises has already been reduced.

Melbourne Harbor Trust.

Profits: Payments to Government.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party) asked the Minister of Public Works—

What profit was made by the Melbourne Harbor Trust in each of the past ten years and what amount was paid by the Melbourne Harbor Trust to the Victorian Government in each of those years?

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—The answer is—

The surpluses or deficits as disclosed in the Trust’s annual report in the past ten years and the amounts paid by the Trust to Consolidated Revenue over this period are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surplus</th>
<th>Deficit</th>
<th>Contributions to Consolidated Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>$56,708</td>
<td>$794,136</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>124,454</td>
<td>808,124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>180,772</td>
<td>834,799</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>151,846</td>
<td>991,325</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>113,972</td>
<td>1,060,178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>180,568</td>
<td>1,407,083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>208,102</td>
<td>1,430,158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>164,978</td>
<td>1,307,252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown) asked the Minister of Public works—

How much the Melbourne Harbor Trust contributed to Consolidated Revenue from its income in each of the past five financial years?

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—The answer is—

The amounts contributed by the Melbourne Harbor Trust to Consolidated Revenue from its income in each of the past five financial years are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>$969,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1,060,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1,407,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,430,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1,307,252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PORT PHILLIP BAY.

SHIPPING SANITATION: EFFLUENT FROM CARRUM TREATMENT PLANT.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Public Works, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. What sanitary conditions operate concerning shipping at anchor or moored at wharves in Port Phillip Bay?

2. What action is being taken to cooperate with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works regarding the utilization of the effluent to be discharged by the Board's south-eastern amplification sewerage purification plant at Carrum by diverting such effluent for industrial and agricultural purposes in the Westernport Bay area?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Water Supply).—The answers are—

The information relating to sewerage authorities, other than the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, is—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Engineer</th>
<th>Details of Effluent Discharged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacchus Marsh Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>J. B. Lennox</td>
<td>A. W. Bond</td>
<td>A. W. Bond</td>
<td>Sewage is fully treated in oxidation basins and effluent is disposed of by irrigation and/or discharged to the Lerderderg river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandenong Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>M. G. Jarvis</td>
<td>A. R. Edwards</td>
<td>Garlick and Stewart</td>
<td>Complete treatment in conventional works, followed by irrigation of pasture or oxidation basins. Final effluent to Dandenong creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>J. H. Butler</td>
<td>D. G. Collings</td>
<td>Gutteridge, Haskins, and Davey</td>
<td>Treatment consists of full treatment in conventional works, including chlorination after which effluent is piped to Dandenong creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Eliza Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>J. H. Butler</td>
<td>D. G. Collings</td>
<td>Gutteridge, Haskins, and Davey</td>
<td>Sewage is all sent to the Mornington works for treatment as described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springvale and Noble Park Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>A. A. Erickson</td>
<td>H. L. Williams</td>
<td>Garlick and Stewart</td>
<td>Sewage is all sent to the Dandenong works for treatment as described above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werribee Sewerage Authority</td>
<td>J. N. Smith</td>
<td>N. G. Minna</td>
<td>Scott and Furphy</td>
<td>Sewage is all discharged to the main outfall of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for treatment at the Board's Werribee farm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOUSING COMMISSION.

COUNTRY DISTRICTS: APPLICATIONS FOR HOMES: SURVEY OF REQUIREMENTS.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Minister of Housing—

How many applications are in hand for Housing Commission houses in Foster, Toora, Welshpool, Port Welshpool, and Yarram, respectively?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

Current applications held by the Commission are as follows:

Foster......... 6
Toora........... 14
Port Welshpool and Welshpool 12
Yarram........... 15

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Minister of Housing—

Whether, in view of the activities of Esso-B.H.P. at Barry's Beach, Housing Commission officers made a survey of the housing requirements of Toora, Welshpool, Port Welshpool, and Yarram; if so, whether he will lay on the table of the Library any reports on the matter?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

In reply to a letter from the honorable member, the Director of Housing advised him by letter dated 22nd August, 1967, that following an investigation made by the Commission's land purchasing officer, an extensive development at Welshpool could not be substantiated and it was the Commission's intention to further develop Toora where the Commission is in possession of a number of serviced blocks.

A copy of the land purchasing officer's report, dated 2nd June, 1967, will be forwarded to the honorable member.

PROVISION OF HOUSING AT ROSEDALE, LONGFORD, AND SALE.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Minister of Housing—

In view of the activities of Esso-B.H.P. in the area, what plans have been formulated by the Housing Commission for the provision of housing at Rosedale, Longford, and Sale, respectively?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

Following discussions with executives of Esso it was considered that the Commission owned sufficient land at Rosedale and Sale to meet any possible demand that may arise from the activities of this company.

Housing accommodation at Longford has never entered into any discussion between Esso and the Commission.

OFFSHORE SEISMIC SURVEYS.

UNEXPLODED DEPTH CHARGES.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister of Mines—

Following statements in the press of Thursday last to the effect that depth charges used in seismic surveys remain un­exploded in waters off the Victorian coast—

(a) whether any penalty can be imposed on those responsible; (b) whose responsibility it is to render these charges safe; and (c) what steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Mines).—The answer is—

(a) Yes, under the Petroleum Act 1958 the holder of a petroleum exploration permit is required amongst other things to conduct all operations in the permit area in such a way as not to endanger health and safety of persons employed on or about such area or any other persons affected or likely to be affected by such operations. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the cancellation of the permit by the Minister; this cancellation is final and without appeal. The seismic survey work with which we are concerned was carried out in waters off the Victorian coast under the authority of petroleum exploration permit No. 42.

(b) The company holding the petroleum exploration permit is held responsible for the rendering safe of the unexploded charges.

(c) Departmental officers are currently making a detailed investigation into all aspects of the subject seismic survey carried out on behalf of the permittee company. The objective is to establish the reasons for the failure of some of the charges to explode. When the investigation is complete appropriate action will be taken to avoid a recurrence.

BREAD INDUSTRY.

HORSHAM BAKERIES: REGISTRATIONS.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

How many bakeries situated in Horsham were registered with the Department of Labour and Industry on 1st October, 1947, 1st October, 1957, and 1st October instant, respectively?

Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answer is—

The records kept by the Department do not indicate the number of factories of any class that have been registered from year
to year in any particular city or town. I am happy to provide the honorable member with information about the current situation. At present there are two bakeries registered as factories under the Labour and Industry Act within the City of Horsham.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

BROADMEADOWS WEST TECHNICAL SCHOOL: LAND ACQUISITION.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry, for the Minister of Education—

1. Whether land was acquired for the Broadmeadows West Technical School; if so, where; if not, when it is expected land will be acquired?

2. When it is proposed to commence building the school?

Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answers supplied by the Minister of Education are—

1. A site for this school has been reserved on the north side of Johnstone-street in an area owned by the Housing Commission. It is available for development.

2. It is anticipated erection of a building will commence early in the 1968-69 financial year.

COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOLS: SENIOR QUALIFIED WOMEN TEACHERS.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry, for the Minister of Education—

1. How many country high schools have unfilled senior class I and class II positions, respectively, for women teachers, for 1968, arising from the appointments recently made by the committee of classifiers for the secondary schools division?

2. How many senior class I and class II women teachers' positions at Seymour High School have remained unfilled during the current year and for how many years prior to this year the positions were unfilled?

3. Whether Seymour High School will have a senior class I and two class II women teachers in 1968; if not, why?

4. What action will be taken to ensure that Seymour High School staff includes a full complement of senior qualified women teachers, and when this action will be taken?

Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answers supplied by the Minister of Education are—

1. Twenty-one country high schools have unfilled class I positions. Seventy-five country high schools have unfilled class II positions.

2. One class I position and two class II positions. The class I position was filled in 1966 but not in 1967. There has been no appointment to a class II position since 1963 at least.

3. The classifiers have advertised further class I positions, including Seymour High School, and will be considering applications for these vacancies in the near future. No class II positions will be filled at Seymour High School in 1968 because no applications were received from qualified teachers.

4. Under the present system for the promotion and transfer of classified teachers no action other than that mentioned in item 3 can be taken this year to ensure that the Seymour High School staff will have a full complement of senior qualified women teachers.

It is expected that the secondary staffing officer will fill the vacancies with qualified personnel from teachers' colleges before the opening of the new academic year.

MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY.

PUBLICATIONS: RESEARCH WORK.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of State Development, for the Minister of Health—

1. What publications have been produced by the Mental Health Authority in each of the years 1964, 1965, 1966, and in this year to date?

2. What articles have been published as a result of research carried out by the officers of the Authority?

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—The answers supplied by the Minister of Health are—

1. The only publication produced by the Mental Health Authority itself is its annual report which is required to be submitted to the Parliament by section 13 of the Mental Health Act, 1959. Reports for 1964 and 1965 have been published and that for 1966 is in the course of preparation.

2. A list of articles published as a result of research carried out by officers of the Mental Hygiene Branch of the Department of Health has been printed on pages 25 and 26 of the report for 1964, and on pages 29 and 30 of the report for 1965. Lists of articles which have been published during
the year 1966 and during the period 1st January, 1967, to the present time are annexed to this reply.

Then follows a detailed list, and I seek leave of the House for its incorporation in Hansard without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the list was as follows:—

1966 PUBLICATIONS.

By Officers of the Mental Health Authority.


Mr. Manson.


1967 PUBLICATIONS.

By Officers of the Mental Health Authority.


PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH.

Dr. JENKINS (Reservoir) asked the Minister of State Development, for the Minister of Health—

Whether the Mental Health Authority provides research training opportunities for psychiatrists on a full and part-time basis; if so, how many psychiatrists are included in each category?

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

Research opportunities for medical staff of the Mental Hygiene Branch of the Department of Health are available through association with the Mental Health Research Institute which is operated by the Mental Health Authority and is affiliated with the University of Melbourne, Department of Psychiatry, as a training institution for post-graduate qualifications.

At any one time there are between 30 and 40 research projects being undertaken in the Mental Hygiene Branch and the topics range from biology to social psychiatry. About 300 such projects have been completed since 1953.

Research is carried on on a part-time and often a spare-time basis as part of the post-graduate training of psychiatrists in the Branch and in accordance with their interests. No psychiatrist has been appointed to carry out research full-time.

OVERSEAS CHRISTMAS GIFT FOOD PARCELS.

Costs and Contents.

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD (Rodney) asked the Minister of Lands, for the Minister of Agriculture—

1. What were the costs and the contents of the overseas Christmas gift food parcels in each of the last three years?

2. What are the costs and contents of the parcels this year?

3. Through what agency these parcels have been, or are to be, distributed this year?

Sir WILLIAM McDONALD (Minister of Lands).—The answers supplied by the Minister of Agriculture are
in the form of a tabulation, and I suggest that they be incorporated in Hansard without my reading them.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:

1 and 2. The costs to the donors and the contents of the overseas Christmas gift food parcels in the years shown are set out hereunder—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

For delivery to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

3. In 1964, 1965 and 1966 the distribution of the parcels was arranged through Myer (Melbourne) Limited.

VICTORIAN–NEW SOUTH WALES BORDER.

SURVEY BETWEEN CAPE HOWE AND RIVER MURRAY.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister of Lands:–

Whether the Victorian–New South Wales border between Cape Howe and the River Murray is being re-surveyed; if so—(a) whether there is any suggestion that the present border survey is inaccurate; (b) how many surveyors are engaged in the work and how long it will take; and (c) what proportion (if any) of the cost is being borne by New South Wales?

Sir WILLIAM McDoNALD (Minister of Lands).—The answer is—

The Victorian–New South Wales border between Cape Howe and the River Murray is not being re-surveyed. The accuracy of the survey effected during 1870-72 has never been questioned and at present there is no need to re-establish any survey monuments along the boundary.

However, my Department has four geodetic and topographic field survey parties in East Gippsland to establish basic ground control for the mapping, by photogrammetric methods, of the general Mallacoota region east of Orbost, with a view to the production of maps at a scale of 1:100,000. It is anticipated that this field work will be completed by January 1968, and by arrangement with the Commonwealth Department of National Development the State of Victoria is being reimbursed at the rate of $2 per square mile for the field survey content of this mapping project.

Sir William McDonald.
Lifts and Cranes Bill.

Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Crimes Act 1958 with respect to certain driving offences connected with motor cars, to amend Part VI. of the Motor Car Act 1958, and for purposes connected therewith.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

Lifts and Cranes Bill.

Mr. Rossiter (Minister of Labour and Industry).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to repeal and re-enact the Lifts and Cranes Act 1959, in order to cure certain defects which have become obvious in the course of administration of the Act during the past few years.

Briefly, the most important aims of the Bill are—

1. To ensure that the Act applies, not only to lifts and cranes in use, but also to lifts and cranes at any time in the course of their construction, erection or use—or, in the case of cranes, in the course of their being relocated and being made ready for use elsewhere.

2. In relation to fixing maximum safe working loads for cranes, providing for the fixing of various maximum loads in circumstances where a crane may be used in different ways.

3. To clarify the powers of inspectors under the Act—to make it clear that those powers extend to lifts and cranes in course of construction as well as those in actual use and also that an inspector has the right of entry to any place but that he must produce his certificate of appointment on demand.

4. To remove doubts about the validity of the Lifts Regulations 1964 and the Cranes Regulations 1964, having regard to references contained therein to standard codes and specifications and to other matters concerning which doubts have been raised.

The Lifts and Cranes Act 1959 was enacted following a comprehensive investigation of the need for regulation and inspection of lifting gear. The 1959 Act replaced the Lifts Regulation Act 1928, which, of course, applied only to lifts and had been on the statute-book for many years. The Lifts and Cranes Act 1959 provided for the first time legislation that applied to a wide range of what are commonly known as cranes, hoists and conveyors, and the application of the legislation to this wide range of equipment, which has a great variety of uses in a great many different places, has imposed a considerable responsibility on the Lifts and Cranes Inspectorate of my Department.

However, I am proud to say that during this time, Victoria has had an extremely good record with respect to safety in the use of lifting gear. Certainly, there have been a few serious accidents—serious in the sense that they have resulted in a death or serious injury to a person—but my Department is at all times striving to reduce the possibility of recurrence of this sort of event.

The Bill does not propose any real change in the system of statutory regulation of lifts and cranes; its purpose is merely to clarify certain issues, to remove certain doubts and to ensure the validity of certain regulations. The extent of the present weaknesses was brought to notice by two means—first, in considering the institution of legal proceedings for alleged breaches of the Act, as well
as in the course of proceedings actually taken; and, secondly, in the course of examination of certain statutory rules by the Subordinate Legislation Committee of this Parliament.

The advice given by the Parliamentary Draftsman was that, as the Act is so short—it contains only 21 sections—the best approach would be to re-enact it in whole, incorporating the appropriate amendments. This is what has been done. Honourable members will notice that slight changes of drafting have been made to some provisions; to some extent, these are of personal preference on the part of the draftsmen concerned. I shall now explain the principal amendments which will be made by the Bill.

Clause 2 omits sub-section (2) of the existing section 2 of the Act, which was of only transitory effect when the Act came into operation. In clause 3, the definitions of "conveyor", "crane", "hoist" and "lift" have been varied so as to make it clear that the Act covers situations where a conveyor, crane or lift is in course of being constructed or erected, or is not actually in use as such at the time. The Supreme Court decision in Kirkpatrick v. Lewis Construction in 1964 was that a crane being repositioned was not a crane being used within the meaning of sub-section (3) of section 11.

Clause 4 re-enacts the present sub-section (1) of section 4, but omits the present sub-section (2). Thus no exemptions will be available to Government Departments or statutory corporations. This accords with the Government's general approach to these matters, which is that, wherever appropriate, Government agencies should be subject to the same conditions as private entrepreneurs. Clauses 6, 7 and 8 rewrite the existing sections 6 and 7 in a more easily readable form.

In clauses 12 and 13, which deal with maximum safe working loads, provision is made to cover the situation where a crane has several maximum safe working loads, according to the arrangement of its components—for example, it is generally quite simple to alter the length of the boom of a mobile crane and so affect its stability under identical loads. Clause 13 does not include the existing sub-section (1) of section 13, which was of only transitory effect when the Act came into operation.

Clause 19 removes some doubt about the power of an inspector to enter premises, having regard to the provisions of sections 17 and 18 of the Act. Section 18 confers powers of entry; but section 17 provides that an inspector, on applying for admission to any place shall, if required, produce his certificate of appointment to the occupier or person in charge. This implies that an inspector must apply for admission before he enters, and leaves up in the air the question of what the position is if the occupier refuses the application. Clause 19 makes clear what was originally intended, that the inspector should have the right of entry, but should be required to identify himself on demand.

Clause 20 includes additional provisions to make it clear that the powers of an inspector under the Act extend to lifts and cranes being constructed or set up, built or set or placed in position, as well as lifts and cranes in actual use.

Clause 23 spells out the regulation-making powers. Paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1) is to ensure that these powers extend to the design and manufacture of lifts and cranes, as well as to their working, use, and so on. Paragraph (a) of sub-clause (2) makes it clear that the regulations may incorporate by reference standard codes and specifications, such as those formulated by the Standards Association of Australia, the British Standards Institution and the American Standards Association. Such references already exist in the regulations, but the Subordinate Legislation Committee has raised a doubt
whether they are within power. It is considered that such a commonsense way of specification and avoidance of needless repetition should be available and valid.

Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subclause (2) provide that under the Act the chief inspector has power to grant exemptions from provisions of the regulations where he considers those provisions unnecessary for safe operation. Some such provisions for exemption are already contained in the regulations, but the Subordinate Legislation Committee in this case also has raised a doubt whether they are within power.

These necessary provisions having been made, sub-clause (4) is then included to provide that, if in fact any regulation was not within power when it was made, it shall not now be invalid if it might be validly made under the new provisions. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 7.

SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 4) on the motion of Sir Henry Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—Any superannuation Bill is of great importance to the many thousands of contributors to the Superannuation Fund and to the pensioners thereunder. The latest quinquennial report of the Government Statist—that for the period ended 30th June, 1965—showed that there were then 51,647 contributors and 17,525 pensioners, so any measure of this character does affect and is of interest to all those public servants, using the term in the broadest sense, who come within its ambit. I regret that the Treasurer, who probably understands the ramifications, the complications and the intricacies of the Superannuation Act, is not present at the moment. I trust that, before the debate is concluded, members may have the advantage of his presence because there are a certain number of aspects which must be dealt with in the Committee stage rather than during the second-reading debate.

It is unfortunate, too, that at this late date in October, 1967, the most recent available information relating to the Superannuation Fund, which has assets of nearly $100,000,000, is contained in the quinquennial valuation of the Government Statist which was presented to Parliament only last month. On top of that, the latest report of the Superannuation Board itself—that for the year ended 30th June, 1965—was made available to members only in September of this year. That report, which is merely a factual one giving the number of contributors, the amounts received and a few other statistical details, was dated 25th May, 1967. I do not wish to be critical because I know that probably the members of the Board and the Government Statist are working under certain disadvantages.

One of the main purposes of this Bill is to make amendments which the Government regards as important to the Pensions Supplementation Act of 17th May, 1966. That Act provides that a report shall be submitted to Parliament each year after the scheme is brought into operation—and it was inaugurated in the financial year 1965-66. A report on that matter has not been made, yet Parliament is asked to make amendments to the Act based upon the operations of that scheme and on the report of the Government Statist for the year ended the 30th June, 1965.

The Opposition will support the Bill with reservations and criticisms. I regret that the measure does not include provisions to give effect to a number of suggestions which were
made when the Act was discussed last year. I understand, too, Mr. Speaker, that it may be out of order for me to refer to matters which are not contained in the Bill before the House, but I seek your generosity to allow me, in a very small way, to put in passing two or three suggestions which have been brought before the House on previous occasions but which have not been, but I think should have been, incorporated in this measure.

The Pensions Supplementation Act provides that supplementary pensions shall be paid in respect of former contributors who retired prior to 12th July, 1961, or to their widows. The Superannuation Board is invested with wide powers. Section 4 of the Act provides—

(1) There shall be established a Fund to be called the Pensions Supplementation Fund.

(2) The Supplementation Fund shall as far as practicable be invested by the Board in securities in which the Superannuation Fund may be invested—

(6) All supplementary pensions payable under this Part shall be paid out of the Superannuation Fund.

Sub-section (2) of section 5 provides that—

The Board may if it thinks fit grant a supplementary pension.

Section 6 states that the Board, in determining the amount of any supplementary pension to be granted, shall take certain factors into account. Sub-section (1) of section 69 of the Superannuation Act provides—

Any dispute under this Act shall be determined in the first place by the Board:

Provided that any person aggrieved by a decision of the Board may appeal to a county court judge.

The people to whom the Pensions Supplementation Act was meant to provide certain benefits have no right of appeal. As I have pointed out, the Board may, if it thinks fit, grant a pension. I do not know whether the Board reveals the reason when it does not think fit to do so, but if it does refuse a pension there is no appeal whatsoever. That is a grave omission in the Pensions Supplementation Act.

I do not wish to repeat what the Treasurer said in his second-reading explanatory speech, which ran into several pages of Hansard but, briefly, this Bill provides for the application of any surplus in the Superannuation Fund, as revealed by the Government Statist's investigation, to the Supplementation Fund, and that the Board may from time to time review any class of supplementary pension granted under the Act. In reviewing a supplementary pension, the Board shall have regard to such matters as it thinks fit. Those provisions give the Board too much authority. It may review the pensions; it may or may not grant them. The whole basis of the Pensions Supplementation Act is that the Board shall have regard to such matters as it thinks fit. Parliament will not be told what they are, nor will the 51,000 public servants who may be affected. The Board, in its wisdom, will decide what shall be done. As all honorable members know, the Board has presented to this House a report which is over two years old. The principle that the Board shall review pensions and so on is all right in theory, but the Opposition considers that the Board has been given too wide an ambit.

I shall deal in a little more detail with the first few clauses of the Bill because they are the provisions which the Treasurer said contain the most important amendments to the Act. In his second-reading speech, the honorable gentleman said—

The pensions supplementation scheme was introduced in May 1966, and to the 30th September last the cost of supplementary pensions amounted to $1,413,487 and 4,917 pensioners received additional pensions.

I take the opportunity to point out that the latest report of the Superannuation Board, which was presented to Parliament in September, 1967, stated amounts of money in pounds, shillings and pence, whereas decimal currency came into existence in February, 1966.
As honorable members probably know, an actuarial assessment has regard to present liabilities, future contributions, future liabilities, and other such matters. In his report for June, 1965, the Government Statist said that the funds showed a surplus of £6,187,566. At page 7 of his report, it is stated—

The annual pension cost in its first full year of operation—

that is, of the Supplementation Fund—

is likely to be about £560,000 and the present value of these benefits amounts to about £4.5 million. Of the revealed surplus of £6.2 million, therefore £4.5 million has already been earmarked for pension supplementation.

In other words, something over 70 per cent. of the revealed surplus has already been earmarked to meet liabilities of the Supplementation Fund. However, in clause 3 of the Bill it is provided—

There shall be transferred to the Supplementation Fund from the Superannuation Fund from time to time amounts of money or assets equal in value to the amounts that have been debited to the Supplementation Fund in respect of the Supplementation of the pensions of superannuated officers and superannuated widows:

Provided that the aggregate of the amounts transferred to the Supplementation Fund—

(a) in the period of three years commencing on 1st July, 1965, shall not exceed three-fifths of the amount determined to be surplus to the requirements of the Superannuation Fund.

The Government Statist has already stated that the present cost will be over 70 per cent. of that surplus. In his second-reading speech, the Premier said—

It will be recalled that when the measure was before the House it was explained that, although under the Superannuation Act a widow’s pension is 62½ per cent. of her husband’s entitlement, it was decided, on the recommendation of the Pensions Advisory Committee, to adjust a widow’s pension on the basis of it being 50 per cent. of the husband’s recalculated pension and to review the position later in the light of events. Since then, the Actuary has furnished the State Superannuation Board with a report of his quinquennial investigation of the Superannuation Fund as at the 30th June, 1965. The report discloses a surplus of $12,376,000, and the Board considers—

I point out that it is the Board, not the Government—

that this surplus is sufficient to meet the cost of supplementary pensions already granted as well as meeting the cost of reviewing widows’ pensions on a 62½ per cent. basis.

But the Government Statist has said that it will require over 70 per cent. of the surplus to meet the present commitment covering, of course, widows’ pensions calculated at only 50 per cent. of the husband’s entitlement. The Government has said that it will increase the widow’s pension to 62½ per cent. Why therefore does the Bill provide that the amount to be transferred out of surplus is to be limited to 60 per cent. of the surplus, but that in subsequent years the full amount may be transferred?

Proposed new sub-section (5) of section 4 of the Pensions Supplementation Act, as contained in clause 3, provides an increase in pensions to police widows by a specified amount of 25 per cent.; that is to say, on the 50 per cent. basis it is the equivalent of a 12½ per cent. increase. The Bill also removes the limitation previously imposed debarring the granting of a supplementary pension if it is less than 20 (cents per week to a pensioner who is receiving a Commonwealth pension or if it is less than $1 per week to a pensioner who is not receiving a Commonwealth pension. I am glad that the Treasurer has taken heed of the suggestion I made when debating a previous Bill.

There is to be an enlargement of the investment powers of the Board. The Board will now be given authority, subject to the Treasurer’s approval, to invest a percentage of its funds in mortgages, so that it will be enabled to earn a higher rate of interest than is the case from some of the gilt-edged securities in which it is now required to invest its funds. Provision is also made that the Government Statist shall make an
actuarial investigation every three years instead of every five years. On this basis, the next report will be available in five years' time, allowing for three years' preparation and two years to present it to Parliament. It is also proposed that a contributor shall continue his payments until the actual date of retirement, instead of ceasing payment for each unit on the anniversary of the date of his initial contribution. The Opposition does not object to that proposal although, during the Committee stage, I shall ask the Government to consider the payment of at least the equivalent of bank interest on the added payments which are necessary to simplify the administrative procedures of the Board. The Board will now collect a little more money, therefore it should pay interest on this money. After all, a contributor must pay the Board interest on deferred contributions and the principle should apply in reverse.

The Bill also provides that a limited contributor of twenty years' or more standing may apply to be a contributor for full benefits. The Opposition approves of this proposal, but, during the Committee stage, I shall ask why he must wait a period of twenty years. There should be a reconsideration of this provision to allow a contributor to pay for full benefits if he should regain good health at an earlier time. The most important provision is that a contributor will automatically be covered upon becoming eligible for additional units. If he does not want to take out additional units, at a later stage he can elect not to do so and obtain a rebate on his payments. In the opinion of the organizations and individuals with whom I have had discussions, this is a desirable provision.

New table B was introduced last year into the principal Act, and new contributors to the Superannuation Fund are obliged to make contributions in accordance with the scale contained therein. It is now proposed that, to avoid any unnecessary delay, in future this table may be amended by regulation to coincide with any new table that the Commonwealth Government may introduce. I have not a copy of the Commonwealth table, but I understood the Treasurer to say that, in some instances, State contributors on the same salary range as their Federal colleagues may suffer a disadvantage to the extent of up to four units as compared with the entitlement under the Commonwealth scale.

It is further proposed to rectify a small anomaly and to provide that a person may not be entitled to payment of more than one pension. Under the principal Act, a person may be retired on superannuation and then, by some fortuitous circumstances, he may obtain a position in another Department. Although he may be in receipt of his original pension, when he retires from his subsequent position he may collect another pension. I shall explain in Committee the provision that when a person who is contributing for retirement at the age of 65 years decides to retire at 60 years the Government will meet its full share of pension in respect of units held for ten years or more.

A further desirable concession is the provision to increase the amount on which a pensioner may capitalize his pension. He may require money for certain purposes—he may wish to go for a trip abroad or to pay off his home. Therefore, the pensioner may accept a lump sum in lieu of a certain number of units and accept a pension at a lower rate. I shall deal with other clauses in the Committee stage. The Opposition desires to refer to anomalies in the principal Act. I appreciate that when one sets out to remove one anomaly, there is always the danger of creating another.
I seriously suggest to the Premier and Treasurer that the Government should consider, not the setting up of a special Parliamentary committee, or body of that nature, but arranging for a sort of unofficial committee, consisting of two or three members of each of the parties in this House, to meet and receive the benefit of advice and consultation with officials of the State Superannuation Board, and so on, so that a list can be compiled of what are considered to be anomalies in the present scheme. I do not suggest that such a committee should make recommendations or attempt to dictate in any way to the Government.

Honorable members will recall that in an earlier Act provision was made for persons to elect to retire between the ages of 60 and 65 years on a full pension, upon payment into the Superannuation Fund of an amount determined by the Superannuation Board. I was interested to read the following passage in the latest annual report of the Victorian Railways Commissioners, for the year ended the 30th June, 1966—

Another factor that causes serious concern is the ever-increasing burden on working expenses of superannuation charges due to the constant liberalization of benefits.

For instance, in 1963 the Superannuation Act was amended to give contributors the right to elect to retire between the age of 60 and 65 on a full pension upon payment into the Superannuation Fund of an amount determined by the Superannuation Board.

Many of the staff have taken advantage of this privilege.

In respect of each full pension the Department is required to contribute a sum equal to 2½ times the amount paid from contributions to the Fund. For each employee who retires at 60 years of age on a full pension, therefore, the Department is obliged to contribute its share of pension five years earlier than if he continued in the service until the normal retiring age.

For the year 1965-66, 31 members of the staff elected to retire on a full pension before reaching 65 years of age, and this resulted in an additional charge of $29,419 to railway revenue.

The total charge to railway revenue for superannuation payments for the year ended 30th June, 1966, was $4,944,573—almost 5 per cent. of revenue—and it can be expected that with the passing of the Pensions Supplementation Act, No. 7417, these charges will continue to mount.

One feels that, instead of these charges being debited to the Railway Department, some of them should, perhaps, be borne at least in part by Consolidated Revenue. Contributions are made from the Consolidated Revenue to the pensions fund in respect of practically all Government employees, other than those in the employ of the Victorian Railways Commissioners. As I have indicated, the Railway Department saved Consolidated Revenue an amount of $4,944,573 in one year, so members will appreciate why railway deficits tend to increase.

As I mentioned earlier during the temporary absence from the Chamber of the Premier and Treasurer, who has now returned, the Opposition supports the Bill, with reservations and criticisms, and desires to make a number of suggestions in respect of individual clauses. However, the Opposition will not move any amendments because its members appreciate that the Government desires an expeditious passage for the Bill, and probably would not accept the amendments in any case.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I assure the honorable member that the Government will always consider such suggestions on a future occasion.

Mr. Clarey.—As I have already stated, the Treasurer was generous enough to adopt a suggestion I made when another measure on this subject was before the House last year. I need say nothing further at this stage, because the Bill deals with eighteen different points or aspects which are being reviewed or amended, and it would be more appropriate to deal with them in Committee.

Mr. Moss (Leader of the Country Party).—The Country Party supports this Bill. The Premier and Treasurer gave a fairly clear explanation of the specific proposals contained in the measure, and the House has been treated to a valuable
contribution to the debate by the honorable member for Melbourne, who is regarded as an expert in this field. Having submitted the various proposals to organizations and individuals concerned, I have ascertained that there is no opposition to them. This Superannuation Act affects a large number of people, including contributors to the State Superannuation Fund and retired persons who are drawing pensions out of it. Consequently, a Bill which amends the principal Act possesses far-reaching ramifications. I do not know whether these particular proposals will create any of the anomalies referred to by the honorable member for Melbourne, who said that when an endeavour is made to rectify some particular situation possibly, in some instances, new problems are created.

Mr. CLAREY.—I was not suggesting that that would be the case in regard to this particular measure.

Mr. MOSS.—I appreciate that fact, and I did not intend to attribute such a statement to the honorable member for Melbourne, but I think the Premier and Treasurer agrees with me that often, in endeavouring to rectify an anomaly, other problems arise. The Bill deals with a number of important aspects of superannuation, such as a review of supplementary pensions and an increase in pensions for widows, including police widows. Another important feature of the Bill is that clause 5 enlarges the Board's investment powers. I think the proposals in this respect are reasonable because they will enable the Board to earn a higher rate of interest on surplus funds placed in safe investments. This will be of considerable benefit to the Superannuation Fund and is in the best interests of the State.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—And it will not interfere with the normal borrowing programme.

Mr. MOSS.—That is so; I was about to touch on that point. The Treasurer will be able to determine whether in a particular year the Board may invest in the mortgage field, obtaining a higher rate of interest or whether it is necessary to assist local governing and semi-government bodies to satisfy their borrowing needs. Thus the honorable gentleman will be enabled to obtain a better balance in the use of available financial resources in the prevailing circumstances. I feel that, by and large, the proposed legislation has been accepted fairly well, and therefore my party supports it.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed, pro forma.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of this Bill.

A resolution in accordance with the recommendation was passed in Committee and adopted by the House.

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

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Principal Act No. 6386 reprinted to Act No. 7417).

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I again assure the honorable member for Melbourne and the Leader of the Country Party that any suggestions they have already made and any that they make during the Committee stage will be given serious consideration. I shall always adopt a similar attitude towards legislation relating to superannuation, but I give no guarantee that that will be the procedure for other legislation. Over the years I have found that many excellent suggestions concerning superannuation have been put forward during debates, and invariably they have been well worth examining. Although no action will be taken in this measure concerning
these suggestions, as the Superannuation Act is amended approximately every two years any worth-while suggestions will be incorporated in future measures.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 3 (Application of surplus in Superannuation Fund to Supplementation Fund).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—Perhaps it is desirable at this stage for me to repeat one or two remarks I made during my second-reading speech and the Premier and Treasurer may be in a position to elucidate these matters. In his second-reading speech, the honorable gentleman stated that the surpluses revealed by the Government Statist in his quinquennial report are sufficient to enable the Superannuation Board to increase widows' pensions from 50 per cent. to 62½ per cent. If that is the case, I am a little intrigued with the provisions contained in paragraph (a) of proposed new sub-section (5) of section 4, as contained in paragraph (a) of clause 3, whereby it is proposed to transfer from the Superannuation Fund to the Supplementation Fund certain of the surplus. The paragraph to which I refer states that in the period of three years commencing on 1st July, 1965—that will be up to 30th June, 1968—the amount transferred shall not exceed three-fifths of the amount to be determined to be surplus to the requirements of the Superannuation Fund upon investigation made by the Government Statist. For the first three years, it is proposed to limit the amount that may be transferred from surplus to the Supplementation Fund of the surplus. The annual pension cost in its first year of operation is likely to be about £380,000 and the present value of these benefits amount to about £4,500,000 of the revealed surplus of £6,200,000.

Therefore, the sum of £4,500,000 has already been earmarked for the Pensions Supplementation Fund. That is over 70 per cent. of the surplus, yet the Bill limits the amount that may be transferred to 60 per cent. In addition, the reference is obviously to the present supplementary pensions and not to the possible extra amounts involved by increasing widows' pensions from 50 per cent. to 62½ per cent.

I may be on the wrong track, but I direct the attention of the Treasurer to this matter so that it may be further examined. I know of no reason why in the first three years, from 1965 to 1968, the amount of any surplus that may be transferred should be limited to not more than 60 per cent., whereas in subsequent years the whole of the surplus may be transferred.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I confess that I cannot give a detailed answer to the question asked by the honorable member for Melbourne. It is possible that the amount of £4,500,000 that was earmarked to meet the anticipated cost of pensions under the Supplementary Fund was found to be in excess of the requirements and that widows' pensions can now be increased from 50 per cent. to 62½ per cent. of the contributors' pensions and still remain within the present limits. I think that is the correct answer, but I shall ascertain the position and advise the honorable member.

I know that it is the hope of not only the Government but of all honorable members that from time to time when a actuarial assessment of the Fund is made, it will be possible, in stages, to bring more pensioners into the ambit of the Fund and it is possible that 60 per cent. restriction on payments to the Fund may assist in achieving this result whereas, if the whole of the surplus were used immediately, there would be little or no chance in the immediate future of helping others.
Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I thank the Treasurer for his undertaking to look further into the matter. He stated that if the whole amount were transferred into the Supplementation Fund, there might not be enough left to allow an increased number of pensioners to be assisted from the Fund.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—The money would not be available for investment.

Mr. CLAREY.—I should imagine that there would be no difficulty in finding investment for the money, because the Board is being given power to invest a certain amount of money in mortgages. The next quinquennial investigation by the Government Statist will be due on the 30th June of next year. Honorable members are perhaps aware that the Government Statist, probably quite rightly, always makes his quinquennial valuation on a conservative basis. This is evident because at page 6 of the last quinquennial report, he states—

Under Act No. 7081, the Government of Victoria increased the guaranteed rate of interest from 3¼ per cent. to 3½ per cent., and it further provided that the quinquennial investigation should be made at a rate not less than 3¼ per cent. That rate has therefore been used in this valuation.

In other words, the Government Statist has said that, in making his quinquennial valuation, he assumed that the fund, which totalled almost $100,000,000, will earn a rate of interest of not less than 3¼ per cent. In the preceding paragraph he indicated that—

the effective rate of interest earned by the fund during 1965 was £5 6s. 2d. per cent.

At page 5 of the report, he said that the surplus had been built up in part by the sum of £825,000 because since the 1960 valuation the assumed rate of interest had been increased by one-quarter per cent. When the difference between the assumed 3¼ per cent. and the actual 5¼ per cent. that the fund is earning is taken into account, it is apparent that the return from investment runs into millions of dollars more than that estimated by the Statist.

Sub-sections (1) and (2) of proposed new section 6A, as contained in paragraph (b) of clause 3, provide—

(1) The Board may from time to time review any class or classes of supplementary pensions granted under this Act.

(2) The Board in reviewing a supplementary pension shall have regard to such matters as it thinks fit.

When further legislation is being considered, I suggest that these two sub-sections might be defined more precisely, because many pensioners have been dissatisfied with decisions of the Board. Under section 69 of the Superannuation Act, a person has the right of appeal to a court if he is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board, but under the Supplementation Act there is no right of appeal.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I shall examine the point raised by the honorable member for Melbourne. Possibly, both the honorable member for Melbourne and I were wrong in relation to the payments into the Supplementation Fund. The answer is that in the past there has been an investigation every fifth year, whereas now there will be an investigation every third year. With the five-yearly investigation the Fund was receiving 20 per cent. for five years, making 100 per cent. over the period, whereas it will now receive 20 per cent. for three years, which makes a total of 60 per cent. The amount is not actually transferred to the Supplementation Fund until expended by way of supplementary pensions granted under the Superannuation Act.

Mr. CLAREY.—Section 4 of the Pensions Supplementation Act provides—

There shall be established a fund to be called the Pensions Supplementation Fund.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—Money is probably transferred into the Fund as required; the Fund is not being used for investment, whereas the Superannuation Fund is invested.

Mr. CLAREY.—Sub-section (2) of section 4 provides, inter alia—

The Supplementation Fund shall as far as practicable be invested by the Board in securities in which the Superannuation Fund may be invested under the Superannuation Act 1958.
Sir HENRY BOLTE.—That part of the Fund which is transferred from the Police Superannuation Fund and is not immediately required for supplementary pensions is invested. Funds which are part of the surplus in the Superannuation Fund are earmarked for use by the Supplementation Fund, but are not paid into the Fund until required to supplement pensions.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 4.

Clause 5 (Enlargement of investment powers).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—This clause provides for the enlargement of the investment powers of the Board and proposed paragraph (g) of sub-section (1) of section 6 of the Superannuation Act, as contained in sub-clause (1) of clause 5, provides investment may be made—subject to sub-sections (1A) and (1C) and notwithstanding anything in paragraph (a), a loan secured by a mortgage of an estate in fee simple, or of a leasehold interest, in land in Victoria being a loan the amount of which does not exceed ninety per centum of the value of the security at the time the loan is made and which is repayable on demand or is for a term not exceeding thirty years.

When loans are a high proportion of property valuation, provision is made to protect the Fund by the mortgagor being required to take out a form of insurance. Certain contributors to the Fund have asked why the Treasurer should be entitled to allow only a certain amount to be invested in mortgages. However, I feel that this restriction is desirable for a number of reasons. If the shadow Treasurer becomes the Treasurer of the State, he would probably adopt the same course.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 6.

Clause 7 (Cessation of contributions).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—This clause provides that instead of contributions ceasing at different times during a contributor's last year of service, they shall continue until the pay day prior to his retirement. As the law stands at the present time, if a contributor commences to subscribe for a certain unit as from, say, the 1st September, he is no longer required to contribute for that unit after 1st September in the year of his retirement. The contributor might have commenced subscribing for other units on 1st August, 1st February, and so forth, and this involves the Board in a good deal of work in making calculations for a number of different pay periods in a contributor's last year of service. A point has been raised, however, by several of the interested bodies and individuals in the superannuation scheme.

A member who in his last year of service contributes in excess of what is required should certainly be entitled to a refund of this amount, but why should he not also receive some reasonable amount of interest? The Australian Railways Union supplied me with information concerning a contributor—it might be an extreme case—who will be required during his last year of service to pay in $699 over and above what he would have paid if the contributions had ceased on the specific dates as at present. I make this suggestion which I hope the Premier will consider.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 8 (Limited contributor who has been an officer for twenty years may apply to be contributor for full benefits).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—The purpose of this clause is to provide that a limited contributor with twenty years' service may apply to the Board to become a contributor for full benefits and to enable the Board, after considering the evidence placed before it, to make a determination to this effect. No one could cavil at that proposal, except to ask why he must have been in the service for twenty years. Would it not be possible to delete the reference to a period of twenty years' service? After all, the contributor could regain his full health and overcome any disability after a period of much less than twenty years. In considering an application under this provision, the Board must take into account medical
evidence and so forth. I cannot understand why it is necessary to provide that a contributor must have twenty years' service before his application for full benefits can be reconsidered.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer to the problem raised by the honorable member for Melbourne is reasonably simple. In the first place, a limited contributor would be eligible for limited benefits because of medical evidence. The Government believes that, having given twenty years' service, a contributor who still has the disability which resulted in his being classified as a limited contributor should be able to have his case dealt with simply by application to the Superannuation Board. In other words, a contributor who has served for twenty years will not be required to supply medical evidence to obtain full benefits unless the Board thinks it is necessary.

Mr. CLAREY.—I do not wish to interrupt the Premier, but I point out that proposed new sub-section (3B) states, inter alia, that the Board may determine an application by a limited contributor for full benefits—

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—The proposed new sub-section provides that medical evidence shall be considered, only if the Board thinks it is necessary. All honorable members will agree that this is fair. Because of medical evidence, or perhaps some disability, a contributor may be entitled to only limited benefits, but if he has served for twenty years, I believe he has proved that the original medical evidence did not quite stand up to its application in limiting his benefits. No great emphasis will be placed on further medical evidence under the proposed new provision. If a contributor makes an application for full pension rights under this provision, the normal evidence will be taken. That is how this provision will be interpreted.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I do not wish to labour the point, but, as I stated earlier, the Board may determine that a limited contributor who makes an application can become a contributor for full benefits if, after considering such matters, including medical evidence, as it thinks fit, the Board is satisfied that he should enjoy full benefits. The Opposition does not object to that wording, but it is conceivable that, with the advances in medical knowledge and surgery, a person who enters the service as a limited contributor may, after a period of much less than twenty years, have fully recovered from any disability. If such a contributor can say after five years or ten years that he is completely clear of his former disability—

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—He can do it now.

Mr. CLAREY.—If that is so, why is it necessary to include in the new provision the reference to twenty years' service and medical evidence?

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 9.

Clause 10 ( Contributor to pay for additional units on increase of salary unless he elects to the contrary).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—This clause provides that where a contributor's salary is increased to a higher unit group, he will automatically be liable to contribute for the additional unit, and provision is also made for the higher cover to operate immediately. All honorable members are satisfied with that provision. If he does not wish to contribute for the unit, the contributor may, within three months, elect not to contribute and receive a refund of any excess contributions he has made. That is the substance of the provision. The Opposition thoroughly agrees with the provision, but with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to read a few paragraphs from a submission made by the Victorian Teachers' Union, which is worthy of consideration as a matter of administration. It reads—

In theory this is a good thing particularly as it provides cover from the date of his entitlement to the additional unit or units.
But in practice, under existing methods in the Education Department, teachers will have no idea whether they have been debited with additional payments. From January 1st of each year many teachers receive altered salaries due to promotion, &c. A new award for teachers could apply from a date about the same time. It usually takes the accounts branch of the Education Department about three to four months to complete adjusting salaries, and rarely are any explanatory statements provided with alterations to cheques. Many teachers will not even know if and when the three months begin and could miss out on their right to cancel the extra units.

I shall not read further from the submission, but I shall make a copy of it available to the Premier. Probably, the Board could take this matter into consideration so that, if there is a long delay by the Education Department in notifying a person of his particular rights, he will not lose his rights.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—Again, I assure the honorable member for Melbourne that if the complaint he raises is valid, and I believe that it could apply, the Bill will be amended in another place to overcome the problem. I realize that certain difficulties exist so far as the Education Department is concerned, because teachers are continually receiving not only increases in pay but also increases in grading and promotions. Consequently, the returns in the Department are continually being altered, and this creates a lag which is hard to overcome. Probably, it is a legitimate reason why the Board should be empowered to use its discretionary powers in this case.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 11, providing, inter alia—

(2) In the final proviso to paragraph (b) of sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Principal Act, after the expression “sub-section (1c)” there shall be inserted the words “or an election made before the 31st day of December, 1969 which relates to units which the officer has elected not to contribute for pursuant to sub-section (7) ".

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—Last week I gave notice that I would be proposing an amendment to this clause and I now do so. I move—

That the following words be added to sub-clause (2) :

“and after the words ‘his existing units’ there shall be inserted the words ‘for which the initial contribution became payable less than ten years before his retirement’.”

To refresh the minds of honorable members, I repeat the statement I made last week on this matter. I then said—

In the 1966 amending superannuation legislation, provision was made to allow contributors, who were over the age of 60 years, to pick up lost units on voluntary retirement before attaining the age of 65 years. Previously, such lost units could not be utilized for early retirement purposes unless they were in force for at least two years. A person over the age of 60 years who is about to retire and who wishes to pick up a lost unit, however, must pay into the fund the actuarially calculated lump sum to enable the full pension to be paid not only on the lost units, but on all existing units—that is, on the pension he would receive at the age of 65, as well as the full actuarial contribution on the units being picked up.

As honorable members are aware, by allowing the full Government share in respect of units that have been in force for more than ten years, this Bill provides a valuable concession to contributors who will retire early. After investigation it has been decided that this concession will be extended so that those persons who will be participating in it will not be denied the right to pick up the lost units.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—In the notes which the Premier was good enough to supply, this statement appears—

Table B was the scale of units introduced in 1966 and was then comparable with the unit entitlement provided for by the Commonwealth scheme. However, the Commonwealth entitlement, which is altered from time to time by regulation, is now up to four units greater than the State entitlement. The Government is desirous of ensuring that State public servants enjoy pension entitlements at least as high as the Commonwealth and clause 11 provides for the amendment of Table B by regulation to achieve this. Provision is also made so that a contributor who does not wish to contribute for the additional units
may, within three months, elect not to so contribute and to receive a refund of any contributions he has made.

Some people have expressed concern at the intention to write into an Act of Parliament power to amend a table which, as it were, was more or less basic to the Act. Table B provides the maximum number of units that a contributor can take out according to the salary he receives. I assured those who raised this matter that if the Government or anyone else ran haywire and attempted to bring in a new Table B which was allcock-eyed, if I may be excused for using that expression, Parliament would disallow it.

There is one other small point. The notes state—

Provision is also made so that a contributor who does not wish to contribute for the additional units may, within three months, elect not to so contribute and to receive a refund of any contributions he has made.

No one cavils at that, but the provision enabling a contributor to refrain from contributing for the additional units under this Bill states—

Provided that a contributor who has attained the age of 30 years on or before the said date—

In other words, a contributor under the age of 30 years who does not desire to contribute for the additional benefits will still have to do so. I do not think many contributors would be involved, but a precedent was established last year with the bringing into force of Table B. Contributors until then were contributing according to a scale which is now Table A. Table B provided that contributors could contribute for a larger number of units and probably the overwhelming majority of contributors transferred to Table B. However, it was provided in the Pensions Supplementation Act that a contributor could elect not to contribute to Table B whether he was under 30 years of age or more than that age.

Mr. CLAREY.—That is not my reading of it. The relevant passage in section 15 of the Pensions Supplementation Act reads—

An officer shall, subject to this Act, contribute for units of pension—

(a) in the case of an officer who was a contributor immediately prior to the commencement of Part III. of the Pensions Supplementation Act 1966 and—

who (i), being a male contributor, elects in writing before the 1st day of July, 1966, to contribute for units in accordance with Table A;

I should be glad if the Treasurer would look into this aspect. I do not think many contributors would be affected. Most of them, particularly those under 30 years of age, would be happy to contribute for the additional units. I do not know why it should be compulsory when, under the 1966 Act, it was made optional, whether a contributor remained under Table A or Table B.

The clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 12 to 17.

Clause 18 (Interest on premiums on life insurance policies transferred to Board).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—The notes supplied by the Premier state—

The Board has always had the power to accept a transfer of an assurance policy, pay the premiums and charge thereon interest at the rate of four per cent. per annum or where it so determines, 3½ per cent. per annum. As the Board has for the past six years earned an average interest rate of not less than 5 per cent. it is considered that 4 per cent. is too low, and clause 18 provides that the Board may, in future cases, fix a rate not exceeding 8 per cent. and not less than 4 per cent.

A rate of 8 per cent. seems rather high, but I notice, on reviewing the matter, that the Board has a discretionary power.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 19 was adopted with a verbal amendment.

Clause 20 was agreed to.
Clause 21 (Miscellaneous amendments).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I do not know whether my remarks have particular reference to clause 21, as it contains many miscellaneous amendments, and it is hard to classify some of them, but I take the opportunity to offer another suggestion relating to the transfer of money from one fund to another. I shall read part of a submission which has been prepared, as follows:

In 1963 an age 60 schedule for males was introduced and existing contributors were given the opportunity of transferring to this schedule, with appropriate increases in contributions, and of retiring on a full pension upon attaining the age of 60 years.

In 1966 an amending Bill created two scales of units of pension, Table A and Table B. Table A is the same scale as that which has been in force since November, 1963, and is limited to a ceiling of 54 units. Table B has a higher unit entitlement than Table A for officers whose salary exceeds $2,730 per annum. Officers who were contributors before 25th May, 1966, could elect to remain under Table A.

The introduction of Table B so soon after the provision enabling contributors to transfer to age 60 schedule has reacted to the immediate financial detriment of some officers, particularly those of middle age, whose payments to the Superannuation Fund represent a higher percentage of the fortnightly salary than those of younger officers.

A contributor who has elected to contribute to the age 60 schedule is not permitted to transfer to age 65 schedule. In view of the fact that the introduction of a new Table in 1966 requiring higher contributions could not have been foreseen in 1963 by contributors, it seems reasonable that contributors who elected to transfer to age 60 schedule between 1963 and 1966 should be given the option of changing back to age 65 schedule, with a refund of excess contributions.

In due course, although perhaps not in connexion with this Bill, consideration might be given to the cases of older officers who may, having previously elected to retire at 60, desire to re-elect to retire at 65. Not many officers are involved and, as the matter is of a technical nature, I shall make a copy of my submission available to the Treasurer.

The clause was agreed to.
Then, later—

(r) or, in like manner, a motion may be made that the order be deferred to a future day, but not to a remote date in order to defeat the Bill.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—The purpose of the motion is very simple. As you, Mr. Speaker, would be aware, as a matter of convention and practice, once a Bill has passed through this House, it is presumed, as a matter of propriety, that it expresses the wishes of the whole House. In connexion with that convention, it seems to me that, as a matter of simple practice and Parliamentary procedure, this House should, whenever it is considering proposed legislation, be fully informed of all the implications and all the facts.

That principle is even more important when the House is dealing with a measure as contentious as this Bill. At present, some basic and important questions are largely unresolved. The motion simply provides for the consideration of the Bill being adjourned until the Treasurer is able to inform it of the fiscal implications of the measure to Victorian taxpayers. In case it is suggested by the Treasurer that he has explained those implications, I point out that, in the light of all available information, there are grave doubts about the constitutional propriety of the measure. Apart from constitutional questions, important fiscal questions remain unresolved.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Leader of the Opposition is getting wide of the motion.

Mr. HOLDING.—On the 11th October, 1967, speaking to the motion for the adjournment of the House, I asked the Treasurer if he could inform the House and the people of Victoria whether the Prime Minister had acceded to the proposition, put forward by the Treasurer in his Budget speech, that the Commonwealth Government should allow what the Treasurer describes as an income tax or a stamp duty on receipts to be levied on the pay packets of Commonwealth employees. Such employees are, of course, also Victorian citizens. More importantly, I asked the Treasurer to inform the House whether he had made submissions to the Prime Minister that deductions made in respect of this tax should qualify for taxation concessions under the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act. Unless the Commonwealth indicates that it is prepared to allow such deductions as taxation rebates, under this Bill the average Victorian citizen will be taxed twice. This morning's Sun News-Pictorial contains a report on this matter. Whilst I do not regard newspapers as constituting the final word on the subject, nevertheless the article was written by a reliable political correspondent of national standing. He said—

The Federal Government is expected to declare that the part of the new Victorian stamp duty levied on wages is income tax. The Treasurer is entitled to point out that this is up to the Commonwealth. The article continues—

This could mean that if part of the Victorian tax was held to be an income tax, the Federal Government could deduct this amount from its regular reimbursement of income tax to Victoria.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Leader of the Opposition is getting wide of the motion.

Mr. HOLDING.—There is a Bill before the House containing financial implications which are not clear, and cannot be clear, to the Opposition until the House learns of the discussions that the Treasurer has had with the Prime Minister. What representation has the honorable gentleman made to the Commonwealth in relation to basic principles outlined in the Bill? If the Treasurer says, "I have not raised these matters with the Commonwealth", it would be an admission of grave negligence on his part. This matter was raised in Federal Parliament on the 19th September, 1967, when the Federal
Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Whitlam, asked the Prime Minister whether he had considered the implications that were involved in this Bill and whether the Premier and Treasurer of Victoria had consulted the Federal Treasurer to ascertain what was the constitutional position of the Commonwealth in respect of this measure.

It would seem trite to say that this House would be placing its reputation in jeopardy if it were to proceed to debate the merits or demerits of this Bill without being fully apprised of its fiscal implications for the people of Victoria. Until the House is informed by the Treasurer of the results of any discussions which he has had with the Commonwealth, honorable members cannot know what the effects of this Bill will be on Victorians. It has been stated that constitutional difficulties may arise. I suggest that the Treasurer should save some of his yawns and keep his energy for his conversations with the Prime Minister. The Treasurer has stated what the incidence of this taxation will be. However, is the average Victorian citizen to be taxed twice? That is an important question.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! It does not strike me as being relevant. It is a question of the Commonwealth employees.

Mr. HOLDING.—No, Sir, it is not just a question of the Commonwealth employees; it concerns every member of this House in terms of simple interest. Every person will pay this tax. Every employer will pay so much tax to the State by virtue of the provisions of this Bill. Are those payments to be allowable deductions for the purposes of Commonwealth taxation? That is a critical question to many small employers.

The SPEAKER.—Order! It does not come into this motion.

Mr. HOLDING.—Because of the uncertainty and the fact that the Treasurer has not indicated the results of his discussions with the Commonwealth, the Opposition believes that this House would be ill-advised to proceed with this debate at present. The Treasurer should indicate to the House what he believes to be the position of the Commonwealth—whether the people are to be taxed twice, and whether the passing of this Bill will mean greater or lesser grants by the Commonwealth to Victoria. These are important matters, and the House should be in possession of these facts before the debate is proceeded with.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I am amazed at the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. Every question he posed is answered in the Bill. If he would only allow the debate to proceed, he would be able to discuss all the questions he raised, separately or collectively. He has asked a series of questions, and he particularly wanted to know what the financial implication of the measure will be. I take it that the Leader of the Opposition can read; he listened to my second-reading speech, and he must be aware of the financial implications of the Bill. It is proposed that a duty of 1 cent in every $10 or $1 in every $1,000 shall be imposed. Surely I do not have to work out that figure for him! This duty is to be imposed on receipts, possibly with some minor amendments that I shall move in the Committee stage concerning administrative matters.

The principle contained in the Bill will not be altered, either now or later. The Leader of the Opposition asks: Has this Government the authority or the direction of the Commonwealth Government? If he were to read the Bill and understood it, he would realize that it is not necessary to have Commonwealth authority, approval or anything else. All that is required, in my opinion, is the co-operation of the Commonwealth to save Commonwealth employees the inconvenience of
lodging a return. That is the only reply I need from Canberra. I did not seek permission of the Commonwealth Government; as a matter of common courtesy I notified that Government that this charge would be levied in Victoria and that Commonwealth employees would be inconvenienced if it did not deduct from their salaries one cent in every $10. That is clear enough.

Surely the Leader of the Opposition can get ingrained into his thinking that no constitutional problems are involved. If there are to be constitutional problems, they would arise not on a Bill but on an Act, and then only if it were challenged. No challenge can be made at this stage. The Leader of the Opposition, using all his legal wiles, can debate these matters in Committee. Except for the over-all principle and policy of the Government, the Opposition and the Country Party concerning this measure, this is a Committee Bill. Nobody wants a further tax in any form. When the House debates this Bill—I hope that will be shortly—perhaps some alternative will be suggested. At this stage the Leader of the Opposition is drawing a red herring across the trail by saying, "What about the Commonwealth public servants?" They will be required to pay the same as you and I.

Mr. HOLDING.—Are they going to pay?

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—If they are Victorian citizens, they will pay the same as anyone else. I do not want them to be inconvenienced by having to lodge a return. It is only a question of the method.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Is this relevant to the motion before the House?

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—I am trying to work out what is the motion before the House. The Leader of the Opposition said, "Is it anything to do with income tax?"

Mr. HOLDING.—I want to know whether the average Victorian is going to pay twice.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—But is he? I believe that any person, particularly if he were in business, would have no fear that this was not a deductible item for income tax purposes. The normal procedure is that the taxpayer completes an income-tax return and claims the deductions.

Mr. WILKES.—Will this tax be allowed as a deduction?

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—That will be a matter for decision by the income-tax authorities. For business purposes, there is no doubt that it would be deductible, as are any other ordinary business costs.

Mr. DIVERS.—What about the wage earners?

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—I have not yet mentioned them. The wage or salary earner will pay stamp duty at the rate of $1 per $1,000. I should like the opportunity to pay $40 or $50 because I would not object to being in that salary bracket.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Treasurer should speak on the reasons for postponement.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—There is no reason why the debate should be postponed. I am endeavouring to widen the debate and to help the Opposition find a reason. If the stage was reached of the Bill being debated on this motion, it would not be a bad idea.

The SPEAKER.—It would be very much out of order.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—That is about all that has been done up to the present. I have been asked to clarify the situation. I shall repeat the fiscal implication just in case someone may say that I have not answered this serious challenge. A perusal of my Budget speech will indicate that Victoria hopes to get about $17,000,000 from this measure. That is clear, and no one has been hiding that fact. Secondly, there will be a charge of one cent in every $10 on receivals
and this rate also applies to salaries and wages. Surely that is clear enough. I could go on repeating this fifteen times, but that is all I can tell honorable members because that is the only fiscal implication; there is nothing more and nothing less.

I could go a little further because the motion entitles me to do so. If Victoria garners in this amount, it will be in a position to use all of its loan funds for schools, hospitals and necessary essential services. If it does not, there will be a deficit of $7,000,000 or $8,000,000. Then Victoria will have to restrict the loan expenditure to the extent that it will not be enabled to supply schools, hospitals and other services. These are some of the fiscal repercussions—or whatever was the term used by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Holding.—Implications.

Sir Henry Bolte.—The financial implications. If one wants to go into the matter chapter and verse as to why it is necessary to balance the Budget, would it be within the scope of your ruling, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—No, it definitely would not be.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I am only looking for guidance, Sir. I could furnish other reasons why it is necessary to balance the Budget. I have stated the fiscal implications of the measure, and I suggest that the services of this State will be dependent on its becoming law.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is simple. It merely says that because of the doubts that have been created by the Federal authorities in Canberra—

Sir Henry Bolte.—Whom are you quoting?

Mr. WILKES.—The Federal Treasury.

Sir Henry Bolte.—Herschel Hurst!

Mr. WILKES.—Yes, I am referring to an article written by Herschel Hurst. The Premier has forgotten that a similar tax proposed to be imposed by this Government two years ago was rejected for the reasons that we are now putting forward. I suggest that the matter should be examined by the Commonwealth Government.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member's remarks are not within the terms of the motion.

Mr. WILKES.—This is one of the reasons why we suggest the debate should be postponed. The Premier does not know whether it is a wages tax, an income tax, or a purchase tax.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I said that it was a receipt tax.

Mr. WILKES.—On this occasion the honorable gentleman calls it a receipt tax, but that does not satisfy the people of Victoria or the Opposition. Apparently it does not satisfy the Treasury officials in Canberra either, because they consider that it might be an income tax. If that is the case, and the Federal Cabinet so decides, there will be certain repercussions. Commonwealth employees will pay the stamp duty, but certain business undertakings will not.

Mr. Holding.—The wage earners will pay twice.

Mr. WILKES.—Of course they will. An article which appeared in the Sun News-Pictorial this morning stated—

Sir Henry also proposes that Commonwealth-owned undertakings run as business enterprises, such as Trans-Australia Airlines, should pay the new tax.

Federal Cabinet will closely examine this proposal before giving any undertaking to agree to these bodies paying the tax.

The feeling in Canberra official quarters last night was that Sir Henry was not likely to get much sympathy from the Federal Government on this tax.

Opposition members are not concerned with whether or not he gets sympathy, but we contend that the Premier and Treasurer should have the political decency to wait until these matters are determined by the Commonwealth.
Sir Henry Bolte.—There is nothing to be determined.

Mr. Wilkes.—We disagree. Many things have to be determined by the Commonwealth before this tax can legally be applied in certain areas in Victoria. There will be other implications if it is deemed to be an income tax, because the High Court has already ruled that the Commonwealth Government is the authority charged with the responsibility of collecting income tax in Australia. If the Premier proceeds with this Bill, the reimbursements to the State under the uniform taxation formula will be reduced by the amount collected under this measure.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member is now discussing the Bill.

Mr. Turnbull.—This is merely a preface to my argument. The Bill imposes a duty on wages.

The Speaker.—This is a discussion on the Bill. The honorable member should discuss reasons for postponement of the debate.

Mr. Turnbull.—In my opinion, what is proposed is a tax on income. What is an income tax? It is defined in Stroud’s legal dictionary as “a tax on income”. If this tax is imposed, the Commonwealth will immediately reduce the amount paid to Victoria under the uniform taxation reimbursement formula.

The Speaker.—That is another matter.

Mr. Turnbull.—The point I am making is that the proposed stamp duty is a tax on income.

Mr. Clarey (Melbourne).—I support the reasons put forward by members of the Opposition, and I hope Government supporters will not again show themselves as marionettes and say, “The Premier says that this Bill has to go through in a hurry; therefore, we will vote in favour of it.” The measure shows indications of inadequate presentation; the Premier is not aware of its full implications from a fiscal and monetary point of view.

Honorable members will recall that last year he introduced a Stamps Bill consisting of eight pages and before the second-reading debate was resumed he brought forward four pages of amendments. When the Bill was returned from another place, it contained a further four pages of amendments. The Premier has publicly stated that the Bill submitted to the House is not the one that will eventually be passed. This measure has many grave implications. If honorable members examine it, they will find that in some form or other it...
contains ingredients of an income tax, a stamps tax, a sales tax, a purchase tax and a turnover tax, all of which involve the question of Commonwealth-State relations. In reply to a question that I asked in this House last week, the Premier stated—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! This has no bearing on the subject.

Mr. CLAREY.—It is one reason why the debate should be postponed. The Premier has already received deputations from various people.

The SPEAKER.—The motion refers to the implications of this measure on the Victorian taxpayers.

Mr. CLAREY.—That is what I am putting. The fiscal implications involve problems of Commonwealth-State financial relations as to whether in some form or other it is proposed to levy a sales tax, a turnover tax, or a purchase tax, all of which are ultra vires the Victorian Parliament. It is obvious that there are fiscal implications.

In the Federal Parliament on 19th September of this year, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Whitlam, asked the Prime Minister—

In the document "Commonwealth Payments to or for the States, 1967-68", which the Treasurer presented with the Budget, there is an account of the Victorian Government's proposal of 3 years ago for a marginal State income tax, the Commonwealth's objection to the tax—

The SPEAKER.—Order! This matter is out of order; it has no bearing on the matter before the Chair. I call on the honorable member for Melbourne, on reasons for the postponement of the debate.

Mr. CLAREY.—In his question in the Federal Parliament, the Federal Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister whether he had given consideration to the fiscal implications of this measure, and the reply of the Prime Minister was to the effect, "If you will give me written notice, I will give an answer in due course". Surely that is a reason why this Bill should not be rushed through Parliament to-day. Obviously, it has fiscal implications of which we are not aware, and doubtless the Premier will bring forward amendments which we have not seen before.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition has been well taken on this point. If the proposed legislation is eventually upset, not only this Government but also this Parliament will look exceedingly foolish. The Premier was given the opportunity to explain to the House the constitutional situation and to state his authority for saying that everything was in order. But, what did he say in defence of the arguments that have been put forward? He trotted out the old story that honorable members heard last year in regard to the turnover tax—unless this Bill is passed there will be less money for schools and so forth and the social service programme will be put in jeopardy. What has that to do with the constitutional position?

The Premier has given no assurance that what he proposes has the support of his legal advisers. If he had received opinions from his legal advisers, all he had to do was to quote those opinions and the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition would have been answered. In the circumstances, the debate on the Bill should be postponed until the opinions of the Premier's legal advisers are known.

The House divided on Mr. Holding's motion (the Hon. Vernon Christie in the chair)—

| Ayes | 26 |
| Noes | 42 |

Majority against the motion 16
The debate (adjourned from September 19) on the motion of Sir Henry Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—About the only point concerning which Opposition members can agree with the Premier is that this measure is substantially a Committee Bill, and therefore most of the detailed criticism of its implications will be made when it is being dealt with in Committee. During the second-reading debate, I shall deal primarily with the general principles which underly the Bill and the events which led to its introduction. Some of these issues were canvassed by Opposition members during the Budget debate but, unfortunately, the Government was not then prepared to defend either the Budget as a document or, more importantly, this Budget Bill which is now under consideration. It is to be hoped that during the debate on this measure, every member of the Government will be prepared to indicate clearly by words—not merely by deed or by being one of the 42 members who crossed the floor of the House to vote against a particular process—his support for this legislation.

To honorable members who believe in Parliamentary process, it is fundamental and cardinal to the operation of our democratic political system that a Government, which goes to the polls, does so on a specific set of promises. In other words, it seeks a mandate for a specific policy which it contemplates introducing if elected to office. The first that honorable members heard of this rather novel means of levying further taxes on the people of Victoria—who, I remind the House, are already the most highly taxed citizens in the Commonwealth—was during the Treasurer's Budget speech. The honorable gentleman said that this legislation was necessary to balance the Budget, and a few moments ago he gave a few further reasons which are precisely the same fraudulent reasons which the Government has falsely used time and time again to extract further funds from the people of the State. The Premier stated that unless this Bill was passed by Parliament, there would be no money which must be provided for schools, hospitals and other services. The most evident comment that one could make in reply to the honorable gentleman's statement is that the Premier and Treasurer knew, or ought to have known, the state of Victoria's economy at the time of the last State election campaign.
Sir Henry Bolte.—You said all this on the Budget.

Mr. HOLDING.—I am perfectly happy to say it all again, and I hope that on this occasion some of the Premier's Ministerial colleagues will defend the Government's broken promises to the people of Victoria. I make no apologies for reminding the Premier of his election promises, and I have no hesitation in bringing this matter to the attention of each Government member who stood on platforms in town halls and in other public places throughout the State during the last State election campaign and said with confidence that, if the people voted for a return of the Liberal Government, there would be no increase in income tax.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Name one member of the Government who said that.

Mr. HOLDING.—I shall not name only one member—I shall quote several.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Name one member who referred to income tax.

Mr. HOLDING.—The proposed new tax is an income tax, turnover tax, or purchase tax, whatever one likes to call it. The critical question for the honorable member for Dromana is not the name of this tax, but whether he regarded himself as bound by the promises given by the Premier during the last State election campaign. The promises to which I refer were clear and unequivocal. The Treasurer promised that there would be no increases in taxation if his Government was returned to office.

Sir Henry Bolte.—That is not true.

Mr. HOLDING.—By interjection, the Premier states that my last statement is not true. In the Sun News-Pictorial of 24th April, 1967, there is a report of a meeting at Bendigo, which was addressed by the Premier and at which no doubt the honorable member for Bendigo also was present. I shall read to the House what the Premier said.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—What else?

Mr. HOLDING.—That is just the first of them. I do not know whether the Premier says that he was misrepresented. Perhaps he does. I take it from his silence that he concedes that what I have read was an accurate statement of what he said in the Bendigo town hall on behalf of the honorable member for Bendigo.

Sir Henry Bolte.—One sentence.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Premier says that I have quoted just one sentence. Let me repeat it—

I am saying categorically that if we are elected the proposals in our policy speech will not mean an increase in State taxes.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—They are two separate items.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Government is in difficulty and those honorable members who support it are embarrassed to be reminded of the promises
that the Premier made on behalf of each and every one of them. Will the honorable member for Bendigo support this measure? Will he say to the people of Bendigo that the Premier did not say what he was reported to have said? After all, the statement was made with the authority of a Premier who had been in office for a record period of time. Members of the Opposition had been saying that the Premier was not aware of the state of the economy in Victoria, but the honorable member for Bendigo would be amongst the first to say that no one knew more about it than the honorable gentleman. In case the Premier says that he was misquoted or misreported, as he endeavoured to do, let me refer to an article in the Sun News-Pictorial on 27th April, 1967, under the pen name of "Sir Henry Bolte, Premier of Victoria." I presume the Premier will not quibble and say that he was mis-reported or that, perhaps, the article was written for him by one of his back-benchers. The report is in the classical phraseology of the Premier.

Stability or Return to Plotting

is the heading. In the body of the article, the Premier dealt with the Labor Party and the Country Party, and went on to say that the Opposition had indicated that the return of the Liberal Government to office would mean an increase in taxes. In this article under his own name, he said—

I say again that the charge is not true. I have already outlined in my policy speech, and during the campaign, the additional items which my Government if returned to office, will introduce. The cost of these is estimated at $54 million, an amount which is well within the returns from the present scale of taxation in the normal course of the development of the economy of this State.

I should have thought that a child in Form I at school who read that statement—possibly not as an exercise in grammar, but perhaps as an exercise in clear thinking—would be entitled to deduce that the Premier of Victoria was saying that the people could vote for him with confidence because, if they did, there would be no increase in taxation, and even with the additional items which he promised—the schools, the hospitals, the roads, and all the things that the honorable gentleman referred to less than a quarter of an hour ago—his programme could be financed as the result of the normal economic growth of the State and without any imposition of additional taxes. Is that not a reasonable implication?

I would like to know what reasonable, or unreasonable, implication is placed on that statement by those honorable members who support the Premier. When the honorable gentleman is confronted with a statement that he made, how do his supporters feel? All of them went into their electorates and said with confidence—because they had the authority of their Leader—that there would be no increase in taxes. Therefore, by implication, every one of them indicated to the people of their electorates that, if they were voted for on a Liberal Party ticket, they were obliged not to vote for any increase in taxation. Nothing could be clearer than that.

In case the Premier feels that, somehow, he might have written the article which appeared in the Sun News-Pictorial on 27th April, 1967, while suffering mental confusion, and in a state of temporary aberration, I refer to what he was reported to have said in the Herald of the 28th April—polling day was getting closer. Big black headlines said, "The Only Party Fit to Govern—by Sir Henry Bolte, Premier of Victoria." What a high-sounding title, "Premier of Victoria". All the people who bought the Herald that night, on seeing that article, would say, "There is an article by the Premier of Victoria, Sir Henry Bolte; what is he telling me will happen if I vote for him?" With characteristic honesty, the Premier again dealt with Mr. Stoneham's allegations that the Premier, and his
Government, if returned to office, would increase taxation. This is what he said about those allegations—

Sir Henry Bolte.—This is talking about a purchase tax.

Mr. Holding.—Let me enshrine that for ever in the annals of Hansard. The Premier, somewhat embarrassed, and sitting with his head in his hands, says “This is a purchase tax”.

Mr. Scanlan.—This is tedious.

Mr. Holding.—During the last State election campaign, did the honorable member for Oakleigh say that he was bound by the promise made by the Premier and that, if elected by the people of Oakleigh, he would not vote for increased taxes?

Mr. Scanlan.—I was bound by my Leader’s policy statement.

Mr. Holding.—If the honorable member is bound by the Premier’s policy statement, before he votes for this Bill he should have the honour to resign his seat in Parliament. I realize that it is asking a bit much of the honorable member to suggest that he might regard political honour as highly as to do anything like that.

Mr. Scanlan (Oakleigh).—Mr. Speaker, I regard that remark as unparliamentary, and I request a withdrawal.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The Leader of the Opposition turned away as he said it. I, unfortunately, did not hear exactly what he said. Could the words be repeated to me?

Mr. Holding (Leader of the Opposition).—Could the honorable member for Oakleigh say what he regards as unparliamentary.

Mr. Scanlan (Oakleigh).—I understood the Leader of the Opposition to say that it was an act of political dishonesty.

The Speaker.—I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw it, if it fits what he said.

Mr. Holding (Leader of the Opposition).—I did not say that. As I understand it, what I said about the honorable member for Oakleigh was a suggestion that he had political honour.

The Speaker.—The Leader of the Opposition turned away as he said those words. If what the honorable member for Oakleigh has suggested are the words he used, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw them.

Mr. Holding.—Those are not the words I used. Perhaps I may rectify any misunderstanding if I repeat both the meaning and the purport of the words I put.

The Speaker.—I cannot hear the honorable member now. There is too much interjection; that is the problem.

Mr. Holding.—What I said to the honorable member for Oakleigh was that, if he—as he suggested by interjection—regarded himself as bound by the promise made by the Premier—which we have indicated was a promise not to increase income taxes—and if he was politically honest, he would resign his seat in Parliament rather than vote for a Bill which contained a principle that was clearly contradictory to that promise.

Mr. Meagher.—What else did you say?

Mr. Holding.—I then went on to say—

The Speaker.—Order! I find there is no point of order.

Mr. Meagher (Minister of Housing).—On your ruling that there is no point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a further point. After having made his comment that the honorable member for Oakleigh would be honest if he resigned his seat, the Leader of the Opposition added that that was too much to expect of him. That is what the honorable member for Oakleigh objected to.
Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Mr. Speaker, if the honorable member for Oakleigh, as a matter of political honour, intends to resign his seat, I certainly withdraw any suggestion that implies otherwise.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—There is far too much interjecting. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to continue his speech.

Mr. HOLDING.—All honorable members supporting the Government would regard themselves, as the honorable member for Oakleigh indicated, as being bound by the promise of the Premier. There can be no suggestion that the Premier was speaking off the stump, that he was under pressure at a political meeting, or that he was harried, when, in an article which bore his own name, he went on to say—

Mr. Stoneham has consistently stated that if my Government is returned on April 29, we will immediately levy additional taxes on the people of Victoria. There was no talk of its being a purchase tax or an income tax or any other particular tax. The Premier said that Mr. Stoneham had stated “that the Government would immediately levy additional taxes on the people of Victoria.” The Premier then dealt with that allegation, and he dealt with it on behalf of the honorable member for Oakleigh and all the other back-bench members of the Liberal Party, as well as on behalf of his Ministers, who will not speak in the debate to defend this proposal. He then added—

I have denied this, and, I will here again say that it is completely untrue. I should have thought that the logic of that statement would have been compelling to a five-year old child, but apparently it is not logic to Government members. This article, under the hand of the Treasurer and carrying his personal approval, gives denial to the levying of additional taxation. He knew the problems relating to schools, roads and hospitals. Yet, on 28th April, 1967, when dealing with the allegation which had then become a critical part of the election campaign, on his own behalf and on behalf of every one of his supporters, he said, “I have denied that we will increase taxes, and I say again that that allegation is completely untrue”. It would have been bad enough and there might be some excuse if this matter had not been an issue in the election campaign, if it had not been mentioned, and the Treasurer had decided to introduce this form of income tax. But the Treasurer, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Victoria, speaking on the subject of finance and the provision and maintenance of schools, hospitals and housing as a political issue, said quite clearly and unequivocally, “Under no circumstances will additional taxes be levied”.

However, the Treasurer has introduced this Bill relating to receipt duty and to amend the Stamps Act. Will any Government member say that its purpose is not to levy additional income tax? I am greeted with silence, and so I ought to be! This action follows an election promise by the Liberal Party: “You can vote for us, we will not levy additional taxes”. The Bill was introduced within a few months of the Government taking office. Call it what one will—an increased purchase tax or sales tax—the purpose of this Bill is to levy income tax and to do the very things the Liberal Party promised that it would not do. This is not merely a Bill without a mandate; it is contrary to the mandate of the people of Victoria and contrary to the mandate given to every honorable member on the Government side of the House who, no doubt, will remain silent. It will betray the promises they made to the people and the mandate of the electors. These honorable members will simply use the numbers of the Government and pass the Bill.

The Opposition can only point to the broken promises and suggest that, as a matter of political honour, some
Government members—particularly the honorable member for Oakleigh—might agree to resign, go back to the electors and honestly say, "I believed in the promise that was given and in good conscience rather than betray my promise to you, I come back to seek a mandate". Will any Government member follow that course? Of course not; very few of them will enter into this debate to defend the Government or the Bill.

Mr. Moss.—The honorable member for Hawthorn may do so.

Mr. HOLDING.—I do not think he will. The only mandate the honorable member for Hawthorn could claim in respect of this Bill would be to vote against it.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—He may do that.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Deputy Leader of the Country Party may be right and the honorable member for Hawthorn may vote against the Bill. However, Opposition members take a harder view of this Government and would be greatly surprised if the honorable member for Hawthorn honoured his undertaking to the electors of Hawthorn.

Mr. JONA.—My undertaking to the electors of Hawthorn was quite clear.

Mr. HOLDING.—The honorable member for Hawthorn has reminded the House that he gave a clear undertaking to the people of Hawthorn. He could have made only one of two statements. He could have repeated the statement of the Treasurer that the allegation that additional taxes would be levied was not true and that he dissociated himself from it, or he could have said that he believed in additional taxes. Honorable members will be delighted to hear the honorable member for Hawthorn dishonour the assurances of the Treasurer during the last election campaign by saying, "I know that this man is not telling the truth", or whether he proposes to dishonour himself and his mandate in this House by voting for this Bill.

I shall be delighted to hear from the honorable member for Hawthorn in due course.

I now turn to the principle of this tax. The only people not interested in reading the statements made on behalf of this Government are its supporters. The Opposition is opposed in principle to the proposed tax because its concept is bad. It is not a progressive tax, and its burden will not fall clearly and equitably within the community. The tax will fall equally and without discrimination on all members of the community. It will impose the same economic burdens upon the lower-income groups, the pensioners and the people least able to afford it as upon the people in the higher-income group. In Western democratic communities, it is a basic principle that, to be equitable and just, taxation ought to be progressive; its incidence should rise according to the wealth of the individual members of the community.

Mr. WILKES.—With which the honorable member for St. Kilda would agree.

Mr. HOLDING.—I believe I would be supported in this argument by the honorable member for St. Kilda. That is the first basic objection of the Opposition to this tax. Earlier tonight the Opposition sought an assurance from the Treasurer that the wage earner would not be taxed twice in respect of this impost. When the wage earner makes out his income-tax return for the Commonwealth taxation authorities, he will say, "I am not taxable on this amount of State taxation; it comes into the same category as land tax, Board of Works rates and so on". However, the Treasurer made it clear that no assurance could be given that this amount could be claimed as a deduction. He made it equally clear that, so far as business firms are concerned, the amounts paid would be absorbed as business costs, after which the net profit only of the business would be available for Commonwealth taxation purposes. To the
workman, the pay packet is his profit, and the Government is prepared to agree to the inequitable principle that the wages of the lower-salaried groups in this community are to be taxed twice.

The Opposition suggests that this is a bad tax because ultimately the retailers and manufacturers will absorb it in the only way they can—in the traditional and time-honoured fashion of passing it on to the community by adding it to the cost of the commodities they sell. Therefore, it will add to the ever-spiralling costs and to the continued inflation within the community. The people most adversely affected by rising costs and inflation are the pensioners, the people on fixed incomes, and those in the lower income groups. For those reasons, the Opposition believes this concept of taxation is bad.

Finally, I shall refer to the effect of this tax on Commonwealth-State relationships. The State leaders of the Labor Party, whether Premiers or Leaders of the Opposition, are so concerned about the deterioration in Federal-State relationships and the breach between the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth that they have agreed to meet with the Federal leaders for the purpose of discussing this matter and to ascertain whether a proper basis can be found for the purpose of restoring proper Commonwealth-State relationships.

Mr. Meagher.—You have always opposed a proper basis.

Mr. Holding.—That is arrant nonsense. The Minister of Housing knows that the aspect which is causing further deterioration of the Commonwealth-State relationship is the attitude of the Commonwealth to this particular form of income tax. The Minister of Housing has suggested that the Commonwealth has been unfair to the State.

Mr. Meagher.—The Commonwealth has intruded into affairs that it should not have entered.

The Speaker.—The honorable member has covered that aspect.

Mr. Holding.—I should like to make one or two other points. If the Minister of Housing can take time off from solving the problems of Aboriginal welfare, the honorable gentleman may enter the debate. I point out that the proposed tax will not solve the problems of the State, either in the short term or the long term. It is clear that the Commonwealth Government is not going to accept this tax on its own employees and that the State cannot levy such a tax without its being taken into account in determining the grants that flow from the Commonwealth to the State.

Mr. Meagher.—Do you support that?

Mr. Holding.—I do not. In reply to the question whether I would support that attitude on the part of the Commonwealth, the Labor Party is so concerned about this matter that it is prepared and has made arrangements for its leaders in all States—several of them are Premiers—and the Federal leaders of the party to come together for the purpose of rationalizing the relationship between the Commonwealth and the States. I understand that, after my party announced this action, the Premier got into the act and said that the Liberal Party was going to have a conference, too. I would not be so churlish as not to wish the Liberal Party every success in its discussions. I would wish that, out of these discussions by any political group, there will emerge a new formula which will enable a proper partnership to be developed between the Commonwealth and the States. Therefore, I was somewhat disappointed that the moment the issue was raised, the first action of the Premier, who has got the affairs of this State into such a mess in respect of both its own internal economy and its relationship with the Commonwealth, was to indicate to the press that if the Opposition sought any advice or assistance from Treasury officials,
the financial advisers of the Government, so far as he was concerned this would not be forthcoming. Frankly, I regard that as some indication of the real attitude of the Premier and Treasurer to the question of Federal-State relationships. Surely, if the honorable gentleman was concerned about this relationship, the first thing he would say to me and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would be, "If you are going to a conference in Adelaide, I shall be delighted to make available to you any of the resources of this State in order that you may argue about these matters within the framework of your party".

Mr. Jona.—But your party is pledged to unification. Its policy is the abolition of the States.

Mr. Wilcox.—Is that not right?

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member not to proceed to debate Commonwealth-State relations.

Mr. Holding.—I say simply that this tax is not going to solve either in the short term or the long term the real problem of the fiscal relationships between the Commonwealth and the State. It is a short term desperation measure, as the Premier clearly indicated in his Budget speech.

The Speaker.—I have ruled that there is no debate on Commonwealth-State relations.

Mr. Holding.—I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I would be happier if you had ruled that you had heard me on this point rather than that there was to be no debate, because other members may want to argue about this.

The Speaker.—I shall make the point quite clear. It may be discussed in its relevance to a State tax, but it would not be proper to proceed to debate on its own the question of Commonwealth-State relationships.

Mr. Holding.—I shall comply with your ruling, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Transport has asked me, by way of interjection, what is the view of the Labor Party on Commonwealth-State relations, but as you have ruled me out of order I cannot answer the question.

The Speaker.—Order! I have made it quite clear, despite any interjection or opinion that may be given from either side of the House, that this is not a debate on Commonwealth-State relations at large.

Mr. Holding.—I shall conclude by briefly expressing the Opposition's attitude on this Bill. First, I point out that not only has the Government no mandate for this legislation, but the Liberal Party expressly promised the people of Victoria that, if it was returned to office, there would be no increase in taxation. Secondly, I have stated the reasons why the Opposition believes that the proposed duty is a bad tax as a form of income tax, and why it ought to be opposed in principle. Thirdly, I raised the question of Commonwealth-State relationships. For those three reasons, the Opposition believes that the Bill ought to be opposed. We consider that it is without merit and is founded on a series of broken and dishonoured promises. As such, the measure ought to be rejected by all members of this House.

Mr. Moss (Leader of the Country Party).—The Country Party strenuously opposes this measure, which constitutes an assault on the wage earner and the primary producer. It will dampen initiative, enterprise and enthusiasm for progress in Victoria. At present, the stamp duty on receipts is 3 cents on amounts from $10 upwards not exceeding $200; 10 cents between $200 and $1,000; and 20 cents on amounts of $1,000 and upwards. The amendment proposed to be made by this Bill is to establish a flat rate of 1 cent per $10 without any limit. I shall discuss the iniquity of this later.

Under the existing legislation, businessmen may elect to make periodical returns to the Comptroller
of Stamps, on which duty is payable at the rate of 5 cents per $400 or part thereof on the total amount shown in the return. I wish to make two points. First, the proposed tax will mean an increase of 800 per cent., according to the Treasurer's estimate of revenue to be received. It will also mean that the total amount received by the Treasury will be increased eight-fold. The tax will apply to every part of the gross receipts shown in the return, and in effect will be a tax on business turnover. Of course, this is much heavier than a tax on profits, because profits are only a fraction of turnover. While this receipt duty is only one-tenth of 1 per cent. on turnover, it represents about .5 per cent. or more on actual profits. At present, primary products are exempt from stamp duty, as is the payment of insurance premiums by primary producers under the 1958 legislation. This will continue to operate until this legislation comes into operation on 1st February, 1968, as proposed by the Government.

The Country Party appointed a committee to investigate this proposal, and that body has applied a good deal of vigour to its work. The committee made representations to the Director of Finance on behalf of and together with major primary industries on the incidence of the tax. I need hardly remind honorable members that certain primary industries are in a very serious condition at present—for example, the dairying, fruit and wheat industries, which will be required to pay receipt duty on several occasions. The whole situation is not nearly as simple as the Premier and Treasurer stated, not in the House but to people outside. A good deal of our basic information was obtained from sources outside this House. The honorable gentleman used his own case as an example in the press, and said that if his turnover from wool and sheep amounted to $20,000 he would pay a certain amount of stamp duty—$20 or some such amount.

In examining the situation in regard to the dairying and wheat industries, it will be found that transactions with buyers may take place up to six or seven times. Representatives of the dairying industry have drawn up a graph showing how the proposed new duty will affect their industry. The honorable member for Gippsland East will go into some detail on this aspect, and will illustrate to honorable members on the graph what will occur in regard to stamp duty. Of course, if some sort of explanation is given, it will be asserted that basically there will be no difference in the transactions that take place except that the charges will be increased, but, because of its implications, the tax will make a very substantial increase to costs. I do not wish to spend much time on the point made by the Leader of the Opposition concerning election undertakings by the Government party, but the honorable member clearly indicated that certain undertakings were given not only by the Premier, but also by Government supporters. One notices the tremendous interest displayed by back-benchers of the Liberal Party and the abject silence that seems to surround them on this occasion.

Mr. WILKES.—We may get a Minister to speak.

Mr. MOSS.—The Leader of the Opposition and his Deputy are toying with the idea that a Minister may rise to defend the statements of the Premier and Treasurer, not only at election time but also in regard to the implications of this measure. I do not think it would be unfair to assert that those two honorable members are unduly optimistic. I am more inclined to think the honorable member for Hawthorn may rush into the debate, because he seems to be that type of person. I think he is more likely to enter the debate than one of the Ministers.

The tax implications associated with this measure include a tax on receipts for payments on purchases
of land or property, purchase of livestock—whether direct or through stock agents or bankers—wages over $20 per week, money received by growers for sale of fruit and vegetables, whether in the market or not; payments from the Wheat Board, butter factories, dried fruits packing sheds, or canneries, or for any primary produce—whether this money is paid into a bank account or direct to the producer—salaries or wages paid into a bank account by order of an employee—it must be deducted by the bank—and payments for any article purchased in a shop or elsewhere of a value in excess of $10, at the rate of 1 cent in $10 irrespective of the value of the article. The tax on the purchase of any article could apply to a motor car, a motor truck, farm machinery, or any other similar item. This list could be extended ad infinitum.

The provisions of the Bill will have widespread and vicious implications. It is strange that a Bill which will stifle enterprise should be introduced by a so-called Liberal Government, whose supporters profess to be the bulwarks of freedom and private enterprise. I can only suggest that Government back-benchers will, in view of the Premier’s election statements, have difficulty in explaining this tax imposition. I am not in a position to say how they will explain the imposition, but probably the same old story will be trotted out—that it is a question of either denying the people of Victoria the right to schools, hospitals, social services and necessary public works or imposing an increase in State taxation.

I remind the Government that this story is wearing rather threadbare. The Government does not care about obtaining value for the money that is entrusted to it. It is simply a question of ascertaining the requirements of the various Departments and the cost of those needs, and then, without proper investigation, taxing the people of Victoria to find the money. Some day, some Government in Victoria will settle down and establish the economic control which has been sadly lacking in the outlook and administration of this Liberal Government. It is not prepared to examine the position and institute economies into the various spending Departments.

Millions of dollars in Government spending could be saved if the Government obtained expert advice and administered its responsibilities in a reasonably economic manner. Canada is a classic example of a country which has instituted economies in Government spending after receiving expert advice. Perhaps the Victorian Government is afraid of what will be revealed by an open inquiry into spending by Departments. At some future time, it will be necessary for the whole structure of departmental spending to be examined by competent persons. I can only come to the conclusion that Victoria's financial position is worsening because of the Government's lack of competency.

I repeat that the Country Party is strenuously opposed to the imposition of additional taxation in Victoria because the Government is not taking steps to effect reasonable economies in departmental spending. Consequently, the Country Party will strenuously oppose the passage of this Bill through Parliament and do what it can to relieve the burdens on the people of this State.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—I am amazed that a Government member has not risen to speak. The Government has, on occasions, been anxious to determine which party should have the right to speak, but to-night no one is prepared to defend the Treasurer's tax proposals. The honorable gentleman hinted at these proposals in his Budget speech, but during the Budget debate he received no support from his Ministers except from the Minister of Water Supply. Now, he is receiving no support from even his back-bench supporters to defend a measure the implications of which have been clearly defined by the
Leader of the Opposition who pointed out that a suggestion was made prior to the election that there would be no increase in taxation.

The Opposition is opposed to the taxation proposals contained in this Bill because, after careful examination, it can see no justification for the introduction of a tax of this nature. The Premier and Treasurer has said that it is necessary to impose this taxation on receipts in order that hospitals, roads, and schools may be provided. What did the honorable gentleman say during the last election campaign? He told the electors that the Government would increase expenditure on education, and would build more hospitals and roads, but he did not say how he was going to finance the projects. At election time, it is easy to promise these things.

Mr. Wheeler.—The Labor Party is a past master at that.

Mr. Wilkes.—That may be so, but it can learn a lot from the Government, which during election campaigns makes promises and practises deception. After making all sorts of promises during the election campaign, the Premier, when presenting his Budget for the current year, told Parliament that to enable the Government to undertake these works, it would be necessary to impose additional taxation to meet the cost. Between the election and the introduction of this tax proposal by the Premier, another event took place. The honorable gentleman visited Canberra and was compelled to agree with what the Commonwealth Government decided to give this State to meet its financial requirements for the ensuing year. The Premier and Treasurer went to Canberra full of hope and came away disappointed because his Federal Liberal colleagues told him to examine his affairs before he requested more money from Canberra. He was told to exercise some form of saving in the Departments before he asked the Federal Government for more money.

Mr. Wilkes.—I am advocating no tax by this Government in respect of wages and salaries. The State has managed to exist without a tax on wages and salaries, and if this Government had been defeated at the last election the State would have continued to manage without such an imposition.

Mr. Birrell.—What about the Labor Party's promises, which would have cost $55,000,000 annually?

Mr. Wilkes.—I should have thought that Government members, and particularly the honorable member for Geelong, would have paid cognizance to the fact that this Government was elected by 36 per cent. of the electors following a promise that there would be no increases in taxation. The Opposition has had no opportunity to implement what it promised at the last election, but, if it had been given that opportunity, it would, I reiterate, not have introduced a tax on wages.

Why has the Premier paid no cognizance to the principle of taxation on a sliding scale? After all his...
promises, one would have thought that he would at least have said that if wages and salaries were to be taxed, he would not tax a man on low wages but would tax only those who can afford to pay. The Premier has decided that there shall be a flat tax on wages and salaries.

Sir Henry Bolte.—It is a receipt tax.

Mr. Wilkes.—I have no doubt that this is an income tax, and perhaps the Premier's Liberal colleagues in Canberra will also consider that it is an income tax. Warnings have been given to the State Government by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party, and after the Government's Liberal colleagues in Canberra decide their attitude to this tax, it will be interesting to see whether the State Government is sufficiently impressed to reconsider the proposal to tax salaries and wages in this State.

Sir Henry Bolte.—It will not.

Mr. Wilkes.—Nothing will shift the Premier. He is determined to tax the wages of the workers of this State. One wonders whether the wage earner, when he goes home on Friday night and passes over his pay packet, will have to collect a 2 cent stamp from his wife to satisfy the needs of the Premier under this proposed legislation.

The Premier has said that receipts on the sale of primary products will be taxed. Will that not have a long-term effect on the ultimate cost of production of primary products? It will have not an immediate but a long range effect. A number of factors, including one mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, have not yet been considered by the Premier in respect of this tax. One factor is the effect of the drought on primary producers in the State and the concessions that will be made because of this catastrophe. There was no indication of this in the Premier's second-reading speech, and none has been given by the Minister of Lands.

The Premier stated that the new impost would be a tax on receipts for dividends and interest received by individuals. Perhaps Opposition members have no argument in regard to a tax being imposed on receipts for dividends.

Sir Henry Bolte.—The Labor Party would take a lot more.

Mr. Wilkes.—Members of my party would closely examine that suggestion of the Premier. Far be it from me to give him an on-the-spot answer. No clear definition of "interest" has been given. How does the Premier define interest received by individuals? Members of the Opposition would like to know the type of interest referred to. Does it relate to interest on a savings account in the State Savings Bank or the Commonwealth Bank or the savings department of any other bank?

Sir Henry Bolte.—It will amount to only 1 cent in $10.

Mr. Wilkes.—Apparently it will be a tax on savings bank accounts as well as on wages. If the wage-earner deposits $10 in the bank each week and receives an interest payment at the end of the year, he will be taxed on the interest payment; he will be taxed for thrift. This was not fully explained by the Premier.

The speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I cannot follow this discussion. I cannot hear the interjections of the Premier and the replies of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and this makes his speech difficult to follow.

Mr. Wilkes.—Mr. Speaker, I agree that all interjections are disorderly, and I shall refrain from answering further interjections. If I stop speaking maybe the House
will hear from the honorable member for Glenhuntly, and in this debate that would be refreshing because he is in the same category as his colleagues who were referred to by the Leader of the Opposition as being elected on the promise that there would be no increase in taxation.

Sir Henry Bolte.—If you say it often enough, you will believe it.

Mr. Wilkes.—We believe it and we feel certain that the people of Victoria are commencing to believe it now, because they were deceived by what took place before the last election.

Finally, the Premier said that there would be a receipt duty imposed on assurance premiums. Again, this is a tax on thrift. A person who has a small assurance policy and pays a few cents a week or perhaps $1 a week is in effect saving his money, and the Premier proposes to impose a tax on this.

Mr. Fennessey.—Is he taxing the share market?

Mr. Wilkes.—We will examine that aspect. The Premier makes no apology for the proposal to tax life assurance premiums. The point I am trying to make is that the small wage-earner is the person who is most affected. The manufacturer will be able to pass on the tax. It will cost him money to collect this tax; he will have to increase his administrative staffs for this purpose, whether payment is made quarterly, half-yearly or yearly. The taxation will be the subject of book entries, and the producer and the manufacturer will have to provide the necessary staff. The cost of complying with the Government’s requirements concerning the keeping of records and the employment of staff to make up returns in respect of this tax will increase costs considerably.

Sir Henry Bolte.—The employer has them all now.

Mr. Wilkes.—He has nothing now to which he could tie this sort of collection. There is a payroll tax, a sales tax and a wages tax. If the Government is to implement another tax, this will mean another form of bookkeeping and the employer will have to pass on the costs. When he does that, it will be reflected in the cost of the article.

Sir Henry Bolte.—What about another increase of $1 in the basic wage. Where does that go?

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to continue his speech and not to answer interjections.

Mr. Wilkes.—Very well, Mr. Speaker. I shall not answer the Premier. Suffice to say that the whole concept of the tax to be imposed is to raise the amount of money that the Government has failed to get from Canberra to balance its Budget, and to satisfy the promises that it has made in respect of more money for hospitals, roads and schools. As yet, the additional finance has not been provided for education. At a later date, perhaps, the Opposition will have the opportunity of debating with the Government the additional amounts that it claims to have spent in education over the past four or five years, and a careful examination of the dissipation of these amounts may pose an altogether different picture in that sphere.

The Premier claims that without this tax he cannot balance his Budget; he cannot continue to provide what has been allowed for in the Budget up till now. If the Bill is passed, and if the tax is imposed, it will get the Premier out of his dilemma for another twelve months. He has said that its effect on the budgetary provisions for the next financial year will make it a lot easier for him to balance the accounts. If this is the method which the Government is to employ for economic
planning, Opposition members disagree with it. We disagree with the concept of the proposed tax. We say that the Premier, very carefully and seriously, told the people of Victoria that there would be no increase in taxation. We have heard about that, and we know that the Premier did not mean what he said when he made that statement to the people of Victoria. Now he has proposed this tax, and he has used as an argument the contention that it will materially assist in economic planning for his Budget next year.

Opposition members disagree with this concept of economic planning. The least the Premier could do would be impose increases, if he has to, in stamp duty on those who are more able to pay them, and to disregard the proposition contained in this Bill under which it is proposed to impose a tax on salaries and wages that will affect the lower income groups in the community and further increase costs of commodities and charges throughout Victoria. Members of my party believe that the repercussions of the proposed legislation may not be fully appreciated by the Parliament at present, but before the next Budget is introduced the people will have realized the effect of this tax on commodities, on wages and on other forms of income. I have no doubt that they will express themselves far more forcibly than they have done in the past, because they have not been fully conversant with the implications of the proposed tax. Perhaps the Government has been careful to see that they have not been fully conversant with the matter. The Premier has said that if anyone has any worthwhile proposition to make he will pay heed to or at least will consider his representations.

On the 16th October, the Melbourne Trades Hall Council held a deputation to the Premier and made certain recommendations. I shall not take up the time of the House by going into all the propositions. Suffice to say that the deputation clearly informed the Premier that Victoria was the highest taxed State in the Commonwealth and that a basic wage worker was required to work five and a half weeks a year to pay his Commonwealth tax. At present, a carpenter has to work seven and a half weeks at award rates to pay the direct taxation imposed on him.

These were some of the propositions put to the Premier by the representatives of the Trades Hall Council. The deputation quoted the Commonwealth Statistician’s survey of the incidence and types of taxation in both Commonwealth and State spheres for the year 1964-65, and informed the Premier that the aggregate amount of taxes collected, including indirect tax but excluding local government collections, was $4,284 million, which represented $380.86 per head of population. It was pointed out also that this was approximately $29 a week for a family man with a wife and two children. These propositions were put to the Treasurer by the Melbourne Trades Hall Council to justify the expressed opposition to any increases in State taxation. It was pointed out that the wage-earner in this State was already overburdened by Commonwealth income tax and existing State taxes.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I cannot see the relevance of figures of that sort.

Mr. WILKES.—For the reasons outlined by the Leader of the Opposition and for reasons which will be further outlined by members of the Opposition during the second-reading debate, the Opposition emphatically rejects the principles that the Bill proposes. We claim that there is no justification for the imposition of an income tax in this State, and we hope the Commonwealth Government will see reason in the Opposition’s views concerning this matter and will take the very important constitutional step of debarring the present income tax-happy Government of Victoria from imposing such a tax on the wage earners of this State.
Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—This Bill, the purpose of which is to increase the incidence of stamp duty, has been introduced into this House in an atmosphere almost of deceit. The Government went to the people at the last State election with the clear and definite policy that, if it were returned to office, there would be no increases in taxation. The statement made by the Premier in that regard was broad and it could have been taken only in its broadest terms. There is no doubt that the people of Victoria were influenced by this statement. By way of contrast, the Premier asked Treasury officials to draw up a statement setting out what the policy proposals by the Labor Party and the Country Party would cost the taxpayer, and this was used as a weapon during the election campaign.

Although opportunity has been provided during the debate for Government supporters to speak for the proposals contained in this measure, no Government supporter has availed himself of that opportunity.

Mr. MANSON.—That is wrong.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—An opportunity was provided before the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rose to address the House. It has been traditional in this House since I have been a member that when the Country Party has indicated that it opposes a proposal, the call alternates between the Government and the opposing parties. It seems remarkable that Government supporters have not taken the opportunity to answer the case put forward against the proposals contained in this Bill, because this is the place where these matters should be argued out. Parliament is certainly not serving its true purpose if the only comments made on Bills are those made by members of the Opposition and of the Country Party. Government supporters have a responsibility to put the opposing point of view and to answer arguments put forward during the debate. We hope this will be the case before this debate is concluded. It is pertinent to point out that Government supporters greatly outnumber members of the Opposition and the Country Party and therefore we should not be required to match them one for one. However, in this case there have been four speakers opposed to the Bill and not one in support of it.

I propose to support my contention that the Bill has been introduced in an atmosphere of deceit. When the Premier made his second-reading speech, he did not inform the House that stamp duty was to apply to wages; this information appeared in the press the following day. The honorable gentleman must have had some motive in not advising the House of this fact. One wonders why the Premier was not honest in informing honorable members of the import of the proposals. Surely Parliament should be told about legislative proposals; honorable members should not be required to read about them in the daily press. By treating honorable members in this fashion, the Premier is bordering on contempt of Parliament.

I wish to direct the attention of the House to the impact of these proposals on the dairying industry, which has a rather complicated marketing set-up. Honorable members who have only a casual acquaintance with the complexity of this marketing system will appreciate that there are many transactions by way of advances in various accounts and the payment of moneys between different organizations. This has led to the stability which has been so important to the industry and to the country as a whole. There can be no doubt that the dairying industry has been one of the greatest contributors to decentralization because it maintains large numbers of people not...
only on rural lands but also in factories throughout the Commonwealth.

In this State, this most important industry will be hit harshly by the terms of this Bill. I have a list of ten different transactions which operate within the framework of the industry and on which stamp duty will be levied under the present terms of the Bill. Whilst I do not intend to weary the House by going through this list, I shall quote an example to illustrate the position. I refer to the purchase of goods from co-operative stores and similar organizations, many of which work on the basis that payment is made in full on receipt of the goods, a rebate being granted at the end of the twelve-month period according to the profit made by the undertaking.

When a person purchases goods through his co-operative, stamp duty will be paid on the transaction. When he receives his rebate, which is actually a reduction in the original price, he will have to pay stamp duty on the amount received. So, instead of paying less duty, he will be paying more.

Mr. Manson.—You do not really mean that.

Mr. B. J. Evans.—I certainly do. I know of no way in which a discretion can be made on this form of transaction.

Mr. Manson.—Something could be done through the annual return.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Minister of State Development should not interject in a low voice because, as a result, the House and I hear only one side of the argument. Whilst interjections are disorderly, sotto voce interjections are more disorderly.

Mr. B. J. Evans.—I agree, Mr. Speaker, that you hear only one side of the argument because up to now no one has spoken in support of the Bill. It is necessary for the Minister to interject in order to obtain the basic facts of the proposition that I am putting. I am sure that he has not the vaguest idea how this complex financial structure of the dairying industry operates and how it will be affected by this Bill. The honorable member for Ballarat South is now interjecting, and I look forward to his contribution to the debate on this measure. I am sure that when he speaks there will be no interjections because honorable members will think it is his maiden speech. Vague suggestions have been made that amendments will be moved during the Committee stage, and it may be that those amendments will have some influence on the circumstances to which I am referring.

Mr. Clarey.—Should we not be given some foresight of those amendments?

Mr. B. J. Evans.—It would make my task easier if I had some knowledge of the amendments which the Premier has somewhat belatedly said will be brought forward during the Committee stage. There are transactions within the industry whereby advances are made from one fund to meet payments out of another fund, and, subsequently, these advances are repaid to the original fund. If this Bill is passed in its present form, transactions of this type will attract stamp duty. The amounts in question could be substantial, and the removal of the upper limitation, as proposed, will have a severe impact.

I should like to direct the attention of honorable members to an article which appears in to-night's Herald under the heading "Delay new tax plea to Bolte". It reads—

The Melbourne Chamber of Commerce moved to-day in an attempt to delay the passing of Victoria's controversial Stamps Bill.

It sent an urgent telegram to the Premier, Sir Henry Bolte, asking that the Bill should not be passed until more talks were held.

This is ample justification for the Country Party's attitude on this Bill. I am sure that the Premier has no
idea of the full consequences of this proposal, although certainly he would have a better idea now than when he introduced the measure. If the honorable gentleman had taken the people into his confidence during the election campaign and said that the only way by which he could finance his promises would be by increasing taxation in the stamp duty field, many of the difficulties which have arisen could have been foreseen and perhaps the Premier might have been better advised before he introduced this measure.

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—During the Budget debate, I condemned the proposal to increase stamp duty, and I propose briefly to reiterate what I said on that occasion. The Stamps Act provides that wages and salaries shall be exempt from the payment of receipt duty. Clause 3 of the Bill, which amends the Third Schedule to the Stamps Act, provides that a receipt duty of 1 cent shall be payable for an amount not exceeding $10. Clause 23 of the amended Third Schedule provides an exemption for a—

Receipt for a periodical repayment made by way of salary or wages at a rate not exceeding $20 per week.

All honorable members were pleased some time ago when the Government revoked receipt duty on wages. The Opposition is gravely disturbed that this principle should be re-established. In future, an exemption from the payment of the new tax will be applicable to wages not exceeding $20 per week. It would be interesting to know whether in granting this exemption the Government had in mind a boy selling papers or an age pensioner whose wife intended to work in order to augment the inadequate pension to which she and her husband were entitled.

Whenever the Government wishes to increase taxes, there are two classes of people in the community of which it is always contemptuous—the working class and the farming community. Of course, there are two "subsidiaries" who assist the Government in this regard, one of which is an organization in Sydney known as the Basic Industries Organization. Government members are also contemptuous towards the Trades Hall which, through the years, has maintained the dignity and wage rights of the working-class people of the State. I should have thought that the Government, like any other Government, would recognize the value of the Trades Hall rather than seek to raise a furor, as though it were some foreign organization, whenever it was mentioned. I hope that during the Committee stage the Premier will take steps to retain the exemption which now exists in the principal Act so far as wages and salaries are concerned. I should like the honorable gentleman to give me an undertaking that this will be done.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—Would you support the Bill if I did?

Mr. TURNBULL.—Yes, so far as the worker is concerned. I do not know what will be the outcome of this legislation. There is no doubt that in substance it is a form of income tax. During the Budget debate, I stressed the fact that some working-class people live in the electorates represented by Government members. Surely, these members are disturbed that some of their constituents will in future be called upon to pay double income tax. I do not know whether the Premier has given consideration to the impact of this proposal upon trust accounts kept by solicitors.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—I hope they are keeping them.

Mr. TURNBULL.—We seldom hear of solicitors not keeping trust accounts.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—There have been cases.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Compared with some accountants and auditors who handle company business, solicitors are amateurs. A good deal of money
is paid into solicitors' trust accounts and a good deal is paid out of them. I, personally, paid to a solicitor—I hope it is still in the trust account—a consideration on the transfer of a house. I have paid that money into the trust account and, at some future date, it will be paid to my transferee.

Some time ago a special trust fund was set up—the present Minister of Transport was in charge of the enabling legislation—to ensure that any person who is defrauded by a solicitor will be reimbursed by this means. Unless the Premier deals with this matter, instead of paying money to a solicitor to be placed in a trust account and on the day of settlement having the money paid out, the purchaser will get a bank cheque and turn up for settlement either through himself and his solicitor and the cheque will be handed over to the purchaser. In cases of this type, there will be no stamp duty, but it will destroy the fund which has been set up for a specific purpose. I invite the Premier to give some consideration to exempting transactions of this type from stamp duty. It appears that the only exemption which will be allowed under this measure so far as trustees are concerned relates to receipts for money paid to the trustees of a cemetery.

Whenever the Government wants more money, it imposes extra levies on the farmers and the workers, neither of whom can pass it on. On the other hand, of course, business people pass the tax on by means of increased charges. When I stated this on a previous occasion, an honorable member interjected that business people would be required to pay the extra impost which would be part of their costs structure. Under the Liberal Governments in both the Federal and the State sphere, the cost of living has increased by 5 per cent. for every year since about 1963. Every time the Arbitration Commission grants a rise in wages because of increased prices, it is attacked by the employing class. Something must be done to control prices in this country.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member is getting onto another subject.

Mr. TURNBULL.—If this Bill becomes law, there will be a spiral of rising costs. The laws of gravity prevent me from indicating how high they will go, but that is what will happen if this sort of legislation is enacted. I repeat what I said during the Budget debate, and ask the Premier to again examine the exemptions. I appeal to him to retain the existing exemption in the Stamps Act relating to wages and salaries, and to examine the question of solicitors' trust funds.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—You should look at proposed new section 53c.

Mr. TURNBULL.—If the Premier is giving me an assurance that solicitors' trust funds are quite safe, are exempt—

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—You are giving me that assurance.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It appeared that the Premier was trying to convey that there is in the Bill an exemption in regard to solicitors' trust funds.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—Have you read it?

Mr. TURNBULL.—I have read the Bill, and the workers of West Brunswick and the farmers throughout Victoria know of its effects. I ask the Premier to consider what I have said.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Shepparton).—The tax proposed by this Bill has been correctly described as a turnover tax. It also qualifies to be called many other kinds of tax. The danger of a turnover tax is that it is a compounding tax. In other words, it is a tax that is paid on the same goods many times in the ordinary course of business. I shall give some examples of other problems related to a turnover tax. First, a business or an individual pays the
tax regardless of whether it or he is making or losing money. Secondly, it is inflationary by nature. Thirdly, the cost of collection is a factor. I appreciate that, probably contrary to general belief, the Government's cost of collecting the tax will be very small. However, it will not be cheap for industry or an employer to collect. It will place a great administrative burden on an employer. Fourthly, the burden of the tax falls on that section of the community least able to pay it. Apart from the legal validity of its being a tax on wages, the tax is morally wrong because it imposes a flat rate of taxation and has no relation to ability to pay. Since the second world war, the State of Victoria, and particularly the City of Melbourne, has become the financial centre of Australia. However, if such legislation as this is enacted over the years, this very satisfactory state of affairs will tend to alter and the financial centre of this country could move to Sydney or Canberra.

It is difficult to know what section of commerce or industry will be most affected by the tax which the Bill will impose. However, I know something of the workings of the dairying industry and, having listened to the honorable member for Gippsland East, I find it hard to visualize any industry that will suffer more. Even Government members who support the Bill must realize that it contains many features which are bad from the administrative point of view.

Some parts of the Bill obviously require amending. I shall quote some examples, but they will be only a few of many. First, I refer to the provision which applies to the agent who handles money destined to go interstate. If a solicitor handles money which is to go to Sydney, the tax must be paid but, if the money is sent direct, the tax will not be paid. I suggest that stock agents in border towns such as Wodonga and Albury will be faced with great problems. Secondly, there is the method of assessing stamp tax on wages. Obviously, many employers who employ only two or three people will pay the tax themselves. It would be easier if the amount of tax due could be calculated on the total wages bill and the employer were to pay on that amount; he could still have the right to recoup the money from his employees. Thirdly, I consider that the exemption of $25 a week on superannuation benefits is low. The person who relies on superannuation is faced with problems. He is not a burden on the State; he looks after himself. I believe he should receive consideration above all others.

Sir Henry Bolte.—How much would he pay in a year?

Mr. Ross-Edwards.—He would not pay very much, but he would have to make some payment. Then there are payments between subsidiary companies which are not covered by the short-term loan provision. I appreciate the problems that this raises, of what is a subsidiary company and where the principle should stop. However, in our modern company structure, it is the practice for large companies to have many subsidiaries and, on my interpretation of the Bill, payments between them will attract stamp duty.

Sir Henry Bolte.—Most of those subsidiaries have been created to save tax.

Mr. Ross-Edwards.—Some subsidiary companies have been created for that purpose, but many others have been taken over, and have been operated over the years as separate companies for convenient administration. Paragraph 22 under the heading “Exemptions” in the proposed new Third Schedule would indicate to people reading it for the first time that receipts for amounts under $10 will not attract stamp duty. However, I assure honorable members that stamp duty will be payable for amounts under $10.

The new tax will impose an administrative burden on the people of Victoria. It will be imposed on that...
section of the community least able to afford it. It is hard to understand a free enterprise Government introducing such a Bill.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that he was astounded at the course which this debate has taken. I am not astounded because this is not the first occasion on which a Minister, having introduced a Bill, has, in effect, thrown it at the House and has as much as said, "Take it or leave it."

This is one of the most controversial, most highly debatable and, in some respects, most important Bills to be introduced into this legislature since I have been a member of the Legislative Assembly.

What has been the position of the Treasurer? By insisting that the debate on the Bill should be resumed to-day, and by refusing to allow any further adjournment, the Premier and Treasurer has taken the attitude that this is a carefully thought out and considered Bill. What consideration has the Treasurer given this measure? The debate was supposed to have been resumed on the 3rd October, but it has been resumed three weeks after that date, for the simple reason that every section of the community, from the workers to great business interests, has pointed out that there are implications in the Bill which suggest that it has not been given proper consideration.

The Premier has received deputations and he has indicated to them that certain amendments will be made to the measure. He could well have adopted the procedure which he adopted towards the end of last year when he introduced a controversial stamps tax Bill. As I said, when speaking on another measure earlier to-day, that was a Bill of eight pages when it was introduced. However, it was so loosely thought out, that, on the resumption of its consideration, the Treasurer introduced four pages of amendments. Then, after the Bill was considered by the other House, there were another four pages of amendments.

I do not know what detailed criticism was levelled at the Bill, or what promises the Premier made to certain deputations about bringing forward amendments. Why could he not have brought those amendments forward and said that they indicated what the Government proposed to do and then allowed the debate to be adjourned for a few days until honorable members had the opportunity to consider them? The Bill was obviously introduced hastily.

When the Premier and Treasurer advanced another proposal a year or two ago, in regard to the imposition of a State income tax, he first consulted the Commonwealth Government to ascertain whether that Government would co-operate. On this occasion, however, he has gone ahead with his proposals without consulting the Commonwealth Government and without having received any indication of its attitude. In his second-reading speech on this Bill, the Premier said that provision had been made to allow for agreement between the Governor-General of the Commonwealth and the Governor in Council for the State. One would have thought that, before the Premier introduced a provision to allow for agreement, he would have found out whether any agreement could be reached. On the 17th September, the Leader of the Federal Opposition asked the Prime Minister what were the implications of some of the Victorian proposals, and the Prime Minister said, "I will have to look into that very carefully before I give you any response."

Although it may be debatable whether the Bill imposes an income tax, a purchase tax, or a sales tax, there is no question that, in part, it imposes an income tax. In his second-reading speech, the Premier said—

Other members of the community, including self-employed persons, will be
liable for receipt duty on virtually their total receipts, including that part of those receipts which represents their income.

Can anyone tell me that the tax is not an income tax? As a matter of fact, in the notes which the Premier circulated to honorable members—not those dealing with the same clause—he indicated that when a receipt is not requested the duty will still have to be paid. The taxpayers will be confronted from all directions. I return to my point that the Bill has not been carefully thought out. The Premier also said—

At this point I might mention that by its own legislation, the Commonwealth has expressly given an immunity from State stamp duty to some of its own instrumentalities. Particularly where these are in competition with private enterprise which will be liable for stamp duty on receipts under this Bill, we would expect these authorities to pay duty.

I suppose many honorable members have read Dickens's Book Great Expectations. That was apparently the attitude of the Premier when he went to the Premiers' conference in June of this year. He indicated that he went with great expectations but, of course, he came back with great disappointments. In his second-reading speech on this Bill, the honorable gentleman also stated—

One example which comes readily to mind is that of Trans-Australia Airlines, which is in competition with Ansett-A.N.A. The latter company will pay duty on its total receipts and, if Trans-Australia Airlines sought protection because it is a Commonwealth authority, there would have to be legislation to ensure that it paid an equitable amount, as its competitor would do. The only way we could ensure this would be to inconvenience the clients of Trans-Australia Airlines by placing the onus on them to stamp the receipt for the money they paid to Trans-Australia Airlines. This is something new. The person who receives the money is supposed to issue the receipt, but the Premier suggests that if I pay for something, I have to place a duty stamp on the receipt.

Sir Henry Bolte.—The onus is on you to see that he receipts it.

Mr. CLAREY.—It would be undesirable for legislation to operate in that way.

Sir Henry Bolte.—You are on the side of the Commonwealth.

Mr. CLAREY.—Mr. Speaker, I have not attempted to answer the interjections because you have said that I should take no notice of them.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! Under the Standing Orders, these interjections are disorderly. I call on the honorable member for Melbourne.

Mr. CLAREY.—The Government has introduced a half-cooked scheme and expects this House to accept it. The honorable member for Northcote referred to the double taxation that will be involved, and the honorable member for Shepparton stated, that in certain directions, this is a turnover tax.

Mr. SCANLAN.—The honorable member for Northcote said that it was an income tax.

Mr. CLAREY.—The measure has all the ingredients of an income tax, purchase tax, sales tax, turnover tax and pay-roll tax. The employer is required to affix stamps or pay duty on wages or salaries. To that extent it is a pay-roll tax. The Treasurer said that stamp duty would have to be paid on all receipts, including income. That is certainly an income tax. Obviously the Treasurer was not aware of the full implications of this Bill because, in reply to an interjection by the honorable member for Brunswick West, recorded at page 235 of Hansard of 19th September, 1967, the Premier was reported as saying—

I would have to examine the position; all those matters will be cleared up.

No one knows when they will be cleared up. The position is ludicrous. The honorable member for Northcote asked the Treasurer how this measure would affect the interest credited to the accounts of depositors at savings banks. I have a small
savings account, and if I am credited with $10 interest at the end of each financial year will I be required to pay the bank one cent, or will the bank debit my account with that amount? Probably some honorable members have State Electricity Commission debentures; will stamp duty be paid on the interest on those debentures, or will one cent be deducted for stamp duty? The proposed duty is not only a turnover tax, it is also a double tax. I am a member of the board of the Australian Natives Association. I may be required to make country visits. When I pay my hotel expenses, the recipient must pay duty. When I return to Melbourne and submit my expense account to the Australian Natives Association, I shall have to pay duty on the amount I receive. The tax will be paid twice.

In fairness to the people of Victoria, I oppose this Bill because the Government had no mandate to introduce it. The honorable member for Oakleigh said that he was bound by the policy speech of his Leader. That policy speech contained no taxation proposals. If the honorable member for Oakleigh is bound by the speech of the Treasurer, he should join with the Opposition in voting against the Bill. The Labor Party made no promise that it would not introduce fresh taxation. The Treasurer said, "My Government will not increase taxation, but if you put those bad Labor boys in, you will be up for millions". The people did not return my party to office, but we believe we must vote against the Bill. I do not wish to be accused by the Treasurer of being the "reader of the Opposition", but I shall refer to one or two brief statements in the daily newspapers relating to the announcement of these tax proposals.

An article in the Age newspaper of Wednesday, 5th July, 1967, under the headline, "Bitter Attacks on State tax plan", stated—

The president of the Victorian Taxpayers' Association (Mr. F. F. Knight) last night bitterly attacked the Premier's proposals to introduce a State income tax. He said the tax was a "silly scheme without rhyme or reason".

The president of the Victorian Taxpayers' Association is certainly not a member of the Labor Party, but as a businessman he knows something of what is involved. The article continued—

The secretary of the association (Mr. Eric Risstrom) said the tax was a perfect example "of robbing the rich and poor alike".

That was the contention of my Leader, and it is one of the reasons why the Opposition opposes the Bill.

"The serious discrimination of the tax in Western Australia has made it a hated scheme."

The Treasurer said that he had examined the position in Western Australia and that the Victorian proposals were based on that scheme.

"A turnover tax is a pay-roll tax, an entertainment tax and many others all rolled into one."

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member not to continue with too much reading.

Mr. CLAREY.—I bow to your ruling, Sir. I was endeavouring to indicate that all sections of the community—not merely the Opposition, the friendly societies, the cooperative housing societies, and the building societies but also the leaders of the business world—contend that the Government's proposal is ill-advised. The director of the Retail Traders' Association said that his association would oppose any sales tax. One authority regards it as a turnover tax, another as income tax, and a third as sales tax. Mr. Johnson, the director of the Retail Traders' Association, said that sales tax tended to inflate prices and was an undesirable burden on retailers. From every aspect this measure has been condemned. I hope that back-bench members of the Government, particularly the new members who are bubbling over with enthusiasm to justify themselves in the eyes of the Government, will rise to defend it.
Mr. STOKES (Evelyn).—I am in favor of the proposed tax, which has two great advantages. An examination of the Treasurer's Budget speech will show that expenditure has gone up by an additional $43,000,000 and that the expected income will be only $36,000,000, leaving a net gap of $7,000,000 to be bridged. The proposed stamp duty will bridge that gap. No individual in Victoria will be unduly harmed by this tax. I am one of those back-bench members of the Government who can see a lot of good in the measure, and I rise to the defence of the Treasurer.

The Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Northcote spent much time stating how untruthful the Treasurer had been during the election campaign, and how impracticable the proposed tax is. No one could deny that the election promises mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition were made in good faith. If the Federal Treasurer had done what our Premier hoped he would do at the time the statements were made, I do not think anyone would deny the accuracy of the Premier's statements. It is time that members of this Parliament and the people of Victoria looked to themselves to meet the State's financial needs and accepted the responsibility of raising the revenue that is necessary to meet the expenditures that have to be made by the Government.

The Opposition described the proposed tax as a bad tax, but not one speaker from either the Opposition or the Country Party has suggested how the shortage of money that must be bridged can be met, or has submitted any alternative method by which the money could be more satisfactorily raised. The Leader of the Opposition stated that Victoria is in a mess, but I point out that during the régime of the Liberal Government there have been many achievements, and progress and prosperity have come to all sections of the community. I think it is generally conceded that the opportunities for living, particularly amongst working people, are better in Victoria than in any other State. I deny that Victoria is in a mess.

I have some comments to make on how the Bill could be very much improved from a practical working point of view. I know a number of the types of people whom members of the Opposition represent in this House, and I have heard no grave complaints from them. An ordinary tradesman or craftsman who receives up to $80 or so a week will pay only 6 or 8 cents a week tax, which is not a severe burden. I challenge Opposition members to name one group of people who will not be able to bear the tax that is proposed. I think it will work very well. Members of the Country Party approached the Bill in similar fashion, and offered no better alternative than the Opposition. The Leader of the Country Party asserted that the Government should get good value for the money it spends, and so it should. I am sure the Government will take every opportunity of doing so. But members of the Country Party should be careful when they discuss the value of money because a great proportion of people in the country cannot even earn their keep without subsidies. Panton Hills, which forms part of my electorate, is a very rich centre and a great many people in the dairying industry there share the views I am expressing. There are men in that industry who do not wish to face up to competition from people in other primary industries. So far as value for money is concerned, those people who are seeking privileges and easy conditions compared with the rest of the community are not really in a position to suggest that what the Government is now doing is not in the interests of Victoria.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised somewhat similar objections to the Bill to those advanced by his Leader. I wish to comment on his assertion that it is wrong for
receipts to be necessary in respect of insurance premiums. I do not say that his comment is necessarily wrong, but point out that duty on those receipts will be paid for by the insurance companies concerned. The Bill has not been before the House for very long, but perhaps I could have studied it more carefully. I believe the wording of the Bill is so complicated that it could correctly be described as a Government administration's dream!

What is the Government trying to do? It is trying, by imposing a stamp duty of only 1 cent on every $10, to raise $7,000,000 to meet Victoria's needs, and it is suggested that this sum could correctly be obtained by a turnover or stamp tax on trading.

In the majority of returns furnished by people engaged in trade, the amounts will be lumped together and industry as a whole will have to pay. Why is it necessary to have the tedious rigmarole as set out to be gone through with banks, agents and brokers and others? I believe the administration could be reduced and the tax collected in a much simpler fashion. It is not altogether practical, but one might almost suggest the application of an honour system in industry in respect to turnover and all salaries. With their book-keeping entries, firms are in a position to note what they have to pay, and if the matter were policed by properly trained inspectors it should work satisfactorily. When evasion of stamp duty is discovered, the amounts should be paid, say, four, five or six times over by those transgressing. If people in industry and those who employ labour were under an obligation to pay the duty, the costs would be passed on to a large degree—the majority would, no doubt, do so. There is the difficulty of administering the collection of all the small sums of money involved, especially where only one or two persons are employed. Penalties as suggested could be imposed on persons who do not pay. These rather trivial amounts which, although small, will in total produce a sum sufficient to meet Victoria's present needs.

The principle which has been suggested of paying fines up to $100 could be very much more easily controlled. Although some persons may evade the tax, in the long run they would be caught and enormous savings would be made by the Government in the cost of collection as well as in legal procedures that have to be carried out in accordance with the Bill. I suggest to the Government that the proposed tax should be agreed to in principle, and that when the measure reaches the Committee stage the proposal could be referred to a group of practical commercial people, outside of Government administration, who will be involved in the collection of the money. Surely they would be able to work out short cuts to make the collection of stamp duty easier with saving to themselves and advantages to the Government.

The Bill is fairly long and unnecessarily complicated. Its implementation would lead to a number of prosecutions and penalties which could be avoided. In the long run, because of these difficulties and collection costs, the tax may not provide a large amount of revenue for the State. Taking the broad view, I agree that the collection of stamp duty on salaries can be regarded as either a stamp duty or a form of income tax. If Victoria is to regain its independence and authority of administration, the time must come when the State must raise the money that it needs and hand to the Federal Government amounts which are needed for Federal purposes. It is much better and more economical for taxation to be arranged on that basis than for all the money to be handed to a central body to which the State must go cap in hand to get back money for its own purposes. The proposed tax will make it possible for this State to balance its Budget. It is a source of income which will not impose an undue burden on any member or class
in the community, particularly if steps are taken to ensure that the administration and control of the collection of this money is done in a more economical fashion than is at present envisaged, and for that reason I support the Bill.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—This measure is entitled the Stamps Bill and relates to receipt duty, but when one examines the Bill and its implications one does not need to be very well versed in what represents income to realize that that portion of the measure which applies to salaries and wages is a straight income tax. The vast majority of people who will be affected have no other source of income or livelihood than the salaries or wages they are drawing. It is difficult to understand how the Government can term this a stamp duty.

It is clear that in its present form this measure is a repetition of the proposition submitted to the House by the Government in 1964. At the by-election for the South-Eastern Province, in that year, the Government was humiliated by losing 24,000 primary votes as a result of the proposed introduction of this type of legislation. I am prepared to say that if the Government were put to the test at the present time a similar result would be achieved in 1967, because the Government is dishing up to the public in another form exactly the same legislation which so overwhelmingly rejected in the blue-ribbon Liberal seat which was lost to the Labor Party, in consequence of which the Government lost its control of the Upper House. I believe history would repeat itself if the Government were put to the test in this fashion at this time. There is no doubt that this Bill, like many of the fiscal measures that have been introduced into this House by the Treasurer, has been ill-considered.

The implications are not appreciated or understood. This was amply illustrated when the honorable member for Brunswick West, by interjection during the Treasurer's second-reading speech, asked—

What have you done about paying money into and out of trust accounts? Have you exempted those payments?

The Treasurer replied—

There are no double payments of duty. The agent provision is preserved.

At a later stage, I asked the Treasurer what would happen with transactions which were merely a transfer from an operating company to its parent company, and whether there would be a multiple tax. The Treasurer said, "We think that will be all right." I was taken to task by him when I suggested that the public's obligations under this Bill should be spelt out precisely. I believe the remark was fair and intelligent. The honorable member for Brunswick West also said—

I had solicitors' trust accounts in mind.

To this, the Treasurer replied—

I would have to examine the position; all those matters will be cleared up.

I remind the House that this statement was made on the 19th September, and a vote is to be taken on the Bill tonight, the 24th October. However, Parliament has not received an explanation of the matters to which I have referred. This is the sort of financial management to which the State is subjected and the disrespect with which Parliament is treated. The time has come when Parliament ought to be told what is going on. Apparently one or two Government officials know, although it is obvious that the Treasurer does not.

Mr. BILLING.—Have you read the proposed section 53c?

Mr. PHELAN.—I have done so, but obviously certain members of the Government have not. This section provides an exemption for agents, but a trust account is not an agent. It has been suggested that anybody who is handling money on an inter-company basis will be treated as an agent. If this is the position, it
should be spelt out precisely in the legislation so that members of the public and the accountants who will be responsible for handling the transactions for various businesses will know what is involved. At present, one man's opinion is as good as another's, because until the principles are applied and decided upon, no one will be sure how far and on how many occasions this tax will be applicable.

I was surprised to learn that the Bill brings within the stamp tax provisions a stamp duty on wages and salaries, which is straight income, and also other additional items such as receipts from primary produce, dividends and interest received by individuals, and insurance premiums which hitherto have been exempted from stamp duty. I agree that too much avoidance of stamp duty on legitimate receipts has occurred. Previously, there was a minimum of $10 on which duty was payable. The rate was 3 cents on any amount over $10, with a maximum duty of 20 cents. I feel that few members appreciate that where people purchase large capital items or, for instance, a house valued at $10,000, the stamp duty on the receipt will rise from 20 cents to $10.

When the full implications of the tax proposals are known, it will be found that in the four months remaining during this current year, the amount of revenue received from these proposals has been grossly understated at $7,400,000. The honorable member for Evelyn suggested that this amount was required to bridge a temporary gap between the estimated increased revenue for this year from various sources such as land tax, probate duty, and motor registration and the required additional revenue to meet the estimated increased expenditure of $34,000,000 but one does not have to be a mathematical genius to realize that in a full year the receipts from these proposals will be in excess of $30,000,000. It is obvious that the amount referred to is grossly understated and in the four months that the legislation will be in operation during the current financial year, a sum in excess of $10,000,000 will be received: in future years an amount of more than $30,000,000 will be derived from these sources without any increase in rates.

Unlike the honorable member for Evelyn, I believe the general principle of taxation provided in the Bill is bad. The principle by which taxation has been levied over the centuries has been ability to pay.

Mr. DIXON.—Are you in favour of income tax which is based on ability to pay?

Mr. PHELAN.—In this instance, I do not believe—nor do I believe the honorable member for St. Kilda, if he were sincere, would agree—that the basis of the proposed tax is equitable.

Mr. DIXON.—Are you suggesting that I was insincere?

Mr. PHELAN.—That is a very pertinent suggestion, but I was not intending to make it. However, I shall not take issue with the honorable member. I consider that there is no equity in a tax which falls in the same proportion on a person who earns $1,000 per year and one who earns $10,000 per year.

Mr. DIXON.—Why don’t you be consistent in your arguments?

Mr. PHELAN.—I am consistent to the extent that over the years the only basis of equitable distribution of cost has been on a person’s ability to pay. I do not think one will find anywhere in the English-speaking world a different principle.

Mr. DIXON.—Follow that to its logical conclusion.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member for St. Kilda will cease interjecting.

Mr. PHELAN.—If the gag has been removed from the honorable member for St. Kilda, he should speak when I resume my seat.
It is remarkable that this Bill has been introduced following efforts by the Premier to convince the electors of this State that no new tax would be imposed after the elections. Of course, the honorable member for Evelyn said that if the State had obtained its requirements from Canberra, there would be no necessity for this tax imposition. The Premier did not qualify his statement. If the amount that the State needed to raise was limited to $6,000,000-odd, the Government's first action should have been to cut its cloth according to what was available.

In explaining this Bill, the Treasurer stated that it was closely tied to the Budget proposals. This was, as it were, the other side of the coin. If this is so, the community is faced with a rather unfortunate situation because the Treasurer last year stated that he had been able to pare the departmental estimates by $20,000,000, whereas this year the estimates are up by $34,000,000. The Treasurer has not indicated that he has done anything to pare the estimates submitted by Departments. As I have said, last year he was able to prune the estimates by $20,000,000, although after passing Supplementary Estimates for a further $3,400,000, which with the estimated deficit of $2,600,000 represents $60,000,000, the Treasurer was able to balance the Budget. I believe that a little prudent combing of departmental expenditure on this occasion might have found the elusive $7,400,000 to which the honorable member for Evelyn referred. If that had been done, there would have been no difficulty in applying principles of economy and cutting down departmental extravagance to recover the amount.

This Bill will have a retarding effect on the economy of this State. I am also concerned that the provisions of the Bill will apply to Commonwealth officers, if the State can make satisfactory arrangements with the Governor-General. There has been ample evidence and publicity that the Federal Government is not happy about the proposal. In the Federal House in 1964, when a State income tax was mooted, there was a categorical statement that if the State raised money by direct taxation, the Commonwealth would reduce its grants to the State.

Mr. WILCOX.-Would you agree with that sort of approach?

Mr. PHELAN.-It is not a question of whether I agree, or whether the Minister of Transport agrees; it is a fact of life which we have to face. If this Government is so inept that it does not realize the position, then it is time it got out and made room for a Government which can understand what is happening.

Mr. DIXON.-Who made that categorical statement?

Mr. PHELAN.-It was the Federal Treasurer.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member to ignore interjections; they will probably cease if he does.

Mr. PHELAN.—Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. We will still have to face the fact that if additional tax is raised in Victoria, we will be subsidizing some of the other States. The Government is over-selling Victoria as an ideal place in which to live. Victoria is already the highest taxed State in the Commonwealth, and its people are to have superimposed upon them a new stamp tax which can be classed as a turnover tax or a capital tax.

There are sufficient legal practitioners in the Government party, among members of the Opposition, and even in the ranks of the Country Party to recognize that the principle applied in past years has been that a stamp duty has always been levied on the instrument of transfer. Likewise, when duty has been payable on a receipt, that has been the instrument upon which the tax has been levied. Under the proposed legislation, the recipient of funds will be taxed on the gross amount that he
receives before any deduction is made for income tax. This gives the lie to the statement of the Premier that there will be no double tax. I can give example after example to prove that a result of this Bill will be a multiplicity of charges in respect of many transactions. I do not believe that this is in the interests of the sound development of the State.

It is obvious that, owing to extravagances in many instances, the Government has got into a financial position which has forced it to impose this additional tax on the people. In his Budget speech, the Treasurer referred to the Public Works Loan Application Bill, and in the second-reading speech of the Minister of Public Works on that measure I was amazed to notice provision for expenditure on additional wharves and specialized equipment for Westernport Bay.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I invite the attention of the honorable member to Standing Order No. 87, which states that no member shall allude to any debate of the same session upon a question or Bill not being then under discussion.

Mr. PHELAN.—Mr. Speaker, I was referring to a reference in the Treasurer's Budget speech to the Public Works Loan Application Bill. In explaining the Stamps Bill, the Premier stated—

The circumstances which make it necessary to submit this measure to the House have been explained in detail in the Budget speech, and I do not propose to repeat them here. The Bill and the Budget go hand in hand. They are, as it were, the opposite sides of the same coin, and as foreshadowed in the Budget speech the Bill is introduced now so that it can be considered by the House in the context of the Budget.

Clearly, the matter was related by the Premier to the need for the State to raise funds, and in his Budget speech he referred also to the Public Works Loan Application Bill. The Government cannot afford to undertake essential works in the State but a fiasco began when the Government gave an assurance that the building of the BP wharf at Westernport would be for the benefit of the general public and for other purposes; now we find that it is a specialized wharf which has no general application.

The SPEAKER.—Order! Is this out of the Budget?

Mr. PHELAN.—Yes, this is related to capital expenditure referred to in the Budget.

The SPEAKER.—I rule this discussion out of order under Standing Order No. 87.

Mr. PHELAN.—The point I wanted to make was that there is a proposal to construct additional wharves at Government expense, and now the Government is compelled to raise money to finance the State by imposing a special stamp tax.

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).—Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I make two submissions—first, that the honorable member for Kara Kara is discussing something to do with Westernport Bay that cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be connected with the matter now before the House; and, secondly, that you have already directed him on that matter.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I uphold the point of order. I was being very indulgent with the honorable member to see if his remarks did have some relevance to the question of extra capital expenditure, but the reference to the debate on the Budget is out of order.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of other works, in future years the State will be forced to service, partly out of the revenue raised from the proposed new stamp duty, a larger loan liability. The Government has already got beyond the $7,400,000 said to be the amount to be raised as a result of the passage of this Bill.
Mr. BIRRELL.—For this year.

Mr. PHELAN.—For a period of four months. One so-called specialist is out of his place, out of order, and not thinking straight. It has been stated that during this financial year the sum of $7,400,000 will be raised and that it is hoped the new tax will be in operation by February.

As a result of general financial mismanagement, the Government has found it necessary to impose a tax that the people of Victoria once rejected when they were given the opportunity to express their voice on vital matters. The Government went to the people with a categorical statement that there would be no further taxes levied in Victoria, and when it was returned to office it announced that it would impose the tax provided for in this Bill. When the opportunity is presented to them, the people of this State will react in the same manner as they reacted when a similar proposal was mooted previously. I should have thought that the Government would learn a lesson from what happened before, but it has not done so. The Government has blundered into an almost inescapable corner, and it has decided to impose this special tax as the only means left to it to extricate itself from its financial difficulties. When it comes to the expenditure of money, apparently the last thing that the Government ever considers is looking to the effectiveness and the efficiency of its operations.

The honorable member for Evelyn made an unfortunate reference to primary industries when he said that they had to be subsidized so that they could remain in business. Whatever we may think about industrial development, Australia always has been and as far as we can foresee always will be a primary producing nation. Australia is dependent upon its primary industries for export income, and while it is appreciated that secondary industries provide employment—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I think the honorable member is taking the subject too far.

Mr. PHELAN.—I am replying to a statement made by the honorable member for Evelyn. I remind the House that there is no industry in Australia that has not enjoyed for its establishment and continuation a subsidy under tariff protection.

The SPEAKER.—That is adequate reply to the honorable member for Evelyn.

Mr. PHELAN.—Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Bill under discussion will be applied to a section of the community which cannot pass on its costs and which has to compete on world markets. Far from being inefficient, as suggested by the honorable member for Evelyn, the primary producing industries of the nation produce twice as much food and fibre as any other nation in the world.

The SPEAKER.—Order! The honorable member has made his point on something that is not relevant.

Mr. PHELAN.—I hope that when adjustments of the stamp duty and the amendments to the law that will follow the passing of this Bill are considered, some thought will be given to relief for that section of the community that needs it most.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—I support the speeches that my colleagues have made on this Bill. I believe that we have the support of the vast majority of the Victorian people concerning this taxing measure and the principle underlying it. The Government's policy was put to the people on the 29th April of this year, and the mandate that it received did not cover the introduction of a measure such as this. It is interesting to note that members occupying Government benches have not been prepared to deny that during the election campaign they said the Government did not intend to impose another tax upon the people.
During the debate, the Premier has been the target for the main stream of criticism as being the culprit who promised the Victorian people that there would be no taxing measures such as this one imposed upon them. I assure the honorable gentleman that he is not the only person who went to the electors and said that there would be no increase in taxation. I was interested and amused to hear the honorable member for Geelong interject when the honorable member for Kara Kara and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were expressing their opposition to the Bill. The honorable member for Geelong was one of those members of the Government party who ridiculed during the election campaign the suggestion that there would be any increase in taxation. On election day, 29th April, in response to accusations that an incoming Liberal Government would increase taxes, the honorable member for Geelong adopted a different attitude from that which he has adopted in this House today. Now he apparently seems to be strongly in favour of increased taxes.

Mr. TURNBULL.—What did he say?

Mr. TREZISE.—I quote from a newspaper report of that date—

“A lot of boloney” was how Mr. Hayden Birrell described a statement that there would be a severe tax rise were the Liberals returned to power today. Australian Labor Party statements were quite beyond normal human comprehension, he said.

With the passage of time it can be now seen who were the sincere political parties at the last State election. The attitude of members of the Opposition is in contrast to that of the honorable member for Geelong and the other members of the Government party concerning this Bill. Their attitude is now proven to be hypocritical and dishonest. Some weeks ago, the Premier said that he could not understand why the people of Geelong were voting Labor. It is clear to me why, in a recent by-election, a majority of 8,000 for the Liberal Party at the previous election was turned into a victory for the Labor Party. Following the last State election, Government members expressed disappointment at the large loss of votes by the Liberal Party. The reason for the decline was the fact that the people of Victoria and particularly in the Geelong area had become sick and tired of being led by the nose by a hypocritical Government such as that which is now in office. As was stated by the honorable member for Kara Kara, this is not the first time that the Government went to the polls with a false attitude. In 1964, similar carbon copy statements were made to the people, and we all know the result of that election—there followed the greatest increases in taxation in the history of the State of Victoria.

Mr. WILCOX.—What happened at the next election?

Mr. TREZISE.—After the proposal to levy income tax became known, the South-Eastern Province by-election was contested, at which the greatest number of people on record changed over and voted for the Labor Party candidate.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I ask the honorable member for Geelong North to debate the Bill and not election results.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I rise to a point of order. Surely it is more than relevant to the Bill and to this debate that the Government claimed to have a mandate by virtue of what was stated at election time. It would be restricting honorable members for you, Sir, to rule that they should not refer to promises that were clearly and freely given on the hustings concerning the proposals envisaged in this Bill.

The SPEAKER.—I find no point of order.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—Earlier, the Premier asked where the increased finance necessary for education and so forth would be obtained if this Bill were not passed. However during the election campaign, the
Premier stated that it was proposed to spend $2,500,000 on State-owned and private schools, and that this sum would be provided for in the next Budget without any increase in taxation. By his statement in the House today, the honorable gentleman has now revealed himself as being hypocritical and having led the people of Victoria up the garden path. As was stated by the honorable member for Kara Kara, I believe the electors of Victoria are beginning to awaken to the Government's tricks. After the 1964 State election, thousands of people marched up Bourke-street in protest against the hypocritical action of the Government. It is no wonder that recent Gallup polls show that the Victorian Liberal Government and its counterpart in the Federal sphere are a declining force. The people of this State are demanding honest government, and this measure does not fall within that category. On behalf of my electorate and, I believe, on behalf of the vast majority of electors in the State of Victoria, I claim that this Bill must be opposed at all costs.

Dr. JENKINS (Reservoir).—Opposition to the proposed measure has already been thoroughly canvassed, but it is important that honorable members should express their individual attitudes toward it. By now, it must be clear that there is grave objection to the Premier having stated that there would be no further taxes imposed and then having gone back on his word. The honorable member for Geelong North has reinforced this by a statement by one member of the Government party. I do not think there is doubt in the mind of anyone that the honorable gentleman has been dishonest.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! Did the honorable member for Reservoir state that another member had been dishonest?

Dr. JENKINS.—I might have done so, Mr. Speaker, and, if so, I withdraw the remark. The Premier made a promise which he did not keep but, much as it grieves me to do so, I must speak in his defence. Members who have spoken in opposition to the Bill have stated that the Premier promised roads, education and hospitals without the imposition of further taxation. However, the honorable gentleman made no such statement about hospitals in his policy speech. In fact, he promised nothing in relation to health and hospitals, and that symbolizes what he has done—nothing. His approach has been completely negative.

In considering this particular tax, one wonders how the Premier explained it to members of his Cabinet or to his Parliamentary party. Indeed, in view of the silence of members of the Government party concerning this matter, I am impelled to wonder whether the honorable gentleman explained it at all. If he did so, he must have described it as a grab-all, an all-inclusive tax that would take in everything—purchase tax, income tax and all the things that have been mentioned in the discussion tonight. To give the impost a sweet name, his colleagues were probably told that it would be called a receipt duty tax and would be put over in that manner so that people would accept it, because it would be only a small tax which no one would notice. However, once it is imposed it will, no doubt, be increased annually in order to augment the revenue of the State, as so many other taxes have been increased annually in the past, and so, surreptitiously, an additional burden will be placed upon those in the community who can least afford to bear it.

As has already been pointed out, probably those who will be most affected by the proposed tax are wage earners and primary producers. The honorable member for Evelyn stated that this tax will represent only a small amount and will not greatly affect anyone. He then talked about the ordinary working-man as being a person who receives in the region of $80 a week. There is no reality in that wage level among ordinary wage-earners.
Mr. WILCOX.—The honorable member was speaking about tradesmen, and he was pretty correct in what he said.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Minister of Transport may make a speech later.

Dr. JENKINS.—The best speeches by Ministers and members of the Government party are made while they remain seated. Perhaps that attitude relieves the pressure on their brains! Although the tax paid by the wage-earner and the primary producer may be small, one must consider its cumulative effect. This tax could be the last straw that breaks the camel's back, so to speak. Many charges imposed on ordinary individuals are excused on the ground that, in themselves, they are small, but their cumulative effect can prove very burdensome, and that is the principal reason for our objection to this measure.

Apparently not all members on the Government side of the Chamber are convinced about the propriety of the proposed tax. The honorable member for Evelyn discussed practical aspects, and he stated that he was not convinced that the measure, if it becomes law, can be effectively administered. He wants to have the whole matter referred to a committee. We assume that the honorable member for Evelyn represents a considerable body of opinion on the Government side of the Chamber, and so he acts as spokesman for the silent masses on the Government benches. Moreover, he is a businessman of wide experience, and one wonders what the Premier will have to say to him concerning this matter.

There have been requests for the submission of alternatives to this measure. The Premier, in an impassioned plea, stated that although the Government did not undertake to depart in any way from the principles underlying the measure—the Opposition submits that there are no such principles—he was prepared to listen to constructive comments. I maintain that it is the duty of the Government to run the State. It is not the responsibility of the Opposition to do so. If the Government submits to the House a stupid measure like this one, it can expect to have it chopped around. A similar proposal proved to be particularly unpopular in Western Australia, yet the Premier stated that he had already considered that legislation. By interjection, the honorable member for Burwood stated that business people will pay this tax out of their profits. My comment on that suggestion could not be recorded. There is no doubt in my mind that the proposed tax will be passed on to the consumer, and the ordinary person in the community will have to withstand its cumulative effect.

In the House to-night mention was made of the bearing which this impost will have on Commonwealth-State relationships. The Premier failed to prevail upon his party to change the Senate team in November, and, having had clashes with the Federal Treasurer, particularly when accusations were made about the honorable gentleman's mental arithmetic, his Federal colleagues have now raised a doubt about the validity of this measure. Probably no one in this House realizes better than do Opposition members that the Premier is an ordinary man. In fact, he is a very ordinary man. There is some virtue in an ordinary man working out what should be done in Parliament for the good of society. If an ordinary man accepts a measure of this character, one would expect him to have had good advice concerning it.

In his second-reading speech on this Bill, the Premier, in referring to Commonwealth employees, stated—

In the view of our legal advisers, the Commonwealth Government and its authorities would not be bound by the general provisions relating to deductions by employers, nor would its employees necessarily be bound by the liability to pay receipt duty on periodical payments of salaries and wages.
The honorable gentleman made it obvious that he had taken legal advice concerning the problems relating to employees of the Commonwealth Government. Has he taken legal advice also as to whether the Commonwealth considers that the proposed impost might properly be an income tax and thus affect the amounts payable by the Commonwealth to this State? If so, surely it is up to him to inform the House as to the nature of such legal advice. Opposition members condemn this measure as being a thoroughly bad one which represents the breaking of an election promise. The only good feature we can see in it is that at least we will not be chased when we are dead, because the payment to the trustees of any cemetery is exempt from its operation.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I was hopeful that the honorable member for Hawthorn would seek the call in order to defend the Government in this debate. However, as is usually the case in this type of debate, Government supporters are so disgusted with the Bill that they have decided that the best thing to do is to remain silent until there are no further speakers from the Opposition, when the vote can be taken. Earlier to-day the Leader of the Opposition, because of the grave doubts which were being cast on the validity of certain aspects of the proposed legislation, sought a further adjournment of the debate. Eminent officials of the Federal Treasury have raised doubts about its validity. However, simply because the Government has the required numbers the attempt to have the debate delayed was defeated. Members of the Opposition are not the only persons who are concerned with this measure; the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce has expressed grave concern. In fact, the Chamber was so perturbed about the Bill that to-day it made strenuous efforts to have it delayed. Those efforts were also unsuccessful. It is interesting to note that an article in to-night’s Herald reads—

Sir Henry would not comment to-day on the report that the Federal Government might declare the stamp tax on wages as income tax.

“It’s a stamp duty on receipts, whether it is for goods services or salaries,” he said.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the interpretation placed on the Bill by officials of the Federal Treasury was that if it affected business it would be a turnover tax and if it affected salaries it would be an income tax. Even the Minister of Transport, who is at the table, should be able to grasp that fact.

Mr. WILCOX.—The Treasury officials are not the final arbiters.

Mr. WILTON.—As is usual in debates of this type, the Minister of Transport is making his contribution by interjection. He has not the courage to stand up and defend the Government against the charges made by members of the Opposition, who have repeatedly told the House that the Government, through a political subterfuge at the last election, was able to hoodwink the people of Victoria into believing that they would receive protection from a Liberal Party Government. During that election campaign, the Premier said that if the people voted for a Labor Party Government there would be increases in taxation. However, now that the Liberal Party has been elected it has produced the dire results that the Premier said would follow if the Labor Party was elected.

The definition of “employee” contained in proposed sub-section (1) of section 50 is as follows:—

“Employee” means a person who receives or is entitled to receive salary or wages and includes—

(a) a member of the Parliament or a person employed by the State of Victoria or an authority of the State of Victoria; and

(b) Where the Governor in Council has entered into an arrangement with the Governor-General, subject to . . .
What will be the position if the Governor-General tells the Governor in Council to go to hell?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member to moderate his language.

Mr. WILTON.—It is no wonder that one gets carried away with this stinking measure.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I have already asked the honorable member to moderate his language.

Mr. WILTON.—The smell of this Bill is permeating the atmosphere of this Chamber. It is one of the most iniquitous measures to come before this Parliament. It will go down in history as the Bolte Budget double-soft shoe shuffle. Could the Premier inform the House whether he has confirmed an undertaking with the Federal Government and the Governor-General that the arrangements to be entered into with the Governor in Council will become a fact? Is the Prime Minister happy about having his gross salary taxed by the Premier of Victoria? No indications have been given along these lines, although the Leader of the Opposition attempted to obtain some clarification from the Premier. The honorable gentleman went through the usual rigmarole of saying that if we want more schools, roads, and so on, we must provide an alternative means of raising finance.

The Premier has forgotten that when he came into office he inherited a surplus from the previous Government which he quickly dissipated; he has progressively received more money from the Federal Treasury and is now receiving a greater financial return than any previous State Treasurer. The people of Victoria are expected to accept this form of taxation to extricate the Treasurer from financial difficulties of his own making. He has decided to try to ram down the throats of members of the Opposition that, if this Bill is not passed, the school building programme and the road construction programme will be considerably interrupted.

Members of the Country Party have explained to the House the grave effects of the proposed legislation on primary industries. The honorable member for Kara Kara pointed out the important role that primary industries play in the overall financial position of Australia. An examination of the exemptions provided for in the Bill discloses that the Treasurer is concerned about the Totalizator Agency Board, bookmakers and punters and is prepared to grant them exemptions, but he is not prepared to grant protection to those people who are buying homes through co-operatives and other housing societies. I would be grateful if the Minister of Transport, who is at the table, will inform the House what protection such a person receives under this legislation. The only exemption I can find in relation to housing is for the Housing Commission.

In my opinion, the Bill will have serious effects on business and industry generally. The honorable member for Brunswick West has referred to the cost spiral that will be touched off by the proposed imposts. Figures for the latest quarter indicate that the consumer price index has increased considerably, and members of the Opposition would like to know what the Government proposes to do to safeguard the interests of the people of Victoria against the rising costs which will flow from the enactment of this Bill. These costs will occur because the various houses of commerce and industry will pass on the expenses that they will incur as a result of compliance with the provisions of the measure.

What will be the situation in regard to Commonwealth Government undertakings and Commonwealth public servants? The Leader of the Opposition attempted to get information from the Premier on this aspect this afternoon, but he met a
blank wall. It will be interesting to see the Federal Cabinet’s decision in regard to whether Trans-Australia Airlines, a Commonwealth undertaking, should make a contribution under this legislation in regard to its Victorian operations. What will be the situation with people who engage solely in interstate trade? To escape these imposts, they may decide to take their business transactions out of Victoria. This could touch off a considerable exodus of industry from this State.

I agree with other members of the Opposition who have expressed the opinion that this is a bad Bill. It has been brought into this Chamber under a false premise, and if any back-bench member of the Government party was sincere in his attitude towards it he would be prepared to resign his seat in this Parliament and allow the people of Victoria to express their views on the Bill at a by-election. If that happened, I am confident that the electors would act in the same manner as they did on a previous occasion when the Premier foreshadowed a State income tax.

The honorable member for Geelong North quoted from a responsible newspaper circulating in the Geelong area a report to the effect that the honorable member for Geelong said it was utter nonsense to suggest that there would be an increase in taxation if the Liberal Party was re-elected to office. In his statement to the press, the honorable member for Geelong implied that any suggestion of increased taxes was a political stunt by Labor Party candidates. If that gentleman is sincere concerning his attitude and responsibilities in this Chamber, he would be prepared to resign his seat and say to the people of Geelong, “Now, you can express your views concerning this legislation.” I have no doubt concerning the outcome if this occurred.

I condemn the Bill. It is repugnant to me and completely opposed to all the democratic principles which I have come to respect and honour. The Government has no mandate from the people of Victoria to introduce legislation of this kind. The only reason why the Liberal Government remains in office is because of the particular electoral system which operates in Victoria.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds).—Briefly, I propose to state my position concerning this Bill, and in doing so, I propose to refer to the election campaign which was conducted in the Moonee Ponds electorate. During the campaign, when the question of State tax was raised, the electors of Moonee Ponds made a clear and precise judgment of their opinion of the Premier in his attitude to State taxation. The honorable gentleman had stated categorically at a public meeting that there would be no increases in State taxation, but the electors of Moonee Ponds were suspicious, and as I was the only person who was standing on the principles of the Labor Party in the electorate, and as I was elected to office, I assure those electors that I am opposed to this Bill. Government members were very vocal during the election campaign to convince the electors that there would be no increase in State taxation but, in the six months after the election, particularly since this proposal has been brought before the House, they have been silent.

An article in the Herald of 28th April of this year directs attention precisely to what the Premier said concerning this issue. The article states that the honorable gentleman was speaking about the latest direct charges that he would impose if returned to office, and that he said he could not impose a purchase tax, because it was unconstitutional. However, the idea of a purchase tax had been accepted by the present Government and he was trying to overcome the legal barrier. This is very relevant because at the present time this State could be facing its greatest constitutional crisis for 20 years.
In the Age newspaper of to-day, the Federal Treasurer, Mr. McMahon, is reported as having said that a special meeting of Federal Cabinet was necessary and would be held either later this week or early next week to discuss the new taxes that would be imposed in Victoria. In to-night's Herald, there is a leader dealing with the same subject. This article, which indicates that the whole of Victoria is in a state of alarm concerning the proposals, reads—

Financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States could become even more confusing than they are now if an argument is allowed to develop over the Victorian Government's plan to collect stamp duty on wage payments. According to reports to-day from Canberra, the Federal Cabinet may accept the view of its Treasury advisers that this stamp duty comes into the definition of income tax when applied to wages.

Because the Federal Government is held to have priority in collecting income tax, Victoria's allocation from the tax pool might then be cut by the amount of its own collection from duties on wages.

That is a clear statement, and I should like to hear Government members contradict what all the authorities, who are knowledgeable on this subject, are saying. Not only are Opposition members and Country Party members directing the Government's attention to some of the problems associated with the new tax, but the newspapers and other bodies involved with the handling of public moneys are also concerned at the position.

I should have thought that accountants would be up in arms once they understood the implications of this legislation and the effects that it will have on their clients. It could be the forerunner of one of the greatest constitutional crises in this country for many years. This measure has been brought in by a complacent Government which for many years has remained apathetic to the feelings of the people. I assure my constituents that I am totally opposed to the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—Opposition members have waited all night to hear some Government back-bench members defend the Premier, but we have now come to the conclusion that the Premier has either stood over them or bulldozed this measure through his own party. So far, only the honorable member for Evelyn has spoken on behalf of the Government and, although he said that he supported the Bill, it was obvious that he was very critical of it. The honorable member echoed the criticisms of the Opposition concerning the Bill when he said that the new tax was an income tax; the honorable member also referred to it as a pay-roll tax.

The Opposition contends that the proposed impost is also a purchase tax, but the Premier denies that it is any of these things; he contends that it is purely a receipt tax. The honorable gentleman may have pulled the wool over the eyes of the majority of members of his own party but he has not pulled it over the eyes of all of them. There are some back-bench Government members who feel the same way concerning this measure as do Opposition members, but they do not have the courage to voice their views because the occupants of the Ministerial bench would not like it. I can only repeat what I said previously concerning the recently elected Liberal members in this House. Standing on the election platform and looking starry-eyed at the Premier, whom they considered to be a great statesman, they said, "We will stand by him all the way." At the same time, they agreed with the Premier that no direct tax of any form would be introduced after the election.

Mr. JONA.—Go on.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I am going on, and I should like to hear from the honorable member for Hawthorn who interjects persistently, but very rarely makes a real contribution to the debates in this Chamber. When the honorable member does speak, he is worth listening to, even though the Opposition does not always agree
with him. If he had the same courage as the honorable member for Evelyn, he would voice his opinion concerning this measure, because he is not completely sold on it.

Mr. Jona.—That is not true.

Mr. Fennessy.—By a faint interjection, which the honorable member wanted the Premier to hear but was hoping that someone else would not hear, the honorable member for Hawthorn denies that he opposes the legislation. This Bill is false, because the Premier said during the election campaign that he had no intention of imposing a tax as proposed in this Bill. Furthermore, the proposed new tax can be challenged legally by the Commonwealth. It is the Premier's intention to impose the tax on both ANA and TAA. However, if the tax is declared to be illegal and he is unable to tax a Commonwealth instrumentality, is it the honorable gentleman's intention to withdraw the tax from ANA? All honorable members will be interested to see what the Premier does in this regard.

The definition clause of the Bill provides—

"Salary or wages" means in relation to the remuneration of a person—

(a) in his capacity as an officer of the Commonwealth, his official salary earned in Victoria;

That is the part which will hurt the Premier's Federal colleagues, just as it will hurt the Federal colleagues of Opposition members.

(b) in his capacity as a member of the Parliament of the Commonwealth elected in Victoria, the allowances and salaries payable to him either as a member or as a Minister of State of the Commonwealth or as presiding officer or chairman of committees of either house of the Parliament of the Commonwealth; and

(c) in any other capacity the gross amount before any deductions to which he is entitled as salary, wages, commission, bonuses or allowances (whether payable at piece-work rates or otherwise) earned in Victoria or paid in Victoria and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, including—

I should think that, if this legislation is challenged by the Commonwealth, all Federal members of Parliament will stick together. That includes the colleagues of the Premier, who, of course, is not popular with his colleagues in Canberra. After the last Premiers' conference in Canberra, the honorable gentleman returned to Victoria in a complete huff, because he did not obtain what he was seeking. He said that, if he was to square the Budget or if he was to provide those things which he had promised during the election campaign, he had no other recourse but to impose a new tax on the people of Victoria. The honorable gentleman went on to say that this legislation which is proposed—it will not commence until the new Year—would bring in an amount of $7,400,000 up until the end of the financial year. As was pointed out by the honorable member for Kara Kara, this will represent only a small amount taken over a period of twelve months.

I agree with the honorable member for Reservoir who said that the proposed tax at the rate of one cent for every $10 would not be the end. No doubt the tax will be substantially increased when the Premier brings down his next Budget, and there will be further increases when the Budget for 1969-70 is brought down. So, in the year 1969, the people of this State could be facing a tax of 3 cents on $10 or any part thereof. These are things that Opposition members portend in this debate, because we have no faith whatever in the Premier—nor have the people of Victoria—since he has brought in this Bill.

When this proposed new tax was mentioned in the Budget speech, it was hidden in a very small reference to the fact that the Treasurer intended to apply a duty on receipts of one cent for every $10 or part thereof. No indication was given to anybody, either inside or outside the House, as to the manner in which it was to be applied. In the following weeks,
the Premier received deputations from traders in Bourke-street and Collins-street, from the Trades Hall Council, from co-operative housing societies, from permanent building societies and the like—from people who would be involved in this payroll tax, income tax, purchase tax, whatever it is called.

Obviously, the Premier had a look at his original draft legislation, as the schedule now contains approximately 23 exemptions. Before the Bill is passed through another place the list could be increased—there could be a number of additional exemptions.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I can assure you that there will not.

Mr. Fennessy.—I am pleased to hear the Premier inform the House that exemptions contained in the Bill will not be added to. I shall be interested to see the final results of the measure, and to see if there is any guarantee that the Premier's statement is correct, because I well remember that during the election campaign he stated that he was not going to impose a tax. At that time, he challenged the member for Midlands, who had stated that it was the Premier's intention to introduce a purchase tax. The Premier would not deny that he refuted that statement.

Sir Henry Bolte.—No, I agree with it; this is not a purchase tax.

Mr. Fennessy.—The Premier has informed the House that this is not a purchase tax. The honorable member for Evelyn stated that it was both a payroll tax and an income tax. I emphasize that they are not my words—they are the words of one of the Premier's supporters. The honorable gentleman ought to have a talk to him and put him right. I suggest that the honorable member for Evelyn is a better businessman than the Premier, and I invite any honorable member on the Government side of the House to dispute that statement.

Mr. Scanlan.—I will dispute it.

Mr. Fennessy.—I shall be pleased to hear the honorable member for Oakleigh make a contribution to the debate, backing his Premier. I do not intend to say much more about this measure. Back-bench members of the Liberal party should be convinced of the soundness of the arguments advanced by members of the Opposition. I am convinced that they are either not happy with the proposed legislation or are not game to stand up in this Chamber and support it because if they do they will be cast in the same mould as the Premier, who, on the election platform, said that he would not bring in any form of taxation.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I did not say that. You go from one extreme to the other.

Mr. Fennessy.—I know this sort of thing hurts the Premier.

Sir Henry Bolte.—It is only when you tell falsehoods that you annoy me.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. L. S. Reid).—Order! I call on the honorable member for Brunswick East, without interruption.

Mr. Fennessy.—The Premier hates to be reminded of what he said during the election campaign. This is like a lot of election promises. From a 36 per cent. vote, the Premier leads a party of 44 members.

Sir Henry Bolte.—I started with 34 and now have 44.

Mr. Fennessy.—We do not need convincing that the Premier has 43 members behind him and with the possible exemption of one, none is prepared to get up in the Chamber and support the Bill. However, it does not matter one iota. It will be known inside and outside the House that not one member of the Liberal party was game to get up in this Assembly and support this measure. The silence on the Government back benches can only be construed to mean that the members sitting there do not give their support to the Bill.
Members of the Opposition oppose the Bill because we believe it is unnecessary and that it proposes an iniquitous tax which will fall mainly on the average salary and wage earner. It will not affect the big businessman to the extent that business people try to make out. The Premier has asked why the Opposition has not produced some constructive criticism. I can give him some in a few short words and it is this: Get out. It is time that the Liberal Party got out of the Government and let a party that will really govern the State take over.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg).—In his speech, the honorable member for Melbourne spoke of the enthusiasm of new members. I assure the honorable members that I am one new member who is not bubbling over with enthusiasm concerning the prospects of this proposed legislation. In my opinion, it is taxation by subterfuge. I am safe in saying that if any mention had been made during the campaign preceding the State elections on the 29th April regarding what was in the mind of the Premier—

Mr. WHEELER.—What did your Leader promise?

Mr. MUTTON.—The people of Coburg elected me to this House by a democratic process.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—Look out! They are wooing you. They will endorse you next time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. L. S. Reid).—Order!

Mr. MUTTON.—Thank you for your protection, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a new member, I have at least the intestinal fortitude to speak my mind in this House on behalf of the electors of Coburg. Since my election I have been impressed by the lack of speakers on important measures presented to the House. To-night, there has been a fair indication that members of the Government lack the courage to contribute to a debate on a Bill the passing of which will have a far-reaching effect on the taxpayers of the State.

Before I was interrupted by interjections, I was about to repeat what was said earlier to-night that, if the people of the State had known what was in the Premier's mind, there would have been a different result on 29th April. I point out to the honorable member for Essendon, who is interjecting, that I would rather be known as "Happy Jack" than as "Heartache Henry." Although some honorable members on the Government benches might not realize it, I am inclined to sympathize with the Treasurer, even though he is subjected to much criticism by members of the Labor Party. I realize that the honorable gentleman is confronted with great difficulties every time he attends a Premiers' conference. He probably hopes that he may receive a charitable gesture from the Federal Treasurer or the Prime Minister.

Mr. FLOYD.—The sort of tip that you give a message boy.

Mr. MUTTON.—Yes. When he reviews his results, he inevitably finds that he must prepare new legislation, such as this Bill, which is an imposition on the people who must accept it whether they like it or not. When a Government has the numbers, as the present Government has, it can do anything. This Bill will pass through Parliament because of weight of numbers, but on behalf of the people of one electorate I am pleased to have the opportunity of expressing their opposition to the measure. The Bill proposes the imposition of a tax of 1 cent in $10, whether it is a purchase tax, an income tax, a stamp duty—call it what one may. Whatever it is, the people of the State must make a contribution to the Treasury. I am concerned about those people who can ill afford to meet any form of increased taxation, minute
as it may be, as the Treasurer put it. It is my duty to put the strongest possible arguments against what will be an added burden on those people, and not a just tax.

If, on his frequent visits to Canberra, the Premier is given the same sort of answer as he was given this year and, as a result, introduces similar legislation as this in future years, the State of Victoria will be taxed out of existence. The Premier and Treasurer could at least be more courageous when he attends the Premiers' conference and challenge the Prime Minister and the Treasurer to say what action should be taken to obtain revenue to keep this State functioning. If no stand is made on this issue, legislation of this type will be enacted every year. Very shortly, a Bill to impose greater charges on motorists will be presented to the House. If the Premier agitated for a greater refund from petrol tax collections, he would probably find it unnecessary to introduce such Bills which represent another great hardship on the people.

Mr. SCANLAN.—It is obvious that you have not read Hansard for the last ten years.

Mr. MUTTON.—I have read Hansard, and I have attended many sittings of this and other Parliaments. I have already said that a Government with the numbers can do anything, but, quite often, what it achieves is not good.

Mr. SUGGETT.—How do you get the numbers?

Mr. MUTTON.—Not very long ago, the numbers of those now in Opposition were almost the same as those at present supporting the Government. The political pendulum which swung the Government in will swing it out.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—You will go out if we do, you know.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member will be heard without interjection.

Mr. MUTTON.—I thank honorable members who have interjected, because they have given me the opportunity to say what I think. I was born and bred a Labor man, and I will go out the same way. Nothing will change my view. I respect the views of honorable members sitting on the Government side of the House. My only regret is that although there are capable speakers among them, I have not heard them contribute to the debate on this important Bill. Perhaps it would not be wise for me to continue in the same strain because I might be goaded into saying something I regretted. I again quote what might be a graveside rite: "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, if Holt don't get you, Bolte must."

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—I support my colleagues of the Opposition in opposing this Bill. My basic reason for doing so is my belief that the tax of 1 cent in $10 which the Bill imposes, by whatever name it may be called, will be passed on by traders and, because of its multiplying effect, will increase inflationary trends and reduce the purchasing power of the community. I am particularly concerned about how the measure will affect municipal councils. I know that the Treasurer will say that the Bill provides for the exemption of payments to those bodies, but some assurance should be given about the exemption of payments by statutory bodies and local government bodies. If contractors realize that they will have to pay the proposed tax they will add the amount they must pay to their prices. If the Premier can give an assurance that the tax will not be added onto contract costs, that is fair enough, but I bear in mind the imposition on metropolitan ratepayers when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works accepted — perhaps unwittingly — the financial responsibility of providing freeways in the metropolitan area.

Mr. WHEELER.—You opposed it. No wonder Altona is down at the bottom of the list in the new report.
Mr. GINIFER.—If the honorable member for Essendon is going to get down to that level, he should not think I will get into the gutter with him; he can stay there.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member will address the Chair, and will be heard without interjection.

Mr. GINIFER.—The tax will also detrimentally affect ordinary people because it will be applied in the same way as sales tax. Irrespective of income, in relation to the purchases they make, people will pay the same amount of tax. It would be better if this tax had progressive application so that the wealthy person would pay a greater amount. The Treasurer made great play of the fact that this Bill would not have been introduced if he had received what he believed was a fair and just reimbursement from the Commonwealth.

If this measure is rejected on constitutional grounds, what will be the position? Will the Treasurer use it as an argument to break another of his election promises to provide additional assistance to non-government schools? It is said that the revenue obtained from this tax will enable him to implement that promise. He has already broken one promise; if this Bill is challenged, will he repudiate the second promise, or will he disclose that there are other means of raising money? Perhaps money can be saved by better housekeeping methods.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—I am amazed that I am the last speaker. However, I am used to being last; as an old debater I usually wait for the other side to say something of consequence. This so-called debate has taken the usual course—the back-bench members of the Government have said nothing. That is not satisfactory to the people of Victoria, and it does not satisfy the requirements of Parliamentary democracy. The normal processes of government are, first, the introduction and first reading of the Bill by the Government; secondly, the Minister’s second-reading speech; thirdly, the debate; fourthly, the Committee stage, and lastly the third-reading. Our Parliamentary system is modelled on the pattern of the Mother Parliament, and for centuries this has been the practice in a democratic Parliament of dealing with Bills. This enabled honorable members to be au fait with the contents of the Bills and the subject matter of debate. Over the years this Government has adopted a slovenly approach to the introduction of measures. In practice, a Bill is not read a first time; the Minister in charge of the Bill is permitted to read his second-reading speech, and usually there is no debate on the third reading. Having made yourself thoroughly acquainted with May you, Mr. Speaker, have rightly decided that, in the interests of debate, members of the Opposition may not quote extensively.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! If the honorable member reads the Standing Orders, he will see that it upholds this.

Mr. FLOYD.—I am not criticizing the Chair—in fact, I am upholding it. I would be happy if the Chair would carry the matter a little further and, instead of endeavouring to curtail quotations from members of the Opposition that, in future, Mr. Speaker, having permitted the Minister not to read the Bill a first time will endeavour to ensure that he fully explains the Bill on the motion for the second-reading. I am endeavouring to convince honorable members who may be listening that this should be done.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—You are an optimist.

Mr. FLOYD.—Hope springs eternal in the human breast. The Opposition would “go along” a little with the Government if an adequate second-reading explanation of Bills
were given. This debate has taken the usual course in this Parliament. The Government called on the debate at 8 p.m., which is too late an hour for the press to report the inactivity of the Government speakers. Consequently, the people cannot be expected to know everything that goes on in Parliament; they are unaware of the complacency of the Government and they do not know what happens until it hits them.

This Bill was obscured in the Budget and in the Treasurer’s policy speech. Previous Government speakers said that the Treasurer did not intend to tax the people any further. The poor people have been taxed enough. At election time the public are told that it is only the Labor Party that wants to tax the people. The Labor Party always has a progressive programme, but the Liberal Party with its little brother the parasitic Democratic Labor Party always asks the question, “From where will you get the money?” The poor pensioners who would benefit from the programme of the Labor Party fall for the silly trap. The Liberal Party never tells anyone from where it will get the money. The Treasurer takes his annual futile trip to Canberra to try, as he tells us, to get some financial justice for Victoria. He returns always with the same story, with no documentary evidence to prove it that, “We are not going to get the money; there is only one thing to do, tax the people further.”

Members of the Labor Party are sensible people, and we know that we cannot get something for nothing. It is an economic truth that, when someone gets something for nothing, other people get nothing for something. The Opposition believes that if the people want things, they must pay for them. However, it does object to the fact that, during election campaigns, the people are not told that they must pay for the promises of the Liberal Party. If the Government does not get what it wants from Canberra, it must raise money by some obscure tax that is hidden in the Budget. From time immemorial taxation has been imposed. Income tax was imposed in Australia during the first world war as a temporary measure. No doubt the honorable member for Bentleigh, who is interjecting, was elected because of his social scale, and not because of his calibre.

The income tax was imposed on the people as a temporary measure. If the honorable member for Bentleigh keeps interjecting, he will prove my point. I am trying to convince him and other honorable members that a temporary taxing measure becomes a permanent one. It is also an economic truth that an old tax is a “no tax.” Once a tax has been imposed people forget it; they accept it. Once the Premier and Treasurer gets his foot in the door with this particular tax, so to speak, although it might be only one cent this year, the honorable gentleman will relish the fact that in the years to come if he is still in office—God forbid that that should happen—he will take the opportunity of increasing the tax. Opposition members do not like the surreptitious or concealed way that this tax was put into the Budget, and we object to the confused way in which the Government has introduced it. In his second-reading speech, the Premier and Treasurer said:—

The primary purpose of this Bill is to implement the proposal announced in the Budget speech relating to stamp duty on receipts. In the first place, one needs to be a Sherlock Holmes with a decent sort of microscope to find it in the Budget speech.

Sir Henry Bolte.—It is there.

Mr. Floyd.—It is obscured by seven pages about superstition—“This is my thirteenth Budget. I am not upset about the word ‘thirteen’.”

Sir Henry Bolte.—This is your thirteenth year in Parliament.
Mr. FLOYD.—I hope to serve for a few more years yet. I remind the Premier and Treasurer that my predecessor broke the world's record by being a member for 51 years. I feel fit enough to challenge the record. Perhaps one could even admit that the tax was lurking somewhere within the first thirteen pages of the Budget speech. These pages included an elementary lesson about the coin that used to be called a "thirteen" in Ireland, and a "twelve" in England, and all this tommyrot. It was admitted there that possibly the Government might have to bring in some sort of tax. Honorable members have described the tax in various ways—as a purchase tax, a turnover tax, a capital tax and a receipt tax—and euphemistically the Treasurer said that it was a receipt tax. Members of the Opposition have pointed out that if it is a receipt tax it can be paid twice. I am so pessimistic as to believe it may be paid three times. The way our society works to-day sometimes money never changes hands, but receipts change hands and cheques change hands, and before one gets to the final transaction one may be paying this receipt tax three or four times.

I shall make a prophecy here and now that, despite the prescience of Government and Treasury officials and the Treasurer, this tax will not amount to $7,000,000; it will bring in more than $20,000,000, because the Premier and his Treasury officials do not know the ramifications of the tax even with all the possible exemptions that will be made.

Having said that the primary purpose was to implement the Budget proposal on stamp duty on receipts, the Premier and Treasurer went on to say—

While the Government could not undertake to depart in any way from the principles underlying the measure, constructive comments and suggestions from interested parties which could facilitate the practical application of the provisions of the Bill will be welcomed.

That is a complete admission that the Government is not sure of its ground. In other words, the Government is introducing a tax and it does not know what its name is. The Government is hoping that someone will give it a name. The Government will grab the name that is most acceptable, and if it is not quite acceptable to everyone, the Government will consider any suggestion that anyone likes to put forward. The Government ought to hold a competition and give a pair of homing pigeons or something like that as first prize.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—Are you acting the clown now?

Mr. FLOYD.—No, I am simply reminding the House that the Premier and Treasurer said that if anyone has any worth-while suggestions to make, the Government will consider them. The honorable gentleman went on to say—

I hope there will be a happy compromise on this particular matter. I confess that at this stage there may be administrative difficulties, and I shall welcome any constructive suggestions in this regard.

And then a little later, without taking it out of context, the Premier and Treasurer said—

The present system creates many anomalies.

Then, a little further on the honorable gentleman said that if honorable members made any constructive suggestions and these were adopted by the Government it must not be construed that the Government was admitting that the measure as drafted was a failure. The whole fundamental of the introduction of this taxing measure seems to be that it is flying a kite—"We will put up an idea and you knock it down. If you knock it down successfully we will think of a solution. We will put up the ideas. If you put up any constructive suggestions that are good, we will put them in the innumerable amendments that will be forthcoming. On the other hand, if you
put up some constructive suggestions that are no good, you will be called ‘knockers’.

The whole situation amounts to this: To-day the Opposition tried to help the Government out, as it has often tried to do, by asking that the debate on the measure be adjourned for a further period, because over the years we have discovered that the Government rushes in head down hoping for the best. About 90 per cent. of the Bills that come before the House are amendments to earlier legislation. A Bill with which I shall be dealing in due course is an amendment of an Act that was passed last year. That sort of business is repeated year in and year out.

Apart from its unfairness to the people, this Bill has been hastily conceived, and its application is ridiculous. The Premier and Treasurer has been left on his own with all his back-benchers who stood on the platform in April, saying that they would support the Government and there would be no further taxing measures. Those honorable members have all had to sit down and suffer the Opposition condemning the measure. They must be wondering what is going on, but when all is said and done the older members on the back bench know that has been going on for years. This is the prescription. They will always be there while the worker has a dollar in his pocket. The reason why he has a dollar or two in his pocket is because, over the years, the Labor Party has fought for his conditions. In other words, it is what one might term an anomaly. Our party fights for the conditions and as soon as we get them the Liberal Party cashes in on the position. Any student of political science knows that. No matter what names it may be called, the proposed impost is a flat tax. Taxation is a necessary evil, and all that people ask is that there should be a fair application of taxation towards the affairs of the State. However, the greatest amount of tax must be gathered from those people who are most capable of paying it. The Premier has made this excursion into the taxation field in desperation because he cannot convince his political colleagues in Canberra to give him extra money. But, the honorable gentleman has failed to apply this impost to those best able to pay it. It is to be a flat tax on everybody. The worker will pay just as much as Korman and his cohorts.

Every time members of the Opposition say that a tax should not be applied in a certain way, the Premier brings forward his tear-jerking argument and talks about the little children who will be deprived of their baby health centres and the old people who will be kicked out of their homes, but he overlooks a very important factor, namely, that all the financial brains in this community do not reside in the Liberal Party. He forgets that it is possible that if some other party was in charge of the Treasury bench and the same amount of money was available it could do a better job than the present Government. Has any member on the Government side of the Chamber ever determined that it is possible not to incur a deficit without sacking people, closing hospitals and police stations and dismantling railway lines? Those are the things that the Premier would say that members of the Labor Party would do if they were in office. However, has any member on the Government side of the Chamber ever given thought to the fact that with more efficient government and a better allocation of funds there would be no need to incur a deficit? Perhaps if some of these thoughts occurred to the Government there would be no gap to bridge. In debates on various Bills, members of the Opposition bring forward suggestions that lead to better results without sacking people, closing old people’s homes and police stations and without leaving railway stations unmanned. It is possible that with better management of the affairs of State there would be no deficit to be bridged by this form of taxation.
Members of the Opposition contend that it is unfair to impose this tax at a flat rate. If a tax is to be imposed, it should be on a scale under which the lowest paid worker pays his share and the higher paid worker pays more. Members of the Opposition also say that the imposition of the tax could be avoided by efficient government. Of course, the easy way out is for the Treasurer to be more realistic in his approaches to his colleagues in Canberra. There are two ways in which to improve the financial affairs of this State. The first is to get more money from Canberra, and the second is to have more efficient government.

The newly elected members who came into this House thinking they would be sitting behind a Government that knew everything must be experiencing disappointment, because it must now be apparent to them that occupants of the front bench know nothing.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. Vernon Christie in the chair)—

Ayes 40
Noes 25

Majority for the motion 15

Ayes.
Mr. Balfour
Mr. Billing
Mr. Birrell
Sir John Bloomfield
Sir Henry Bolte
Mr. Borthwick
Mr. Doyle
Mr. Dunstan
Mr. Evans (Balaarat North)
Mrs. Goble
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Jona
Mr. Loxton
Mr. MacDonald (Glen Iris)
Sir William McDonald
Mr. McKellar
Mr. McLaren
Mr. Manson
Mr. Meagher
Mr. Porter
Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Reese

Noes.
Mr. Clukey
Mr. Cochrane
Mr. Divers
Mr. Evans (Gippsland East)
Mr. Fennessy
Mr. Floyd
Mr. Ginnifer
Mr. Holding
Dr. Jenkins
Mr. Lovegrove
Mr. McDonald (Rodney)
Mr. Moss

Tellers:
Mr. Buckley
Mr. Edmunds.

Pairs.
Mr. Darcy
Mr. Reid (Box Hill)
Mr. Rossiter

Mr. Ring
Mr. Turnbull

The Bill was read a second time, and committed, pro forma.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That it is expedient that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of the Bill “relating to receipt duty, to amend the Stamps Act 1958 and for other purposes”.

I do not know why a Governor’s message is necessary in regard to this Bill. Mr. Chairman, how will this Bill be a cost to the Consolidated Revenue?

Mr. FENNESSY.—You should know.

Sir HENRY BOLTE.—I do not; it is a matter that is not within my province.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. L. S. Reid).—In reply to the Treasurer, the appropriation is to cover exemptions, which are tantamount to the appropriation of revenue.
Mr. Wilkes.—Are these exemptions included in the schedules to the Bill?

The CHAIRMAN.—They are related to clause 3 of the Bill.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I move—

That progress be reported.

It is obvious that the Treasurer does not know what this is about and, quite frankly Mr. Chairman, I am not able to follow the reasons given by you—I am not in any way reflecting on the Chair. Obviously, the Governor’s message is news to the Treasurer, and he is not prepared to pursue it. I suggest that progress be reported until to-morrow or some suitable time, when honorable members can be informed of the true situation.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—No. Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. L. S. Reid).—There can be no debate on the motion that progress be reported.

The Committee divided on Mr. Holding’s motion (Mr. L. S. Reid in the chair)—

Ayes .... 25

Noes .... 39

Majority against the motion .... 14

AYES.

Mr. Buckley
Mr. Clarey
Mr. Cochrane
Mr. Divers
Mr. Edmonds
Mr. Evans
Mr. Fennessy
Mr. Floyd
Mr. Ginifer
Mr. Holding
Dr. Jenkins
Mr. Lovegrove
Mr. McDonald

Noes.

Mr. Rylah
Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Smith

Bellarine

Warnambool

Mr. Smith
Mr. Stephen
Mr. Stokes
Mr. Suggett
Mr. Tanner

Morwell

Caulfield

Mr. Taylor
Mr. Templeton
Mr. Trethewey
Mr. Vale
Mr. Wheeler
Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Wiltshire.

Tellers:

Mr. Dixon
Mr. McKellar.

PAIRS.

Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Ring
Mr. Turnbull

Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Darcy
Mr. Reid

Box Hill.

Sir Henry Bolte’s motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

The House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That on and after a day or days to be fixed by proclamation of the Governor in Council published in the Government Gazette there shall be charged under and subject to the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be amended by the Stamps Bill for the use of Her Majesty upon any instrument specified hereunder the duties specified hereunder.

1. RECEIPTS.

For an amount not exceeding $10 0.01

For $10 or more, then for every $10 of the amount and also for any fractional part of $10 of such amount .. 0.01

Exemptions—

(1) Receipt for any payment to Her Majesty or to any public department or to the Housing Commission.

(2) Receipt for any payment to a municipality the Western Metropolitan Market Trust any Sewerage
authority under the Sewerage Districts Act 1958 any trust within the meaning of the Mildura Irrigation and Water Trusts Act 1958 any authority within the meaning of the Water Act 1958 any river improvement trust under the River Improvement Act 1958 or any Union under the Weights and Measures Act 1958.

(3) Receipt for any amount paid to or received from any person in respect of a deposit or loan where the deposit or loan is at call or for a term of twelve months or less.

(4) Receipt given by a banker for money deposited in a bank for the credit of a depositor.

(5) Receipt given by a depositor for money withdrawn from a bank.

(6) Receipt for money paid to any person to be applied for any charitable purpose.

(7) Receipt for any money on payment or delivery thereof by one banker to another in the ordinary course of banking business.

(8) Receipt for any money paid to or by a registered bookmaker for or as a result of any bet on any licensed racecourse during the holding of a race-meeting.

(9) Receipt for any money paid to or by the Totalizator Agency Board for or as a result of any bet.

(10) Receipt for any money paid to or by persons for or as a result of any bet on a totalizator operated by any racing club.

(11) Receipt for or in relation to any application or subscription for or any redemption purchase or sale of—

(a) any stock debentures or Treasury bonds Treasury notes or Treasury bills of the Government of the United Kingdom or of the Commonwealth of Australia or of Victoria or any other State of the said Commonwealth or any other part of Her Majesty's dominions;

(b) any State Savings Bank Fixed Deposit Stock debentures or Credit Foncier Debenture Stock issued by the Commissioners of the State Savings Bank of Victoria;

(c) stock debentures or bonds of any public statutory body constituted under the law of Victoria.

(12) Receipt for any money delivered to or by any carrier approved by the Controller of Stamps for delivery from or to any bank.

(13) Receipt for any money paid by any friendly or benefit society for sick pay.

(14) Receipt for money paid to the representative in Australia of the Government of another country, a foreign consul or a trade commissioner of any part of the British Commonwealth.

(15) Receipt for any money paid to the trustees of any cemetery.


(17) Receipt solely for accounting or office purposes of any payment—

(a) made by any person to any employee or servant of such person or by any employee or servant of such person to such person or to any other employee or servant of such person;

(b) made in the course of the internal administration of business of such person; and

(c) not being directly or indirectly a payment by way of wages salary bonus allowance commission fee reward or gratuity or in consideration of services rendered or of work or labour done or of goods bought from such person or from any employee or servant of such person.

(18) Receipt upon the refund of a deposit lodged by a tenderer or upon the refund of any over-paid rates taxes duties or other similar charges.

(19) Receipt for any payment—

(a) under the Social Services Act 1947-1966 of the Commonwealth as amended from time to time;

(b) under the Repatriation Act 1920-1966 of the Commonwealth as amended from time to time; or

(c) under the Tuberculosis Act 1948 of the Commonwealth as amended from time to time.

(20) Receipt for a periodical payment made by way of superannuation pension or retiring allowance at a rate not exceeding $25 per week.

Sir Henry Bolte.
(21) Receipt for any payment for relief or assistance granted by or on behalf of any Government or by or on behalf of any charitable institution.

(22) Receipt for any money not exceeding $10 received by or paid to any person to whom section 53E does not apply.

(23) Receipt for a periodical payment made by way of salary or wages at a rate not exceeding $20 per week.

2. DUTY IN LIEU OF DUTY ON RECEIPTS.

Upon every statement lodged by a person carrying on any trade business or profession who elects pursuant to section 53E of the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be inserted by the Stamps Bill to pay in accordance with the provisions of section 53F of the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be inserted by the Stamps Bill a duty on the statement lodged with the Comptroller of Stamps at the rate of One cent ($0.01) for every $10 and for any fractional part of $10 of the total amount of all sums received or deemed to have been received by or paid or deemed to have been paid to such person during the period to which the return relates.

3. DUTY UPON RETURNS OF SALARY OR WAGES.

Upon every return lodged by a person resident in Victoria pursuant to section 53H of the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be inserted by the Stamps Bill to pay in accordance with the provisions of section 53H of the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be inserted by the Stamps Bill a stamp duty on the return lodged with the Comptroller of Stamps at the rate of One cent ($0.01) for every $10 and for any fractional part of $10 of the total amount of all sums received or deemed to have been received by or paid or deemed to have been paid to such person during the period to which the return relates.

4. TRANSFER OF MARKETABLE SECURITIES.

Under and subject to the Stamps Act 1958 as proposed to be amended by the Stamps Bill upon the transfer of any marketable security or right in respect of shares of any corporation company or society which has a register in Victoria in which such marketable securities or rights are registered not being a transfer to perfect a sale or purchase to which sub-division (4A) of Division 3 of Part II. of the Stamps Act 1958 applies—

(a) where such transfer is made for a consideration in money or money's worth of not less than the unencumbered value of the marketable security or the right in respect of shares comprised in the transfer—

where the amount or value of the consideration for the transfer—

does not exceed $100—a stamp duty at the rate of 10 cents for every $25 and also for any fractional part of $25;

(b) where such transfer transfers the beneficial interest in a marketable security or right in respect of shares from one company to another company where one of such companies is the beneficial owner of not less than ninety per centum of the issued share capital of the other company or where not less than ninety per centum of the issued share capital of each of the companies is beneficially owned by a third company and the transfer was not executed in pursuance of or in connexion with an arrangement whereunder the consideration for the transfer was to be provided directly or indirectly by a person other than a company which at the time of the execution of the transfer was associated with either the transferor or the transferee or whereunder the beneficial interest transferred was previously transferred directly or indirectly by such a person as aforesaid.

For the purposes of this paragraph—

(i) "Company" includes corporation or society; and

(ii) a company shall be deemed to be associated with another company if, but not unless, one of them is the beneficial owner of not less than ninety per centum of the issued share capital of the other or not less than ninety per centum of the issued share capital of each of them is in the beneficial ownership of a third company—

where the value of the marketable security or right in respect of shares comprised in the transfer—

does not exceed $100—a stamp duty at the rate of 10 cents for every $25 and also for any fractional part of $25;
exceeds $100—at the rate of 40 cents for every $100 and also for any fractional part of $100—of that value;

(c) where such transfer is made for a consideration which is or includes a consideration in money or money's worth of less than the unencumbered value of the marketable security or the right in respect of shares comprised in the transfer—

(i) as to the amount of such consideration—

where such amount does not exceed $100—a stamp duty at the rate of 10 cents for every $25 and also for any fractional part of $25;

where such amount exceeds $100—at the rate of 40 cents for every $100 and also for any fractional part of $100;

(ii) as to the difference between such amount and such unencumbered value—the same duty assessed in the same manner and with the same exemptions as on a deed of settlement or gift of property;

(d) in any other case—

the same duty assessed in the same manner and with the same exemptions as on a deed of settlement or gift of property;

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

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

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Progress was reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow, at a quarter to Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.50 p.m.
Minister for the payment of drought relief; if so—(i) from what areas was assistance requested; and (ii) what assistance has been given?

(b) Has the Government made any formal request to the Commonwealth Government for drought relief or assistance; if so—(i) when; and (ii) in what form was the request made?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(a) Yes.

(i) Assistance was requested for all drought affected areas.

(ii) The Government has approved of the following programme of assistance:—

Government finance at 3 per cent. per year for farmers unable to get loans through expanded trading bank allocations.

A rebate of railway freight rates and transport licence fees for farmers carrying live stock to and from agistment areas.

A drilling programme to establish community bores in towns where domestic supplies are critical using seven Government-owned drilling plants, including those capable of deep drilling.

Lifting the killing capacity of meat works to help reduce the bottle-neck caused by excess live stock. If practicable, the Shepparton meat works will be re-opened.

Fodder will be carried to country railway stations in drought areas at reduced freight rates.

The State will subsidize the cost of transporting water.

(b) I would refer the honorable member to the reply given to the earlier question asked by Mr. Cathie.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPovich (Doutta Galla Province).—By leave, I asked, first, whether any of the farmers' or primary producers' organizations had made a written request for drought assistance. The Minister of Agriculture has failed to supply the answer.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

There is no wastage of water at Newport workshops.

The Railways Commissioners have directed that every effort be made throughout the Department to conserve water and prevent its wastage.

HOUSING COMMISSION.

BROADMEADOWS ESTATE: SALE OF LAND: PRICES.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPovich (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(a) Of the 247 home sites in the Broadmeadows housing estate released by the Housing Commission for sale to individual home builders in February, 1963, how many were sold in single lots to individual home builders and how many blocks were ultimately built on?

(b) Were any of these blocks sold to home developers; if so—(i) how many; (ii) to whom were they sold; (iii) how many homes were built; (iv) what was the average price charged to home purchasers for two and three-bedroom homes, respectively; and (v) what deposit was required, what interest rate was charged and what maximum period was allowed for repayment for houses sold on terms?

(c) At what prices were these blocks of land made available to—(i) home builders; and (ii) home developers?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(a) Eighty-three lots sold to individual home builders, of which 80 are either built on or houses are in course of erection.

(b) Yes.

(i) One hundred and sixty-four lots.

(ii) A. V. Jennings Industries (Australia) Ltd., 159 lots; Fulton Constructions Pty. Ltd., five lots.

(iii) All have been built on.

(iv) Two-bedroom, $8,700; three-bedroom, $9,100.

(v) As between the builder and any purchaser, the transaction was one for cash, no homes being sold on terms. In every case a deposit equivalent to 20 per cent. of the purchase price was required and settlement took place approximately three or four weeks after completion of the house.

(c) (i) Prices ranged from $1,930 to $2,130.

(ii) $2,000 in all cases.
SALE OF HOMES TO MINORS.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

How many Housing Commission homes have been sold to persons under the Housing (Contracts with Minors) Act 1963 in each of the past two years?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

For twelve months ended 30th June, 1966—81.
For twelve months ended 30th June, 1967—7.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.
EXEMPTIONS FROM ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Education—

Following the reply to question No. 5 asked in this House on the 18th instant, will he have examined a two-month sample of exemptions granted to children under fifteen years of age from attending school for 1967; if so—(i) how many exemptions were granted in this period; (ii) what was the age of each child; (iii) for how long was the exemption granted, and for what reason or reasons; and (iv) what schools were affected?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

Yes. I will furnish the honorable member with the information as soon as it is available.

STATE RIVERS AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.
SUPPLIES FOR POOWONG, NYORA AND LOCH.

The Hon. H. A. HEWSON (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Has the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission approved a plan for the supply of water for the townships of Poowong, Nyora and Loch; if so—(i) from what source will the supply come and where will the storage be sited; (ii) when will it be built; and (iii) when is it expected that water will be available to these townships?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

No. However, proposals submitted by the Shire of Korumburra for supply to these towns are at present being examined by the Commission.

The proposals envisage that the supply would be obtained from a storage on the little Bass river some 2 miles south-east of Poowong. The Commission expects to complete its review of the scheme in the near future but it is not possible at this stage to indicate whether and when the proposals might be implemented.

OFFSHORE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION.

LICENSES AND PERMITS.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(a) Who made application for licences or permits under the provisions of Acts Nos. 7537 and 7540?
(b) For what purposes were such applications made?
(c) How many and for what purpose were such permits and/or licences granted?
(d) What fees were paid with respect to each application made or permit granted?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer to this question is very lengthy and, with the concurrence of the House, I suggest that it be incorporated in Hansard without my reading it. I wish to indicate to Mr. Merrifield that I think there was some little doubt in the minds of those whose responsibility it is to answer this question, and the appropriate Minister has intimated that, if the reply is not in accordance with the exact meaning of the question which the honorable member asked, the honorable gentleman will be pleased to discuss the matter with him.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

(a) Haematite Petroleum Proprietary Limited and Esso Exploration and Production Australia Inc. applied for pipe-line licences.
(b) To obtain licences to construct, maintain and operate pipe-lines from the production fields to the coast.

(c) Two pipe-line licences for the above purposes were granted—one from the Barracouta field, and the second from the Marlin field.

(d) Fees of $1,000 in respect of each licence have been paid.


No provision is made in this Act for applications to be made for licences or permits, and it is not therefore possible to answer the question in the form in which it has been asked.

However, the following information is supplied:—

The Petroleum (Barracouta and Marlin Fields Agreement) Act 1967 is an Act which ratified an agreement between the Premier of the one part and Haematite Explorations Pty. Ltd. and Esso Exploration and Production Australia Inc. of the other, which agreement authorized the Minister of Mines to grant and the companies to accept, the production licences referred to in the agreement.

The Minister of Mines granted and the companies accepted the four production licences referred to in the agreement on the 1st April, 1967.

In general terms the production licences authorize the companies to explore for and produce petroleum within the areas of the licences granted. The details of the terms and conditions of the grants are shown in the agreement which is the schedule to the Act and to which I refer the honorable member for further information.

The fees payable in respect of the licences granted are at the annual rate of $3,000 for each block included in the licences.

The fees paid in respect of the first year of the licences are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licence Number</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Licence No. 1</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Licence No. 2</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Licence No. 3</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Licence No. 4</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOCATIONS OUTSIDE TERRITORIAL LIMITS.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Were any requests made, enforcements proposed or other actions taken under the powers assumed under the Acts Nos. 7537 and 7540, which relate to locations outside the normal “territorial sea” of Article 1 of the International Convention on the Continental Shelf; if so, what were these requests, enforcements or actions?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

The four petroleum production licences granted to Esso-B.H.P. in terms of the petroleum (Barracouta and Marlin Fields Agreement) Act 1967, relate to areas beyond the territorial sea as described in the Convention. Similarly, the petroleum pipe-line licences granted to Esso-B.H.P. in terms of the Pipelines (Submerged Lands) Act 1967, relate to areas beyond as well as within the territorial sea.

Apart from the matters referred to in my answer to the previous question, the companies, in compliance with the relevant Acts, have submitted for approval—

(a) plans and specifications for production platforms and equipments to be erected, one on the Barracouta field and the other on the Marlin field; and

(b) plans and specifications of the pipe-lines in respect of which licences have been granted, which pipe-lines will run, one from the Barracouta field and one from the Marlin field to the shore.

STATE OFFICES.

CONSTRUCTION IN WARRAGUL.

The Hon. H. A. HEWSON (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

Will State public offices be built in Warragul; if so—(i) when will tenders be called for the construction; and (ii) where will the building be sited?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—The answer is—

Yes.

(i) Tenders were invited in the press and Government Gazette several weeks ago and will close on the 14th November, 1967.

(ii) The building will be situated between the new post office and the court-house in Smith-street.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER (OMBUDSMAN) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 11) on the motion of the Hon. M. A. Clarke (Northern Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.
The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Ballaarat Province).—I think Mr. Clarke might well be congratulated upon having brought this measure before the House. I suppose we ought also to congratulate the House, because this is the first occasion upon which an opportunity has been afforded in any Parliament in this country to debate fully a Bill of this character. The subject of ombudsman is one that has captured the imagination of sections of the public and, of course, the press and television. It is a subject that concerns the minds of many people and some legislatures in other countries of the world.

It is important to stress that all honorable members are in agreement on at least two aspects. It is agreed that, under a modern social welfare State, practically every phase of human activity is influenced by a Government Department or public authority. In this paternalistic era one could argue that we are probably over-governed by rules, laws and regulations. One could also agree that every day Government Departments and public authorities make decisions that affect the lives and futures of many hundreds of thousands of people in the community.

To-day, as never before, the ordinary citizen needs every help and assistance available to him in relation to his dealings with these Departments. Whilst we accept the principle that all men are equal before the law, it is fair to say that, in relation to the private individual and his conflicts with public authorities, it is not an equal struggle. Those of us who, over the years, have been able to assist constituents in relation to their properties—more particularly before the recent Land Valuation Board was constituted—know that the struggle of the individual is somewhat unequal to the weight of the Government and the Crown.

The ombudsman has captured the imagination of sections of the public press. Mr. Clarke has said that an ombudsman—the people’s advocate—can assist all sections of the community. In a debate of this nature, it is important to stress at the outset that the setting up of a Department, even though it may be staffed by trained lawyers, senior public servants and adequate secretarial assistance, would not in itself be a panacea to the ills of a modern welfare State, and would not solve all the problems.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—Do you think it would help?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—It might help, but it would not solve all the problems. This is evidenced from an examination of figures relating to the work of the ombudsman, particularly in New Zealand, and in other parts of the world. This Bill is based on the New Zealand office which is considered to be the most efficient of all the offices of ombudsman. In a book, The Ombudsman, edited by Professor Donald C. Rowat, professor and chairman of political science, Carleton University, Ottawa, facts and figures have been cited of the work of ombudsmen in many countries of the world. A section of this book has been devoted to the New Zealand system, and it is interesting to examine the report concerning this ombudsman. When he first took office, he received a considerable amount of work, but subsequently the number of complaints he received has fallen off.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—That is probably because of the establishment of his office.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—That may be so. At page 336 of The Ombudsman, Professor Rowat sets out figures showing that, in the first two years, from 1962 to 1964, the time of his greatest publicity, the New Zealand ombudsman received 1,100 complaints. More recently the number of complaints he has received has lessened. Of the 1,100 complaints, 409 were declined for want of jurisdiction, 48 were withdrawn, 58 were not proceeded with, and 398
were dismissed or investigated with no direct action. In the two years of office, the Ombudsman was able to complete 107 matters on which he made recommendations. Therefore, over a period of two years only a small number of persons were affected and needed assistance.

The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the House of Commons in Ottawa, Canada, took evidence on an Act to establish the office of Parliamentary Commissioner—or ombudsman—and Professor Rowat appeared before it. As reported in the minutes of evidence of this committee, Professor Rowat substantiated his figures, and gave evidence of a survey he conducted of all Canadian members of Parliament to ascertain the number of persons who could possibly approach a Parliamentary Commissioner or ombudsman.

The results of the survey were most interesting. He found that approximately 65 persons approached members of Parliament every month seeking assistance and help in relation to their dealings with Government Departments. In some cases this figure was as low as ten people.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Was this a Federal matter?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—That is so. Professor Rowat estimated that at least twenty people would approach the average member of Parliament in any one month. On these figures he estimated—again conservatively—that 50,000 people would approach the Canadian Parliament for assistance. Indeed, when one considers the work done by honorable members in this House, I am inclined to agree with him. If twenty people contact their member of Parliament in any one month it could be said that it is a small number. It has been my experience—no doubt other honorable members have had a similar experience—that the average member of Parliament would interview a greater number of people in any month. I would be surprised if I interviewed fewer than twenty people a day, and in fact I have interviewed more than twenty people at the one time. It would be conservative to estimate that 25,000 people contact the members of this Parliament to seek their assistance.

It must be stressed that, if one believes in Parliamentary democracy, Parliament should be the sovereign body, and one should not escape the fact that whether commissioners, ombudsmen or Departments are established, all these matters must finally be referred back to Parliament. Quite properly, in this Bill Mr. Clarke has provided that all the ombudsman can do is to refer matters—which in New Zealand average 56 a year—back to Parliament or to the Ministers.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—They are not referred back to Parliament. That is the last resort; the ombudsman does not have to resort to Parliament.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—As Mr. Clarke rightly states, the ombudsman does not have to use this power; he does so only when he can obtain no satisfaction from the Minister. No matter how strong the arguments may be in favour of the appointment of an ombudsman, Parliament cannot divest itself of its responsibilities—honorable members cannot shed the responsibilities of assisting, protecting and redressing the rights of ordinary individuals against the public authorities. These matters must always come back to Parliament.

It is interesting and important for this House briefly to consider why the public and the press have, over the years, pressed for the establishment of the office of ombudsman, or similar organization to do the work of Parliament and its members. It opens up a number of aspects. I do not deny that there is an agitation and an appeal to establish an authority to carry out the work that members of
Parliament are elected to do. Many members of the community do not realize that the Parliamentary system is an effective institution to protect and redress the rights of ordinary citizens. The public generally believes that many Parliamentary procedures are antiquated. They also have a real ignorance of the function of Parliament and of members of Parliament. For example, the average child in school has far more knowledge of what Batman does than what a member of Parliament does. I wonder how many people in the community know about the workings of some of the Parliamentary committees which have been set up by Acts of Parliament to undertake important duties similar to those that it is proposed an ombudsman should do.

I wonder, for instance, how many people know anything about the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which is a remarkable and rather unique Parliamentary committee in this country. As members of this House know, for some ten years that committee has examined, on behalf of the ordinary person in the community, all the regulations of all the Government Departments and public authorities. The committee has worked on this for at least three days a week. I was privileged to be a member of that committee for more than six years with Mr. Swinburne and at least three other members of this House. During the whole of my membership I do not think the committee received any publicity. The members examined thousands of regulations and interviewed, as an ombudsman would, public servants and heads of Departments, but I do not remember the work of the committee achieving any considerable news. I was pleased to be a member of the committee its members never voted according to party lines. Of course, there were divisions, but I can never remember the six members voting according to their political beliefs.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.

I shall refresh the memory of the House by quoting from the Act of Parliament that set up this Parliamentary committee, which works day after day on the sort of work that no doubt the press and some people suggest should be done by an ombudsman or some other organization. Section 353 of The Constitution Act Amendment Act provides—

The functions of the committee shall be to consider whether the special attention of Parliament should be drawn to any regulations on the ground that—

(a) the regulations appear not to be within the regulation-making power conferred by, or not to be in accord with the general objects of, the Act pursuant to which they purport to be made;

(b) the form or purport of the regulations calls for elucidation.

That is almost identical with clause 17 of the Bill.

(c) the regulations unduly trespass on rights previously established by law;

(d) the regulations unduly make rights dependent upon administrative and not upon judicial decisions.

That is certainly a matter which would come within the jurisdiction of an ombudsman or Parliamentary Commissioner.

(e) the regulations contain matter which in the opinion of the committee should properly be dealt with by an Act of Parliament and not by regulations—

and to make such reports and recommendations to the Council and the Assembly as it thinks desirable as a result of any such consideration.

These are some of the Parliamentary institutions which do not receive much publicity and about which there is very little knowledge in the community. Another point in relation to this agitation and apparent need in the community for some outside, non-Parliamentary body to look after the rights of the ordinary person is that to-day the community, as a result of this ignorance and of unfair and unjust criticism of Parliament and members of Parliament, does not hold Parliament in very high regard. I am strengthened in that view because that was not always the case.
Parliamentary Commissioner [25 October, 1967.] (Ombudsman) Bill. 1235

Going back into the history of this institution, I always find it of interest to remember that this building was constructed more than 100 years ago by a sovereign State with a population slightly exceeding 250,000. The State did not tax the community directly, but obtained its revenue only by indirect taxation. This poor and struggling State with a Budget of less than $3,000,000, erected this magnificent building, although its people were without any of the amenities and facilities that we now regard as essential to our way of life. At that time the people were prepared to make a real sacrifice to establish their Parliamentary institution. This financial sacrifice was made to the disadvantage of essential services in the State in order to provide a wonderful building, which can seat far more members than the number occupying it to-day. Actually, this House had more members 100 years ago than it has to-day. I am referring to page 8 of the History of Parliament. In 1876, there were 42 members of Parliament in the Legislative Council and in the Legislative Assembly there were between 78 and 86.

The Hon. M. A. Clarke.—But there were no Federal members.

The Hon. M. Murray Byrne.—That is so, but the population then was very small compared with the present. I spoke of unfair and unjust criticism. I shall not spend much time on this aspect, but I think it is one of the great tragedies of our modern way of life. Most of us, especially when we were younger, felt that freedom of the press was an essential aspect of democracy. I must admit that the more I have to do with the press the less inclined I am to believe that this is an essential freedom of democracy. I must admit that the more I have to do with the press the less inclined I am to believe that this is an essential freedom of democracy. Unfortunately to-day, for a whole host of reasons, including the apparent need for sensationalism, the press on almost every occasion makes unfair and unjust criticism against this institution and its members. This is something that we should take up as a matter of some seriousness.

I remember that years ago Professor Murdoch, who certainly did not support the non-Labor parties, used to answer questions written to him in a column in the Herald. Someone asked him whether he thought the Germans and the Italians deserved the vicious and ruthless dictatorships that they received from Hitler and Mussolini. The professor's answer was interesting. He said that before the rise of these dictators the average German and the average Italian were peace-loving persons, who had Parliamentary institutions, forms of democracy within their nations. However, said Professor Murdoch, the average German and Italian did deserve the ruthless and vicious dictators they received because, when the time came, they were not prepared to defend or protect their Parliamentary institutions or the freedoms and rights in which they believed prior to the coming of those dictatorships.

Another thing I shall always remember is this: On my first day as a member of Parliament, it was my duty to move the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. I was very impressed and regarded the matter as a serious exercise. I listened to other honorable members speaking during the debate, both in this House and in another place. I felt that the speeches they made were quite sincere and that obviously each member, in his own way, had tried to submit a point of view on behalf of the people whom he represented. When I went back to my city, the headlines in the local press stated that a certain member—not of this House—"called Bolte a mongrel". There was not one word about anything that had been said during the whole of the week. Later I ascertained that the actual expression was not uttered during a speech, but as an aside.

While one may defend the freedom of the press, I think one really means the responsible press. I was rather interested to read a letter which
appeared in the Herald to-night under a large heading "Sick of Politics". This matter has been given a lot of publicity. The letter reads—

As a plain and honest man-in-the-street I am wholeheartedly sick of all politics and our political leaders now running this our wonderful Australia—paradise for all and not just for its few all-grab salary-rise politicians.

Why cannot this country be made truly great by a select few of its morally great men. Let us encourage and have them in power at any price, for while living in a prosperous country we are in most perilous times and the sands of time are running out.

Rest assured we are none of us in this world just for self, but "one for all and all for one".

The suggestion is made that a member of Parliament is not even moral. In reply to an interjection, I indicate that the letter was signed by George Cooke, Cowper-street, Sandringham. Of course, that person has the right to make such a statement. It is a good thing that someone can write into the press and say what he thinks about members of Parliament. I wonder whether anyone will reply to that letter. I wonder whether an officer of this House will do so. I wonder whether any publicity would be given to such a reply.

I say again publicly, as I have said during election campaigns and on other occasions, even in relation to my Parliamentary opponents, that I do not know of any person in this Parliament who is not an honest hard-working man. I know that this statement will not achieve any publicity, but I do not know of any member who is in this institution because he can get something out of it, because he can obtain more money by being a member of Parliament than if he were in some other employment. I know that some members were trade union organizers. Those officers work very hard and are not highly paid, but when they enter this Parliament they finish up worse off financially. These things are never given publicity. I am sorry that Mr. Elliot is not present.

The Hon. Murray Byne.

It is a tragedy that there are not better public relations between Parliament and its members and the public. I am not suggesting that members are not good at public relations, possibly on their own behalf, but I wonder whether they ever do any public relations for the institution of Parliament or in the interests of the status of a member of Parliament. In other countries of the world some consideration is given to this question of public relations. No other country that I have visited possesses a Parliament that is better than this institution or a system that is better than ours. In making that statement, I include England and the United States of America. But in those countries the people are very proud of their Parliamentary institutions, and there are definitely real public relations. When I visited the United States Senate, I was handed a brochure by an attendant in which there appears an interesting article entitled, "If your Senator is not in the Senate Chamber". Copies of this brochure are handed to all visitors to the Senate. The article reads—

At the time of your visit to the Senate Chamber there may be comparatively few Senators on the Floor—and your own Senator may not be present. Much of the Senate's time must be devoted to items of routine business—which have been thoroughly studied and discussed in committee and therefore can be disposed of by a small number of Senators.

The Majority and Minority Leaders (or other Senators acting for them)—that is, Cabinet Ministers and Leaders of the Government or the Opposition—are always present to guide legislation and to protect party interests. A bell system keeps Senators not on the Floor advised of the legislative situation. Party Whips are ready at a moment's notice to call their Colleagues to the Chamber when vital issues are about to be decided.

Senators are amongst the busiest of individuals, having a multitude of responsibilities requiring their personal attention. If your Senator is not on the Floor, or in his office—
it even makes an excuse for a Senator who is not in his office—
attending to the many problems and re-
quests of his constituents, he is probably
engaged in a committee hearing or investi-
gation.

To ensure the efficient accomplishment
of its work, the Senate has created sixteen
permanent standing committees. Bills,
resolutions, and other matters requiring
action by the Senate normally are referred
to the appropriate committee for initial
examination and subsequent report. Each
Senator is a member of at least two stand-
ing committees and also of several sub-
committees. In addition, assignments to
special, select, and joint committees (or
commissions) are spread among the
membership.

In dark print at the bottom of the
article, there is a paragraph in-
dicating how many hours a
Senator works. It
would be interesting to
know how many people visit this
Parliament and, because they see a
few empty seats in the Chamber,
wonder where their members
are. Frequently, I have brought
visitors to Parliament and they rarely
understand why members should not
be present in the Chamber all the
time. The publication of a brochure
of the type from which I have quoted
would prove helpful here. Obviously,
good public relations exist in the
United States of America between
the Senate and the community.

In debating a Bill of this type, it
is important to consider other instit-
tutions which have been set up over
the years to carry out the duties and
responsibilities of the proposed
ombudsman. I have in mind Par-
liamentary committees, including the
Statute Law Revision Committee, and
such authorities as the Auditor-
General, the Public Solicitor, the
Legal Aid Committee, the Public
Trustee, and the Consumers Pro-
tection Council. These institu-
tions and organizations were established to
do much of the work that Mr. Clarke
suggests should be undertaken by an
ombudsman. The real protection for
the ordinary person in the community
should be the courts of law. Many
members of the public do not seek
redress of grievances in the courts
because our present legal processes
are too costly and too slow.

Certain court procedures are far
more antiquated than some of our
Parliamentary procedures. Further-
more, the ordinary man in the street
does not feel happy in a court where
he sees the Judge, dressed in unusual
clothing, seated 10 feet higher than
other people in the court. The
average person feels that our courts
do not provide adequate protection
of his rights, particularly regarding
Government Departments. If this Bill
does nothing else but focus the
attention of Parliament on the diffi-
culties of our present institutions and
organizations, it will be of some real
value. I concede that an ombudsman
may have a place in Victoria——

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—You
used to concede that until the last
Liberal Party conference.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—No
doubt Mr. Tripovich will make an
interesting contribution to the debate
on this Bill. Conceding that there is
very real value in having an ombuds-
man, I think it is proper to point out,
again, some of the problems that are
associated with this Bill, as drafted.
In New Zealand, England and the
other countries from which I have
been able to obtain information con-
cerning the activities of an ombuds-
man, there are not Federal systems
of Government. Perhaps Mr. Clarke
could assist me in this regard.
If an
ombudsman is to carry out his duties
efficiently, it would be necessary for
him to be a Federal ombudsman,
or otherwise he would be unable to
do anything concerning Federal matters.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—That is
nonsense.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—An
ombudsman appointed in Victoria
would be unable to do any-
thing to assist a person who had
encountered some problem in con-
nexion with a Federal Department or
the Commonwealth Public Service.
Furthermore, an ombudsman in Victoria would be unable to assist a person in relation to problems in other States. From an examination of Mr. Clarke’s Bill, it is also apparent that an ombudsman would be powerless to help a person who was confronted with a problem associated with local government.

The Hon. M. A. Clarke.—That is not correct.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I could not find such a provision in the Bill, and I shall be interested to hear argument on this aspect. It would be necessary for an ombudsman to be appointed in all States and at a Federal level and, to carry this idea to its logical conclusion, an ombudsman would be needed to control the courts.

The Hon. I. A. Swinburne.—And co-operative housing societies!

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—That is so. A number of aspects should be considered when comparing the position in Victoria with that in New Zealand or England or in our own Federal Government’s territory. It is fair to say that the Public Service in Victoria is much closer to the people than is the Commonwealth Public Service in Canberra. In Victoria, any member of the community who encounters a problem with a Government Department can usually discuss the matter with a responsible officer of the Department concerned. Hardly a week goes by that I do not bring to Melbourne some person who wishes to discuss a problem with a Government Department. This is good. If an ombudsman were appointed, a slow process would be involved in dealing with complaints, and the officer concerned would not be as intimate with the problems as would a member of Parliament or the person concerned. Certain difficulties would be encountered so far as Federal Departments were concerned. It would be interesting to know how the people of Broome could take up a matter with a public servant in Canberra.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—They could write a letter to the Department concerned.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—Of course, they could write a letter, but it is difficult to express oneself properly simply by correspondence. There are real problems associated with the office of an ombudsman.

It is important that honorable members should realize that, irrespective of how effective an ombudsman may be or how much expert assistance he may have, he will never do the work that members of Parliament are expected to do. Members are directly responsible to the community, and it is their duty so far as possible to protect the rights of the individual. An ombudsman will never be directly responsible to the community. However effective an ombudsman may be, in the long run he will always have to refer the matter back to Parliament and to members of Parliament.

I appreciate that what I am saying is not a perfect argument against the appointment of an ombudsman. It may assist if we look at our own institution. All honorable members are concerned about the problems which confront the ordinary people of the community in their dealings with Government Departments and public authorities. The Statute Law Revision Committee is at present conducting an exhaustive inquiry, not only into the desirability of appointing an ombudsman, but also into the functions of administrative tribunals. In the course of its inquiry, the committee has visited New Zealand.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—Members of the committee paid their own fares.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—They should not have been expected to pay their own way. Because the
committee has not completed its inquiry, it would be unwise for this House to support the Bill without first hearing what the committee has to say and without examining the whole problem.

The Hon. A. K. Bradbury.—How many of the 1,100 cases to which you referred were settled because they were referred to the ombudsman?

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I could not supply the information sought by Mr. Bradbury. Over a period of two years, the ombudsman, by means of advice and assistance of the type which is provided by members of Parliament, was able effectively to provide a solution in 107 cases.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield (Doutta Galla Province).—As usual, the Government has not been represented in the debate by a Minister of the Crown.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—You criticize back-bench members because they do not speak, claiming that they are stifled by the Government, but, when they do speak, you criticize the Ministers for not speaking. You should realize that back-bench Government members have the same rights as you to speak in this House.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—I should have thought that a Minister would express the Government’s views concerning this Bill which, if passed, would impinge on the powers of Parliament and of Ministers. There is every reason why a Minister should have taken up the cudgels on behalf of the Government. Obviously, Mr. Byrne is ultra-sensitive concerning the position. Like other members of his party, the honorable member probably has a mixed mind concerning the whole problem. One moment, his party supports the appointment of an ombudsman, and the next moment it is opposed to such an appointment. I was particularly interested to hear Mr. Byrne moralizing concerning the value of Parliament and the fact that we should do nothing to destroy it or take away its rights and privileges. It is amazing to hear such sentiments expressed by a member who voted with the Government to support an adjournment of the debate on this Bill for six weeks. In other words, he desired to take away from Parliament the right to debate this important measure.

The Hon. G. J. Nicol.—That statement is not true.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—Members supporting the Government should not be hypocritical—they should at least be frank. They are not really concerned with the privileges of Parliament. What they are concerned about is protection of the Government. That is the basis of the attitude adopted by Mr. Byrne and other members occupying seats on the Government benches. The Government intervened in Liberal Party discussions and persuaded the members to abandon any support they might have for the appointment of an ombudsman.

The Hon. G. J. Nicol.—That also is not true.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—That was the fundamental reason underlying the speech made by Mr. Byrne. On the one hand, the honorable member conceded that there was a lot of value in the suggestion, but he did not enumerate the virtues of the measure. On the other hand, he sought to indicate the retrograde phases, and he conjured up all sorts of imaginings that had no relation to the Bill.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I do not think you heard my speech.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—Mr. Byrne stated that there would be a tendency to destroy the democratic functions of Parliament.
The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I did not say that. Mr. Merrifield could not have heard me.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—I repeat that Mr. Byrne said that this would tend to destroy the democratic functions of Parliament. I point out that the Parliaments which have passed legislation of a similar nature to this Bill reside in countries which are among the most democratic in the world. I have in mind in particular the Scandinavian countries; I suppose no other form of democracy stands higher than that practised in those lands. Who would say that New Zealand is an undemocratic community? It has been democratic enough to abolish the Upper House, which is an anachronism anywhere. New Zealand has also instituted adult franchise for local government elections.

It has been suggested that the passing of this Bill would tend to destroy the operation of Parliamentary democracy. That is so much piffle and rubbish. Mr. Byrne stated that the appointment of an ombudsman would cut across the working of Parliamentary committees. I have never heard of anything so ludicrous.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I did not say that.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—It is ridiculous to suggest that the Public Works Committee would be inhibited in making inquiries into Melbourne’s water supply because of the fact that an ombudsman might take certain action. Mr. Byrne stated that the appointment of an ombudsman would cut across the working of Parliamentary committees. I have never heard of anything so ludicrous.

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I did not say that.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—It is ridiculous to suggest that the Public Works Committee would be inhibited in making inquiries into Melbourne’s water supply because of the fact that an ombudsman might take certain action. It has been put that an inquiry by the State Development Committee into a proposal for the construction of a railway line or an express-way between Melbourne and Tullamarine might be affected because an ombudsman might become interested in it. Is anything more ridiculous than that?

The Hon. Murray Byrne.—I did not mention it.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—The Statute Law Revision Committee inquires into matters of broad principle and often its recommendations are afterwards translated into legislation. Any inquiry that it undertakes usually commences as a result of a Bill being referred to it by Parliament.

The Hon. G. J. Nicol.—Its terms are afterwards translated into legislation.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—Last session Mr. Nicol voted against a motion proposing that this Bill be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee.

The Hon. G. J. Nicol.—For exactly the same reason.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—Members supporting the Government contradict themselves all along the line. The Subordinate Legislation Committee wanders through by-laws, regulations and rules made under various Acts. The committee considers the meaning of words and perhaps interprets the intentions of rules which are to apply at a common level. The committee does not deal with individual cases.

It is not intended that an ombudsman should function in this way. It would be his duty to handle difficult personal problems which occur in a community and which appear hard to resolve, and to find a suitable way out through the processes of the law. That is not the function of the Subordinate Legislation Committee. I do not know whether Mr. Byrne will allege that the appointment of an ombudsman would cut across the select committee proposed to be appointed to inquire into the production and marketing of meat, or would affect the Traffic Commission. Much rubbish has been spoken on this subject. I do not think anyone could swallow what Mr. Byrne has put to the House to-day.

It would be the duty of an ombudsman to deal with problems arising from the passing of an Act of Parliament or from the administration of public authorities. His sphere of
operations would include statutory authorities such as the Melbourne Harbor Trust and the State Electricity Commission. An ombudsman would not necessarily intervene between one individual and another individual or between an individual and a private corporation. This appointment is intended only as a safeguard in respect of public authorities. An individual person would have to present a sound case to an ombudsman before he would act. No occupant of the office would take up a case that was not substantiated by facts. He would soon find out what basis there was for a complaint, and he would quickly terminate any inquiry that was without merit.

I refer now to powers proposed to be conferred upon an ombudsman to inquire into matters. I have been a member of Parliament for 21 years, and I can say quite frankly that one often encounters a problem which appears insoluble. In certain instances, it is impossible to obtain satisfaction from a Department or to get a frank Ministerial statement. In respect of certain problems, there is always a cover-up.

I do not intend to raise other matters that have been argued in the past—for instance, covering up by the Government. All I want to say is that this does occur—and members on the Government side of the House know it. This is the type of problem that it is intended should be referred to a Parliamentary Commissioner so that he can penetrate a veil of secrecy and investigate a legitimate complaint to the fullest extent. What the powers of an ombudsman would be after that remains something of an enigma, but at least his activities would have to be considered by any offender in a public authority. A good case would have to be made out to get past the decision of a Parliamentary Commissioner.

The Labor Party has considered this matter over a period of time. This is the second occasion upon which Mr. Clarke has brought in this Bill. The measure has been referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee, and it did nothing about making a practical report on it. The matter has been canvassed fairly fully, and the time has come when a decision ought to be made. Therefore, the Labor Party proposes to support the second reading of the Bill.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. R. Garrett in the chair)—

Ayes

Noes

Mr. Mansell

Mr. May

Mr. Swinburne

Mr. Todd

Mr. Walton

Mr. Merrifield

Mr. Tripovich

Mr. Byrne

Mr. Campbell

Mr. Chandler

Mr. Fry

Mr. Gleeson

Mr. Gross

Mr. Harmer

Mr. Hamilton

Mr. Houghton

Mr. Hunt

Mr. Nicol

Mr. Thom

Mr. Thompson

Tellers:

Mr. Granter

Mr. Grimwade

Mr. Galbally

Mr. Dickie.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—The voting being even, it devolves on me to give a casting vote. In order that the Bill may be further considered, I cast my vote with the “Ayes”.

The motion was therefore agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—There has been no effective reply by members on the Government side of the House to the arguments put forward in favour of
this Bill. It is disappointing that there has been no Ministerial statement on the Bill.

As there has been no criticism of the provisions of the Bill themselves, but only of the principles involved, I do not think it behoves me to say anything further except to state that it would be perfectly feasible for an ombudsman to operate in Victoria without the Federal structure of Australia causing complications, as I pointed out during my second-reading speech. In effect, it would be easier for an ombudsman to operate in the State sphere than for one to operate in the Federal sphere.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—Obviously, he could not operate in the Federal sphere; he could operate only within the State.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Mr. Byrne was not in the House to hear my second-reading speech, and obviously he did not do his homework by reading Hansard. I specifically referred to the opinions expressed by Professor Sawer, an authority on the subject, who said that it would be difficult for a Federal ombudsman to operate, as he would need deputies in each State, but that it could be arranged. The professor said that an ombudsman could operate satisfactorily in the State sphere where, as he said, there is a mass of decisions by authorities, each year, which could be examined.

I agree with what Mr. Byrne said about the number of matters which come before members of Parliament, but the number of people in this State justifies the appointment of an ombudsman. Every member of Parliament knows that there are, in this State, people who need the type of help which an ombudsman could provide by inquiring into administrative decisions, which a member of Parliament cannot do. I firmly believe many hundreds of people urgently need the advice and assistance of an ombudsman and that such an officer is needed now in the State of Victoria.

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE (Ballaarat Province).—I wish to clarify a matter raised by Mr. Clarke. The proposition I put was clear and simple. There would be more difficulty in establishing an ombudsman within a Federal organization than in a country where there is no separation of sovereign powers. New Zealand has no matters which do not come within the jurisdiction of the ombudsman. However, an ombudsman appointed by an Act of the Victorian Parliament would be restricted to matters which came within the jurisdiction of that Parliament. With the separation of State and Federal authority, obviously many people with problems could obtain no assistance from an ombudsman.

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

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and the report was adopted.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE (Northern Province).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. R. Garrett in the chair)—

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Ayes & 15 \\
Noes & 15 \\
\end{tabular}

\textbf{AYES.}

Mr. Bradbury Mr. Houghton
Mr. Cathie Mr. Hunt
Mr. Clarke Mr. Nicol
Mr. Elliot Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hewson Mr. Thompson
Mr. Knight \\
Mr. May \\
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Mansell

\textbf{NOES.}

Mr. Byrne Mr. Houghton
Mr. Campbell Mr. Hunt
Mr. Chandler Mr. Nicol
Mr. Fry Mr. Thorn
Mr. Gleeson Mr. Thompson
Mr. Granter \\
Mr. Grimwade \\
Mr. Hamer \\
Mr. Gross
Mr. Hamilton

\textbf{PAIR.}

Mr. Galbally Mr. Dickie.
The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—The numbers being equal, it again devolves upon me to give a casting vote. At this stage I bring to the notice of the House Sir Erskine May's reference to the subject of casting votes. It is a well-known principle, and indeed it is so laid down in Sir Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, that upon all occasions when the question is for or against giving to any measure a further opportunity of discussion, the presiding officer should always vote for the further discussion and that, when the question turns upon the measure itself, he should then vote for or against it according to his best judgment of its merits.

I have never felt there was a necessity for an ombudsman. I have listened to the debate most attentively, but what I have heard has not changed my mind on the subject. I cast my vote with the “Noes”.

The motion was therefore negatived.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

The debate (adjourned from October 18) on the motion of the Hon. J. M. Walton (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. W. THOM (South-Western Province).—This House, particularly in this session, has been the sounding board for conflicting political philosophy, and I hope this situation will continue for many years. The private members' Bills which have been presented in this House by members of the Labor Party and of the Country Party clearly indicate the vital differences which exist in our political philosophies.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—They indicate the difference between this Chamber and another place.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I am talking about the differing political philosophies of parties, and this measure clearly indicates the vital point of difference. I do not condemn Mr. Walton for bringing this measure forward for consideration. In fact, members of the Liberal Party welcome the opportunity to debate it. I congratulate Mr. Walton on his presentation of the measure and on his method of putting his arguments to support his case. However, I reserve the right to disagree with him. The measure contains two important principles. The first is single voting in lieu of plural voting, and the second is full adult franchise.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—There is almost single voting now.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I do not think plural voting has the same significance as it had in the past. In 1965 the Municipal Association of Victoria called for a return relating to plural voting, and that return revealed that 62 per cent. of the people had three votes, 28 per cent. had two votes, and 11 per cent. had one vote. Those figures were taken out before the revaluation of all areas of the State. Although no current figures are available, I should think the percentage of those who have three votes has increased considerably.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—That is a good argument for abolishing plural voting.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I do not agree. I am being honest in agreeing that the argument for the retention of plural voting is not as strong as it was previously. I hope Mr. Walton realizes that that is a statesmanlike comment. The most important of the two matters referred to in the Bill is that of adult franchise, and, in order to understand it fully, one has to examine the basic principle underlying local government as such. Local government implies exactly what it says—government for a complete local community. It signifies that the people who have a stake in the local community are the people who should decide the destiny of that community. After all, by a
tax on the land in the municipality, local government was provided with a means of raising finance to carry out its functions of providing amenities and services. It has always been recognized that the right to vote involves financial responsibility, and it is on that simple premise that members of the Liberal Party part company with members of the Labor Party. How can one justify a franchise being given to people unless there is provision for financial responsibility?

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Does Mr. Thom want to restore the property qualification for elections for this House?

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I have never heard a Tory change his colours as quickly as Mr. Clarke.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—When was I a Tory?

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—During his speech Mr. Walton gave the impression that the owner of the property was the only person who had a franchise in municipal elections. I know that he is too intelligent and knows too much about municipal affairs deliberately to give a wrong impression.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Mr. Thom may have that impression, but that is not what I said.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I want to correct that impression, because the occupier has an equal right to stand for election to a municipal council.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—And the spouse.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—That is so. I hope Mr. Walton realizes that these provisions are in the Act.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—I do.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I am pleased that there is no argument about that.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—You do not believe in the lodger having a vote?

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I do not. In this measure Mr. Walton is trying to draw a parallel with the principle of adult franchise for State and Federal elections, but, with respect, I contend that such a parallel cannot be drawn.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—Both tribunals which inquired into local government recommended it.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—They did not, and later I shall quote from the reports. The important point is that wherever there is responsibility for financial contribution by way of taxation, there is a case for adult franchise. In fact, in such circumstances it is the only fair and reasonable basis for voting. However, the position is different in regard to municipal elections.

I turn now to the question of compulsory voting, the principle of which has been strongly contested over the years. It is of interest to note that Australia is about the only country where it applies. In other centres such as Great Britain, where adult franchise operates, the further step towards compulsory voting has not been taken. If we are to get the best out of municipal government, it would be wrong to introduce compulsory voting. Most of us agree that a large percentage of people who vote at Federal and State elections cast an unintelligent vote.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVIC.—Yes, they vote Liberal!

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I did not mean that. Any person who goes to the polling booth and does not know the names of the candidates and their respective parties is contributing very little to the community. The strength of local government throughout Victoria has been brought about by the vote which has been registered by people who take an active and intelligent interest in their local community. When I was a municipal councillor, I was an independent. It was our proud boast at the Geelong
West City Council that politics never entered into our deliberations, and the politics of the majority of the councillors were not known. In fact, the only councillors whose politics I could guess with any degree of certainty were those of Councillor McKenzie and myself.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt.—You could not guess your own.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Everybody knew that I was a Liberal.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—I thought you said you were an independent.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—The point I make is that Councillor McKenzie was a member of the Trades Hall Council and everybody assumed he was a member of the Labor Party. Many people realized that I was a Liberal. I could not have guessed the politics of the other ten members of the council with any degree of certainty. That was one of the happiest and constructive councils in the Geelong area. I hope that politics will never intrude into municipal affairs. In fact, there is no need for politics in municipal life and its activities.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—Why does the Liberal Party have a policy on municipalities?

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—What is the Liberal Party's policy on municipalities?

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—I do not know; I can never find it.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I have been a member of the Liberal Party for a long time, and I do not know of a policy on municipal matters. If the Liberal Party has a policy on municipal affairs, I shall be happy if members of the Labor Party can tell me what it is. They cannot do so because there is no such policy. As Mr. Hunt rightly states, the Liberal Party refuses to endorse candidates for municipal elections.

The Hon. Archibald Todd.—When they are elected, they run true to form, including the clique down at the Melbourne Town Hall.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—I am having difficulty in hearing Mr. Thom.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Under the present franchise, the predominant factor is an interest in local affairs.

The Hon. J. M. Walton.—A financial interest in local affairs.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Surely it is not suggested that an occupier has no financial interest in local affairs?

The Acting President.—I suggest that Mr. Thom should not be side-tracked by interjections.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—They do worry me. Mr. Walton referred to a report on Local Government in Darwin, which was printed in the Town Planning and Local Government Guide. The report was prepared by Councillor H. G. Behan, president of the Local Government Association of Queensland, and Mr. J. A. Sewell, the Director of Local Government for the State of Queensland. In referring to the peculiar problems which exist in Darwin, the report states—

It is quite certain that some of the accepted principles and practices of local government in other places would not and could not operate in the city.

The report also states—

The matters to which particular attention is drawn are:

(a) The main industry of the city is administration. Whilst the city is quite substantial in population (its population is approximately 10,000) its predominant function is as an administrative centre. It has no highly developed and well settled hinterland from which to draw wealth and obtain stability. Neither has it significant industrial development of its own.

(b) All land is owned by the administration. When private citizens acquire land, they do so on long term lease, from the administration. The land is subdivided and essential community services built before leases are let.
Although I am certain that Mr. Walton would not do it deliberately, he failed to quote these sections of the report.

The Hon. J. M. Walton.—The report argued on democracy. Mr. Thom should look at the findings of the two investigators.

The Hon. Samuel Merrifield.—He is not interested in that; he knows nothing about it.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I am interested in the findings. At the Australian Political Science Association's conference in August, 1964, Mr. Colin A. Hughes presented a treatise on the history and the development of compulsory voting in Australia. He stated—

Senator Gardiner in an often quoted speech declared that he would vote for compulsory voting because it was in the Labor platform, but thought it an infringement of liberty and observed that the "opinions of the negligent and apathetic section of the electors are not worth having". In the House of Representatives Mann developed the majoritarian argument by citing Bryce's opinion that as individual liberty consists of exemption from legal control, so political liberty consists in participation in legal control.

The Hon. I. R. Cathie.—When did Senator Gardiner make that speech?

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—In 1924. Also, on the matter of compulsory voting, I refer to a booklet entitled The Nation's Forum of the Air.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—It is 25 years since that programme went off the air.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—It is longer than that. The subject of the forum is, "Should Adult Franchise for Local Authorities be Universal and Compulsory?" In reference to people who are compelled to exercise their franchise, this passage appears—

They are to be found amongst the lazy and apathetic people in the community, who haven't got so much interest in public affairs that they would bother to go along to a ballot box unless there were some threat, near or remote, of some sort of monetary penalty. Others are people who are simply not interested, and what is the result of lack of interest in any subject? It means that you have no knowledge of it, and those people who are uninformed and who have no real interest, are compelled under this system to go along and register a vote. The quality of votes so registered would be very low indeed. It may be that in some cases they would not influence the election one way or another, but there are often elections which are so closely contested that the votes of the unthinking few may determine the actual result.

The Hon. Archibald Todd.—This occurs in Victoria.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—That is true. I believe that local government in this State is on a higher plane than in any other State, or in any other part of the world. I consider that the community would be unwise to relinquish something which has been proved to be successful. I again contend that the plea made by Mr. Walton for a change to an adult franchise system is not warranted because the right to vote will be given to persons who have no financial responsibility in the maintenance of local government. For the reasons I have stated, I believe that compulsory voting would be a backward step. Therefore, I oppose the Bill.

The sitting was suspended at 6.27 p.m. until 7.53 p.m.

The Hon. A. R. Mansell (North-Western Province).—This small but very important Bill deals with some of the most important aspects of local government, concerning which many members of both Houses of the Parliament have had extensive experience. Probably the particular points dealt with in this measure are among the most controversial ones in the Local Government Act. As the years pass, every time an election is held there are discussions among the voting community as to the basis upon which the poll should be conducted. It is the right of any private member to express the views of his party in Parliament so that we, as members, may understand the viewpoints of our fellow members. There are some matters concerning which we take directly opposite views, yet
there are others upon which we agree to disagree, and that should continue to be the position.

The matter of compulsory voting is dealt with in a comparatively few words at the latter end of the Bill. So far as city councils and town councils are concerned, I favour compulsory voting. Having had some experience in this field, I can see certain advantages in the compulsory vote in respect of those particular councils, just as I favour having a city without wards because, in my view, wards constitute a deterrent to any progressive city going ahead. It cannot be denied that wards are responsible for the setting up of factions, and so the views of only small sections are presented.

In the case of shires, however, it is a different matter. The Shire of Mildura is the second largest shire in Victoria and, if compulsory voting were operative in that shire, people would have to travel a distance of up to 60 miles in order to vote, and it would be completely wrong to compel people to do that. In such circumstances, voting could be made optional instead of compulsory.

Why should the Act be altered to bring in all municipalities? As the law now stands, any municipality, irrespective of whether it is a shire, a borough or a city, can determine whether voting should be compulsory or optional. Accordingly, the Country Party favours leaving it to municipalities to do their own domestic work. In this House, criticism of the Federal Government is frequently expressed, and complaints are made about our being hampered in certain ways by the Commonwealth authorities. Why, then, should we stand over local government bodies? They should be permitted the freedom of deciding whether voting within their boundaries should be compulsory or otherwise.

Another matter dealt with in the Bill is plural voting, which, it is proposed, should be abolished. I have always favoured plural voting, as has our party, but latterly things have changed. With the incidence of unimproved valuations and the increase in valuations, practically all voting is plural. There is a very small minority of voters in any municipality who have only one vote. Why should some persons have one vote, while others have two votes, and others have three votes? It would be much simpler if each voter had a single vote. However, we, as a party, have not discussed that particular aspect.

This brings me to the third matter contained in the Bill, namely, adult franchise. The Country Party has always considered that adult franchise should not be operative so far as municipal councils are concerned. There are only about half a dozen words in the Bill which state that a voter should have only one vote; the remainder of clause 4 deals with the matter of adult franchise. For the reasons I have stated, the Country Party cannot support the Bill.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—I congratulate my colleague, Mr. Walton, upon his magnificent contribution to the debate on this measure. His was indeed a fine oration. It was pleasing to hear a former councillor make such a speech, and I am sure that aspect will be appreciated by you, Mr. Acting President, because you were formerly a shire president. It is a most gratifying experience to be a shire or city councillor, and the reward, from a personal viewpoint, is very satisfying. I know that Mr. Walton derived a great deal of gratification from presenting this measure to the House.

Local government assumes an important place in the community to-day, and its importance can become still greater if more people are prepared to confess their belief that local government is a form of democracy. Many idle remarks have been made concerning this subject. I cannot help commenting upon the action of Mr. Thom in sitting up till
midnight as an independent councillor of the City of Geelong, then going home to sleep and, next morning, changing his clothes to travel to Melbourne to take his place as a Liberal member of Parliament. How such changes of attitude can be worked out is beyond me.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—I was a councillor from 1946 until 1958, and I resigned from that position two months after I was elected a member of this House, because I felt that my views might not then be as impartial as they had been previously.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Citizenship implies—in fact, demands—a lively interest in and a sound knowledge of the community and its welfare. In local government, finance is a common problem, as is the lack of direct public interest. Few people show an interest in their local right to vote or much interest or awareness of what is provided by their local councils.

The Hon. F. S. Grimwade.—Do you think the compelling of people to vote makes them more interested?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Grimwade would not be a member of this Chamber if he did not think so. Because adult franchise is denied to many residents, local government does not attract the co-operation of the people. I speak with some authority on local government matters, because I have been a councillor of the City of Williamstown for many years, and I am a former mayor of that city. People who have a right are not given a vote because they pay contributions to the municipalities.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Are you advocating another tax?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The Liberal Treasurer of this Government would tax every honorable member for walking down the street. Local government belongs to the people, but many fail to realize it. For too long, local government has refused to realize where its future lies—in the community, which it serves and which can serve it. The sons and daughters of ratepayers make fine contributions to community life either by service or by donations, but they are denied the right to vote. Many municipalities have established excellent free library services.

The Hon. K. S. Gross.—They are not all free.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—The ratepayers pay for these library services through the redemption of loan moneys and the amortization of the loans over a long period. Many kindergartens and crèches are staffed by voluntary workers. Mr. Walton previously expressed fears about what would happen at municipal elections. His remarks were borne out by the despair of municipal officers at the council elections last August. Municipal rolls are compiled from March onwards and three or four officers are engaged in this task.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—That is a gross over-statement.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—In a little hamlet like Sleepy Hollow, it would take only a week. Speaking from the experience of a responsible councillor, I contend that adult franchise is now necessary for the proper conduct of municipal affairs. This would give the public a greater awareness of their rights of citizenship and responsibility to their city. In many municipalities it is difficult to obtain suitable persons to nominate for council elections. Probably the ramifications of the Local Government Act would deter them. The provisions of Mr. Walton's Bill would encourage worthy citizens to take a more active part in municipal affairs.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—You have not had any problem in Williamstown in obtaining nominations for the position of councillor?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Not at Williamstown, but I am speaking of the over-all municipal position in
Victoria. The Minister for Local Government knows that there have been some problems in this matter.

The Hon. K. S. Gross.—Can you name any councils that have had difficulty in obtaining nominations for office?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Gross can carry out his own research with the help of the Minister for Local Government. In large cities and suburbs—particularly Williamstown, Altona and Newport—there are boarding houses which cater for people working in large industrial plants. The people residing in these establishments are not entitled to be enrolled as electors for the municipality.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—They probably have a vote at home.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Mr. Thom is now showing his ignorance of this matter.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Now that I have got your attention, how do you explain that only 70 or 80 per cent. of people vote under the Queensland system?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Perhaps Mr. Thom can elucidate that problem at a later stage. Mr. Mansell mentioned the hardship that exists in many shires. I have great respect for the honorable member's municipal experience, but he should know that the regulations allow for a postal vote to be lodged where the person resides more than 5 miles from a polling booth. Therefore, great hardship would not exist.

The Hon. I. A. Swinburne.—You should try to get a postal vote for a municipal election, and you would find out what complications exist.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Probably there are complications. Many spinsters and young ladies over the age of 21 years often cannot obtain work in the smaller country towns and they travel to the larger cities and obtain work in industrial offices, insurance offices and other white-collar organizations. These people make a contribution to the local government through indirect taxation. If adult franchise were established, the financial burden of the municipalities would be eased because the State or Federal electoral rolls could be used.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—What about the onus?

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—There is an onus under the principal Act for a citizen to ensure that his name appears on the electoral roll. Municipal councils are struggling under great financial burdens to-day, and I do not know what their future will be. In many cases it has been necessary to increase rates, but many ratepayers are unaware of the difficulties under which these councils are operating. It is common to hear the comments, "Those people at the city hall do nothing, but they increase the rates". I shall quote from a publication Local Government and Citizenship. It contains a paper entitled, "Local Government and the Community" written by Mr. A. F. Dunton, senior lecturer in Adult Education, University of New England, and was delivered at two seminars at Grafton and Taree in 1962. The following comment illustrates the public attitude to local government to-day:

The empty seats in the public gallery, the dearth of candidates for local government elections and the general apathy of most citizens towards local government would seem to me to suggest that most of the fine phrases uttered on platforms are more in the nature of aspirations or of wishful thinking than they are statements of fact. The average citizen has come to think of local government as a dealer out of roads and drains in insufficient quantities and as a collector of rates in too great quantities. Local government, to other citizens, is more the handmaiden of the State than the obedient servant of the local community.

I shall not weary the House by quoting further in that vein to illustrate the parochialism of the ratepayers.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—There must be adult franchise in New South Wales.
The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—If the Minister for Local Government was speaking to me on this subject outside the Chamber where he would not commit himself politically, he would agree with me. The Labor Party believes that adult franchise is essential for the proper working of local government in Victoria. This has been shown on many occasions, not only by our own political followers but also by people of all political complexions.

I reiterate the point made during Mr. Walton’s second-reading speech that members of a certain political party have no policy on this question. I have heard this repeated cry, and I challenge that party in regard to what happens in Swanston-street on the Sunday night before the election of a Lord Mayor for the City of Melbourne. Most of the persons concerned are prominent members of the Liberal Party, which asserts that there should be no interference in local government affairs. Yet on Sunday night they sit in judgment on their fellow men and elect their Lord Mayor.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Do they receive directions?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I cannot appreciate how a person can become an independent on the night of a council meeting, but the next day become a member of the Liberal Party. I do not believe that people can change their political ideologies overnight.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—I cannot see how this is relevant to the Bill.

The Hon. A. KNIGHT.—I support the Bill, so ably introduced by my colleague, Mr. Walton. It appears that the Country Party will not support the measure because its policy is against adult franchise. I trust that in the near future this State will accept the principle of adult franchise.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—I think the situation should be summarized in a few short, sharp words. In regard to adult franchise, if it had not been for a piece of blackmail in this House in 1952, there would still have been restricted voting in respect of the Legislative Council of Victoria. Sometimes, as a matter of convenience, our friends in the corner support democracy, but when it suits those honorable members they go farther out to the right than the most conservative Liberal, especially when it comes to certain rights which they consider are peculiarly their own and which they have clung to over the years.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL.—Don’t you think we should have the right to vote?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—I do, but Country Party members have also a right to be democratic. There is no more conservative member of his party than Mr. Mansell, the sire of Sunraysia. I should like the Ministers, particularly the Minister for Local Government, to declare quite openly whether or not they are in favour of democratic voting. Does the Minister for Local Government favour continuation of a system which means that vested interests and capital investment should determine the number of votes to be cast in municipal elections? This is an aftermath of colonialism. It is something that is deeply inherent in the conservative elements of all sections of the British Commonwealth, who would still like to call themselves “part of the British Empire, Sir.”

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Why would you give the owners a vote?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Because they are individuals, just as are lodgers and boarders and people over the age of 21 years. The Government is deliberately denying them the right to vote, except where they can establish a property interest. That can be laid four-square at the feet of the Minister for Local Government, because he is one of the last bastions
of this conservative outlook on democratic voting at municipal elections.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—Does not a tenant get a vote now?

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—He does under certain circumstances. The lessee of an hotel or business gets a vote if he can establish that he is a ratepayer.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—What about the occupier of an ordinary home?

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—The Whip of the Liberal Party should know better. It is a pity that it is necessary for the Acting President to castigate him on so many occasions because of his many interjections, which are of a rather imbecilic nature.

Look at members on the other side of the House. Look at the old conservative gentleman from the wheatbelt in the Wimmera. A couple of them are asking questions of themselves on this measure. Deep down as individuals they would accept progress and agree that there should be one vote for one man, but innately they are tied to the apron strings of their past. They will not let them go without a fight. The same ugly head always rears itself. May they be ever condemned for it. They will hang out as long as they can.

I can see certain members of this Chamber hanging on to the limited voting franchise in municipal affairs from now on until Kingdom come if they can save it, but the sands of time are running against them. They wish to retain the status quo in regard to any form of legislation. May they be given some power to think, so that at least democracy will get into local government elections.

The Hon. W. G. Fry (Higinbotham Province).—A lot of the discussion has not been relevant to the Bill, nor very helpful to local government. Many of the points raised were worthy of attention, but there has been a kind of burlesque parade with people racing up and down and raising their arms.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—You raised your hand. You are an old ham school teacher. You acted in primary school until the kids thought you were one of the old time actors. This is a lot of balderdash.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order!

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—If it is my turn to speak, Mr. Acting President, I shall proceed. Many things should have been said on a constructive basis during this debate. Mr. Knight raised one interesting point. I expected him to discuss the earlier preparation of rolls and an earlier date for municipal elections.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—I suggested that to the Minister.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—These are the sorts of things we want. The last Saturday in August is during the school holidays. This date for voting would act against compulsory voting. Many people are out of town at the time. Another point concerning an earlier date of election is worthy of consideration. In large municipalities, as most of them are in Melbourne, the preparation of rolls takes a considerable time. Many of the errors, whereby people's names are left off the roll, occur because municipal clerks have not enough time in which to check the rolls. There are only about fourteen days from go to whoa, and this is not sufficient time when many thousands of names are involved. Consequently, people telephone to inquire why their names are not on the roll, whereas they were on it the previous year. These are purely clerical errors caused by the similarity of names, and so on.

I compliment Mr. Walton on his submission of the measure to the House, which was very impressive. The honorable member made several very interesting points, but one must be careful in accepting without question, the finding of various reports, because, on close examination, some of
them do not hold water. For example, Mr. Walton used the following quotation—

The voting is now restricted to the occupier or owner of property, but as much municipal revenue is now derived from the public purse through Country Roads Board and other governmental grants, the Commission considers that the electoral franchise should be liberalized.

On this point, the implication is that municipalities are being propped up by grants from governmental and Country Roads Board sources. This argument is out of proportion because, taking the City of Moorabbin as an example, for the year ended 30th September, 1966, the general rates amounted to $1,602,608, whereas Government subsidies totalled $94,703 and Country Roads Board grants were $171,496. In other words, the municipality received from those two sources an amount of $266,199 out of a total of $1,602,608 or one-sixth of its revenue. Furthermore, all of the Country Roads Board grant was not spent in the City of Moorabbin or for its benefit. Much of it was allocated to the North-road project, which serves practically all of Melbourne. Therefore, Mr. Walton's deduction that councils are being propped up by governmental grants was not a fair one.

The argument was advanced that all adults living in the area should have a vote, because the money they contribute in taxes comes back to keep up the sagging municipalities. This is not true. Only one-sixth of a municipality's revenue is derived from those other sources. The second quotation that Mr. Walton made was from the report of an inquiry into local government, held in Darwin, at the request of the Commonwealth Government. Mr. Walton made the interesting point that local government is one of the trinity of spheres of government—Commonwealth, State and local.

So far as the Commonwealth and State Governments are concerned, adult franchise is recognized as a well-accepted principle, and I do not disagree with it. There is a distinct difference between those forms of government and local government. In local government, the principle that has been embodied in our Parliamentary thinking for many centuries has been quoted in many of the reports to which Mr. Walton referred. It has been said that he who pays the piper calls the tune, and this is very true.

We believe that those who pay the taxes are entitled to vote. Why then should the Labor Party wish to throw away this principle? It is a good, sound principle, and there is no reason why it should be thrown overboard. In the municipality which I have the honour to represent, there is no sign of any lag or falling away in the impetus of development. During the past fourteen days, more than $500,000 worth of building permits were issued and a few arithmetical calculations would reveal the total value of permits for the year. There is no reason to upset a system which has functioned satisfactorily and which is producing results and a pleasant municipality in which to live.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—And which would not employ a national serviceman.

The Hon. W. G. FRY.—I do not know that that has anything to do with the Bill. I suppose I shall hear this for the next six years, if Mr. Cathie is here for that period of time. In his speech, Mr. Walton referred to a book written by Mr. Alan Davies and, in dealing with the question of plural voting, he stated that the system had been abolished in New South Wales. Members of the Labor Party tend to praise this wonderful sister State and what it is doing. It would appear that, by abolishing the plural voting system, New South Wales has almost reached the millennium. In this regard, it would be interesting to have a look across the border and see what is happening in New South Wales. What a sorry
mess exists there! An Act of Parliament has wiped out the Sydney council, replacing it with three commissioners. There is no need for me to remind honorable members what happened at Ryde.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—Tell us what happened at Warringah?

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! I ask honorable members to cease interjecting.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—I do not begrudge Opposition members interjecting because, when they participate in debates in this Chamber, they say so very little. I remind honorable members of the sorry effects which are noticeable so far as Ryde and the Sydney council are concerned. Obviously, the wonderful system across the border has not been as effective as the Labor Party expected it to be. Mr. Walton also quoted at some length extracts from a book written by A. J. & J. J. McIntyre, but to my mind the viewpoints expressed are suspect.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—In what way are they suspect?

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—I shall not dodge the issue, but first I should like to read the relevant quotation. It is as follows:

Big property owners can, by paying their rates in the names of various relatives record a very large number of votes; the reaction to this is: “Bill Jones is the Browns’ candidate, so he’s sure to get in; it’s waste of time to vote.”

This is so suspect as to be sheer nonsense, because any honorable member who has been associated with municipal business knows that a property owner cannot go to someone and say that, because he is living on his land, he must vote for him.

Recently, our municipality was visited by the mayor of a municipality in Texas in the United States of America. This person spoke off the record concerning municipal affairs in America. He told me in the course of conversation that the introduction of the adult franchise system was the greatest mistake that they had ever made, and that without exception almost all councils are riddled with graft. I do not contend that this would happen here, but the visiting mayor of whom I speak was extremely perturbed that graft had crept into municipal business in the United States of America.

The recent Municipal Association meeting at South Melbourne considered the question of plural voting. No one present questioned the figures supplied by the man who moved a motion for the adoption of single voting and the abolition of plural voting. This man said that 89 per cent. of the people in the country had three votes in municipal affairs, 8 per cent. had two votes, and 3 per cent. only one vote.

The Hon. J. M. Walton.—His figures are not correct.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—That may be so, but no one challenged the figures. It seems that the question whether the country and the Melbourne municipal areas should be separated, and, possibly, plural voting abolished in one or the other could be examined. I commend it for consideration by the Government.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.—You did not tell us about the suspect report.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—Mr. Knight must have been asleep at the time, as I explained what I meant by my reference to a suspect report.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich (Doutta Galla Province).—I apologize for participating in the debate on this Bill, but the truculence of Mr. Fry has led me to do so. I take exception to his statement to the effect that councillors in New South Wales are involved in a good deal of graft.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—I did not say that. I said that an Act of Parliament had removed the Sydney council and replaced it with a commission of three men.
The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I accept Mr. Fry’s correction. Is the whole of the single-vote representation in New South Wales to be condemned simply because one council has been taken over? Adult franchise as a method of voting was accepted in another place in 1857, when it was strongly opposed by the people who were the forerunners to members who occupy the Government benches to-day. They opposed it because of the great number of miners who drifted from place to place and who, in the words of the leader of the then Conservative Party—Mr. Thom likes to refer to it as the Independent Party—were illiterate and had no hope, and hence were not entitled to a vote.

In another place, by 33 votes to 25, a majority of members decided that adult franchise should be introduced. When the relevant Bill came to this Chamber, it was dealt with by the Leader of the Government, who said in a speech which occupied only ten lines of Hansard, that, seeing that another place had the delicacy not to affect the franchise in this place, he supported the Bill and urged the House to pass it, which it did forthwith. Adult franchise for this House was introduced nearly a century later—in 1950.

The Labor Party believes that adult franchise should also apply to municipal elections, because there would then be one roll for all elections. The only persons whom this would prejudice would be those to whom Mr. Thom referred when he said that those people who pay the piper should call the tune. That was the policy in the old feudal days when the feudal lord accepted full responsibility for all the people on his estate and he had the right to call the tune. Those days are gone. When the rates are calculated into the rents which are charged, the lodger or the tenant of property would come within the category that should not be excluded because they do not pay the piper, as it were.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—There is a big difference between direct and indirect taxation.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—Any person who lets a property, whether it is developed or undeveloped, calculates into his charges the rates and taxes for which he will be responsible in relation to the property.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—In such circumstances, the occupier has a vote and that is something around which you are trying to draw a red herring.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—I do not know how I can get through to a block of wood, but I shall try. For Mr. Fry’s information, I point out that, in municipal elections to-day, 62 per cent. of the people have three votes, 22 per cent. have two votes, and 11 per cent. have one vote. This information was supplied at the recent municipal conference.

The Hon. G. W. Thom.—That was in 1965; later figures are not available.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—If they were, I do not know that the position would be altered. There would be great advantage in the acceptance of one roll for all elections. I do not think the disadvantages in relation to plural voting to which members of the Government party have referred are sufficient to outweigh the advantages claimed by the Labor Party.

On the non-political aspect, I should like to relate one of my experiences. In 1946 I arranged to organize an election campaign for a young fellow who had distinguished himself in the tank forces in New Guinea during the war and who, on returning to civilian life, decided to nominate for a seat in another place. I ran his campaign for him, and in a country town I could not induce one councillor out of twelve to chair a meeting that he was to address because his politics were different from theirs. But they were independents—every one of them!
The Melbourne City Council leaves something to be desired. Government supporters talk about independents in politics.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—Don't they stand on a ticket?

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—Instead of standing as nominees of the Liberal Party, certain members of the Melbourne City Council describe themselves as the Civic Group. At one time they also ran an undercover candidate as an independent, and she joined the group on the night of the election.

On the question of compulsion, to which objection is also taken, what is wrong with people measuring up to their responsibilities? Compulsory voting was introduced into the political sphere because members of the Labor Party could not put up the money or arrange an organization for collecting people from hotels and other places and rushing them to the polls. Compulsory voting for this State was introduced in 1926 by a Government led by Sir Alexander Peacock. Members of my party should not be justifying the legislation that he sponsored at that time.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—But you wanted it.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—Yes, so did he, and he did not have any trouble in having the necessary Bill passed. I hope the time will come when members of the Government party will accept adult franchise and compulsory voting for local government elections. Earlier Mr. Gross interjected that there were no shortages of candidates.

I have spent as great a part of my life living in country districts as I have living in the metropolitan area, and I have always been interested in local affairs. I spent some eight years in Nhill and participated in municipal activities there. Whenever a councillor retired, his friends held a discussion among themselves and decided who would be the best person to take his place. Sometimes there was an election but more often there was not.

The Hon. W. M. Campbell.—Did this happen in Camberwell as well?

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—I did not take any interest in local Government activities in Camberwell. When Councillor Dear retired from the Camberwell City Council, a certain person was invited to take his place, and there was some organization in that regard.

The Hon. W. M. Campbell.—It was not in the Liberal Party.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—The people who did the talking were members of the Liberal Party, but they allegedly met as independents to decide who would be the new councillor.

The Acting President (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! I am finding difficulty in relating these remarks to the Bill.

The Hon. J. M. Tripovich.—I am answering an interjection, Mr. Acting President, but perhaps I should not do so. Mr. Walton has advanced an excellent argument in support of this Bill. The advantages in favour of the proposal outweigh the disadvantages enumerated by those opposed to the measure.

With respect to our friends in the corner, I believe the political life of New South Wales and Queensland to be equivalent to that in this State. I consider that the social service work undertaken by municipal councils in other States—this may be due to the fact that they have access to other sources of revenue than those available in Victoria—results in more benefits being given to the citizens there than in this State. Therefore, I suggest that if this Bill is passed, even with a compromise on the basis of that suggested by Mr. Mansell—that the proposal could be adopted with respect to town councils, and that shire councils could be considered later—it will be a great advantage.

I pay my tribute to Mr. Walton for the way in which he has handled this, his first private member's Bill, and I...
congratulate him upon the constructive manner in which he presented his case. I should like to make only one further comment and that is that when Mr. Knight produced the napkin which was discoloured with carbon black, I thought it was the oven cloth used by the Minister of Health!

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—I should like to make a few brief comments on this measure because I have had some years of experience as a member of a municipal council. First, I should like to dispose of one or two of the arguments that have been put by speakers on the Government side of the House—arguments which probably have nothing to do with the question of plural voting or adult franchise, but which are merely red herrings drawn across the trail.

Reference was made to the action of the New South Wales Government in altering the boundaries of the council of the City of Sydney. I point out to Mr. Fry that there are certain individuals, probably members of the Liberal Party, in Swanston-street, who want to go in the opposite direction, and probably their decision to try to alter the way in which certain people are governed is not exactly welcomed. Let us not be naïve about these things; we should always be prepared to recognize the truth. Members of the Labor Party realize that anti-Labor people oppose us on many issues, and, whether we like it or not, they vote along certain lines.

Local government is the level of government which is nearest the people. Residents of a municipality have an inherent right to decide the manner in which they should be governed and what should be done on their behalf by the authorities they elect—what should be done by their town clerk and their city engineer; what crèches should be erected and kindergartens conducted; what social services should be instituted, and so on. These matters should be the subject of decisions arrived at by the people at citizen level.

I should like to quote as an example the City of South Melbourne. Reference has been made to Camberwell. With due respect to Mr. Campbell, I suggest that Camberwell council is no special example of municipal administration. Some other councils are excellently administered and their councillors are not members of the Liberal Party.

The City of South Melbourne has five wards and most of the residents are located in three of them—Canterbury ward, Beaconsfield ward and Queen's ward. The preponderance of the ratepayers are in Beaconsfield ward, whereas in Queen's ward the population is diminishing because many flats are being converted into commercial offices. There are two industrial wards—Fawkner and Normanby—which elect six councillors to the South Melbourne council. Each is a non-resident of the City of South Melbourne, and together with one or two other individuals they have a say in what is going to happen in the city. In all instances, they line up on a political basis whenever any question is being decided at a council meeting.

The so-called independents never vote with the Labor councillors. These people, who in the main are nominees of companies and pay nothing personally in rates, decide what is to be the fate of the municipality. They can decide whether industrial zones are to encroach on residential zones; whether zoning is to be changed here or there. They decide the important things in the lives of the citizens. Almost 5,000 people are enrolled in Canterbury ward and there are only a slightly fewer in Beaconsfield ward.

The Hon. W. G. FRY.—Would not the changing of zoning be subject to the greater Melbourne plan of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works?
The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Not at all; the councillors decide whether a zone should be altered, whether an industrial zone should encroach further into South Melbourne, and so on. Let us be truthful about the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and realize that it is a political, Liberal-dominated body. The council approaches the Board and a decision is made on what should be done. Meetings of the Board of Works are held in the daytime and Labor councillors cannot afford time off from work to attend those meetings.

I shall deal now with the question whether there should be plural voting in municipal elections. This has been the practice for a long time. A man with a family living in one house may be entitled to two votes and his next-door neighbour may have three votes because he has a brick fence along the frontage. These matters are at present decided on the basis of the quality of the homes that people live in, not on whether the occupants of the properties take an interest in the progress of the municipality.

Is the present system of the allocation of votes the right one? Should votes be allocated on the basis of amounts paid in rates? It is said that the owner of the property pays the rates. That is a myth. I join with Mr. Tripovich in saying that it is the tenant of the property who pays the rates. The Minister for Local Government is aware that his Government was responsible for changing the Landlord and Tenant Act to give the owner of property the right to add to the rental amounts based on increases in rates from year to year. At present, one of the conditions imposed on a person seeking rental accommodation is that he must pay the rates and taxes on the property he rents.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—There is no such automatic right.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Did Mr. Hunt look at the Landlord and Tenant Act? Not only is that so, but if the landlord makes a capital improvement to the property, he is allowed to increase the rent by a certain percentage of the expense incurred and there is an automatic adjustment of rates.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—Are you thinking of the old, protected premises?

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—It is on those premises that the rent can be increased. Tenants in unprotected properties are at the mercy of the owners. Honorable members should consider what is best in the interests of the people who live within a particular municipality. They should not be concerned about the interests of those who come to a municipality day by day to occupy business premises and then retire to such places as Camberwell, Brighton, and other modest places, where they pay exorbitant prices for land. The people with whom Parliament should concern itself when considering such cities as South Melbourne and Port Melbourne are those who live there.

Adult franchise should be introduced to bring about proper municipal Government. “Adult franchise” is the best expression to describe what is necessary. Each adult member of a family, in one way or another, contributes a share of the rent paid for the family home, which eventually finds its way into the pocket of the landlord. If an owner lives elsewhere, he does not have much interest in what happens in South Melbourne or Port Melbourne.

The people who live in Port Melbourne are not worried. There is an all-Labor council there, and it has not been necessary to hold an election for a number of years. Apparently, General Motors-Holden’s, Kraft Ltd., and all the other large organizations located at Fisherman’s Bend are content with the way in which the Labor council of Port Melbourne conducts the affairs of the city. I inform honorable members on the Government side of the House, who have smirks on their faces, that
the Minister for Local Government recently paid a compliment to the City of Port Melbourne on the way it keeps its municipality in order.

The main objective of local government is to ensure that the municipality meets the standards desired by the people regarding cleanliness, good streets, garbage collections, health services, kindergartens, and everything else which should be provided by local government authorities. It is most important that people should be close to the councillors who represent them. In places like Malvern, Camberwell and Brighton, it is safe to say that 90 per cent. of the people do not know who are their representatives in their councils.

The Hon. W. G. Fry.—Now, now!

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I am not drawing a long bow. Mr. Fry should not wave his arms about; he is not in front of a class of school children now. If people in those places were asked who represented them in the Legislative Council, how many do honorable members on the Government benches think would know?

The Hon. MURRAY BYRNE.—I bet they know in my area.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I have some doubt about that, although I realize that the Ballarat Gaol is in Mr. Byrne's area.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Order! Mr. Todd needs no assistance from either side of the House.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I want to discuss the simple procedures of local government.

The ACTING PRESIDENT.—I should like Mr. Todd to do that and to keep to the Bill.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I have endeavoured to do that all along, Mr. Acting President. It is people who count, not businesses, not large enterprises which pay some rates for the services they receive from municipal councils; it is the people who live within a municipality who have the right to determine what services should be supplied.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—What percentage vote do you have?

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I am sorry that Mr. Thom cannot stand up and have another "yap." The reason for the advocacy of adult franchise is that it is people who count. Adult people who live within a municipality should be able to decide their own future. Municipal government should not depend on wealth or what is paid to a council but should be determined on the basis of the needs of a particular place. It should not be possible for two or three wards of a municipality, from which the greatest amounts of rates are received, to decide that there will be no kindergarten here, no road there, or no health service somewhere else. It is essential that, instead, the best level of government should apply in the local sphere.

Some reference has been made to the Municipal Association, for which I do not have a great deal of respect, although I do respect Mr. Fagan, its secretary. This association is comprised of delegates who can find time to attend its meetings. When people have the audacity to pass resolutions about what ought to be done with land in a municipality which they do not represent, instead of minding their own business, I begin to lose faith in such organizations as the Municipal Association. I do not usually praise Ministers—I believe it is wrong to do so from the Opposition benches—but it is to the credit of the Minister for Local Government that he was prepared to resist those creatures and do the right thing in the interests of municipalities.

Unfortunately, this Bill is approached with prejudice. Government members do not ask whether the Bill is progressive, whether the evidence presented to the inquiry on local government was sound,
or whether the recommendation that adult franchise should be introduced was proper. It is approached from the point of view that one section of Parliament seeks to make a gain at the expense of another. It is far better that the great majority of adults who live in a municipality should be taking part in municipal affairs than that only a select few should have the right to do so.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. R. Garrett in the chair)—

Ayes ..... 7
Noes ..... 22

Majority against the motion ..... 15

**AYES.**

Mr. Elliot | Mr. Tripovich.
Mr. Knight | Tellers:
Mr. Merrifield | Mr. Cathie
Mr. Todd | Mr. Walton.

**NOES.**

Mr. Bradbury | Mr. Hamer
Mr. Byrne | Mr. Hamilton
Sir Percy Byrnes | Mr. Hewson
Mr. Campbell | Mr. McDonald
Mr. Chandler | Mr. May
Mr. Clarke | Mr. Nicol
Mr. Dickie | Mr. Swinburne
Mr. Fry | Mr. Thom.
Mr. Gleeson | Tellers:
Mr. Granter | Mr. Houghton
Mr. Grimwade | Mr. Hunt.
Mr. Gross | Mr. Thompson.

**PAIR.**

Mr. Galbally | Mr. Thompson.

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.**

**DAYS AND HOURS OF MEETING:**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS.**

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I move—

That so much of the sessional orders as provides that the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be half-past Four o’clock and on Wednesdays Four o’clock, that on Wednesday in each week private members’ business shall take precedence of Government business, and that no new business be taken after half-past Ten o’clock be suspended until the end of December next and that until the end of December next the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be Four o’clock and on Wednesdays Two o’clock and that Government business shall take precedence of all other business.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province).—Members of my party have no objection to the motion; it is the usual one moved at this stage of the session. We appreciate that the Government has a large legislative programme and that it is necessary to expedite the passage of Bills. However, I offer the Minister the suggestion that he should not take advantage of the privilege afforded to private members and ask the House to sit for long hours in order that the legislative programme may be completed. After all, we are not responsible for the way in which the Government conducts the business of this House. I understand that more Bills are still to be introduced. One relates to the Victoria Institute of Colleges, and the Minister for Local Government has said that it is intended to introduce into the lower House a Bill relating to town and country planning. I understand that other Bills are still being introduced in another place also. There are already 24 Bills on the Notice Paper of this House and there are more to come. The Government should accept some of the blame for the fact that this House is behind in transacting its business.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—It is a pity that so much time was wasted last night in debating air pollution.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD.—If the Minister of Health wants to make interjections of that sort this fight can be widened. I am speaking in a moderate tone in an attempt to persuade the Minister of Agriculture not to push Bills through the House at an unfair rate. When proposed legislation is introduced members should be given a reasonable time in which to consider it. I think that is a fair proposition, and I ask the Minister not to take advantage of our good nature.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture) (By leave).—I took particular note of Mr. Merrifield’s remarks when he said he hoped I would not take advantage of his
The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD.—There is a sufficient period in which to consider Bills between the time when it is proposed the House shall rise and Christmas. If the Minister wants to sit during that period, we will assist him.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Since I have been the Leader of this House, I do not think I can be accused of trying to suppress debate on private members' Bills. I hope the sensible co-operation which has generally prevailed in this House between the Leaders of the parties will continue, and that it will be possible to finalize Government business on a reasonable basis. However, on occasions there has been a large backlog of business and Mr. Merrifield knows that there are some things that the Leader of the House cannot control.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD.—There is a lot that you can control.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Yes, but I cannot control Mr. Merrifield or members of his party. I have never tried to suppress debate in this House, and I have already given an assurance that the private members' Bills that are still on the Notice Paper will be dealt with by suitable arrangements between the Leaders of the various parties. In my opinion, the motion before the Chair is a reasonable one.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—Members of my party are quite happy to co-operate with the Leader of the House in any efforts he makes to ensure that adequate time will be given for the discussion of Bills. There are at present, I understand, sixteen Bills before another place which have not yet come to this House, and there are 24 on our Notice Paper. I do not know how many more Bills will be introduced, but rumour has it that there are several. I understand, also, that the Government wants Parliament to rise early in December.

If Ministers continue to introduce Bills in the optimistic belief that they will be rapidly disposed of in this House, they may be disappointed. Adequate time must be given in which to debate all measures. Bills should not be introduced into this House at such a rate that there is insufficient time in which to debate them. There are only so many sitting hours in a week, and if it is the Government's intention for the House to rise at the end of the first week in December there will be only five or six weeks' sitting time left. I suggest that the Minister of Agriculture should curb the desire of his fellow Ministers to introduce large numbers of Bills in the hope that they will be rushed through this House before Christmas. Many important measures have yet to be debated, and it is our duty to ensure that reasonable legislation is placed on the statute-book. We will offer all possible co-operation, but we also expect co-operation from Ministers.

The motion was agreed to.

RAILWAY LANDS BILL.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It proposes to exempt the Victorian Railways Commissioners from the provisions of the Sale of Land Act 1962 in cases where the Commissioners desire to sell lands on which a railway line has been dismantled. It is a limited exemption and applies only to what might be called "dismantled lines."

From time to time, Acts of Parliament have been passed authorizing the Commissioners to dismantle lines
of railway or sections of lines of railway and to sell or dispose of the lands acquired or used in connexion therewith. Acts authorizing the sale of lands on which railways have been dismantled in country areas are listed in the schedule attached to the Bill. Although there are parts of two metropolitan dismantled lines mentioned in the Acts in the schedule, there are no lands for sale on such metropolitan lines.

The provisions of the Sale of Land Act 1962 have rendered difficult the sale of the lands referred to in the Acts set out in the schedule. The main difficulty has been the necessity to provide a plan of subdivision before entering into negotiations with adjoining landowners. It is not until negotiations are commenced that it is possible to determine the exact areas to be sold to each landowner.

Certain Government and municipal bodies, professional institutions and associations, and so forth, also found difficulties arising out of the provisions of the Sale of Land Act, and, following evidence from these bodies, amending legislation was passed in 1965. However, the problems peculiar to the sale of land on dismantled lines of railway were not made known to the Statute Law Revision Committee at that time.

In February, 1966, following representations by the then Minister of Transport, the Honorable E. R. Meagher, the Statute Law Revision Committee, was asked to re-examine problems arising from the Act encountered by public statutory bodies, with particular reference to the difficulties met by the Railways Commissioners, and on 8th September, 1966, the railways estate officer and a legal officer appeared before the Statute Law Revision Committee and gave evidence.

In its report of 23rd November, 1966, the Statute Law Revision Committee accepted the railway's contention that some relief should be provided from present procedures under the Sale of Land Act. Subsequent discussions between the Crown Solicitor, the Parliamentary Draftsman and the Titles Office resulted in changed procedures which eliminated some of the problems of the railways and, I understand, the remaining problems of the other public authorities, but there still remains the problem of the sale of railway lands on dismantled lines of railway in country areas.

The committee considered that the difficulty could properly be categorized as a dismantling one, that any relaxation of procedures under the Sale of Land Act would be authorized more appropriately in the particular dismantling Bills as they came before Parliament, and that in Bills concerning rural land, an exemption from the relevant parts of the Sale of Land Act would not attract much concern.

However, as there are so many dismantled railways on lands which have not been sold owing to the effects of the Sale of Land Act, the Railways Commissioners are reluctant to request any further railway dismantling Act at this stage.

Consequently, this Bill is being introduced to provide that the Sale of Land Act 1962 shall not apply to the sale by the Commissioners under any of the Acts referred to in the schedule of the Bill of any lands formerly used in connexion with a line of railway or section of a line of railway. This would put the Commissioners in a position to get on with the work of selling the lands on the lines now dismantled, and I therefore commend it to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (PRE-PACKED ARTICLES) BILL.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Bill is of great importance to industry and commerce throughout
Australia, and also to the consumer— that is to every citizen. Its purpose is to bring into effect in Victoria an agreement for Australia-wide uniformity on the marking and standardization of packaged goods. More and more goods are being pre-packed by the manufacturer, and the volume and variety of the items available in packaged form seem to grow each year. There has up to the present been considerable variation in the requirements of the various States, and it has been clear for some time that great benefits, in costs and otherwise, could accrue from a reasonable uniformity in packaging regulations.

At the same time, with the growth of packaged goods has come the anguish of the customer, who frequently has no means of estimating the contents of a package, nor of comparing it for value with a similar-looking package of the same commodity. The housewife is frequently confronted with packages marked "Economy" or "Family Size" or "Giant Size", without any indication as to the actual contents or any effective way of checking the claims made.

This Bill, therefore, does four things:

First, it provides for standard sizes for packaging various kinds of goods, and these standards are to be uniform throughout Australia.

Secondly, it requires all packaged goods to be marked with the actual contents—by weight, number or volume according to their nature—in a prominent manner, and also the name and address of the manufacturer, or some identifying brand.

Thirdly, it prohibits the use of some quite misleading expressions, such as "Big Gallon" or "Super Large Pint."

Fourthly, it restricts the use of certain other expressions such as "Economy Size", "Giant", "Jumbo", and so on unless the actual contents of the package are stated prominently in close association with that expression. It is not a prohibition, but a restriction, so that the actual contents of the package will be made clear.

All Australian States have agreed to enact legislation in these terms to come into operation as from 1st January, 1968. The legislation itself will provide a one year "breathing space" for manufacturers to meet the uniform requirements, but these requirements have been known in general terms for some time, as I shall now explain.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—The code comes into operation in February, 1968.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—The provisions of the Bill will operate from 1st January, 1968, and then the manufacturers will be given a year within which to comply. Therefore, by the 1st January, 1969, there should be uniformity throughout Australia.

The differing requirements in the various States of Australia were, and still are, extremely frustrating to manufacturers and packers operating on a national scale. It would be an illusion to think that consumers do not have to meet at least a part of the extra costs resulting from the need for packers to allot different forms of labelling and packaging in different States. In 1959, an informal conference of weights and measures officers of all States recommended the development of a "uniform code" to deal particularly with "standardization."

In 1962, the Honorable A. G. Rylah, as Chief Secretary for this State, put this view to a conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, and offered, on behalf of Victoria, to arrange for the holding of a public inquiry into such matters. This offer was accepted, after which Mr. W. J. Cuthill, Stipendiary Magistrate, was appointed as a board of inquiry, by the Executive Council of this State. Mr. Cuthill made an extremely thorough inquiry, hearing many witnesses, making an extensive survey of relevant legislation both in Australia and overseas, and also visiting
a number of factories where packaged goods were prepared for the market.

Mr. Cuthill's report of over 2,300 pages was presented to Parliament in 1964. Ministers and weights and measures officers of all States then gave further attention to the matter, and a "uniform code" was produced. This code was circulated to the Chambers of Manufactures and many other interested parties for comment. A final draft was later approved, including numerous modifications, without however affecting its basic general requirements. The necessary drafting of a uniform Bill was done by a drafting committee comprised of legal officers from Queensland and Tasmania, in association with senior Weights and Measures officers of all States, and of the Department of Trade and Customs, which watched Commonwealth interests in the matter of imported goods.

Finally, Ministers of the Commonwealth and of all States met in May last to consider the draft Bill. In general, the Ministers were satisfied to approve it, but gave some further directions, largely in relation to matters on which the officers had sought directions on policy. The drafting committee then produced the final draft of a uniform Bill, which forms the basis of the relevant parts of the present Bill. It was agreed that the States would have discretion as to whether they made the draft Bill the basis of an entirely separate Act, or whether they amended existing weights and measures legislation to produce the same effect. This Bill follows the latter course, and to a very large extent it substantially repeats provisions in the Weights and Measures Act, although frequently with very different wording.

At this stage, it does not seem necessary to deal in detail with the provisions of the Bill as they do not involve any change of principle, although I propose to outline the directions in which the main changes are proposed. I should say, first, that assurances have been given to trading organizations that no packages which could legally be sold immediately before the time of commencement of the new packaging law would be rendered illegal for at least twelve months thereafter, although anything permitted by the new law would become acceptable immediately.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—This applies only to packaged goods? It does not apply to the embellishments in advertising a product that might not come in a packet?

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—This is so. It is thought that this transition period should be sufficient, in general, to avoid hardship to bona fide traders, but provision is made for an extension of this period if a real need should be demonstrated in regard to particular classes of goods.

Another matter of a general nature is that some selective increases in penalties are proposed. For example, while the present general maximum penalty for breaches of the Weights and Measures Act or the regulations is a fine of $100, proposed new section 82H provides for a penalty of $200 for a first offence of giving short weight or measure, and of $400 for a second or subsequent offence.

I now turn to more specific points. Proposed new section 82D requires packages to be marked to enable the packer to be identified, either by an actual statement of name and address or by means of an approved brand, which would be in the nature of a code mark. Section 74 of the principal Act places certain responsibilities on the manufacturer or packer if his name and address appear on the package, with a corresponding reduction in responsibilities of a re-seller. This is important in relation to packaged goods because a re-seller has very little control over the contents of a package.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot.—He has no control.
The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—He certainly could not be expected to reweigh every package, or to count the contents of a package. The existing section 74, however, does not require the manufacturer or packer to be identified by a marking on the package.

Proposed section 82E provides that on or after the appointed day certain goods may be packed and sold only in the same denominations as are prescribed in the regulations. In other words, the provision standardizes packages for those classes of goods. The regulations will contain a very considerable list setting out the classifications of goods and the various standardized packages in which they may be sold throughout Australia.

Proposed new section 82F provides that articles to which the section applies shall not be packed or sold unless the package is marked in the prescribed manner with the true weight or measure of the contents. The proposed new section 82H has the effect of making prosecutions for minor average deficiencies of weight or measure possible only if the average is based on at least six packages, although it continues to be possible to prosecute for gross deficiencies in even single packages.

A particular problem which has concerned weights and measures administrations for a long time has been how best to deal with goods liable to lose weight, usually by reason of evaporation of moisture, during storage. The best example that I know of is a packet of soap flakes which, I believe, if left on a shelf for a period, especially in Queensland, will lose up to 20 per cent. of its weight.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—This can happen in Victoria, too.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—It is caused largely through climatic conditions. Sub-section (3) of section 73 of the present Act has dealt with such matters by permitting any goods subject to such diminution to be marked in the terms of “net weight when packed” with the result that the effectiveness of the inspection which could be exercised over such goods is greatly reduced. The proviso to the present sub-section (4) of section 73 was intended to improve the effectiveness of this inspection, but its application has been found to be virtually useless. Proposed new section 82I will permit a very limited class of goods to carry “net weight when packed” markings. This should considerably increase the effective control in the interests of the consumer. It will be limited to particular classes of goods which are liable to lose weight. All other goods will have to comply with the provisions that markings must indicate the weight or content at any time throughout their life.

The new section 82J will prohibit completely the use on packages of expressions such as the “Big Gallon” which imply that a particularly large amount is being given for a particular unit of weight or measure, which is of course actually of a fixed quantity. The section also deals with the “restricted” expressions. I instance the words “Economy” and “Giant Size.” The Government has been supplied with quite a long list of these expressions, some of which appear to have emanated from America. In the list, there are such descriptions as: “King Size”, “Giant”, “Jumbo”, and “Starter”, which appears to have an implication that it is the beginning of a new series of products.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—The word “starter” is used by big companies when they distribute a product in a test area for survey purposes.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I suppose the word implies that the consumer is getting something fairly cheap. However, I bow to Mr. Elliot’s knowledge, because he probably knows these expressions.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Reluctantly, I admit that.
The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—There are other expressions such as “Queen”, “Longfellow”, “Hi-Boy”, “Huge”, “Gigantic”, “Colossal”, “Extra Large”, and so on. The restriction under proposed new section 82J will be that the markings must carry a close association with the actual contents of the package.

Proposed new section 82K makes a principal liable for the acts of his agent, and the new section 82L makes an employer liable for offences by his employees. Proposed section 82M makes the consent of the superintendent necessary for the prosecution of offences relating to pre-packed articles, other than in relation to short weight or measure. The object of this provision is to remove a frequent source of embarrassment, in that the Superintendent of Weights and Measures is often asked by traders for statements as to whether or not particular packages comply with the weights and measures law.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Was the Association of National Advertising consulted concerning this measure?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I cannot say. That body has not seen a copy of the Bill, but it may have seen the uniform code, which set out the principles upon which the Bill is based. That code was circulated widely. A large number of comments and suggestions were submitted, and these were considered. As a result of the representations, several amendments were made to the uniform code. The main organizations were consulted freely, but whether the advertisers were included I cannot say. I will inquire into that aspect.

Earlier, I mentioned the consent of the Superintendent. The Superintendent has to reply that, while he is willing to examine packages or labels brought to him and to give an opinion in regard to their compliance or otherwise with the Weights and Measures Act and regulations, he cannot, even in cases where he takes a favourable view of such packages or labels, give any assurance that local authorities and the inspectors employed by them will take the same view. The local authorities are entitled to institute proceedings in regard to such matters without the consent of the Superintendent or even informing him of their intentions; in any such prosecution, a court would give its decision on the basis of its own interpretation of the law, which would not necessarily be consistent with any view which might have been expressed by the Superintendent.

This is obviously highly unsatisfactory from the point of view of traders generally and particularly of those who are contemplating undertaking major projects involving the use of packages of some particular kind. The problem has been accentuated, by reason of the fact that there is a clear desire for ability to give assurances of Australia-wide acceptability of particular forms of packages. This new provision does not empower the Superintendent to give local interpretations overriding those given by the courts, but, from a practical point of view, it will give the Superintendent power to give satisfactory assurances of freedom from prosecutions in respect of packages which are regarded as complying with the uniform packaging law. It is not expected that this power would be exercised, other than in connexion with packaged goods in respect of which assurances of acceptability have been given. The purpose of this is to give an assurance that, if the Superintendent states that there has been compliance with the weights and measures laws, there will be no frivolous prosecution.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—What background does the Superintendent have?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—He is an experienced officer.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT.—Will he be the sole judge?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—No, he will be permitted to express an
opinion, and thereafter he must consent to prosecutions. That is merely to impose a restraint upon local authorities.

The Hon. D. G. ELIOT.—So, the ultimate decision must be made by the court?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Yes. This problem has been accentuated, because manufacturers will need some indication, on an Australia-wide basis, that a package complies with the weights and measures laws.

In the proposed section 820, arrangements are proposed to give a prospect of reciprocal action between States, to facilitate the prosecution of interstate offenders against packaging law. We propose to make it harder for offenders to evade the weights and measures provisions.

Paragraph (d) of sub-clause (2) of clause 3 of the Bill provides for an increase in the responsibilities of directors of corporations, in regard to compliance with the requirements of the Weights and Measures Act and regulations.

Although the Bill deals mainly with packaging, the opportunity is being taken of making several other amendments which experience has shown to be desirable. The first of these additional provisions occurs in clause 5, which makes it possible for the central administration to be authorized to undertake prosecutions which are impracticable for the local administration. This is proposed, because the present Act is considered to require all prosecutions in connexion with the sale of goods to be carried out by the local administration, except insofar as the offences may be detected in the course of general supervision of the local administration.

In practice, it would seldom, if ever, be practicable for the local administration to undertake a prosecution in connexion with the weighing or measuring of some kinds of goods by means of weighing or measuring equipment, the verification of which is a function of the central administration. For example, the local administration is not likely to have the necessary standards and auxiliary equipment to deal effectively with complaints alleging short measure in large deliveries of liquid petroleum products or short weight of gold or other precious metals. The new provision is intended to provide means of rectifying this position.

The Hon. D. G. ELIOT.—What about medical preparations?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—They will be in the same category. Complaints have been received in regard to the sale of truck-loads of commodities such as fertilizers; it has been alleged that some sales purporting to be on the basis of weight have been made, without the sellers having in fact any means available for weighing the material. Clause 8 is intended to deal with this position; the proviso is intended to cover certain special cases as, for example, where goods are weighed on a public weighbridge or where the weight or measure of the goods is determined by the buyer. In connexion with the complaints referred to, there has also been an administrative problem in that there has appeared to be considerable doubt.

As indicated, the main purpose of this Bill relates to packaged goods. In Australia-wide uniform legislation, it is inevitable that some element of compromise has to be accepted. The negotiations leading to this Bill have been somewhat protracted, due in part to a strong view held and pressed on behalf of this State that the whole of the relevant requirements on packaging should be critically examined in the light of modern needs, giving due regard to the protection of buyers and to packaging methods which can be economically used having regard to materials, equipment and techniques which have become available in recent years. This has applied particularly in matters to be dealt with in the regulations relating to standardization of packages, in which connexion it has been agreed that, instead of generalized requirements with numerous exemptions, individual
treatment should be given to different classes of goods, based on a careful examination of what is both desirable and practicable.

There are several small administrative provisions, but I have indicated the general principles upon which the Bill has been based. I believe the end result, which has been reached after a great deal of work, is one which will be accepted as satisfactory by the weights and measures administration and also by manufacturers, packers, re-sellers and consumers throughout Australia. The Bill is a good example of the States coming together with the greatest amity for a common purpose, and it has shown that this is possible without centralized direction. I trust that the House will receive the measure well, because I believe it enshrines some important principles and affords important protection, which is the function of all weights and measures legislation.

Sir Percy Byrnes.—Have the Attorneys-General reviewed this Bill?

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—Yes, they provided the drafting team. I shall not say that they examined the Bill in all its detail, but they certainly checked it, and it has been discussed and thoroughly torn apart and put together several times at meetings of Ministers. It has gone through the mill, so to speak, and I trust that the result is satisfactory. It seems to me to be so.

Sir Percy Byrnes.—The ambit of the Bill is wide, and it is not particularly easy to understand.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.—That is so. Many provisions of the measure are not new but have been re-worded. I have indicated where the Bill has departed from previous legislation.

On the motion of the Hon. Archibald Todd, for the Hon. J. M. Walton (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 1.

Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Bill.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes amendments to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act 1958, No. 6263. Its principal and most urgent purpose is to increase the total borrowing power of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust for both water and sewerage works. At the same time the opportunity is being taken to make several other amendments to bring this Act into greater conformity with corresponding provisions of the Water Act and the Sewerage Districts Act.

By sub-clause (1) of clause 2, sections 41 and 44 of the principal Act are amended to permit the Trust’s borrowing power for water supply to be increased from $24,000,000 to $30,000,000. The amount borrowed by the Trust to date is $17,500,000 but, as the Trust will need to spend at least another $7,000,000 on major water supply projects within the next three years, on top of its normal loan expenditure for reticulation additions and other distribution works, the present provision is obviously inadequate. The amendments concern both initial borrowing powers and the power to reborrow for conversion loans when the initial loan period expires.

By sub-clause (2) of clause 2, sections 127 and 130 are amended to permit the Trust’s borrowing power for sewerage purposes to be increased from $10,000,000 to $20,000,000. Its present borrowings amount to $9,500,000, and the increase will be sufficient to cover a $6,000,000 five-year programme of works, including a new ocean out-fall sewer, which has already been commenced, together with other essential works required during that period. As in the case of the water supply borrowing, the amendments will cover both initial loans and reborrowing for conversion loans when the first loan period expires.
Clause 3 amends sections 3, 59, 78, and 81. Sub-clause (1) proposes the addition of a new sub-section (3) of section 3, to enable the description of land or district boundaries to be made by plan only, rather than by using the present method of technical description by metes and bounds. This provision is similar to section 405 that was inserted in the Water Act during the last autumn session, and which already—by incorporation—applies to the water supply provisions of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Act. The new sub-section merely extends the same facility to the remainder of this Act dealing with sewerage and Barwon river improvements. It will be noted that the plans used for this purpose will be subject to the requirements of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and lodged at the office of that authority.

Paragraph (a) of sub-clause (2) of clause 3 introduces into section 59 an interpretation of "land" which, as in the Water Act and other Acts, will include any easement, right or other privilege. Sub-paragraph (iii) of this paragraph (a) also authorizes the Trust to acquire statutory easements for sewerage purposes without relating such easements to benefited land owned by the Trust. This provision is similar to section 312 of the Water Act, which already applies to the water supply activities of the Trust by reason of incorporation. The only alternative to a provision such as this would be acquisition of the freehold of the land concerned—a procedure which is not always warranted. Similar rights are held by other statutory authorities.

The other amendments contained in this clause were requested by the Trust to bring its powers regarding land acquisition into conformity with those of all sewerage authorities under the Sewerage Districts Act. The matter contained in existing sections 78 and 81 of the Act, dealing with the acquisition and disposal of land, has been rearranged for improved clarity.

Paragraph (b) of sub-clause (2) substitutes a new section 78 which will now contain all the powers of acquisition both within and without the Trust's drainage area—that is, its sewerage district. Paragraph (a) of the new section provides for the Trust to acquire land within its drainage area by agreement without requiring the consent of the Governor in Council, as may be done by all other sewerage authorities. However, compulsory acquisition will still require the consent of the Governor in Council. Paragraph (b) of the new section allows the Trust to acquire land outside its drainage area, both by agreement and compulsorily, with the approval of the Governor in Council. The present provisions of section 81 do not make it clear that land can be acquired compulsorily outside the drainage district.

Paragraph (c) of sub-clause (2) collects into a substituted section 81, without alteration, the existing provisions relating to the disposal of land surplus to requirements, and the way in which the proceeds are to be applied.

Clause 4 amends section 123 of the principal Act relating to the recovery of rates. The Trust has requested that, as it is a single body providing both water and sewerage facilities, the procedure for the recovery of sewerage rates should be made to conform with the procedure under the Water Act. The Trust already has to follow this procedure for the recovery of water rates.

Paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1) amends sub-section (1) of section 123 to increase the interest charged on unpaid rates from 6 to 8 per cent. so as to conform with the amendment to the Water Act being dealt with during this session. Paragraph (b) introduces three new sub-sections similar to the existing provisions of the Water Act in this matter. The new sub-section (1A) provides for at least four months' grace on the payment of
The meat industry in this State, in terms of cattle, sheep and pigs slaughtered, had an annual local production value of $201,000,000 for the 1964-65 financial year, which is the latest year for which figures are available. This represents a 40 per cent. increase over the four-year period from 1960-61 and, while this rate of increase may not have been maintained since 1964-65, the actual figures for stock slaughtering in Victoria indicate that further significant gains were made in 1965-66, with a total production of 512,796 tons of carcass meat as compared with 504,495 tons in 1964-65. Final figures for 1966-67 are not yet to hand, but there are indications that some falling off in production occurred owing to the shortage of livestock resulting from the drought situation.

The meat industry, which in this State is essentially a free enterprise industry, serves the livestock owner by creating a market for fat stock and surplus stock, whether the meat is destined for local use or for export. The industry serves the public by ensuring a regular supply of meat for human consumption, and there is no doubt that the quality of meat available in Victoria is not surpassed anywhere in the world.

In recent years, rapid changes have occurred in the economics, technology and management procedures in this industry, and since 1962 the rate of change has speeded up under the impetus of demands of export markets such as the United States of America, European countries and Japan, all of which require very high standards of hygiene and quality control in works supplying meat.

The control of the industry from the point of view of licensing and registration of works and of inspection procedures, hygiene standards and quality of product is shared between the State and the Commonwealth, the State operating in relation to meat destined for local
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Joint Select Committee (COUNCIL.) [Meat Industry] Bill.

consumption, and the Commonwealth having a responsibility with regard to meat destined for export. This dual control of works involved in production of meat both for the local market and for export has in certain instances resulted in some duplication of inspection procedures. This duplication has occurred in periods of shortage of inspectors and has been the subject of a number of discussions between the Commonwealth and State authorities concerned. At the present time, 26 works in this State are registered under the Meat Export Regulations under the Customs Act and Commerce Trade Description Act of the Commonwealth Government to slaughter and process meat for export from Australia.

The Victorian Government has a three-fold interest and responsibility in respect of the meat industry. In the first place, it must ensure that the meat on sale to the public is wholesome, free of disease and is handled in a hygienic manner. These matters are provided for under the Health Act and regulations under which certain areas are declared as meat areas and inspection procedures at meat works, standards of hygiene in processing, transport and sale of meat are laid down and implemented.

In the second place, the Government is interested in the industry as the proper outlet for the livestock production of our farms and to ensure that Victorian stock owners have access through this industry to the best meat markets at home and abroad. In the third place, the Government, through the Victorian Inland Meat Authority, participates in this industry in large centres such as Ballarat and Bendigo and provides facilities there for the slaughtering and processing of meat for local consumption and for export.

The expansion which occurred in this industry during the early years of this decade, and the high level of prices for export meat at that time, led to a rapid expansion of slaughter works and meat handling facilities in this State. The meat industry in that period attracted capital investment from many sectors of industry, and those companies and agencies already involved were stimulated to rebuild and re-equip works to meet the more stringent demands for hygiene and inspection facilities required for the export market.

Over the past year, with the shortage of stock due to drought and less favourable export prices operating, it has become evident that the State is now provided with meat works with a capacity throughput potential in excess of that being used in normal trading. At the same time, the industry has seen a rapid decline in numbers of the small shop butcher who bought and slaughtered his own fat stock and a tendency for the wholesale and retail side of the industry to aggregate into fewer hands. This type of change, while inevitable, raises the question of the role which municipalities should now play in the control of meat works and in providing facilities where stock may be slaughtered and meat processed.

On considering the rapid changes which have taken place in the meat industry during this decade, the Government is of the view that the time is now opportune to examine this industry in relation to the arrangements and statutory provisions now in operation and to determine what changes, if any, should be implemented to enable the meat industry to develop in the most efficient and rational manner to best serve the interests of the livestock owners and the meat consumers in this State.

Accordingly, this Bill proposes the establishment of a Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly to inquire into the meat industry in Victoria, and sets out principles in relation to membership of the committee, procedure to be followed and terms of reference under which the committee will operate. The terms of reference have been made as wide as possible.

The Hon. R. J. Hamer.
to enable the committee to examine the industry from the selling of livestock through to the slaughtering of stock and the processing of the meat to wholesale distribution and retail sale of meat to the public. The committee will be able to examine the question of location of meat works and their control and operation by the Government, municipalities and private enterprise, and to make recommendations to the Government as to what changes, if any, should be made with regard to this industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—The Opposition supports this measure in every sense of the word. The meat industry in Victoria is long overdue for close examination, not only in respect of killing for export but also for local consumption. It was my intention to obtain a comparison of meat killed for local consumption with that killed for export, because in his second-reading speech the Minister stated that there appeared to be different standards of killing for overseas and for home consumption. However, the Joint Select Committee will have the opportunity of examining this aspect, together with all other matters concerned with the Victorian meat industry. I commend the wide terms of reference of this inquiry to give the committee the opportunity to examine the meat industry without in any way being confined. The Opposition is happy to co-operate for the speedy passage of this Bill.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—The Country Party also supports this Bill because it will permit a thorough examination of the meat industry, which is of tremendous importance to the economy of Victoria. It would seem that there is an unwarranted duplication of inspectors throughout the various killing works, which is not in the best interests of the industry, and which adds to the cost of production in the meat industry.

I am pleased that the terms of reference for this inquiry are wide enough to permit a thorough examination of all facets of the meat industry, and I have no doubt that the committee will bring down an excellent report, irrespective of party affiliation, in the best interests of the State and the industry. It is necessary to ensure that meat, particularly for export, is treated in the most modern and hygienic way.

The Country Party supports the Bill. I have only one query to raise on the measure. The committee is to comprise eight members, four from each House, and it is provided that the chairman at any meeting shall have a vote, but not a casting vote. I can visualize some difficulty if there should be an even vote on any question.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—Perhaps that could be clarified at the Committee stage.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—Only yesterday, as chairman of a committee, I was called upon to use a casting vote, as well as a deliberate vote. I shall pursue the matter when the Bill is in Committee, because I feel that for this reason the proposed committee could become bogged down.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Appointment of Joint Committee).

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—Mr. Bradbury raised an interesting question during the second-reading debate, which I regret, owing to the speed with which the Bill is passing through the House, I am unable to answer at this stage. I am sure that the provision that the chairman should not have a casting vote was drafted deliberately. This may have something to do with the composition of
the Select Committee. I agree with Mr. Merrifield's interjection that, if an unfortunate situation arises where the committee is evenly split, the only course would be for the committee to record two points of view. I trust that will not occur, and that on an important subject like this the committee will make unanimous recommendations. Rather than hold up the Bill, as the committee will be operating for some time, I shall bring the matter to the attention of the Minister in charge of the measure. If the committee becomes deadlocked, the legislation can, if necessary, be amended. I believe there is some reason for not giving the chairman a casting vote, and if I had time I would check on this.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—I did not raise the point because I feared any division. If there is a disagreement, a minority report can be brought down. I had in mind the general conduct of meetings. I am familiar with the working of the Public Works Committee, which is required under its Act to record dissentient votes in its minutes. Generally, the various committees of Parliament act on non-party lines, but it can be embarrassing if a minor matter cannot be resolved without a casting vote. I was merely trying to be helpful, and I accept the Minister's explanation.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

Clause 4 (Functions of the Committee).

The Hon. S. E. GLEESON (South-Western Province).—I consider that it will be within the province of the proposed committee to examine certain aspects of meat quality and perhaps make recommendations or suggestions as to the direction in which farmers may aim their production; also to examine meat as supplied to the housewife and to make recommendations to the trade as to what sort of meat should be supplied. Does the Minister consider that paragraph (b) of the clause will cover these aspects?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—In my view the terms of the inquiry are so wide that they would cover almost any aspect of the meat industry from the time the animal is born until it reaches the consumer. I think the matter referred to by Mr. Gleeson would come within the specific terms of reference in paragraph (a), but if it does not, certainly paragraph (b) gives the committee power to inquire into any other matters which appear relevant to the inquiry. It would be difficult to assert that anything to do with meat was not relevant to the inquiry, so the committee will have plenty of power.

Referring back to the matter raised by Mr. Bradbury, I am indebted to honorable members for supplying me quickly with references to other committees. There does not appear to be any pattern. The State Development Committee is on the same basis as the Public Works Committee, namely, that the member presiding shall have a second or casting vote in the event of any equality of votes, whereas the chairman of the Statute Law Revision Committee has no casting vote. It cannot be said that Parliament has adopted any principle in the matter. However, I shall bring Mr. Bradbury's query to the attention of the Minister concerned, and no doubt whoever is appointed chairman of the committee will do so if any difficulties arise.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—As I have a second-reading speech to make on another Bill, I suggest that progress be reported to enable the Minister for Local Government to make some further inquiries.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province).—My party is happy with the assurance given by the Minister for Local Government.
From past experience, we know that the honorable gentleman will do whatever he says he will do to the best of his ability. We are content with his undertaking.

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

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

PORTLAND HARBOR (EXCHANGE OF LAND) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (GOVERNOR’S SALARY) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), was read a first time.

JUDGES AND PUBLIC OFFICERS SALARIES BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.32 p.m. until Tuesday, October 31.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, October 25, 1967.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie) took the chair at 2.20 p.m., and read the prayer.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS.

LOWAN ELECTORATE: EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. BUCKLEY (Lowan) asked the Treasurer—

Whether, in view of the severe effect of the drought on the economy, he is prepared to direct Government funds to—(a) the City of Horsham for the promised over-pass; and (b) other public works already planned for the future by municipal councils in the electoral district of Lowan?

For Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

(a) This matter has been referred to me by the Minister of Transport and is receiving consideration.

(b) Whatever action is necessary and desirable to deal with circumstances arising from the drought will be taken.

EMPLOYMENT BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands) asked the Premier—

1. Whether plans for dealing with the drought situation in Victoria include the provision of additional works and activities by Government Departments and statutory authorities to provide employment for those who will become unemployed as a result of the drought; if so, whether he has reached agreement with the Commonwealth Government for its financial support for a scheme to provide such employment?

2. Whether he will issue a direction to Departments and authorities not to make dismissals, until further notice, without his approval?

For Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

1 and 2. The honorable member can rest assured that whatever action is necessary to deal with the circumstances arising from the drought situation will be taken.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY.

LIAISON WITH DEFENCE FORCES.

For Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows), Mr. Wilkes asked the Premier—

Whether, in view of the dry state of Victoria, he will seek a conference with the Prime Minister with a view to—(a) placing Army, Air Force, and Naval personnel stationed in Victoria on alert for fire fighting; (b) stationing Army personnel...
strategically in various parts of the State; (c) obtaining the use of Air Force helicopters for the fast transport of firefighters; (d) obtaining any other defence equipment usable for fire fighting; and (e) arranging for close liaison between defence forces and the Country Fire Authority?

For Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

Close liaison is maintained at all times between the Country Fire Authority and the defence forces, and procedures already exist under the State Disaster Plan for members and equipment of the defence forces to be made available for fire fighting purposes when and if the need arises on request by the Chief Commissioner of Police as co-ordinator of the State Disaster Plan.

It is considered that, should the need arise, Service personnel should be used as a mobile fire fighting reserve which can quickly be directed to fire disaster areas where it is most urgently needed, in preference to being dispersed over the State as the honorable member's question implies.

The provision of light aircraft or helicopters for disaster purposes is also covered in the State Disaster Plan.

In view of the provisions which already exist for assistance to be provided from Commonwealth resources, I do not see that any good purpose would be served by seeking a conference with the Prime Minister.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN.

ACCEPTANCE OF DIRECTORSHIP BY CHIEF SECRETARY.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether the Chief Secretary has accepted appointment as a director to Easywear Limited?

2. Whether he (the Chief Secretary) is aware of the convention that Ministers of the Crown should, on assuming office, resign any directorships in public or private companies?

3. Whether the Chief Secretary intends to resign as a Minister of the Crown?

For Sir HENRY BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General).—The answers are—

1. Yes.
2. To my knowledge there has never been such a convention.
3. No.

AUSTRALIAN COASTGUARD AUXILIARY.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. If he will ascertain and inform the House of the names of the members of the Australian Coastguard Auxiliary organization, and what equipment the organization has in use?

2. What role the organization plays in search and rescue operations, and what authority co-ordinates this auxiliary with the Victoria Police and/or the Commonwealth authorities in search and rescue operations at sea?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—My Department has no record of the information sought by the honorable member, but I shall try to obtain it for him and, if I can, I will supply it to him by letter.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES COUNCIL.

REPRESENTATION OF CRAYFISH, SCALLOP, AND NET-FISHING SECTIONS.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether consideration has been given to the inclusion of representatives of the crayfish, scallop, and net-fishing sections of the fishing industry on the Commercial Fisheries Council; if not, why?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

Under the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 6b of the Fisheries Act 1958, the Commercial Fisheries Council consists of—

(a) a person representing the interests of professional fishermen;

(b) a person representing the interests of wholesale and retail traders of fish;

(c) two officers of the Fisheries and Wildlife Branch of the Chief Secretary's Department; one of whom shall be appointed chairman by the Minister.

The intention of the Act was to try to ensure that the representatives of fishermen and wholesale and retail traders of fish should speak with one voice and the Government would not regard favourably increasing representation on the council to include sectional interests.
COMPANIES ACT.

EASYWEAR LIMITED: OBJECTS:
CAPITAL: BUSINESS ADDRESS:
DIRECTORS.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Attorney-General—

Whether Easywear Limited is a company registered under the companies legislation of Victoria; if so—(a) when it was registered; (b) what are the objects of the company; (c) what is the amount of its paid-up capital; (d) where it carries on business; and (e) who are its directors?

Mr. G. O. REID (Attorney-General).—The answers are—

Yes.

(a) Easywear Limited was incorporated under the Companies Act 1961, on the 4th March, 1964.

(b) The principal objects of the company as listed in the memorandum of association are stated to be—

1. To manufacture import, export, buy, sell and deal in (whether by wholesale or retail) boots, shoes, slippers and footwear of all kinds, garments and clothing of all kinds (whether manufactured from fabric, plastic, rubber or other materials).

2. To carry on all or any of the businesses of moulders, extruders, manufacturers and fabricators of and dealers in plastic and rubber goods of all kinds, carriers by land, water and air, shipping agents, transport and travel agents, forwarding agents and warehousemen.

3. To carry on the business of general merchants, manufacturers, importers, exporters, indentors, traders, insurance agents, commission agents and manufacturers agents and any other trade business or agency in any goods or classes of goods whatsoever.

(c) The company has a paid-up capital of $1,000,000.

(d) The Companies Act does not require the lodgment of particulars relating to where a company carries on business. The registered office of the company is situate at 304 Nicholson-street, Fitzroy.

(e) The last return of directors lodged on the 20th June, 1967, lists the directors of the company as:—

Ronald Samuel Dabschek, 26 Bay-street, Brighton, company director.

Richard James Davis, 1A Cheeseman-avenue, East Brighton, solicitor.

Pearl Craig, 12 Hunter-road, Camberwell, director of medical clinic.

Graham Warwick Mills, Benson-road, Couangalt, Victoria, company manager.

HOUSING COMMISSION.

INDUSTRIAL-TYPE HOMES FOR GEEI0NG AREA.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Housing—

Whether construction in the foreseeable future of further Housing Commission industrial-type homes is planned for the Geelong area?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

There are no industrial-type homes programmed for the Geelong area.

DELAY IN HOME PURCHASE APPLICATIONS.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. As at October, 1966, what was the approximate delay from date of application to the availability of units for home purchase by Housing Commission applicants?

2. What is the approximate delay in fulfilling applications to purchase a normal new unit?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answers are—

1. Delays varied from area to area but were anything from immediate to three and a half years.

2. Current delays vary from area to area and range from immediate to five years.

NORLANE HOMES: PURCHASE BY PRIVATE ORGANIZATION.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Housing—

Whether any approach was made in recent months by a private organization to purchase Housing Commission homes at Portland-street, Norlane; if so—(a) what was the name of the organization; (b) what was the basis of the approach; and (c) what decision was reached on any resultant negotiations?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answer is—

Yes, an approach has been made.

(a) Carlton and United Breweries Ltd.

(b) This organization sought to purchase from the Commission property known as No. 5 Portland-avenue, Norlane, adjoining the Norlane Hotel.

(c) The Commission has as yet made no decision on the matter.
FRECTION OF HOUSES IN GIPPSLAND SOUTH ELECTORATE.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. How many houses are being erected by the Housing Commission in Foster, Toora, Welshpool, Port Welshpool, Yarram, Rosedale and Sale, respectively?

2. Whether the Commission proposes to erect additional houses in these centres—
(a) this financial year; and (b) next financial year?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing).—The answers are—

1. Houses under construction at 30th September, 1967, were:—
2. (a) Houses for which tenders will be called during 1967-68 are:—
   (b) 1968-69 building programme—This programme will be determined about June, 1968, in the light of available funds and the overall tenancy demands throughout the State.

OFF-SHORE SEISMIC SURVEYS.

UNEXPLODED DEPTH CHARGES.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister of Mines—

Further to his answer to question No. 22 asked in this house on the 24th instant, if he will ascertain and inform the House—
(a) what steps are being taken by the company responsible to render safe unexploded depth charges off the Gippsland coast; and (b) whether any investigation has been made into alternatives to the use of explosives in such works; in particular, the use of compressed air; if so, whether the Government has given consideration to compelling the use of an alternative?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Mines).—The answer is—

(a) One of the purposes of the present investigation being carried out by officers of my Department is to assess the following matters:—
(i) the time that would be required for the charges to deteriorate to a harmless condition;
(ii) the possibility that the charges might move, under the influence of currents, from their present situation; and
(iii) the danger that might be involved to persons engaged in any attempt to locate and discharge the charges.

Until answers to these question are available, it is considered safer not to take any action to interfere with the charges.

The present assessment is that the only danger associated with the charges is that they may be brought aboard a fishing vessel in a trawling net. Notice has been given to fishermen in the area so that they might recognize the charges under these circumstances and take appropriate action.

I am advised that the extent of fishing operations in the areas containing the unexploded charges is very limited and that the possibility of a charge being brought aboard a fishing vessel is not great.

(b) A number of devices which do not use high-explosive charges are being developed at the present time and some are in regular use. These include electrical sparking devices which have a very limited capacity for penetration of strata, gas source explosive devices, vibrating weight devices and implosion devices, energized by compressed air. None of these devices appear to have yet reached a stage where they will give effective strata penetration in all circumstances, particularly in the kind of conditions which apply off the Gippsland coast where the shallower strata absorb a high proportion of the energy applied.

Attention is being given also to the development of safer devices and techniques for use in connection with high explosives. My officers have these matters under close examination, and the honorable member may be assured that as soon as methods which do not use high explosives are proved to be effective it will be made a requirement that they must be used.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY.

INSPECTORS OF LIFTS AND CRANES: QUALIFICATIONS.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

1. How many inspectors are constantly employed within the limits of the department with high explosives?

2. Whether they are able to adequately police all of the regulations?

3. What qualifications are required of inspectors of lifts and cranes?
Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answers are—

1. One chief inspector, two senior inspectors and fourteen other inspectors.
2. I have received no complaint about any shortcomings.
3. A sound background of mechanical or electrical engineering work, with supervisory trade experience in relation to either lifts or cranes.

CHRISTMAS FOOD PARCELS FOR ENGLAND.

Distribution: Cost Increase.

Mr. R. S. L. McDonald (Rodney) asked the Minister of Lands, for the Minister of Agriculture—

1. Why the distribution of Christmas food parcels for England is being handled by Myer (Melbourne) Limited and not through the agency of the Agent-General as in past years?
2. Whether tenders were called for the handling of these parcels this year; if so, who were the tenderers?
3. What are the reasons for the increase of $1.50 in the cost of the 1967 parcel, the contents of which are identical with the 1966 parcel?

Sir William McDonald (Minister of Lands).—The answers supplied by the Minister of Agriculture are—

1. In recent years many complaints have been received from donors and recipients concerning the quality and standard of the contents of parcels, the condition of parcels on receipt and the late delivery of parcels. These complaints were supported by the Agent-General for Victoria in London, who, after reviewing the scheme recommended early this year that the Overseas Gift Parcels scheme should be discontinued. The Agent-General also expressed concern at the very considerable amount of work involved in his office in the administration of the scheme, the cost of which was not recouped.

Cabinet considered this recommendation, but decided that, as this service has been provided for some 40 years to enable members of the public to donate food parcels to relatives and friends in the United Kingdom and Ireland at Christmas time, it could be of some inconvenience to those who have regularly participated in the scheme (about 1,800) to discontinue it. However, in view of the concern expressed by the Agent-General regarding the work involved in his office, Cabinet decided to explore the possibility of a local firm with experience in a similar scheme undertaking the detailed arrangements.

2. After full investigation of the matter, it was decided that Myer (Melbourne) Limited, which has for many years operated its own gift food parcel scheme, was the only local firm which could satisfactorily undertake the detailed arrangements previously handled in the Agent-General's Office. In this connexion, I should point out that this firm handled these arrangements for the Government scheme from 1940 when, due to war-time difficulties the organization could not be handled by the Agent-General, until 1958 when, at the request of the Agent-General, the organization of the scheme reverted to his office.

In view of the above, tenders for the handling of the parcels this year were not called, and the quote of Myer (Melbourne) Limited, which was considered reasonable and satisfactory, was accepted.

3. As indicated in the answer to question No. 1, the Agent-General's Office has had to undertake a very considerable amount of work in the administration of this scheme, involving overtime and the virtual secondment of a senior officer full time to the work for about three months every year. The cost of this administration was not recouped to the Agent-General's Office as no provision for this was made in the parcel charges to donors. This cost therefore was met from State Government funds.

Under the new arrangements this year, the Agent-General's Office will be entirely relieved of the detailed administrative work associated with the scheme which will be undertaken by Myer (Melbourne) Limited. It is for this reason that the cost of this year's parcel has been increased, although the actual increase is $1.30, as the cost of a parcel arranged through the Agent-General's Office would have been $3.90 due to increases in the prices of the contents and in handling costs.

It is not considered unreasonable that the donors should meet a fair proportion of the cost of this scheme which is provided by the Government as a service to them. Under the new arrangements, the proportion of the cost they will meet is that formerly involved in the Agent-General's Office which has previously been met by the Government. The Government will continue to meet a substantial part of the costs involved in the Department of Agriculture in the administration of the scheme.

STATE RIVERS AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.

Dismissal of Employees.

Mr. Stoneham (Midlands) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

Whether employees of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission have been dismissed since the 1st October, 1967; if so—(a) how many; (b) for what reasons; and (c) at what locations?
Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Water Supply).—The information required is set out in the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Dismissed</th>
<th>Reasons for Dismissals</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reduction in the summer construction programme—mainly on channel lining</td>
<td>Bendigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>One temporary—on completion of works for which he was engaged. One dismissed as unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Castlemaine, Birchip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Misconduct</td>
<td>Cobram, Nillahcootie Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Squad</th>
<th>Reserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27th Oct., 1966</td>
<td>Eltham</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for missing youth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st Oct., 1966</td>
<td>Lower Tarwin</td>
<td>Recover bodies of two persons from river</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Nov., 1966</td>
<td>St. Leonards</td>
<td>Search for two missing persons in bay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th Nov., 1966</td>
<td>Carrum</td>
<td>Search for two missing scouts. Land search</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Nov., 1966</td>
<td>St. Leonards</td>
<td>Search for two missing fishermen in bay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th Nov., 1966</td>
<td>Moorooduc</td>
<td>Testing of haulage equipment in connexion with an inquest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30th Nov., 1966</td>
<td>Powlettown</td>
<td>Search for missing person in bush</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Dec., 1966</td>
<td>St. Albans</td>
<td>Underwater search Maribyrnong river for stolen car</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Sale</td>
<td>Search Thomson river for a drowned person</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Coburg Lake</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>St. Kilda Pier</td>
<td>Search for person in sea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th to 15th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Olinda</td>
<td>Search of bush for missing child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answers are lengthy and I suggest that, by leave of the House, they be incorporated in Hansard without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:

1. Eight members are attached to the Wireless Patrol for duty with the Search and Rescue Squad. When not required for Search and Rescue Squad duties, they perform duties in the Wireless Patrol. In addition to these members, twelve members are attached to the Search and Rescue Squad Reserve. The members attached to the reserve are available on call to reinforce the squad when required.

2. Prior to appointment to the squad or reserve, members are required to:
   (a) have qualified in first aid;
   (b) possess the Royal Life Saving Society Award of Merit; and
   (c) have completed a shallow water diving course to a standard set by the Royal Australian Navy.

After appointment to the squad or reserve, members undergo training in:
   (a) mountaineering;
   (b) casualty evacuation;
   (c) Rescue instructors course at the civil defence school;
   (d) cliff rescue; and
   (e) horse riding (full-time members of squad only).

3. Squad has undertaken 113 search and rescue operations, brief details of which are as follows:

POLICE DEPARTMENT.
SEARCH AND RESCUE SQUAD: QUALIFICATIONS: ACTIVITIES.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Moonee Ponds) asked the Chief Secretary—
1. How many members of the Victoria Police are in the Search and Rescue Squad?
2. What are their qualifications?
3. On what occasions and at what locations the squad acted in search and rescue operations in the last twelve months?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
<th>Number of Members Engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Templestowe</td>
<td>Rescue two children marooned on island in Yarra river</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Yarra river, Melbourne</td>
<td>Search for body of drowned person</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th to 22nd Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>Search for body of murdered person</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Port Phillip Bay</td>
<td>Search for the boat <em>Nina</em>. Helicopter search</td>
<td>Squad: 1 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Port Phillip Bay</td>
<td>Search for rope believed to be from <em>Nina</em></td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th to 28th Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Templestowe</td>
<td>Search for drowned person</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st Dec., 1966</td>
<td>Oakleigh</td>
<td>Search of water-filled quarry for two boys</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Studley Park</td>
<td>Search for property in Yarra river</td>
<td>Squad: 1 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Inverloch</td>
<td>Search for two bodies washed up on rock</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th to 5th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Beaufort</td>
<td>Search for bodies of two men</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th to 11th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Mt. Beauty</td>
<td>Search for six missing teenagers</td>
<td>Squad: 6 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Albert Park Lake</td>
<td>Search for property</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Sunshine</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
<td>Squad: 6 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>Search of Corio Bay for drowned person</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
<td>Search Gardiner's creek for property</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for property</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Axedale</td>
<td>Search Eppalock weir for drowned person</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th to 30th Jan., 1967</td>
<td>Seymour</td>
<td>Search of Goulburn river for drowned person</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Eltham</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 1 Reserve: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd to 5th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Cobram</td>
<td>Search River Murray for missing child</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th to 7th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Strathmerton</td>
<td>Search River Murray for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 5 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th to 7th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Erica</td>
<td>Search for missing fisherman</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>East Malvern</td>
<td>Search lake for property</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Avondale Heights</td>
<td>Search Maribyrnong river for property</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th to 15th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for property</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Kyneton</td>
<td>Search Campaspe river for property</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Black Rock</td>
<td>Search for equipment. Equipment required for inquest</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th to 21st Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>Search for stolen property</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd to 24th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Lismore</td>
<td>Search lake for three missing persons</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th to 28th Feb., 1967</td>
<td>Axedale</td>
<td>Search for missing person Lake Eppalock</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th March, 1967</td>
<td>Diamond Creek</td>
<td>Search bush for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th March, 1967</td>
<td>Bundoora</td>
<td>Search bush for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 3 Reserve: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th March, 1967</td>
<td>Avondale Heights</td>
<td>Maribyrnong river rescue</td>
<td>Squad: 4 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th March, 1967</td>
<td>Reservoir</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th March, 1967</td>
<td>Mont Park</td>
<td>Recover body of mental patient from river</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th to 16th March, 1967</td>
<td>Port Campbell</td>
<td>Search sea for stolen motor car</td>
<td>Squad: 2 Reserve: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Occasion</td>
<td>Number of Members Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th March, 1967</td>
<td>Portsea</td>
<td>Search sea for missing person</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th March, 1967</td>
<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>Rescue man from cliff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th April, 1967</td>
<td>Seaford</td>
<td>Search sea for stolen property</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th to 8th April, 1967</td>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>Search bush for missing person</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th April, 1967</td>
<td>Sandringham</td>
<td>Search bay for property</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th April, 1967</td>
<td>Gembrook</td>
<td>Search bush for three missing persons</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th April, 1967</td>
<td>Beech Forest</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th April, 1967</td>
<td>Box Hill</td>
<td>Search creek for property</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th to 20th April, 1967</td>
<td>Barmah</td>
<td>Search of River Murray near Barmah forest for stolen property</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th to 20th April, 1967</td>
<td>Beachworth</td>
<td>Search bush for missing person</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23rd April, 1967</td>
<td>Heidelberg West</td>
<td>Recover body from creek</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd April, 1967</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>Recover body from creek</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th April, 1967</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>Search creek for stolen property</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th to 29th April, 1967</td>
<td>Rushworth</td>
<td>Search Warrang Basin for missing person</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd May, 1967</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>Search Port Phillip Bay for property</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd to 4th May, 1967</td>
<td>Port Campbell</td>
<td>Search in ocean for stolen property</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th to 9th May, 1967</td>
<td>Aspendale</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th May, 1967</td>
<td>South Yarra</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for property</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th to 16th May, 1967</td>
<td>Balcombe</td>
<td>Search creek for stolen property</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th May, 1967</td>
<td>Sherbrooke Forest at Belgrave</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st to 22nd May, 1967</td>
<td>Romsey</td>
<td>Search for missing woman</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th May, 1967</td>
<td>Marysville</td>
<td>Search for four missing hikers</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th May, 1967</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th to 29th May, 1967</td>
<td>Port Campbell</td>
<td>Search for stolen motor car in sea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd June, 1967</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th June, 1967</td>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>Search creek for missing person</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st June, 1967</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>Search creek for stolen property</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>26th June, 1967</td>
<td>Shepparton</td>
<td>Search Goulburn river for stolen property</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th June, 1967</td>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>Search for missing woman</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>29th to 30th June, 1967</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>Search Barwon river for stolen property</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>15th July, 1967</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>14th to 16th July, 1967</td>
<td>Shepparton</td>
<td>Search Lake for property</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>13th July, 1967</td>
<td>Mooroolopna</td>
<td>Search Goulburn river for stolen property</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>16th to 18th July, 1967</td>
<td>Tooronga Falls, via Noojee</td>
<td>Search for missing child</td>
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<td>18th July, 1967</td>
<td>Wonthaggi</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>19th July, 1967</td>
<td>Bacchus Marsh</td>
<td>Search Warribee gorge for missing person</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>21st July, 1967</td>
<td>Hawthorn</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for stolen property</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>25th July, 1967</td>
<td>Coburg</td>
<td>Search Lake for property</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26th July, to 1st Aug., 1967</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Search Yarra river for stolen property</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th July, to 29th June, 1967</td>
<td>Castlemaine</td>
<td>Search for missing person</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>29th July, 1967</td>
<td>Kyeton</td>
<td>Search Campaspe river for property</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st to 3rd Aug., 1967</td>
<td>Templestowe</td>
<td>Recover stolen safe from Yarra river</td>
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DRUG SQUAD: MEMBERS: PERSONS CHARGED.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. How many members comprise the Drug Squad of the Victoria Police, and what are their ranks?

2. In each of the years 1965, 1966, and 1967 to date, how many persons have been charged and convicted respectively, with—
   (a) drug addiction; (b) having drugs in their possession; (c) trafficking in drugs; and (d) administering drugs to themselves or other persons; giving details of the drugs concerned in each case?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I ask that, by leave of the House, the answers to these questions be incorporated in Hansard without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

1. Four—one senior detective and three detective first constables.

2. (a) Drug addiction—eight new addicts detected (one—palfium, three—heroin, one—Indian hemp, three—morphine)—which are all drugs of addiction. Two persons were found to be using methedrine and two persons using dexedrine, which are restricted substances to which persons are deemed to be dependent and not addicted.

(b) Having drugs in their possession.

1965.

Drugs of addiction—twelve (one—heroin, two—cocaine, nine—Indian hemp).

Restricted substances—22 (nine—methedrine, two—amphetamines, one—barbituate, one—anti-biotic, two—lignocaine, one—ritalin, two—doriden, three—dexidine, one—drinamyl).

1966.

Drugs of addiction—thirteen (three—heroin, seven—Indian hemp, three—methadone).

Restricted substances—57 (one—dexidine, 48—methedrine, one—anovlar, one—barbituate, one—phenergan, five—nembutal).

1967.

Drugs of addiction—Fifteen (five—Indian hemp, three—heroin, two—opium, two—cocaine, three—morphine).

Restricted substances—44 (nineteen—methedrine, one—sodium pentothol, three—nembutal, three—dexidine, three—
amphetamines, two—amitupline, two—ritalin, one—fenfluramine, one—largactil, one—barbiturate, one—methedrine ampoules, two—drinamyl, one—pentobarbital, one—phenergan, one—seconal, one—librium, one—doriden).

(c) Trafficking in drugs.

1965.

Drugs of addiction—one (Indian hemp)
Restricted substances—three (one—barbituate, one—dexidine, one—methedrine).

1966.

Drugs of addiction—two (one—heroin, one—Indian hemp).
Restricted substances—four (one—anovlar, two—methedrine, one—doriden).

1967.

Drugs of addiction—nil.
Restricted substances—six (one—sodium pentothol, two—methedrine, two—librium, one—drinamyl).

(d) Administering drugs to themselves or other persons.

1965.

Drugs of addiction—five (five—Indian hemp).
Restricted substances—one (methedrine).

1966.

Drugs of addiction—six (three—Indian hemp, three—methadone).
Restricted substances—seven (one—phenergan, six—nembutal).

1967.

Drugs of addiction—nine (two—Indian hemp, three—heroin, one—opium, one—cocaine, two—morphine).
Restricted substances—eleven (five—methedrine, one—amphetamine, two—dexidine, one—nembutal, two—drinamyl).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.
STAMPS BILL: NEWSPAPER REPORT.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I wish to make a personal explanation concerning a report which appeared in this morning’s Age newspaper concerning the Stamps Bill which was debated in this House last night.

A number of people were confused by the introduction of the resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means, and the Age newspaper reporter apparently assumed that this was some amendment to the Bill, because, as is the normal practice, the resolution repeated some provisions of the Bill. It appeared from the report in the Age newspaper that the Treasurer had made a number of concessions by way of amendments, but these were in fact in the Bill as originally printed. I can understand the confusion—I share a little of it myself.

MINISTERS OF THE CROWN.
ACCEPTANCE OF COMPANY DIRECTORSHIPS.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I desire to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, “the propriety of the Chief Secretary accepting a company directorship in a company known as Easywear Limited, with a possible conflict with his administrative duties as a member of the Cabinet.”

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order 8a.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—The Opposition is becoming increasingly concerned about the observance of the prerogatives, conventions and practices of this Parliament. From a recent press report, it appeared to members of the Opposition that the Chief Secretary has accepted a company directorship with a company known as Easywear Limited. In our view, by the acceptance of this directorship the honorable gentleman has placed himself in a position which involves a breach of well-established convention and precedent, not merely of the Victorian Parliament but of all Parliaments in the Western democratic world—although, in recent years as the result of the attitude of the Premier, precedent has not always been complied with.

This is not the first time that this issue has been raised in this Parliament—it was brought to notice in 1949 and 1958. The Opposition would be failing in its duty if it did not, on all occasions and under all circumstances, direct attention to the duty incumbent on all honorable members
to maintain the privileges, traditions and conventions of the institution of Parliament. From time to time, particularly in recent weeks, there have been continual complaints from the supporters of the Government that the powers of the State are being eroded by the actions of the Commonwealth. This is not the only way in which the powers of State Governments and State Parliaments can be eroded; they can be eroded by our own actions in relation to the well-established traditions and practices of Parliament.

Therefore, any action which, in the view of any honorable member, tends to diminish the basic structure of Parliament as an institution must be subject to the closest scrutiny by every member of this Parliament. That is the spirit in which this motion has been moved.

I was surprised to-day to hear the Premier's reply to a question which I asked in this House to-day that to his knowledge there has never been a convention that Ministers of the Crown should, on assuming office, resign any directorships in public or private companies. I am prepared to accept the honorable gentleman's answer on the basis that it is indeed likely, and indeed probable, that the Premier has not addressed his mind to the question of the conventions of Parliament, and that perhaps even in this particular instance the Chief Secretary has not addressed his mind to the issue. If that is so, the Opposition would prefer that interpretation to any other.

At the appropriate stage, I shall deal with the precedents and rulings that have been given in other Parliaments. An analysis of the statements made on this issue by leading constitutional authorities establishes that such a convention exists. The word "convention" has several definitions, two of which come readily to mind. They are: An established principle which binds parties to it; and a rule having the force of law upon the parties bound to it. I do not think honorable members would be prepared to argue against the efficacy of those definitions. Furthermore, the definitions seem to be well established and observed in practice. That is the position in the House of Commons, whose rules and precedents and conventions this House follows whenever and wherever practicable, also in the New Zealand House of Representatives, in the Commonwealth Parliament and in Canada. The convention applies also in another type of Federal Parliamentary system and institution, namely, in the United States of America. Therefore, it came as somewhat of a surprise to learn from the Premier that the honorable gentleman is unaware of the existence of such a convention. The eminent constitutional authority, Arthur Berriedale Keith, in the British Cabinet System, 2nd Edition, at page 161, gives the following concise and accurate explanation of the rule.

Sir JOHN BLOOMFIELD.—What is the date of that edition?

Mr. HOLDING.—1952. The author states—

In the interests of sound administration, it is plain that a minister should have no business appointments or directorship which might interfere with complete regard for his duties, and that he should never have any commercial dealing of a kind which may give rise to the suggestion that he is preferring personal advantage to State interest.

In explanation of the various interpretations of this rule, this authority goes on to say—

In 1906 the ministry required resignation of directorships, except honorary directorships in philanthropic undertakings and directorships in private companies, where the interest of the director was similar to that of a partner in a private firm.

He went on to say that the Labor Government in England reaffirmed that rule in its application to trade union officials and that now stands clearly valid.

I should think an eminent authority on this matter who should command the attention, support and admiration
of honorable members is a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Sir Winston Churchill, who made a statement on this matter in February, 1952. He was asked what regulations governed the continuation of salaried service with a private company on appointment to Ministerial office. I direct the attention of the House to the point that most of the statements concerning the convention have arisen during debates which have centred around the point whether or not a member of Parliament who is a director of a company should resign his directorship on his appointment to Cabinet. I ask honorable members to bear this in mind because ultimately I will point out that in this case there is a significant and important departure which, I believe, makes the obligation to follow that convention even more imperative.

Sir Winston Churchill, in his statement to the House of Commons, which was made for the general guidance of members of that House, said—

1. It is a principle of public life that Ministers must so order their affairs that no conflict arises, or appears to arise, between their private interests and their public duties.

2. Such a conflict may arise if a Minister takes an active part in any undertaking with which he has contractual or other relations with a Government Department, more particularly with his own Department. It may arise, not only if the Minister has a financial interest in such an undertaking, but also if he is actively associated with any body, even of a philanthropic character, which might have negotiations or other dealings with the Government or be involved in disputes with it. Furthermore, Ministers should be free to give full attention to their official duties—

That is the significant and basic proposition which emerges from the statement—

and they should not engage in other activities which might be thought to distract their attention from those duties.

If any convention should, by sheer weight, be binding on any Minister of this Government, I think that convention should be binding on the Chief Secretary who is in charge of the most complex omnibus Department in Victoria. From time to time the honorable gentleman has been the subject of some admiration in this House for the way in which he has endeavoured to stay on top of this complex Department. One must, therefore, seriously ponder whether he can depart from his Ministerial activities and become involved in activities as a director of a private company.

Mr. Suggett.—Does this apply to the shadow Cabinet?

Mr. Holding.—I shall be happy to discuss that matter with the honorable member for Bentleigh. However, at this stage I take up his interjection because it tends to indicate the complete confusion that exists in the minds of Government supporters, and even in the minds of members of the front bench, on the distinction and the vital difference between the functions and role of a Minister in this Parliament and an ordinary member. I am delighted that the honorable member made the interjection because, at a later stage, members of the Opposition will be able to explain to him the significance of this difference.

The statement by Sir Winston Churchill is lengthy, and I shall not read it all. It will be sufficient for me to say that it is available to any honorable member who wants to examine it. There can be no doubt that Sir Winston Churchill's statement to the House of Commons indicates that the first duty of a Minister is clearly and conclusively to the public office he holds and, secondly, as a matter of principle, the Minister should not get himself involved in directorship which could involve a conflict of duty. Sir Winston Churchill went on to establish the clear principles by saying—

Ministers must on assuming office resign any directorships which they may hold whether in public or private companies and whether the directorship carries remuneration or is honorary.
I invite the House to consider the terminology of that statement; it is not permissive. Sir Winston continued—

The only exception to this rule is that directorships in private companies established for the maintenance of private family estates, and only incidentally concerned in trading, may be retained subject to this reservation.

Mr. Scanlan.—How about your own activities?

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member for Oakleigh may speak later.

Mr. Holding.—This statement makes it perfectly clear that on taking office a Minister must resign his directorship except where there is some personal family involvement in other than a major public trading company. The answer given to a question I asked to-day clearly showed that it cannot be seriously contested that the company in this case is other than a company which carries on considerable and extensive trading activities.

This matter was also the subject of consideration by the Parliament of New Zealand which operates on much the same principles, conventions and practices of the House of Commons, as this Parliament does. A special select committee was set up to consider the question of Ministers' private interests, and it established certain basic principles. It referred to the basic principles which should be observed by holders of Ministerial office under the Crown in the reconciliation of their public duties and private interests and stated—

1. A Minister must ensure that no conflict exists, or appears to exist, between his public duty and his private interests.

2. A Minister of the Crown is expected to devote his time and his talents to the carrying out of his public duties.

Mr. Suggett.—That would not apply to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Holding.—Yes, it would, and I would accept that. On the application of the principle in relation to directors, it says—

A Minister should, on assuming office, resign any directorship in a public or private company, where either of the basic principles apply.

As to shareholdings, it states that a Minister is entitled to retain shares held by him in incorporated companies; however, he should dispose of shares in a company if the company is involved in trading with the Government.

The report also deals with the question of professional practice. It indicates that a Minister who prior to assuming office under the Crown has engaged in professional practice should cease to carry on the daily routine work of the firm or take an active part in its ordinary business; but that he should not be required, however, to dissolve his partnership or to allow his annual practising certificate to lapse, nor should he be precluded from continuing to advise in matters of family trusts, guardianships and similar matters of a personal nature.

Mr. Scanlan.—Were you ever a director of Oakleigh News Pty. Ltd.?

Mr. Holding.—I have been a director of a number of companies.

Mr. Scanlan.—That company was subject—

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member for Oakleigh will cease interjecting.

Mr. Holding.—The Opposition is happy to keep this debate on a high level. However, if the honorable member for Oakleigh wants to make it rough, he can have it rough. At the moment, a major question of constitutional convention is involved, and the Opposition is endeavouring to deal with it on a proper plane.

The convention has been followed in the Commonwealth Parliament during the lifetime of the Federal Liberal Government. Mr. Bury, on being appointed to Cabinet, and before his appointment as Minister of Housing, immediately resigned as a director of Lend Lease Corporation.
Before he assumed office, the Minister for Territories, Mr. Barnes, resigned from the board of the public company, John A. Gilbert.

Sir John Bloomfield.—What business is carried on by those companies?

Mr. Holding.—The Federal Liberal Government and its Ministers have complied with both the terms and the spirit of the convention, unless there is something which I have been unable to discover, but of which the honorable member is aware.

If it is good enough for Ministers in the House of Commons, in other State Parliaments, in the House of Representatives in New Zealand, and Federal Ministers, who are political colleagues of Ministers in this State, to comply with the convention, surely Ministers of this Government should follow suit. Years ago, a similar situation arose in respect of a Minister of the Crown long since dead—I do not desire to go over the old issues again because I believe it would be improper. The inroad commenced in this institution in relation to a former Minister of Transport.

On a previous occasion when a motion similar to this was being debated, the Premier refused to draw the line and to comply with the convention because he was concerned with the position of a member of Parliament who had spent a lifetime building up a firm which ultimately became a large public company, of which he was a director, and being possessed of some talents he was eligible for election to Cabinet. The personal dilemma of the applicant for Ministerial appointment and the attitude adopted by the Premier are understandable. The clearly expressed view of the Labor Party is that, although some personal misfortune may be involved, the convention should be rigorously applied. Members of the Opposition certainly understand the human problem involved where it affects a director who has spent a lifetime in building up a large public company. Once the Premier refused to draw the line, then the principle was extended to two other Ministers, including the Minister for Local Government who is a lawyer. I understand that he is still involved as a director of a company.

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I do not think it is in order to discuss a Minister in another place.

Mr. Holding.—I referred to the Minister for Local Government only to illustrate the point that, when he was appointed a Minister, he did not, I believe, resign as a director of the Gas Supply Company because he could not be expected to foresee that he might ultimately be involved in a possible clash or conflict of interests. If the convention had been adhered to, he would not ultimately have been in the situation where, as a member of Cabinet, he was involved in discussions as to the future development of natural gas. When this occurred, there was a conflict of interests, and he had to resign his directorship.

The convention ought to be maintained so that a Minister will not find himself in a position of conflict. When Ministers cling to directorships upon appointment to Cabinet, there is a resultant lack of public confidence in the Government. I have no doubt that five years ago the Minister for Local Government would have asked how there could possibly be any conflict between his interests as a Minister and the interests of the company of which he was a director. During this debate probably the same question will be asked on behalf of the Chief Secretary. The Opposition's view is that if a line were drawn now, nobody would have to worry about gazing into crystal balls to see what may occur in the future, and future embarrassment would be avoided. In the interests of Parliament and of the Government, it is basic that Ministerial integrity and independence not only ought to be maintained in fact, but should appear to be maintained. A member should not be
placed in the position where at some time he, as a Minister, might have to resign his interests in a private company.

I now turn to the principle which is involved in the case of the Chief Secretary. The Opposition is not prepared to examine the history of this company or become involved in searches to ascertain who are the directors, or anything else. We are concerned only with the principle of Ministerial independence and integrity being maintained. The Opposition is particularly concerned because precedents and rulings, which are clear and well-established, have resulted in a situation where a member of Parliament who is also a company director has been forced to make a choice whether he shall accept appointment to the Ministry or retain his directorship.

It is clear from the authorities to which I have referred, that this case is without precedent. For nineteen years as a Minister of the Crown, the Chief Secretary was not involved in directorships or other company transactions, but, all of a sudden, out of the blue, he states that he would like to get some knowledge of company affairs and will therefore accept a directorship. If the first situation to which I refer is a breach of Parliamentary convention, the second situation is doubly so. The Opposition is concerned that, up to date, the Premier has chosen to disregard this convention in certain personal cases. If this precedent becomes established, the convention itself will be destroyed because there is a real difference between a member of Parliament, who is also a company director, being appointed to Cabinet and then being confronted with the choice of having to resign or not to resign, and a Minister who has held a senior portfolio for some years suddenly becoming involved in the transactions of a particular trading company.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), Standing Order 8b was suspended to enable the Leader of the Opposition to continue his speech for fifteen minutes.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Because this situation creates a new precedent—in fact, the Opposition believes it goes much further than the simple disregard of a convention—it is considered that it is incumbent upon the Opposition to raise the matter, not in a partisan or political sense, but to emphasize that Parliament can be served only by maintaining a convention which safeguards the individual integrity of Ministers and preserves the integrity of Parliament itself.

An interjection by a back-bench Government member and a statement made by the Chief Secretary to the press are worthy of consideration. With full respect to the honorable gentleman, the Opposition believes it is doubtful whether the Chief Secretary has fully considered the serious constitutional implications of his action. My reason for saying this is because, after I indicated some concern in the press, the Herald on 23rd October of this year reported the Chief Secretary as saying that—

He found it hard to understand the Opposition Leader, Mr. Holding, criticizing him when Mr. Holding was well aware that some members of his own party devoted a considerable amount of time to activities outside Parliament.

That statement could have been made only by a Minister who was either completely unaware of the implications of the convention or who was involved in a simple political exercise. If the latter is correct, the Attorney-General can deal with it when he replies on behalf of the Government. If the former proposition applies, namely, that the Chief Secretary's action is somehow all right because some members of the Opposition are involved in business activities outside the House—or even if it was all right because some back-bench Government members were involved in commercial activities outside the House—the
statement reveals a serious and fundamental lack of knowledge of a convention which is directed not to all members of this House and not to back-bench members but solely to Ministers. This convention is designed to protect Ministers and the Parliament which they serve. I suggest, therefore, that the Chief Secretary should address his mind to the substantial precedents and conventions that exist in this situation.

The Opposition believes the Chief Secretary's action creates a dangerous precedent which strikes completely at the heart of this Parliamentary institution and at the whole concept of Ministerial integrity and independence of action. Because this matter is related to the conventions of Parliament and because members of the Opposition consider that they have a duty to this institution, they believe it would be bad if this adjournment motion were to proceed to a division simply along party lines. Accordingly, on behalf of the Opposition, I urge the Chief Secretary to address his mind to the arguments that I have advanced and to consider in some detail the conventions and precedents to which I have referred. If the honorable gentleman were to follow that course and indicate that he would like to make a Ministerial statement on the whole question of this convention, the Opposition would be prepared to accept the assurance and would not press this motion to a division. The Opposition adopts this attitude because it believes this matter goes beyond partisan political differences; it is a matter of the utmost concern to every honorable member. Ministerial integrity, freedom and independence in public life ought to be maintained, irrespective of whether a Labor Party Government or a Liberal Party Government is in office.

The statement made by the Chief Secretary on this question indicates that he has not had the opportunity fully to consider the grave and serious implications of the step that he has taken. The Opposition would prefer the honorable gentleman to follow the course of action suggested by me which would allow him time to consider the authority, the precedents and the line of argument which I have put on behalf of the Opposition. After the honorable gentleman has considered these aspects, if he wishes to make a statement and embark on this course of action, so be it. If the Chief Secretary gives the House an assurance that he will examine this matter and make a statement concerning his position at this point of time, the Opposition will accept it and this debate will conclude. If the honorable gentleman chooses not to avail himself of that opportunity and forces the matter to a division, the Opposition knows what will happen. Obviously, there will be a political result. It is a serious thing to use members on a partisan political basis to erode and to attack a basic convention of this Parliament. If that takes place, this Parliament as an institution will become so much less and we, as members, with a duty to it, will also become so much less.

Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General).—The Leader of the Opposition has moved the adjournment of the House to discuss what he refers to as the propriety of the Chief Secretary in accepting a company directorship in a certain company with a possible conflict with his administrative duties as a member of the Cabinet. In putting the case on behalf of the Government, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the Leader of the Opposition has rather betrayed the somewhat speculative nature of the argument that he has been propounding by reason of the fact that he uses the words "with a possible conflict with his administrative duties as a member of the Cabinet".

In the first place, the Leader of the Opposition has based his argument on a series of suppositions which are not founded in fact. The honorable
member speaks of a convention and he has been at pains to quote from authorities affecting the British Parliament and other Parliaments just as a few years ago, I see by reference to Hansard, his predecessor in the office of Leader of the Opposition—the honorable member for Midlands—quoted exactly the same authorities.

Mr. Holding.—Not exactly the same.

Mr. G. O. Reid.—They are substantially the same authorities. Quotations were made from the British Cabinet System by Arthur Berriedale Keith and from the Right Hon. Sir Winston Churchill. I should like to make the point very clearly that it has not been a convention in the Parliament of Victoria that a Minister of the Crown should not hold office as a director of a company.

Mr. Stoneham.—Then this is the only Parliament in the democratic world in which it is not a convention.

Mr. G. O. Reid.—It is the Victorian Parliament with which we are dealing on this question, and it is the traditions of this Parliament that we wish to follow.

The Leader of the Opposition has based his argument, hypothetical as it is, on three propositions—first, that there may be a possible conflict of duties; secondly, that the Chief Secretary may be prevented from giving full time to his duties as a Cabinet Minister; and, thirdly, that there is a marked distinction between the responsibilities of a Minister and the responsibilities of any other member of Parliament. I shall proceed to make a few observations in regard to each of these propositions.

With regard to the alleged possible conflict of duties, it is amazing that whenever this question is ventilated in the House it is always the office of director of a company that is chosen as the office which may possibly conflict with the duty of a public man. The Leader of the Opposition states that he concedes the point as regard trade union officials. However, I have never heard any member of this Parliament move an adjournment motion on the basis that some Minister has been holding office as a trade union official.

If we are to go into the question of possible conflict of duties, let us consider the very wide range of outside duties that a member of Parliament might accept. A member might be a company director; he might be a trade union officer, as the Leader of the Opposition concedes; he might be a medical practitioner or a solicitor; he might be a member of a municipal council. All those various facets of public responsibility contain elements which may conflict with the duty of a man not only as a Minister but as a member of Parliament. If one examines this question of conflict of duties, this will be the inevitable conclusion.

If this point of view is carried to its logical conclusion, the stage will be reached when the only man who will be qualified to hold office as a member of Parliament will be a person without any outside responsibilities or without any of the experience that is involved in outside responsibilities. If this is done, the type of person elected to Parliament will have no experience of outside interests and, to use a phrase applied by the poet Tennyson to one of his characters, he will be a person who is “faultily faultless and splendidly null”. If Parliamentary activities were to be limited to people who had not had outside responsibilities, that would be the negative type of person elected to Parliament.

I shall deal briefly with the arm of the honorable member’s attack that a Minister may not be able to give full time to his duties because he has some outside responsibilities. That contention applies equally well to other members of Parliament, and I should say that if the Leader of the Opposition is to pursue that argument to its logical conclusion, he should look to himself, because in his
election propaganda he describes himself as an industrial lawyer. I believe he has a very successful legal practice, both as an industrial lawyer and generally, but when the Opposition recently elected him to succeed his predecessor—who, I believe, gave full time to his office of Leader of the Opposition—the Opposition did not say, "No, we must not have this man as a Leader because he will not be able to give sufficient time to his Parliamentary duties ".

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I want to bring the Attorney-General back to the subject of the motion before the House. Obviously, he is discussing something entirely different and completely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I find that there is no point of order. I find relevance in the Minister's statements.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—If the Minister's statements are relevant, it might also assist him to know that although I hold a practising certificate, like the Chief Secretary and certain other members of the legal profession, I have not practised in detail for some considerable time.

The SPEAKER.—I accept that statement as a personal explanation.

Mr. G. O. REID (Attorney-General).—I should like to put this as a general proposition and divorce it from the Leader of the Opposition. On both sides of the House there are honorable members who hold office and who practise professionally, one as a doctor and others as solicitors.

Mr. FLOYD.—They are not Ministers.

Mr. G. O. REID.—Those members may not have Ministerial responsibility, but the point made by the Leader of the Opposition was that these private interests were an invasion of a member's time. That applies whether a member is a Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, a back-bench member of Parliament, or a member of a Parliamentary committee. I believe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is still a municipal councillor.

Mr. FLOYD.—That is an honorary position.

Mr. G. O. REID.—It may be honorary, but that is not the point. To perform his duties properly, he would have to devote much time to the affairs of the Northcote council. Does that not bring about a conflict of interests? May not membership of a municipal council also generate a conflict of interests in a member of Parliament who represents a constituency of which the municipality is only one component area? If the question of conflict of interest is to be pursued, why should it not be pursued there? Members of Parliament who are municipal councillors would have particularly conflicting interests if they were members of a Parliamentary committee which was investigating local government administration. The questions of conflict of interest and invasion of an honorable member's time by outside interests should be applied equally to all members of the House, whether they are Ministers or not.

The Leader of the Opposition said that, in accepting a directorship, the Chief Secretary might in some way be specifically concerned with a conflict of duties because of the activities of the particular company. The company is primarily concerned in the manufacture and, to some extent, with the importing and exporting of footwear. By interjection, the Leader of the Opposition says that it has a very wide memorandum of association.

Mr. HOLDING.—All memoranda are wide.

Mr. G. O. REID.—As a lawyer, the Leader of the Opposition knows that companies operating under the Companies Act usually have widely drawn objects. I suppose that in the
course of his extensive company practice he has drawn scores of memoranda for companies and, in the ordinary routine of doing so, has set out their objects as widely as possible. The company of which the Chief Secretary has become a director primarily deals with the manufacture and distribution of footwear.

Mr. HOLDING.—I explained that we did not make any investigation.

Mr. G. O. REID.—To-day, the Leader of the Opposition asked a question about the objects of the company, and he was given the information sought.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The time of the Attorney-General is about to expire.

On the motion of Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Housing), Standing Order 8B was suspended to enable the Attorney-General to continue his speech for five minutes.

Mr. G. O. REID (Attorney-General).—Having regard to the primary objects of the company, it is highly improbable that its activities would cause any actual conflict between the interests of the Chief Secretary as a director and his interests as a Minister. The Leader of the Opposition made much of there being a difference between a Minister accepting a directorship and a man who already held a directorship becoming a Minister. In reference to that aspect, I point to the candid statement which the Chief Secretary made to the press on this matter, indicating that he waited until he was free of the embarrassment of the portfolio of Attorney-General, which brought him constantly into touch with company matters, before he accepted a directorship. In commenting on the Chief Secretary's statement, the Australian Financial Review, of 24th October, ended with this cogent paragraph—

The thought that Mr. Rylah, an Australian initiator of company reform, might one day return to the Attorney-General's portfolio with this experience under his belt might not be regarded with unalloyed joy in some Australian boardrooms.

I return to the various points made by the Leader of the Opposition. First, he based his argument on a positively false assumption that there is a convention of the Victorian Parliament that a Minister should not accept a company directorship. Secondly, he based his argument on a principle which, carried to its logical conclusion, would mean that every member of Parliament would have to consider his position in regard to any sort of outside public interest. Thirdly, on the broad facts of the particular case, the Chief Secretary has behaved with the utmost integrity. This motion should be rejected.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—Mr. Speaker—

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order. I take it that the Deputy Leader of the Country Party will speak against the motion. In that case, the call should be given to the Opposition side of the House.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I do not think any member of the House can assume either way until the honorable member is heard.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker; there was a previous ruling in this House concerning this matter, which particularly related to the debates of this kind. According to that ruling, the call goes from one side of the House to the other. With respect, I suggest that the honorable member for Gippsland East should indicate whether he supports or opposes the motion. I understand that he will vote with the Government.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—How do you understand that?

Mr. HOLDING.—I have been so informed.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I have given my ruling on the point of order. The House is not aware, and neither am I, of how the Deputy Leader of
the Country Party or his supporters will consider this matter. I call on the Deputy Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, would you make your ruling clear, that it is not the normal procedure for the debate to alternate from one side of the House to the other.

The SPEAKER.—So that the position is made clear, the normal procedure in this House is that the order of debate is from one side of the House to the other.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It has always been the practice, and it is so considered by Parliament, that Country Party members, who sit on the same side of the House as Government members, generally support the Government.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I have not heard the Deputy Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—The discussion on the point of order raised by members of the Opposition concerning my right to address the House at this point of time has been most interesting. In a debate on another measure last night, the situation was somewhat the reverse—all the speeches were made from one side of the Chamber.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member is now debating a previous point of order.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I am clarifying my position. Until the Country Party indicates its attitude to any proposal, it is within your discretion, Mr. Speaker, to recognize who has the call. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition is in general terms; its purpose is to allow the House to discuss the propriety of the Chief Secretary accepting a company directorship. It does not indicate whether this House should condemn or approve of this action. The Opposition is simply wasting the time of this House.

The Universal English Dictionary defines "propriety" as—

That which is suitable; which is in accordance with accepted standards; in conformity with correct standards of morality, conduct or behaviour, decency, modesty of bearing and demeanor.

Perhaps the word "modesty" may not apply to the Chief Secretary, but in all other respects the dictionary definition of "propriety" applies to him. If this motion were couched in wider terms, instead of specifically mentioning the Chief Secretary and his company appointment, it might have some merit. The Country Party is not in a position to know whether other Ministers hold company directorships or in the past how many of them have held such positions. The members of my party have not had an opportunity to undertake research into this matter because they did not have much notice of the motion before the House. The Leader of the Opposition would not expect us to be such fountains of knowledge that we would be aware of all the ramifications of his motion.

In the experience of members of the Country Party, the Chief Secretary is the last person who could be accused of allowing any possible conflict to arise between his Ministerial duties and other duties. No other Cabinet Minister has been so meticulous in the discharge of his administrative duties as has been the Chief Secretary. He has always been prompt and courteous to us and has given us a fair hearing. When administrative problems have been referred to the honorable gentleman, he has given the members of my party satisfaction in discussions that have followed. We concede that, in respect of his Parliamentary duties, as distinct from his Ministerial duties, we do not always see eye to eye with the Minister. We acknowledge that we have run counter to him on many occasions, but that is part and parcel

of party politics. However, we believe the administration of his Department is of the highest order, and cannot conceive that any conflict would be allowed to arise between the Minister's administration of his Cabinet portfolio and any other interests that he may have.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—At the outset, I think I could say that, in the role of a burlesque comedian which he attempted to adopt this afternoon, the Attorney-General was an abject failure. At no time did the honorable gentleman attempt to meet by cogent argument the most vital points, which are fundamental to democracy throughout the world, that the Leader of the Opposition so effectively raised. I shall return to the Attorney-General's speech presently. Surely the Deputy Leader of the Country Party is aware that when Mr. Nicklin assumed the position of Premier of Queensland he insisted that the Country Party members of the Government, who were directors of co-operative butter factories, should resign those directorships. That is how strict Mr. Nicklin was in respect of this essential convention, which is recognized throughout the world to-day.

Why did the Attorney-General deliberately avoid coming to grips with this issue? The honorable gentleman knows as well as any other member of this House the attitude of the great constitutional authorities to whom the Leader of the Opposition referred. Sir Ivor Jennings, who wrote the great book, Cabinet Government, is one authority. Sir Winston Churchill is another great champion of Parliamentary democracy. Since 1906 every British Prime Minister, irrespective of party, has rigorously endorsed this convention, and so too, thank goodness, has every Prime Minister in Australia. Of course, Sir Robert Menzies was absolutely ruthless on this issue. Whenever potential Ministers, who were also company directors, thought they could retain directorships on attaining Ministerial rank, Sir Robert Menzies emphatically and unequivocally required them to resign the directorship.

All honorable members will recall the case of Senator McLachlan who was Postmaster-General in 1938. It was found that this Minister was a director of Humes Limited, and he was forced to resign during the régime of the Rt. Hon. J. A. Lyons. This Prime Minister laid down in 1938 what was required in Australia in respect of this allegiance to the fundamental convention of democracy.

Throughout the world, in the Mother of Parliaments in Great Britain, in all the Scandinavian countries, in France, Germany, Canada, New Zealand, the Commonwealth of Australia and every State except Victoria, this convention is honoured, but this Government is determined to destroy the essence of democracy. That was proved in 1958 when the Opposition raised the question in relation to the then Minister of Transport, Sir Arthur Warner. In the meantime, that honorable gentleman has passed from our midst, and naturally I shall not say anything that I did not say on that occasion. There were the scandals of Vending Machines Proprietary Limited and Horsham Kyosan, which were never satisfactorily dealt with by this Government. Reference has been made to this matter as though it were some meaningless and out of date academic issue—a hangover from the past. It is an essential and practical point.

I believe it is definitely relevant that I should refer to the fact that two members of this Government are at present, or have been until very recently, company directors, one in Toppa Ice Cream Proprietary Limited, and the other in General Foods Corporation Proprietary Limited. There is some degree of uncertainty whether they are still company directors, because both of those concerns have been taken over by the British Tobacco Company Australia Limited, which has very wide ramifications.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member will not be in order if he extends that argument any further.
Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—On a point of order, how does it work out that the previous speaker could attack the Leader of the Opposition on his outside activities?

The SPEAKER.—There is no point of order. I call on the honorable member for Midlands.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—I am seeking to prove that an essential practical issue is before us to-day in Victoria.

The SPEAKER.—That is quite in order.

Mr. STONEHAM.—It is a practical issue because of the concern outside. I can produce most responsible witnesses from within the food industry who have been disturbed because the Minister of Health, of all Ministers, should be a director of an ice cream company, and another Minister is a director of General Foods Corporation Proprietary Limited. Both of those organizations are to-day part and parcel of the British Tobacco Company, which has extensive business interests. People outside are uncertain whether the old directorships have been left intact or whether the directors of Associated Products and Distribution Proprietary Limited, which is the food division of British Tobacco Company Australia Limited, are actually running those two concerns. Because of this uncertainty, all sorts of rumours and speculations exist, and there is even suspicion as to what is going on.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I do not think the honorable member should extend that part of his analogy any further.

Mr. STONEHAM.—I shall not, Mr. Speaker, except to say that it is wrong that a firm such as British Tobacco Company Australia Limited, possessing such wide ramifications, power and scope, should have Ministers of the Crown on its board of directors, or closely allied to it.

On this question of conflict, it is interesting to note that in the United States of America, as in Great Britain, great importance is attached to the matter. Presently I shall refer to the situation that confronted Mr. Robert McNamara when he was asked by President Kennedy to accept the most important position of Secretary of Defence. I quote from The New Republic of the 30th January, 1961, under the heading, “McNamara’s Gesture”

The record of malfeasance, demonstrating the reality of conflict of interest and official yielding to private temptation, is long: in 1960 a series of questionable cases at the Department of Agriculture (related to grain storage) and at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (related to the Food and Drug Administration), as well as repeated instances over recent years at the Department of Defense, document the opportunities for private profit to those willing to abuse a Public trust. But the techniques for protecting the public interest while time enabling able executives to undertake government service are not simple.

Eight years ago, when Charlie (Engine) Wilson—then head of General Motors as Mr. McNamara has now been head of Ford—came up for confirmation as Defense chief, the Senate stood firm against it until Mr. Wilson had divested himself of his very considerable stock holdings in his company.

Mr. McNamara not only resigned his directorships; he also divested himself of his share holding. The article went on to say that, in anticipation of his receiving this appointment from the Senate, Mr. McNamara had already taken the step of selling all his securities held by himself and his wife and had put the proceeds into a trusteeship which would divorce him from any knowledge of or participation in the management of the funds while he was in office.

No one is suggesting that the Chief Secretary of all people in Victoria is a potential crook of some sort, who is going to betray his public duty to serve other interests. I would be the last person to say that. I hold the Chief Secretary in great respect as a man of integrity and probity. It is the principle involved with which I am concerned. The Chief Secretary must realize that he has disappointed a very large number of his friends. People who have supported him and
admired him from the Liberal side of politics have been staggered that he should be prepared to take a step like this. His political opponents, who may still claim to be friends, have also been disappointed that the honorable gentleman should add to the most deplorable attitude that the Premier of this State has adopted since the case of Sir Arthur Warner was raised some years ago. I want to place on record the statement that was made by Sir Ivor Jennings at page 97 of his book, *Cabinet Government—*

In 1906 the Government laid down the rule that all directorships held by Ministers must be resigned except in the case of honorary directorships in connexion with philanthropic undertakings and directorships of private companies.

In 1924 the Labor Government applied the rule to trade union officers.

In every country throughout the democratic world, this is regarded as a fundamental principle. The Attorney-General did not attempt to quote a precedent in any other Australian State or from any of the leading democracies because he knows that he cannot quote such a precedent. Why did the Minister ignore all the recognized constitutional authorities and the great champions of democracy like Sir Winston Churchill and, the Opposition concedes, on this particular issue, Sir Robert Menzies, although we fundamentally disagree with him on others? The former Prime Minister has been absolutely steadfast in his attitude on this question. The House will recall how he behaved after Sir Percy Spender had been appointed to the International Court at The Hague and his name was mentioned in the report of a public company as a retiring director who was eligible and offering himself for re-election. The Prime Minister hit the roof publicly and insisted on Sir Percy Spender doing the right thing.

I do not think the Chief Secretary is doing justice to himself in this instance. It is ludicrous and laughable to imagine that the Minister has to accept a position like this to gain some knowledge of business affairs. That is the biggest joke I have ever heard. The Chief Secretary has demonstrated in recent years, both in this House and at interstate conferences, that he has a complete grasp of what goes on affecting company activities in this State and throughout the Commonwealth. I regard myself as a personal friend of the Chief Secretary, but I cannot understand why the honorable gentleman has taken this ill-advised and irresponsible action.

Sir JOHN BLOOMFIELD (Malvern).—I am possibly one of a few members of this House who can speak, not as a Minister, but as a former Minister with some personal acquaintance of this exact situation. I think what happened in my own situation and my view towards the propriety of the Chief Secretary's attitude in this matter indicate where the real sense is. My first Cabinet appointment was that of Minister of Labour and Industry and Minister of Electrical Undertakings. Shortly before then, I had been appointed a director of a number of companies which were interested in the electrical implement business. I admit that I received a remuneration which was small but welcome. On becoming Minister of Electrical Undertakings, it immediately occurred to me that I should not retain those directorships because there was quite a reasonable possibility of a genuine, as opposed to a theoretically or maliciously generated, conflict of interest between my position as a director of a company in one case and as Minister of Electrical Undertakings in the other. If it were shown to any reasonable individual that there was, in the present instance, any likelihood of the sort of situation that I found myself in recurring—if it was clear on the surface that this situation would appear—I would not find myself speaking for the Government and the Chief Secretary as I do at this moment. All the conventions, precedents and authorities that have been quoted must depend on one thing,
and that is reason. Struggle as I may, I almost inwardly suspect that the Leader of the Opposition has some bias against the Government from time to time, and occasionally when I hear these exceedingly righteous propositions maintained, even within the limits of Parliamentary decency, I stoop to doubting his sincerity.

A director of an industrial concern who is a member of the Government of the United Kingdom, which has as Ministers people who are responsible for income tax, the Board of Trade, customs duties and trade of a Sovereign nation, is liable to run into those difficulties, and one can well understand the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia laying down as a principle of convenience and excessive caution that their Ministerial colleagues should not retain directorships.

Mr. FENNESSY.—What about Mr. Nicklin?

Sir JOHN BLOOMFIELD.—Mr. Nicklin is not a binding authority. We agree with him in many matters, but we do not accept his word as gospel on all subjects. I understand that in the cases to which reference has been made the companies were producing butter. Surely a financial interest in rural industry in Queensland must be a most delicate matter for a Minister who has come to governmental conclusions. I would not agree with Mr. Nicklin altogether. Is it assumed that when the Leader of the Country Party or his Deputy becomes Premier, he should immediately sell his farm because it would suit him as a farmer to reduce the freight on superphosphate or barbed wire?

As the Attorney-General said, it is remarkable that the rule seems to apply only to that highly culpable class of people who are directors of companies. What is the logic in the man who has vast rural estates and interests of his own being less subject to such a rule, or, in effect not subject to it at all, than a man in a small company which cannot possibly have dealings with the Government?

There are reasons for rules in every Parliament. There is the possibility of the Minister having information which he has to lock away in his mind and not use as a director. There is the possibility that he may have information which could lead to the making of a profit by his company, and finally there is the possibility that he may exert influence in Cabinet, as a member of the Government, in favour of some particular company in relation to contracting or the areas of business in which that company operates.

In the moving of this motion, there has been no effort to establish the faintest suggestion that any of these things would exist. But there has been a voluntary contribution from the Opposition which leads this House to believe, because of the voluntary expressions of respect for the Chief Secretary as a man, that if any of these difficulties did arise he would immediately find himself embarrassed by the possibility and would take the step which is consistent with both his reputation and his integrity. Therefore, I suggest that this is a footling motion. It is based on legalistic precedent which can be brought from Parliaments which are quite different in their nature, unfortunately, from this Parliament. The debate has produced the remarkable result that members of the Opposition have voluntarily reassured Parliament, and I hope the people, that if any embarrassment did arise in the future the Chief Secretary would take the appropriate step and dissociate himself from his directorship, and his commercial interest.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The final words of the honorable member for Malvern ring very clearly in the ears of members of the Opposition, and they highlight a most important part of the motion. The honorable member asserted that if at any time the Chief Secretary found himself
embarrassed by any action of the company of which he is a director he would obviously take the necessary steps to resign. The motion states that the honorable gentleman should not find himself in that position. He would be embarrassed by the fact that he is a director of a company and at the same time a Minister of the Crown of this State.

Sir JOHN BLOOMFIELD.—That particular company.

Mr. WILKES.—The honorable member for Malvern can have it any way he likes. He clearly showed what he considered to be the propriety of a Minister when he said that during his term as Minister of Electrical Undertakings he was a director of several companies and because these companies had some relationship to the portfolio that he held he resigned those directorships. Is not this the very basis of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition? The importance of this fact was completely overlooked by the Attorney-General. The Leader of the Opposition made it quite clear that he did not want this debate to be turned into a political football; he did not want it to have political implications. However, the Attorney-General did not accept the debate on this high plane. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Chief Secretary should examine the precedents and the conventions of this matter which, the Attorney-General said, in answer to a question that he was not aware of. The Chief Secretary rejected this sound and reasonable proposal of examining the matter and informing Parliament whether in his opinion it would affect his propriety as a Minister of the Crown and as Chief Secretary to be the director of a company.

The honorable member for Malvern said that the relevance of the companies of which he was a director to his portfolio was one matter, but whether there is a relevancy between the company of which the Chief Secretary is a director and the complexity of his portfolio is of little consequence in the ultimate. How can the Chief Secretary give this House or anybody an assurance that at some time in the future the activities of the company in which he has accepted a directorship will not come into conflict with the jurisdiction of his portfolio? He could not give such an assurance because the portfolio administered by him is so extensive. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the Chief Secretary is, because of the magnitude of his portfolio, the hardest worked member of Cabinet.

What are the responsibilities of the Chief Secretary in regard to his portfolio? The Ministerial and administrative office of the Department coordinates the work of various sub-departments, branches and offices, and, in addition, it administers many Acts. It is sufficient for me to say that a number of those Acts are pertinent to all walks of life, and some of them are pertinent to the commercial activities of this State. Whilst, in the view of the Opposition, it is not necessary to establish relevancy with any particular facet of the portfolio occupied by the Chief Secretary, surely it is sufficient to show that there is a danger of conflict and, whilst this danger exists, the propriety of the Chief Secretary could be affected. Convention could be thrown to the winds and Parliament could suffer from any misdemeanour. Nobody is questioning the integrity of the Chief Secretary; that is beyond reproach.

Although the Chief Secretary has accepted a directorship in a public company, the Opposition believes that his integrity is beyond reproach. The motion suggests that the honorable gentleman should examine the convention in question; it is essential that the Chief Secretary, the Government and the Parliament should not be embarrassed by something that may occur in the future.

The extensive portfolio of the Chief Secretary embraces many Acts of Parliament and many authorities,
including the State Accident Insurance Office, workers compensation, the Social Welfare Branch, the Social Welfare Act, the Crimes Act, the Maintenance Act, The Constitution Act Amendment Act—it is a very embracing enactment—the Explosives Branch, electoral matters, the Firearms Act, the Fisheries and Wildlife Branch, the Gas Examiners Act, the Government Shorthand Writer, the Government Statist, the Penal and Gaols Branch, the Motor Registration Branch, the Police Department, and so on. As has already been pointed out, the Chief Secretary, has the personal credit of being the architect of numerous amendments to company law in Victoria.

Mr. G. O. Reid.—That was as Attorney-General.

Mr. Wilkes.—That is so; the honorable gentleman has now vacated that portfolio. Whether there is direct relevance with his company activity and a particular section of his Department is immaterial; the fact is that the Parliament, the Chief Secretary, and the Government cannot be certain of what may occur in the future. Apart from the Chief Secretary's Department, a host of statutory bodies function without the administration of that Department. I shall not weary the House by reading out a list of these authorities.

The Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Midlands referred to the precedents and attitudes that have been adopted not only by Parliaments in Australia, but also by the mother of Parliaments to which the Government frequently refers. State Parliaments in Australia have adopted the principle of discouraging Ministers of the Crown from being directors of public or private companies, and have even demanded that they should not hold such positions.

In replying to the case submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, the Attorney-General said that we were concerned about possible conflict, because the motion is based on what could happen in the future. The honorable gentleman further stated that the Opposition's case was based on supposition. Possible conflict need not necessarily mean supposition. The Attorney-General also said that trade union officials could become members of Parliament, and he asked how this would inhibit their activities. He emphasized that if the Opposition's arguments were correct, the field from which people could be elected to Parliament would be considerably narrowed, with the result that people who had no experience would be elected. There are two sides to this question. Surely, the honorable gentleman is not suggesting that the Ministers of the Liberal Party Government in Canberra have no experience. Obviously, responsible Ministers of the Federal Government must be members of experience. Because of the convention to which I refer, and its implications, the Prime Minister and his predecessors have done everything possible to dissuade Ministers from becoming directors of private or public companies.

Surely, the Attorney-General does not suggest that Ministers in the British Parliament have no experience. The question of whether a person has experience does not come into it; it is a matter of whether Ministers of the Crown leave themselves open by being directors of companies, or whether it reacts to the detriment of stable Government in the State. This could occur without any motive on their part. Nevertheless, the risk is there, and it will remain.

The Attorney-General's suggestion that municipal councillors are in the same category as Ministers of the Crown is too ridiculous for comment. The honorable gentleman might as well have mentioned members of school committees and other bodies of this type. There is no relationship between a member of Parliament, who does not hold a portfolio, and a Minister of the Crown who, under
The Constitution Act Amendment Act, has certain responsibilities to Parliament, the State and the Governor. The people can remove a Minister from office by defeating his party at the polls, and the Governor can also remove a Minister from office. I cannot understand why the Attorney-General should suggest that what a Minister does has any relevance to what an ordinary member of Parliament does.

The Attorney-General also said that he wished to quote what the Australian Financial Review said concerning the Chief Secretary. This publication stated a good deal about the company on which the Chief Secretary has accepted a directorship; it stated that the company was fined for the non-payment of income tax. A writ was issued against the company for the non-payment of income tax, which was subsequently paid. It may not mean anything, but at least it shows how involvement can take place.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member has one minute in which to conclude his remarks.

Mr. WILKES.—In the interests of the Parliament of Victoria and of the Government, the Opposition believes that Ministers of the Crown should refuse directorships in public or private companies, first, because of the risk of impropriety, and, secondly, because of the convention established over the years, not only in Australia, but also in Great Britain.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—Although the Country Party intends to oppose the motion, some aspects which have been developed during the debate are worthy of comment. The motion refers to the propriety of the Chief Secretary in accepting a company directorship is concerned, I believe that the Chief Secretary is beyond reproach in any circumstances. From the point of view of a possible conflict with the Chief Secretary’s administrative duties as a member of Cabinet and his duties as a director of a company, I emphasize that the honorable gentleman is one Minister who has the capacity and ability to supply a full reply promptly when matters are referred to him. I do not agree with this part of the motion.

I believe this debate should proceed not on the question of the propriety of the Chief Secretary accepting a directorship in a company, but on the general principles involved in matters of this type. The honorable member for Malvern made it clear that in his own case a conflict existed. The honorable member also referred to the responsibilities or ordinary members of Parliament. I am amazed that he should not recognize that there is a vast difference between the responsibilities of a Minister of the Crown and those of a member of Parliament. A Minister has an absolute responsibility for the operation and administration of his Department, which places him in a different category from other members of the House. The honorable member for Malvern asked what was the difference between an ordinary member and a Minister of the Crown.

All honorable members will appreciate that companies appeal to the public and issue a prospectus concerning funds, debentures, and so on. The fact that the Chief Secretary was linked with a company could greatly enhance an appeal on the market concerning an offer of shares. There is a potential conflict of interests in the case of the Chief Secretary, even though the honorable gentleman has an absolutely unsullied record of integrity. Possibly, the arguments that have been advanced on this matter might cause the Chief Secretary to have second thoughts.
concerning the extent of his responsibilities in association with his directorship of the company in question.

Like every other company, Easywear Limited operates within the scope of its memorandum which is virtually unlimited; in other words, it could diversify its interests to almost any commodity. There is certainly scope for conflict of interest between the Chief Secretary's responsibilities as a Minister of the Crown and those as a company director.

I was surprised to hear the honorable member for Northcote refer to the non-payment of taxes by the company concerned, but that does not represent a conflict of interest. The Chief Secretary's Department would not be involved in the recovery of taxes for the Commonwealth. In conclusion, I believe that the general principles of this question could well be discussed by Parliament with a view to a definite policy on the matter being formulated. The motion must fail because it is an attack on the Chief Secretary whose propriety, I believe, is unchallengable.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—I think all honorable members will agree that the case submitted by the Leader of the Opposition was completely devoid of personalities and directed attention only to the fact that members of the Opposition believe that the conventions have been breached because the Chief Secretary has accepted an appointment as a director of a private company.

I thought the Leader of the Opposition was very reasonable and generous, because he suggested that the Chief Secretary should examine the case presented by the Opposition with regard to the conventions considered to have been breached and later make a statement to the House, not to the press. If that course had been agreed to the Leader of the Opposition was prepared to allow the debate to cease at that point. This course has not been taken by the Chief Secretary. The suggestion was completely ignored by the Attorney-General, too, and I was surprised that a man of his capabilities, a respected Minister of the Crown, should allow himself to descend to personalities, as he did.

The Attorney-General first attacked the Leader of the Opposition for having interests outside this House. Then he said that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition also had interests outside this House, in that he was a member of the Northcote City Council; the Attorney-General suggested that in performing his duties as a councillor the honorable member could come in conflict with his interests in this Parliament. The Attorney-General further suggested that it could be said that any member of a Parliamentary committee could find himself in a possible conflict of duties. Those are the remarks that I wish to make on the subject of convention or propriety.

When he was a back-bench member of this Parliament, the present Attorney-General was a member of a committee. I have been a member of a committee for many years and I know only too well, as you do, Mr. Speaker, that the Act governing committee work clearly stipulates that if an investigation by a committee involves any member of that committee in any way, that member shall not take part in the committee's deliberations at that point of time.

Mr. G. O. REID.—That applies to a Minister and his duties.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The Attorney-General did not make that statement during his speech. He is trying to make the point now, when it is much too late. He attempted to create a wrong impression. He knows the Act as well as other honorable members who have had experience in this matter; of course, I would not expect new members of Parliament to know about this.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that the directorship with which the Chief Secretary
now finds himself involved is with a company which, according to reports in the *Australian Financial Review*, has come into conflict with the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation. The Opposition considers that this is no position for a Minister to be in, and the Opposition is endeavouring to protect him from that position.

Mr. HOLDING.—And to protect Parliament.

Mr. FENNESSY.—Exactly; Parliament also should be protected. A substantial number of authorities have been mentioned, including the late Sir Winston Churchill. Almost every Prime Minister in Great Britain and every Prime Minister of Australia in my lifetime has been quoted, and in many instances even State Governments have maintained the convention that no member of a Ministry shall occupy a position as a director of a private or a public company.

Mr. HOLDING.—If their logic is followed, all Ministers will finish up as directors of companies.

Mr. FENNESSY.—If we accept the answer given to the Leader of the Opposition by the Attorney-General, when answering for the Premier, every member of the Cabinet could become a director of private or public companies. Opposition members are attempting to protect them and to protect this Parliament. If they have not sufficient common sense to know this themselves, at least Opposition members are telling them about it.

I thought one of the best contributions to the debate was that made by the honorable member for Malvern. I remember when he was the Minister of Electrical Undertakings and Minister of Labour and Industry in 1955. He said that because he felt that the directorships he held at the time could conflict with his position as a Minister, he immediately resigned them, and he never hesitated in doing so. The honorable member for Malvern is a man of integrity and sincerity, a fact which has never been questioned in this Parliament. The same comment applies to the Chief Secretary; he is a man of integrity and sincerity, and I join with those who say that he is the hardest worked Minister in this Parliament and one of the best equipped.

The Opposition wants to see that this position is maintained and that embarrassment is not caused to the Chief Secretary, the Government, or the Parliament. That is the whole merit of the motion before the House. The *Australian Financial Review* published a report headed "Tax Department sues Easywear", stating—

Easywear (Australia) Pty. Ltd., a subsidiary of the listed Easywear Ltd. footwear and rubber group, is being sued by the Deputy Commissioner for Taxation in Victoria for income-tax allegedly due for the 1965-66 financial year.

In a Supreme Court writ, the Taxation Commissioner claims $45,361 in taxation and accrued interest for the year.

The writ states that a notice of assessment claiming $70,628 was lodged with the company on February 8 this year.

The amount became due and payable on March 14, the writ states, and on March 28 the company paid only $25,628.75.

The Commissioner is asking the court to award the outstanding principal and interest of $1,361.30.

The writ seeks trial by a Judge sitting alone.

This is a glaring illustration of the danger of Ministers and even of private members becoming involved in private or public companies. Supposedly sound companies have fallen by the wayside and have brought down with them many reputable people. It is not the intention of Opposition members, and never will be, to allow the conventions which have operated in the Parliaments abroad and at home to be breached in any way. We have given an undertaking that if we were to form the Government to-morrow we would
see that those conventions were fulfilled to the limit. That has always been our intention, and it will remain so. For the reasons stated by the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader and the honourable member for Midlands, I contend that the case presented by the Opposition cannot be answered by the Government.

The House divided on the motion for the adjournment of the House (the Hon. Vernon Christie in the chair)—

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Majority against the motion . . . 36

**AYES.**

Mr. Clarey  Mr. Divers  Mr. Fennessy  Mr. Floyd  Mr. Holding  Dr. Jenkins  Mr. Lovegrove  Mr. Mutton  Mr. Stoneham  Mr. Sutton  Mr. Trezise  Mr. Wilkes  Mr. Wilton.

**NOES.**

Mr. Balfour  Mr. Billing  Mr. Birrell  Sir John Bloomfield  Mr. Borthwick  Mr. Buckley  Mr. Cochrane  Mr. Darcy  Mr. Dixon  Mr. Doyle  Mr. Dunstan  Mr. Evans  (Ballarat North)  Mr. Evans  (Gippsland East)  Mrs. Goble  Sir Herbert Hyland  Mr. Jona  Mr. Loxton  Mr. MacDonald  (Glen Iris)  Mr. McDonald  (Rodney)  Sir William McDonald  Mr. McKellar  Mr. McLaren  Mr. Manson  Mr. Magher  Mr. Moss  Mr. Phelan  Mr. Porter  Mr. Rafferty  Mr. Reese  Mr. Reid  (Box Hill)  Mr. Reid  (Dandenong)  Mr. Ross-Edwards  Mr. Rossiter  Mr. Rylah  Mr. Smith  (Bellarine)  Mr. Smith  (Warrnambool)  Mr. Stirling  Mr. Stikes  Mr. Suggett  Mr. Tanner  Mr. Tannar  (Morwell)  Mr. Taylor  Mr. Templeton  Mr. Trethewey  Mr. Trewin  Mr. Wheeler  Mr. Whiting  Mr. Wilcox  Mr. Wiltshire.

**Tellers:**

Mr. Edmunds  Mr. Ginifer.

**PAIRS.**

Mr. Ring  Mr. Turnbull  Mr. Mitchell  Sir Henry Bolte.

Mr. Fennessy.

**MOTOR CAR (HOURS OF DRIVING) BILL.**

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Division 3 of Part IV. of the Motor Car Act 1958 and the Third Schedule thereto.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

**SUMMARY OFFENCES BILL.**

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part I. of the Summary Offences Act 1966.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

**GRIEVANCE DAY.**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER.**

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That Standing Order 273c be suspended for to-morrow so far as it requires that the first Order of the Day on every third Thursday shall either be Supply or Ways and Means.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—The Opposition opposes this motion for reasons which it outlined in a previous debate. During that debate, members of the Opposition indicated that it would be well for the Government to consider reintroducing a grievance day in this House. We believe that such a grievance day worked well when it existed in the past. During the debate I have mentioned, the honourable member for Sunshine indicated, at some length, that grievance day was used by all members to raise matters of Government administration. I shall not reiterate all that was said in that debate, but I point out that it is of the utmost importance to the Government, to the Opposition, and to the good conduct of the House that the Government should take every opportunity to introduce a little more flexibility into the structures, forms, and procedure.
of the House. There are now seven Bills standing on the Notice Paper in the names of individual members. They deal with a variety of subjects, which I do not propose to canvass.

Mr. WHEELER.—Plus an adjournment motion every day.

Mr. HOLDING.—The simple fact is that the Opposition has a duty to the people of this State which it will carry out. Some of the seven Bills on the Notice Paper have already been debated in another place. It is incredible that the legislative initiative which constitutionally resides in this House is being taken away from honorable members who sit here and, by virtue of the Standing Orders of another place, it is operating there.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I make it clear to the House that the motion relates to Standing Order 273c, and not to the matter of general business. I ask the Leader of the Opposition not to discuss that.

Mr. HOLDING.—In fairness to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I was conscious of the fact that I was out of order, but I felt that I should put certain points to the Chief Secretary.

At this stage, the more flexibility which can be introduced into the operation of Parliament, and the more rights which can be attached to honorable members on the back benches, whether on the Government or the Opposition side of the House, the better this institution will be. Last night, members of the Opposition launched a considerable attack on a particular Bill. Honorable members on the Government back benches, although they were perhaps desirous of entering the debate, were prevented from doing so, for political and tactical reasons, by the Premier and Treasurer who decided that it was desirable that they should not speak. The Government of the day must determine its tactics in a debate, and I do not want to take away from it its right to do so.

Mr. ROSSITER.—And the Notice Paper.

Mr. HOLDING.—It is a matter for consideration whether this Parliament will become a blind vehicle for Cabinet decisions or will exercise some of the rights and prerogatives of a Parliament. I may point to the Minister for Labour and Industry that my responsibility here is not to the Cain Government or to the Macfarlan Government; my responsibility, like that of the Minister, is to the people of Victoria. It is to ensure that this House functions in a way which provides the maximum opportunity for individual members to represent the needs and desires of their electorates. That is the only responsibility of honorable members sitting in this House.

Frankly, this problem is endemic to all Parliaments. It is a matter of comment by eminent constitutional authorities that, partly due to the nature and development of the concept of Cabinet, Parliaments are tending to become merely instruments that carry out the dictates of Cabinet. A Government with a majority as substantial as this Government has is able to so order its affairs that Parliamentary democracy as it was once understood has less and less meaning. It is time that this process was reversed, and if this were done the Opposition, the Government and this House would benefit. We all have a vested interest in this matter, and that is the way in which it is being put. Therefore, Opposition members intend to oppose the motion moved by the Chief Secretary, and we hope that during the debate he will indicate whether or not the Government is prepared to consider putting some political initiative back into this House.

The time has come when, unless something is done, this House will become nothing more or less than a slightly glorified city council. The prerogatives of Parliament are frequently mentioned but these are diminishing daily, so let us act like a Parliament and give members on both sides
of the House a little more freedom and flexibility. Perhaps the Chief Secretary is concerned that the Government may not get through its legislative programme. If he is prepared to introduce more flexibility into that programme he will find the Opposition willing to co-operate to make this Parliament the institution that it once was.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I do not propose to go into the general matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition except to repeat the offer I have made to him on a number of occasions over recent months that, if he puts his proposals in writing and submits them to me, I shall be happy to consider them. I should like this motion to be dealt with on its merits. At the moment a number of important Bills are on the Notice Paper and they should be debated. This session, the Government has answered more questions daily than any other Government has attempted to answer and, to some extent, it has had to sacrifice the work of its Departments by insisting upon prompt answers being given to the questions in order that members of the Opposition may be given the information they desire. Motions have frequently been moved for the adjournment of the House to discuss urgent matters of public importance, and last night there was a general debate on the Stamps Bill, which even covered the waterfront. The motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech is still listed on the Notice Paper, and I should like the House to proceed with that debate as soon as the Leader of the Opposition indicates that there are matters which members of his party would like to talk about. There is also the debate on the motion each night for the adjournment of the sitting, in which every member is given the opportunity for five minutes to raise grievances.

Mr. HOLDING.—Five minutes may not be sufficient.

Mr. RYLAH.—If the grievance were real, it could be detailed in five minutes. The adjournment motion has the added advantage that a Minister takes a note of what is said and replies if his Department is affected, and, if not, he refers the grievance to the Minister concerned. I believe this motion should be carried to-day on its merits, and I am not in any way committing the Government to what may happen when a similar occasion next arises.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Sunshine).—I support the case put by the Leader of the Opposition. Whilst I appreciate the substance of what was said by the Chief Secretary, when it is analyzed it breaks down into two classes. One is that the Government believes it has been unusually generous in its treatment of Opposition members because of the number of questions it has answered. I think some concession can be made in this matter. The second point appears to be that on the last occasion this matter was raised—19th September of this year—the Chief Secretary suggested that if anything is to be done in this matter it ought to be by a personal approach from the Leader of the Opposition to the Chief Secretary.

Mr. FENNERY.—In writing.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I did not hear that. Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that you are the custodian of the procedures in this House—they are common not only to this Parliament and have been followed in the past but also to every other State Parliament, and are used by some of them at present—I cannot understand why the question of a personal approach by the Leader of the Opposition to the Chief Secretary—I am informed it has to be in writing—should be placed against the apparently straightforward and Parliamentary method usually adopted of asking Parliament to sanction the procedures sought by the Leader of the Opposition on 19th September. I raise that matter because as one who has had a great deal to do with the Chief Secretary I have found him obliging, accom-
modating, and courteous. However, this is a Parliamentary matter, and you, Mr. Speaker, as I recall, indicated to the Opposition on 19th September the procedures which the Opposition could and should avail itself of if it wanted to raise this matter. At this point of time and without committing him in any way, all that the Leader of the Opposition has done has been to take advantage of the procedures indicated by you, Sir. I cannot imagine why something should be provided in writing to the Chief Secretary, who is the representative of the Government in charge of this House. So far as I can recall, this is a completely novel procedure.

Mr. Dixon.—It was first raised outside Parliament.

Mr. Lovegrove.—Is there anything wrong with that?

The Speaker (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member for Sunshine should ignore interjections.

Mr. Lovegrove.—I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your protection, but I point out that the Opposition is not the only party which raises matters outside Parliament. The Government does it consistently and so does the Country Party. I understand that in the Commonwealth Parliament, whilst there is some arrangement between the two parties from time to time in regard to the order of business, it has never been suggested that the Opposition should be denied the ordinary Parliamentary procedures conferred upon it under our system of Government. It does not have to make a personal approach to the Leader of the Government to obtain these rights. In the absence of an explanation, I cannot understand the reasoning behind the Chief Secretary’s suggestion, and, until an explanation is provided, members of the Opposition should reject the suggestion. The proposition put before the House by the Leader of the Opposition is that certain subjects should be discussed in Parliament. The first one on the Notice Paper relates to a highly contentious subject.

The Speaker.—The honorable member is out of order in referring to Bills during this discussion.

Mr. Lovegrove.—I know that, and I would not attempt to discuss them. I want to make it quite plain that if any honorable member suggested that such a contentious subject as the abolition of capital punishment in the context of what has been said about this Government should be discussed in the course of this debate, I would be the first to deny him his right.

The Speaker.—Order! I think the honorable member is trying to slide around my ruling.

Mr. Lovegrove.—I am sorry that you suspect me of that, Mr. Speaker. The Aboriginal Affairs Bill—

The Speaker.—Order! The honorable member for Sunshine has been a member of this House for many years and knows as much as most members do about the forms and procedures. I have given a ruling that a discussion of these Bills is out of order on this motion, and I ask the honorable member not to discuss them.

Mr. Lovegrove.—I shall not do so. I believe you will permit me to indicate that all the matters placed before the Parliament by the Opposition under the heading “General Business”—

The Speaker.—Order!

Mr. Lovegrove.—How am I breaking the rules?

The Speaker.—I have already pointed out on three occasions during this debate that matters under General Business have no bearing on this motion, which deals with Standing Order 273c. I will not hear the honorable member on Bills under General Business.

Mr. Lovegrove.—I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I have no desire to mention the Bills. Take the question of grievances; since the last election, the membership of this
House has been increased from 66 to 73, and there is such a disproportionate representation that for the first time for many years in the recollection of members who have been associated with the political life of Victoria the Opposition has the smallest membership that it has ever had. If my memory serves me correctly, the last occasion on which the Opposition had sixteen members in a House of 66 members was in 1947 after the Cain Government was defeated on a Commonwealth issue relating to banking. To-day the membership of this House is 73, and the representation of the Labor Party has been reduced to 16, whilst the Liberal Party has 44 members.

The SPEAKER.—Is this relevant to the motion?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Of course it is. I am pointing out that some of the most interesting activists in the Liberal Party are condemned to sit in this Chamber for three years without daring to open their mouths, apart from the occasional stolen interjection. In many of the areas they represent, there is a growing climate of hostility because of the administrative failures of the Government.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I should like the honorable member to illustrate the relevance of his remarks.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Very well, Sir. These honorable members dare not speak on a Bill because those who may have the ability lack the consent of the party, and certain others even lack the trust of the Government. I warn them of this lack of trust.

Mr. PORTER.—That applies to your party, too.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Some Ministers are very sensitive on this matter. In the interests not only of Opposition members but of Government members of whom there are greater numbers in this Chamber to-day than perhaps ever before in the history of Victoria—a Grievance Day should be held. The calibre of public discussion in Victoria would be improved if all honorable members were given opportunities such as were afforded some years ago on this most successful grievance day to which I have referred, and on which the Assistant Minister of Education spoke.

The honorable member for Bendigo represents one of many “swinging” seats, and he is confronted almost daily with complaints and admonitions, and even threats, from a large section of his constituents who are thoroughly dissatisfied, disgruntled and disappointed with their representation. He is denied the opportunity of placing before this House the views of his constituents.

Mr. HOLDING.—He will be voting himself into further silence when the vote is taken.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is true. Other Government members were narrowly elected on the preference votes of the Democratic Labor Party.

Mr. PORTER.—The honorable member for Midlands is a good example of that.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I know that some Ministers are sensitive on the question, and I apologize for raising it. Those honorable members who entered Parliament by the skin of their teeth on the preference votes of a party, which is now becoming dangerously satisfied with its accomplishments and therefore more complacent about its support for Liberal Party candidates, should have the right to address the House on behalf of their constituents. I have every respect for their abilities and the way in which they have conducted themselves in Parliament, but I direct their attention to the fact that in past years a motion such as this was never moved; honorable members were given the right to address the House on what was going on in Ballarat, Bendigo, and other country areas, as well as in the city. They are now
being denied the opportunity to complain about the effects of bad administration in their constituencies, such as the lack of freeways, hospitals, educational facilities, housing, and a multitude of other subjects. Honorable members are being deprived of the right, in Parliament, not only to represent their constituents, but, in some cases, to retain their seats. The Opposition is most jealous of their rights in this House.

The Chief Secretary suggested that opportunities are provided for Opposition members to express their points of view. However, we are not given the opportunity to explain Bills which the Government will not introduce but which we are prepared to sponsor. Members of the Country Party should welcome the opportunity of placing the views of their constituents before Parliament at regular intervals. The Chief Secretary should not make it a condition that there should be a communication between the Leader of the Opposition and himself as to the conduct of the business of the House. Parliament should make these decisions. I can understand the honorable gentleman’s feelings, but I drew the inference that he felt that the Opposition had perhaps taken more than its share of opportunities during this session to express its points of view, and had in some way arrested the Government’s programme.

Mr. Wilkes.—It had inhibited the Government.

Mr. Lovegrove.—The finer shades of meaning sometimes escape me, but it would not be difficult to inhibit this Government. If the Opposition returned to the practices of the past, the Government would not get through any of its business. For the benefit of new Government members, when one of the Ministers gave notice of two Bills to-day, if three simple procedures had been availed of by the Opposition, as has been the case in other circumstances, the Government would have got nothing done.

Mr. Wilcox.—The Government would have had to use Standing Orders.

Mr. Lovegrove.—Mr. Speaker, one can see how ignorant some Ministers are of your prerogatives, and the prerogatives of members of Parliament.

Mr. Wilcox.—The gag is not applied in this House as frequently as it is in other Parliaments.

Mr. Holding (To Mr. Wilcox).—If the Government is not prepared to debate a matter, the gag should not be applied.

Mr. Lovegrove.—To prevent the Opposition from exposing the Minister of Transport’s incompetent handling of a Bill, the Premier, by the use of the gag, rescued the Minister from the most ignominious and humiliating position ever confronting a Minister.

Mr. Wilcox.—It was a very successful exercise.

Mr. Lovegrove.—The Minister of Transport boasts that the use of the gag was a most successful exercise.

Mr. Wilcox.—I was speaking about the Bill.

Mr. Lovegrove.—The Government should provide proper opportunities for honorable members to ventilate the grievances of their constituents. I have placed rather severe restrictions upon myself during this debate, but on the next occasion when such a debate arises, I hope the House will understand if I adopt a more liberal approach.

Mr. Stoneham (Midlands).—I thought Government back-bench members had been so effectively canvassed by the honorable member for Sunshine that at least one of them would have supported the Labor Party’s opposition to the motion that
has been moved by the Chief Secretary. The electorate of the honorable member for Ballarat South, who has just interjected, and my own electorate have been adversely affected by drought conditions. Surely this matter should be discussed on Grievance Day by all honorable members. Country Party members should also oppose this motion. When questions have been asked as to the Government's intentions in relation to drought relief, the Government has been most evasive. To-day, I asked the Premier whether the Government's plans to grapple with drought condition included any schemes for providing additional employment. Honorable members must be aware that the drought will cause unemployment. But what happens? Government back-bench members will sit in silence. The Leader of the Opposition stressed that democratic institutions should look to their laurels. From time to time, visitors from newly developing countries within the Commonwealth, and from other parts of the world, visit this Parliament to see how democracy operates.

Much is said about the Standing Orders, but I venture to say that many honorable members have not even perused them. For the benefit of those honorable members, Standing Order No. 273c reads—

On the Order of the Day being read for the Committee of Supply or Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Speaker shall put the question “That I do now leave the Chair,” but where either of these Committees has reported progress, Mr. Speaker shall leave the Chair without putting any question, on the Order of the Day being read.

Except that while the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means are open, the first Order of the Day on every third Thursday shall be either Supply or Ways and Means, and that on that Order of the Day being read the question shall be proposed "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," to which question any Member shall be at liberty to address the House, or move any amendment thereon, provided that no Member shall speak for more than thirty minutes, and that the whole discussion on this question shall not exceed four hours.

Mr. Stoneham.

To-day throughout the world there is unprecedented division on the perpetuation of democracy; no question is being more hotly contested. It is unsatisfactory that the Leader of the Opposition or any other honorable member should have to furnish a letter to the Chief Secretary, so that he may advise the House that the Government may in due course, give consideration to Grievance Day being allowed. There is an obligation on Parliament to ensure that Grievance Day is held as a regular procedure.

To-morrow is the third Thursday in October. No one would suggest that a grievance day should be held on the third Thursday in December. If this motion is agreed to by the House, only the third Thursday in November remains for a Grievance Day this session. Then the arguments submitted by the Chief Secretary will be more strongly waged. To-day honorable members have their last opportunity this year to ensure that Grievance Day is held as a regular procedure. This would be in the best interests of the Government party and members of the Country Party, as well as Opposition members. I am at a loss to understand the apathy of some back-bench members on the Government side of the Chamber towards this vital subject. Grievance Day is fundamental to honorable members individually, as the honorable member for Sunshine has indicated, and I trust that our party will get full support for the point of view which it has submitted. I do not know whether the Minister of Transport is prepared to admit that this is a subject upon which there could well be a conscience vote, although it certainly is a vital matter and affects democracy in this State. Accordingly, I trust that the motion will be either withdrawn by the Chief Secretary or, if it is put to the House, defeated.

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).—For well over three hours, the Opposition has taken advantage of
the forms of the House to delay the business that is listed on the Notice Paper. I do not mind that, but, if Opposition members persist in these delaying tactics—

Mr. FENNESSY.—You are not going to threaten us, are you?

Mr. WILCOX.—Yes, I am. As I said earlier, by way of interjection, the Government has not adopted the practice of applying the gag in this House. In fact, during the eleven and a half years that I have been a member, I think the gag has been used in this Chamber on only four or five occasions, and that is a pretty remarkable record when it is considered that Opposition members stand up and state in a sham way that the Government denies to members of Parliament the right to speak in this Chamber. Opposition members are aware of the frequency with which the gag is applied in some other Parliaments.

Mr. HOLDING.—Get on with your threat.

Mr. WILCOX.—The threat is simply that, if delaying tactics continue on sham matters, the Government will have no option but to resort to the gag. The honorable member for Sunshine, with crocodile tears, expressed great concern for members of the Government party. He even expressed concern for members of the Country Party, who, I submit, are quite capable of looking after their own rights in this House. The honorable member for Sunshine, with crocodile tears, has no need to worry about them. Members of the Government party do not wish to stonewall the Government's legislative programme. They are free to speak at will, but they exercise a little discretion as to when they do address the House. Moreover, they are mindful of the fact that, less than six months ago, they were elected on the policy enunciated by the Premier, and they are eager to see that policy carried into effect through the legislative programme of the Government.

Any honorable member who accuses the Government of hypocrisy, as the honorable member for Broadmeadows has just done by way of interjection, does not know what he is talking about. What I have stated is basic to the concept of democracy as we know it. When a Government is elected, as the Bolte Government has been elected, members of its party do not merely stand up and talk, they do something about ensuring that worthwhile legislation will be placed up on the statute-book. I wish to make it clear that what the Government is doing—

Mr. HOLDING.—Is it carrying out its promise not to increase taxes?

Mr. WILCOX.—The Government is carrying out the promises that were made to the people of this State in the policy speech delivered by the Premier.

In conclusion, let me say that, when Opposition members talk about members on the Government side of the Chamber—particularly new members—wanting to contribute to the debate, and being denied an opportunity to do so, I think of a Bill in which I am particularly interested, namely, the Portland Harbor (Exchange of Land) Bill. The honorable member for Portland has been waiting for weeks for an opportunity to say something concerning the measure, and he is a pretty fair sample of the calibre of members seated on the Government side of the Chamber. When that honorable member has something worth while to say, he will say it.
Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—The Country Party was not inclined to participate in this debate because its members felt that the discussion was delaying the business of the House. However, I consider the comments made by the Minister of Transport to be among the most dangerous and disturbing that I have ever heard in this Chamber. The natural follow-up to the Minister’s contention that the purpose of Government back-benchers in this place is to sit dumbly behind the Government while its legislative programme is passed through Parliament is a regression from Parliamentary Government to government by administration, as a result of which the authority of Parliament could be completely eroded. I suggest that the people of Victoria should take great heed of the comments made by the Minister.

Over the years, the position of Parliament in relation to the Government has been held in high esteem by most honorable members. The motion being debated concerns the suspension of part of a Standing Order in relation to the conduct of this House, and if it is competent for the Government to suspend this particular Standing Order, it could, I submit, if the Government or Cabinet so decrees, suspend any other Standing Order of the House. Why should a distinction be made with respect to this particular Standing Order? If the proposed procedure is followed on this occasion, any other Standing Order could automatically be removed with the authority of the Government, if that suited the Government’s purpose. It is useless to have a Standing Orders Committee if matters of this character are not referred to it. If it can be proved that a certain Standing Order is redundant, it should be removed, but, while it remains as part of the Standing Orders of this House, the Government should not take unto itself the responsibility of altering it.

The purpose of the Standing Orders is to protect the rights of individual members. Surely any member of this House who is without party affiliations has as much right as has the Premier so far as Parliament is concerned. The comments of the Leader of the Opposition and of other Opposition members who have spoken in the course of the debate are very pertinent. It behoves back-bench members of the Liberal Party to think very carefully how they should vote on the proposition which is now before the House, because they could be denying themselves the right to bring forward for discussion matters which they believe to be of an important nature in their electorates. Many of my constituents are astonished when I tell them that I cannot initiate debate on a subject in this House because the Government denies me the opportunity to do so.

Mr. WILCOX.—You do not understand the Standing Orders.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—The Standing Orders afford me the opportunity to introduce a Bill, but that is as far as the measure will proceed. It will not be debated, and I have no power to initiate a debate upon it. My constituents cannot understand this situation. They are of the opinion that, having elected me as their representative in Parliament, I ought to be in a position to express their point of view. I reiterate that the proposal which is now before the House is one which every honorable member should seriously consider before recording his vote.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—I regret that the debate has developed as it has done, because I desire to appeal to the Government to re-introduce what is known as Grievance Day, which, in my view, is a misnomer. It is not a Grievance Day at all. I am sorry that the Minister of Transport saw fit to make the remarks which he did. To paraphrase an old saying, “If you put a beggar on horseback, you fall in.” When the
Minister of Transport was a back-bench member of the Government party, he wanted his say in the same way as any other honorable member did — and he was a very good back-bencher. I regret that the honorable gentleman has reached the stage of threatening the Opposition by stating that if its members delay the business of the House the gag will be applied. Opposition members should not be referred to as adopting delaying tactics if they debate with decorum and in accordance with the Standing Orders any subject-matter which may be under discussion. Indeed, the business of the House cannot be delayed, because there is no knock-off whistle, and honorable members can continue a debate as long as they wish. In all humility, I suggest that if the Government extended certain privileges to the Opposition in the matter of bringing forward matters for discussion, and allowed a degree of flexibility to back-bench members on the Government side of the House, it would get more co-operation from Opposition members in the handling of Bills.

Many measures could be passed with very little debate. I have in mind particularly Bills of a machinery nature where obvious amendments must be made to existing legislation. Such Bills could readily be passed with the co-operation of the Opposition. An honorable member has just interjected to the effect that I propose to gag members of the Labor Party, but I refuse to be drawn into an argument concerning that aspect. If the Government does not see fit to accept the Opposition's point of view I do not propose to labour the point. Some of the newer members in this Chamber may not know that, from time immemorial, there was a Grievance Day on which honorable members could discuss many aspects concerning their electorates. Members of the Opposition must share the blame for allowing motions like that now before the House to be agreed to without debate. However, they now believe that Grievance Day should be restored and that this would not be to the detriment of the Government's programme. Even though Thursday may be wasted, so far as the Government is concerned, more work will be done on other sitting days.

The Deputy Leader of the Country Party has complained that he cannot raise matters concerning his electorate. The problem is not peculiar to Gippsland East; my constituents want to know why I cannot initiate discussion. If the Opposition agrees with the Government, it should not be a one-way traffic. Opportunities should be offered to enable Opposition members to express their points of view. It has been said that honorable members can speak to the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, in the Budget debate, and on the motion of the adjournment of the House. Because of the complacency that has developed over the past few years, the Address-in-Reply debate has been allowed to drift along like an afternoon tea party; honorable members have raised subjects of a parochial nature and their remarks have been recorded in Hansard. The Ministers take the view: "It is reported in Hansard, and the honorable member has made his point". Some years ago departmental officers exercised vigilance; they analyzed the Hansard reports of the various debates and they sent replies to honorable members. That practice has ceased, and an honorable member cannot effectively speak during the Address-in-Reply.

Often Parliament sits long hours, but an honorable member has only five minutes on which to raise matters concerning his electorate on the motion for the adjournment of the House. The stock reply from the Minister is, "This is not under the control of my Department; I will pass on the remarks of the honorable member to the appropriate Minister". The Minister concerned may be a member of another place,
and consequently the honorable member does not always receive a reply. The Address-in-Reply debate has drifted into a lazy exercise and the attitude is taken that, so long as the debate is concluded before Christmas, and the Address-in-Reply is rushed over to His Excellency, everything will be all right. That is derogatory to His Excellency.

The Budget is not debated at the one sitting. The debate is frequently adjourned. An honorable member may get in a "body blow" and before a reply can be made, the debate is adjourned for some days. The last Grievance Day was in 1957, and it has been said that it was a "fizzer". A perusal of Hansard No. 4 of 1957 will show that there were many speakers. The Opposition accepts the fact that back-bench members of the Government will vote according to the dictates of the Government. They were elected on a platform of Liberalism, and it is fair enough that they should vote with the Government. However, no one will kid me; many times an honorable member—whether from the Opposition or the Government side—has had reservations about certain Bills or resolutions before the House.

Out of loyalty and because of team work, the Government members must vote with the Government and consequently they cannot express themselves. Honorable members are entitled to express their private opinions. On a contentious subject they figure only on the division list. Grievance Day gives the back-bench members on both sides of the House an opportunity to express their point of view and play to the gallery if they so desire. No vote is taken, and consequently they would not be subject to disciplinary action by their party. The minority as well as the majority of members would have their say.

It is foolish for the Government to threaten that Standing Orders will be enforced and that the Opposition will have no say at all. I realize that, in the long run, the Government must win because it has the numbers. But at the same time the Opposition can be a bit of a nuisance, provided that it does not transgress the Standing Orders. If Grievance Day is re-introduced and honorable members do not take advantage of it, it will be fair enough at some future time for the Government to say, "You did not use the opportunity; what are you now howling about?". Towards the end of a sessional period there is usually a long list of Bills to be passed, and they generally pass. Too much time is wasted in the early part of the sessional period on Bills that are not of great importance, and important measures are rushed through at the end of the sessional period. A wasted Thursday is not the cause of it. I am trying to be reasonable; if some flexibility was restored in relation to debates on Thursdays, the Opposition might not have a great deal to say. But it would provide the back-bench members of the Government with an opportunity to express their views without compromising their party.

If the Government in its wisdom says that the Opposition is endeavouring to delay the legislative programme and does not want Bills to pass, all it will have to do is to refuse to restore Grievance Day and play the game as hard as it can. Opposition members were not brought up playing kiss in the ring, and they will mix it with the Government.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Dromana).—I enter this debate to deny the latent implication of the Opposition that the back-bench members of the Government are gagged at any time. My friends of the Country Party have not been given a firm lead on how to vote. Last week the Deputy Leader of the Country Party went to vote with the Government, and he was called across to vote with the Opposition.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—I rise to a point of order. I wish to make it quite clear that the
statement of the honorable member for Dromana is completely untrue. At no stage was I called back to vote on the other side of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. L. S. Reid).—Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—He is a liar if he insists on it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the Deputy Leader of the Country Party to withdraw that remark because I consider it unparliamentary.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—On a point of order, the honorable member for Gippsland East said that if the honorable member for Dromana insists on it he is telling a lie.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I have given my ruling. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party referred to the honorable member for Dromana as a liar. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—I said quite clearly that the honorable member for Dromana is a liar if he insists on his statement. I do not believe that I should be called upon to withdraw my remark. It is up to the honorable member for Dromana to justify his statement. If he does so, I am prepared to withdraw. If he insists on his statement, I am afraid that I cannot find any justification for withdrawing my comment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. L. S. Reid).—Order! I consider that the remark made by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party is unparliamentary, and I ask him to withdraw it or put it in a different manner. He must not use the word “liar”.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—If the use of the word “liar” is the matter in dispute, I shall rephrase the expression and say that he is telling blatant untruths if he insists that what he said is true.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Dromana).—If honorable members would sit where they rightly belong in this House, it would save them a lot of trouble. I do not intend to prolong this debate. The back-bench members of the Government are not joining in this debate because they are more concerned with the legislative programme of the Government. The Minister has already mentioned one Bill; ten other measures are listed on the Notice Paper for to-day. Further important Bills are proposed for next week and the week after. The tactics honorable members have witnessed in this House seem to stem from the new leadership on the socialist side of the House. If these new tactics are the result of the new leadership, I think that leadership could be best summed up as a combination of verbosity, repetition and shilly-shally. If my friend the honorable member for Lowan or Kara Kara—I am not sure which electorate he represents, as he speaks for both—wishes to get himself into the same embarrassing situations as his Deputy Leader, I shall have to take a chance and jump on him. I did so when the honorable member was first elected to this House, and after being put on the right track, the honorable member went along all right for a while. I hope the honorable member will cease interjecting, because I would hate to see him named. Returning to the point I was trying to develop when I was not very politely interrupted, the new tactics developed by the new leadership in the Labor Party do not have the support of all members of the Opposition.

Mr. FENNESSY.—How do you know?

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I know because I am comparing the tactics with those of the Cain Opposition, which was the only strong Opposition that the Government has had in this House. The Opposition has varied its tactics, but at no time since 1957 has it had the full support of every member on its side of the House.
Occasionally when the numbers are small, some ginger is put into the Opposition or into criticism of the Government, but this is due, not to the Opposition, but to the Country Party.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I shall hear the honorable member on Standing Order No. 273c.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. I was pointing out that this Standing Order is being used as part of the new tactics by the new leadership of the Opposition to delay the business of the House. It is not necessarily Government business that is being delayed. There are ten Bills on the Notice Paper to-day, and the honorable member for Williamstown has already stated that the Opposition is not opposed to much of the proposed legislation. Therefore, the discussion of Bills is not only the business of the Government but is also the business of the House. The Opposition is employing a ruse in relation to the motion before the Chair simply to delay the business of the House.

I have entered the debate only to dispel the blatant assertion by the Opposition that private members are being gagged from time to time. Private members on the Government side of the House do not believe that a member is elected to Parliament on talk. Speaking on their behalf, I say that they believe that talk is the least important part of the role of a member of Parliament. If some members of the Country Party and the Opposition worked as hard in their electorates and on legislation before it came to this House—

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Have some sense. How can we talk on it before it comes to the House?

Dr. JENKINS.—The two voices!

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I do not know whether the honorable member for Reservoir is referring to the two voices of the Country Party. When the Opposition is not supported by the Country Party, the vote is something like fifteen to 51.

The SPEAKER.—I ask the honorable member to confine his remarks to Standing Order No. 273c.

Mr. DUNSTAN.—I shall conclude by saying that private members on the Government side of the House will not speak at length or at all on this particular motion because they are more concerned with getting on with the work for which they were elected to this House.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—The House has just heard an extraordinary statement by the honorable member for Dromana—the first the honorable member has made since his return from overseas. Of course, this great champion of the backbench of the Liberal Party was not at his best to-night. He asserted that the Opposition was opposing the motion because it wants to delay the business of Parliament. I refer honorable members back to the first week of this session when this House met for only one hour. The Government had no Bills ready; it had no legislative programme prepared. The only measures that were introduced at that time consisted of a number of private members' Bills introduced by Opposition members. I remind the honorable member for Dromana that nothing happened in the second week except the introduction of sessional Bills by the Government.

Mr. SUGGETT.—You used the adjournment of the debate—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I invite the honorable member not to answer.

Mr. WILKES.—I shall respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but point out that the Opposition has no intention of delaying the business of this Parliament. If there is any delay, it is due to the inactivity and unpreparedness of the Government at the beginning of the session. The Government has been repeatedly warned
about this. At the end of the last session of this Parliament, there was a rush of about eighteen or twenty important Bills, which had to be debated and disposed of within a couple of days. The Opposition has given the Government the opportunity and promoted the idea in the mind of the Attorney-General, who is complaining, that the House should meet earlier. For the first time in the ten years I have been a member, this House has met regularly at 2.15 p.m. Furthermore, Parliament has been meeting on Thursdays to debate important business because this lazy, incompetent Government had nothing ready earlier in the session. But when the Opposition wants to move important substantive motions, the Government objects and asserts that delaying tactics are being adopted.

What legislation has the Government introduced? Two Bills have been before the House. During the Budget debate only one Minister, the Minister of Water Supply, spoke and the House heard nothing from the champions of the Liberal Party on the back-bench. By opposing this motion, the Opposition is endeavouring to protect those members and re-establish their rights in this House. Soon after I became a member, I heard a debate on Grievance Day. I remember that the debate did exactly what the honorable members for Sunshine and Williamstown suggested that it should and would do. The debate enabled back-benchers of the Labor Party, as well as of the Opposition, to refer to matters that it is not possible to raise in the normal debates of this House. For example, how many opportunities do honorable members have to debate matters concerning the Country Roads Board and the Housing Commission?

Mr. SCANLAN.—Dozens.

Mr. WILKES.—The genius, the honorable member for Oakleigh, asserts that there are dozens of opportunities! There are other Departments, too, in relation to which Opposition or Government members are very restricted in making an attack or approach. There is also the spectacle of Ministers in another place having a branch office in this House, so that if one wishes to say anything affecting a Minister it must be said to his deputy or someone else. If the Government were sensible, it would reintroduce Grievance Day and allow back-bench members of the Liberal Party as well as the Opposition to raise matters which they have been elected to raise and which their constituents expect them to discuss. We would not have this stupid totalitarian attitude of the Minister of Transport who, in a gruff way said, "We shall have to have a look at the gag". The Opposition challenges the Minister to use the gag in this debate. Honorable members will see whether or not the Government is prepared to do that on the debate on a motion whereby the Opposition intends to re-establish the rights of ordinary members in this House. That is all we are trying to do. There is no political capital involved.

It is all very well for the Attorney-General to smile; the honorable gentleman has an ample opportunity to raise matters in the House. That is his prerogative in the House. How many of his back-benchers have the same rights? Last night, the honorable member for Geelong wanted to speak on the Stamps Bill, but he was not permitted to do so. Honorable members have witnessed the extraordinary spectacle, in a debate on a very important measure that has not yet been passed by this House, of no Government speakers being heard. A succession of Country Party and Labor Party members debated the Bill. Does the Government call that a democratic debate on an important measure? Does not the Government want to debate these Bills? Is the Government ashamed of them?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! I do not see that this is relevant to the motion.
Mr. WILKES.—It is relevant to the re-establishment of the rights of members. We are pointing out that it is of advantage to the Government as well as the Opposition—in fact to Parliament—to have Grievance Day, to have another means of raising matters in this Chamber. You have ruled, rightly, Mr. Speaker, that no reference can be made to private members' Bills. At the beginning of the session, the Opposition attempted to get the Standing Orders Committee to consider some of these matters, and sought the adoption of sessional orders. When this suggestion was made, it was flatly rejected by the Leader of the House, the Chief Secretary. Now the honorable gentleman says to the Leader of the Opposition, "If you submit a proposal in writing we shall give it consideration".

Of course, many verbal arrangements and agreements have been made in this Parliament; I cannot remember any that were made in writing. Certainly none of this particular nature, which concerns the forms of the House, has been made. Agreements have always been honoured by both sides of the House. I indicate to the Chief Secretary that the Opposition will submit to Parliament what it wants to submit, and Parliament will either accept or reject it. As the Government has the numbers, reflected by the totalitarian attitude of the Minister of Transport, if it wishes to deny the inherent rights of members in this institution, this will rest on the Government's own shoulders. I warn the Government, as the Minister had the temerity to warn the Opposition, that if it continues to erode the rights of individual members, the Opposition will take every opportunity in this Chamber to ensure that the rights of ordinary members are upheld without impediment in any way or form.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I support the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other members who have spoken against the motion that is before the Chair. Arguments have been advanced by the Chief Secretary. The Minister of Transport also stated that the House should support this motion. The Government claims that the Opposition is simply playing at ducks and drakes and trying to delay the passage of urgent measures. My Leader correctly pointed out that the business of the House is in the hands of the Government. If the Government's legislative programme is so important, it is within the scope of the Government to call Parliament together in sufficient time to enable the various measures to be debated properly by both Houses in the normal democratic process.

The Standing Order under which Grievance Day is permitted was specifically designed to establish a democratic principle in this institution. At the present time, many varied problems confront the State, but the only means by which the Opposition can raise them in Parliament is by motions for the adjournment of the House or during a Grievance Day debate. The Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the honorable members for Brunswick East, Deer Park and Reservoir hold certain beliefs concerning the laws of this State. The only opportunity they will have of expressing their views and submitting to Parliament what they consider should be done to improve the laws of the State is during a Grievance Day debate. Unfortunately, by using its numbers, the Government will be enabled to force through Parliament a motion which will circumvent the democratic process to which I refer.

Earlier this evening, the Minister of Transport threatened the Opposition that he would apply the gag in a certain debate. The honorable gentleman should realize that there are certain dangers in acting in this manner. You, Mr. Speaker, would have a grave responsibility placed upon your shoulders, as also would the Chairman of Committees, if the
Government attempted to apply the gag. I recall an occasion in this Chamber when the Government attempted to move the gag during the Committee stage of a Bill and, to the credit of the honorable member for Essendon, who was the Acting Chairman at the time, he refused to put the motion to the Committee on the ground that honorable members had not had the opportunity of debating the question which was before the Committee. Of course, the Government immediately whipped him out of the chair and replaced him with an honorable member who was prepared to support the Government's stand.

Mr. G. O. Reid (Attorney-General).—I rise to a point of order. The remarks of the honorable member for Broadmeadows represent a reflection on an Acting Chairman of Committees.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I find the point of order upheld. The honorable member for Broadmeadows should withdraw his remark.

Mr. Wilton (Broadmeadows).—I am merely reciting an incident in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER.—There will be no argument on this question. The honorable member will withdraw his remark.

Mr. Wilton.—What am I to withdraw, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER.—The honorable member is well aware of the remark which I have asked him to withdraw. In fact, I was about to draw his attention to it myself. He made a reflection on an Acting Chairman of Committees when he said that the Government pulled him out of the chair. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. Wilton.—That is what the Government did. I withdraw it.

The SPEAKER.—Without qualification.

Mr. Wilton.—I will withdraw it in any way you like, Mr. Speaker, because I do not wish to oppose your ruling. However, I consider that I was making a statement of fact.

The SPEAKER.—The matter is now closed. I call on the honorable member for Broadmeadows on the motion before the Chair.

Mr. Wilton.—I shall be guided by your wisdom, Mr. Speaker. In conclusion, I point out that Government members who represent country electorates should give serious consideration to this motion. Many of their constituents must be gravely concerned over the current situation, and no doubt they would like to use the good offices of their Parliamentary representatives to bring this situation to the notice of Parliament. I believe the House should reject the motion which is now before the Chair.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. Vernon Christie in the chair) —

| Ayes | 40 |
| Noes | 25 |
| Majority for the motion | 15 |

**AYES.**

Mr. Balfour
Mr. Billing
Mr. Birrell
Sir John Bloomfield
Mr. Borthwick
Mr. Darcy
Mr. Dixon
Mr. Doyle
Mr. Dunstan
Mr. Evans
(Melbourne North)
Mrs. Goble
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Jona
Mr. Loxton
Mr. MacDonald
(Glen Iris)
Mr. McKellar
Mr. McLaren
Mr. Manson
Mr. Meagher
Mr. Porter
Mr. Reese
Mr. Reid

**Tellers:**

Mr. Reid (Dandenong)
Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Rylah
Mr. Smith (Bellarine)
Mr. Smith (Warrnambool)
Mr. Stokes
Mr. Suggett
Mr. Tanner (Morwell)
Mr. Tanner (Caulfield)
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Templeton
Mr. Trethwyne
Mr. Vale
Mr. Wheeler
Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Wiltshire.

**NOES.**

Mr. Balfour
Mr. Billing
Mr. Birrell
Sir John Bloomfield
Mr. Borthwick
Mr. Darcy
Mr. Dixon
Mr. Doyle
Mr. Dunstan
Mr. Evans
(Melbourne North)
Mrs. Goble
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Jona
Mr. Loxton
Mr. MacDonald
(Glen Iris)
Mr. McKellar
Mr. McLaren
Mr. Manson
Mr. Meagher
Mr. Porter
Mr. Reese
Mr. Reid

**Tellers:**

Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Stephen.
WESTERNPORT DEVELOPMENT BILL.

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to ratify, validate, approve and otherwise give effect to an agreement between the Premier for and on behalf of the State of Victoria and Hematic Petroleum Proprietary Limited and Esso Exploration and Production Australia Inc., to authorize the construction of additional port facilities in Westernport, to make provision with respect to the reclamation of certain land at Old Tyabb, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS (DETOURS) BILL.

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Ninth Schedule to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Act 158.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STAMPS BILL.

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

Discussion was resumed of clause 2 (Division into Parts).

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary). — When the Treasurer introduced this Bill, he said that while the Government could not undertake to depart in any way from the principles underlying the measure, it would welcome constructive comments and suggestions from interested parties which could facilitate the practical application of its provisions. He pointed out that much detailed consideration had gone into the drafting of the Bill but that there might well be aspects of commercial practice which could call for modification of proposed administrative arrangements.

The amendments I now bring before the Committee are very largely the result of the response made by various sections of the community to that invitation. Many submissions have been made and many discussions have taken place, and I am pleased to be able to report that it has been possible to accede to a large number of the proposals which have been put forward. Moreover, this has been possible without in any way departing from the principles embodied in the Bill. At the same time,
the opportunity has been taken to strengthen one or two weaknesses which further examination of the Bill has revealed.

On behalf of the Treasurer, I express my thanks to the private individuals and organizations, to members of the Opposition, members of the Country Party and members of my own party who have, in this way, helped to smooth the path for the administration of what I believe will be very good legislation when it is passed by the Parliament.

Having made those preliminary remarks, such as are usually permitted to a Minister on the consideration of clause 2 of a Bill, I come to the first amendment. Clause 2 provides, *inter alia*—

(1) The Principal Act is hereby amended as follows:—

(a) In section 1 for the expression "(2) Receipts ss. 50-52." there shall be substituted the expression "(2) Receipts ss. 50-53L."

I move—

That, in paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1), the expression "53L." be omitted with the view of inserting the expression "53L."

This amendment is purely incidental to those which are to follow.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask your advice. Clause 2 covers fourteen pages, and it contains the substance of the Bill. How are honorable members placed in regard to further discussion of the clause? The Chief Secretary intends to move a number of amendments to the clause, and he has moved the first of them. Is the Committee to discuss the amendments first, and then discuss other parts of clause 2 in detail?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. L. S. Reid).—For the benefit of the Committee, I point out that the amendments will be put and carried, or negatived. Then clause 2, as amended, if it is amended, may be discussed as a whole.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN.—Is the Leader of the Opposition speaking to the first amendment?

Mr. HOLDING—Yes, Sir, and to some of the preliminary comments made by the Chief Secretary. On behalf of the Opposition, I formally protest at the way in which these amendments have come before the Committee, and at the lack of time which has been given to the Opposition to consider them. No doubt the Country Party will speak for itself, but I believe it would be in the same position. The amendments were circulated last night at a late hour. The Chief Secretary kindly indicated that the services of an officer of the Treasury would be available to assist the Opposition to consider the amendments. Both the Treasurer and the Chief Secretary would concede that this is an incredibly intricate Bill. The amendments are of a substantial nature. They are the result of the Government's consideration of a whole set of propositions put by various groups in the community about the changes they think should be made to the Bill. Just as the Government has had representations made to it, so has the Opposition, and I have no doubt that the Country Party has heard representations.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—That is right.

Mr. HOLDING.—The Opposition was apprised at a late hour last night that the Government proposed to submit a large number of amendments. I was thankful to have the considerable and skilled assistance of the honorable member for Melbourne in considering them. However, although I was able to work with a Treasury official, even if I had cancelled everything I had "on my plate" this morning—and I did not—there would not have been time to give the amendments proper consideration. Amendments which involved propositions put to and rejected by the Government over a not inconsiderable period of time have had to be considered by the Opposition and by
the Country Party within an effective working time of about five hours. That period is just not sufficient.

Members of the Opposition not only disclaim any responsibility for the basic principles of the Bill, we state quite frankly to the Committee, and to the people of the State, that we have not been able to give the proposed amendments the necessary consideration.

Later, the honorable member for Melbourne, on behalf of the Opposition, will move one amendment to the Bill. He prepared it without the help of the Parliamentary Draftsman and would have done so even if that assistance had been forthcoming. The proposed amendment is comparatively simple. The Opposition has sufficient knowledge of the representations put to the Government to know that Government members will vote against it in any case. But that is not the point. Fundamentally, the Opposition opposes the whole concept of the Bill, but, having stated that proposition, its minimum duty is to see that some of the representations made to it and some of its views are put before the Committee in an attempt to ensure that the Bill is put into reasonable working order. Frankly, we are not in a position to do that. Opposition members can accept no responsibility for the final operation of this legislation because of the way in which the Bill has been handled. We can accept no responsibility for the burdens that will be imposed on a considerable section of the community. If we had been given an opportunity, we could have assisted the Government to produce legislation which would have been reasonably effective. However, because of the circumstances, the amendments proposed, like the rest of the Bill, do not represent the views of Opposition members. We will indicate our more detailed objections to the amendments later in the debate.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—A number of amendments are proposed to clause 2, and I understand that a member is permitted to speak only twice in Committee to a particular clause.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. L. S. Reid).—Order! The honorable member may speak to each amendment as it is moved.

Mr. CLAREY.—I merely wanted the position clarified.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—I should like the position to be clarified. My understanding of Standing Orders is that members may speak only twice to any particular clause. What is the position if a member wants to speak to each amendment to a clause?

The CHAIRMAN.—Members may speak twice to each amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. RYLALH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That the following new sub-section be added to follow sub-section (2) of proposed new section 50:—

"( ) Where money is exchanged for money a party to the exchange shall for the purposes of this subdivision and that part of the Third Schedule under the heading "II. RECEIPTS" be deemed not to have received money except to the extent (if any) that he receives an amount of money which, or the nominal or face value of which, being a bill of exchange or promissory note for money, is greater than the amount of money or the nominal or face value of money, being a bill of exchange or promissory note for money, paid by him."

Practically every one of these amendments is a "give away," and I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition is opposed to some of these amendments.

Mr. HOLDING.—We do not think that you have given enough away.

Mr. RYLALH.—That does not mean that the amendments are wrong in principle. I am prepared to debate at great length any suggestion that the Government has not given enough away. I am surprised that the Opposition is opposed to some of these amendments.

Mr. HOLDING.—I did not say that we were opposed to them.
Mr. RYLAH.—The position is more encouraging than I thought it was. This amendment is designed to ensure that a mere exchange of money will not be dutiable. At the same time, it ensures that the discount earned, for example, on the sale of a bill of exchange or promissory note and the commission earned in the course of dealings in overseas exchange will not escape duty.

If a person goes to a bank with $10 and receives ten $1 notes in exchange, that is purely and simply an exchange of money, and it was never intended that such an exchange should be dutiable. In the same manner, if a person has a bill of exchange for $100 payable in three months, and, because he is short of cash, he discounts it at a discount house and receives $96 for it, he will not pay duty on the $96. Duty will be payable by the discount house but only on the difference between the $100 and $96. That was always the intention of the Bill, and the amendment makes the position quite clear.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—It has become increasingly plain that a further period of time should be granted to enable honorable members to study the implications of the amendments. I appreciate what the Chief Secretary has said about the amendments being “give aways”, but members should be given time in which to study their implications. The various parties have already considered the implications of the original Bill and honorable members have made reasonable contributions during the second-reading debate. Now we are faced with a long list of amendments that we have not previously seen, and, as each amendment is moved, an explanation is to be given. That is a satisfactory procedure, but on the spur of the moment this Committee is to be asked to make a decision on an amendment. This could lead to a repetition of what happened on the last occasion a Bill relating to stamp duty was before Parliament. On that occasion four pages of amendments were made in this House to the original Bill, and the Premier said that they were all “give aways”. When the Bill was returned from another place, it had been amended by the addition of a further four pages of amendments.

To avoid a repetition of that situation, honorable members should be given time in which to examine the proposed amendments. If this is done, ultimately a better measure may be produced. I appeal to the Chief Secretary to give consideration to my suggestion. The Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Melbourne have made the same suggestion. In the interests of the people of Victoria, honorable members should be given more time in which to examine the implications of what is proposed in these amendments.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I support the remarks of the Leader of the Country Party, and I appeal to Government supporters, as well as to the Chief Secretary, to give consideration to his submissions. Honorable members appreciate that this Bill, which contains important proposals, affects the great majority of people. The Government has already found it necessary to introduce five pages of technical amendments. I am in a more fortunate position than most honorable members because an official of the Treasury was good enough to spend a couple of hours with me to-day in explaining what is proposed. I am not saying that the amendments are wrong in principle, but the mere fact that the Government has found it necessary to introduce them and to produce a fifteen-page explanation of them is sufficient reason for giving honorable members generally an opportunity to examine what is proposed.

The second-reading of the Bill has been carried, and during the Committee stage it is the privilege of honorable members to consider the Bill in detail. It is certain that the Bill will be passed, but even Government supporters, when they consider some of the amendments, may find some
technical faults. The Government has already admitted that technical faults have been found. On behalf of all honorable members, I appeal to the Chief Secretary to agree to give honorable members further time in which to consider this matter.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—This is a case where the Government cannot win. We go to the trouble of agreeing to make amendments and of considering proposals put forward by the Opposition and the Country Party, and then we are chastised for making these amendments. At least that is what the honorable member for Melbourne has said. I am the most reasonable person around this place, but I want to know where we stand. Are we, as a Government, to do as we are accused by the Opposition of doing and use our numbers to rush this Bill through? Are we to adopt a reasonable attitude, prepare amendments which are desirable and which have been promoted by members of the Opposition, by members of the Country Party, as well as by outside organizations, and concede to the proposals put to us, or are we to adopt an arrogant attitude, as we are accused of doing, and say that we have introduced a Bill and will stick to it and will not consider amendments? If we adopted that attitude — I would be the last person to be a party to it — that would do more to derogate from the standing of this Parliament than anything that has been alleged earlier to-day. The Opposition expected us to rush the Bill through last night.

Mr. HOLDING.—We did not.

Mr. RYLAH.—I would be most surprised if it did not. The Premier told me that the Opposition and the Country Party must be given a reasonable opportunity to study the amendments. So, they were circulated and the Leaders of the two parties were provided with explanatory papers. The honorable member for Melbourne has already stated that he had the services of a Treasury official for some considerable time to-day. Earlier today I saw the Leader of the Country Party outside the Chamber, and he assured me that he had received all the help he wanted.

This is a revenue-producing measure, and the longer its passage is delayed, the less money will be available to meet all the demands that are constantly being made upon the Government by the Opposition, by the Country Party, by members of the Government party and by the community.

Mr. CLAREY.—Have you not already planned for the legislation to come into effect?

Mr. RYLAH.—No.

Mr. CLAREY.—That is a nice admission.

Mr. RYLAH.—The honorable member for Melbourne has a considerable knowledge of how the affairs of State are conducted and how problems can arise with Budget Bills. The Treasurer cannot count on the revenue until it has been received.

Mr. CLAREY.—Have you not already planned for the legislation to come into effect?

Mr. RYLAH.—No.

Mr. CLAREY.—That is a nice admission.

Mr. RYLAH.—The honorable member for Melbourne is saying in effect, "You have the numbers, go ahead and push the Bill through." That is the last thing I want to do because I want to be reasonable, and I think I have always given honorable members a reasonable time for debate in this Chamber. I have been the first to agree to consider reasonable amendments and to give adequate time for their consideration. I have listened to the pleas that have been made by honorable members. Treasury officers are in the precincts and their services are available to every member of the Committee. If the Committee is prepared to proceed with the further consideration of this Bill at 11 a.m. to-morrow, I shall be happy to agree to progress being reported. I would like an indication that such a course will be acceptable because I do not want to "stick my neck out" once again. I am in the position that I have to report to the
Premier, when he returns from Wycheproof, that little progress has been achieved on this Bill to-day.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—Nothing but good can come from the fact of the Opposition being given more time in which to consider this measure. This morning I was not able to take advantage of the services of the Treasury officials, therefore the detailed handling of the Bill was left in the hands of the honorable member for Melbourne. Representations have been made to the Labor Party. As I indicated earlier, the Opposition proposes to move one considerable amendment which the Government may, in its discretion, choose to reject.

Mr. RYLAH.—Could the Government have notice of the proposed amendment?

Mr. HOLDING.—If the services of a Parliamentary Draftsman are made available to the Opposition, I undertake that immediately the amendment has been drafted a copy will be delivered to the Government. If the further consideration of the Bill is postponed, the Opposition will at least be able to make more considered statements in respect of these amendments.

Mr. RYLAH.—Could the Opposition proceed with its consideration tomorrow morning?

Mr. HOLDING.—The Opposition will be happy to proceed with the further consideration of this Bill to-morrow. Of course, I cannot speak for the Country Party. The Opposition would have liked more time to consider the amendments, but it realizes the position of the Chief Secretary and appreciates that he has at least granted this extra time for further consideration. Of course, we would like the debate on the Bill to be postponed until next Tuesday on the same assurance that we would be ready to proceed. However, the Chief Secretary cannot give that undertaking. Of course, it will be of some advantage to Opposition members to proceed with it to-morrow, and I give the assurance that has been requested.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—I agree with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. Naturally, the Country Party would prefer to have the week-end available for further consideration. The Country Party committee did not make direct representations on this measure after the first interview with the Treasurer because he intimated that he would be willing to receive deputations from country organizations which wished to put certain points of view, or that he would arrange for the Director of Finance to meet them. That was done. Consequently the Country Party is unable to contact the various primary producer organizations to inform them of the party's views on the measure and to receive their considered opinions before 11 a.m. to-morrow. However, the Country Party appreciates the gesture made by the Deputy Premier, and is prepared to proceed with the further consideration of the Bill to-morrow morning.

Progress was reported.

PORTLAND HARBOR (EXCHANGE OF LAND) BILL

The debate (adjourned from September 19) on the motion of Mr. Wilkinson (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. BUCKLEY (Lowan).—The port of Portland is a natural asset and is situated only one hour's sailing time from the regular shipping lanes around Southern Australia. The port has been rapidly developed during the past seventeen years and there has been a remarkable transformation in the economic set-up of a hinterland of some 33,000 square miles.

Changes in the transport system have promoted trade movement to and from the Port of Portland. Railways and highways servicing the port
are being rapidly changed and modernized to enable goods to be carried as speedily as possible. Changes in transport must be made because of the economic advances, and because of the freight container system which is now coming into operation.

During the last financial year, for the first time, 1,000,000 tons of shipping berthed at the wharves at Portland; and 126 vessels loaded and/or discharged cargo at the port during the past twelve months. The port facilities include customs and medical centres, fresh water supply and telephone connexions to all berths, bunker fuel at the K. S. Anderson berth and the new bulk berth, supplies of dunnage and fresh provisions, and repair and maintenance facilities for fishing craft. Rail and wheel shunting tractors are available and very high frequency radio communications operating on channels 16 and 12 have been established. There is also a daily air service from Portland to Melbourne.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I invite the honorable member to try not to read his speech.

Mr. BUCKLEY.—The rail system consists of approximately 5 miles of track, 3 miles of approach railway and 2 miles in sidings. The rail system was constructed by the Portland Harbor Trust, and the southern sector is controlled by that authority. At the present time, bulk handling facilities are capable of handling 1,000,000 bushels of grain.

The Port of Portland is not only an asset to trade and commerce, but in times of national emergency it could be of great benefit to this country. To further develop the port, the railway line between East Natimuk and Hamilton should be strengthened, and I ask that the attention of the Railways Commissioners should be directed to this matter. The Country Party supports the Bill and hopes that it has a speedy passage.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—I apologize to the House for not being present when this Bill was called on. Usually, a member of the Opposition makes the first contribution to the second-reading debate on a Bill. Earlier today, when there was a debate about procedure, it was alleged that the Opposition had delayed the resumption of the debate on this Bill, to the inconvenience of the honorable member for Portland. Nothing was further from the minds of Opposition members. We were willing to facilitate the consideration of this Bill because we believed it not to be controversial. It should be placed on record that the Opposition was prepared to proceed with the debate on this Bill on Tuesday, 3rd October. To suit the convenience of some member other than a member of the Opposition, the debate was not resumed on that date.

I understand that the honorable member for Portland will make his maiden speech during the debate on this Bill and far be it from me to steal his thunder by extolling the virtues of the Port of Portland. I assure the honorable member and the Government that the Labor Party does not oppose the Bill. However, like most Bills that are introduced by this Government, some aspect needs to be commented upon by the Opposition, otherwise it would be recreant in its duties. It has become fashionable for this Government to introduce a Bill, rush it through, and then later correct the errors by introducing an amending Bill. Possibly 95 per cent. of the Bills that are passed in this House and in another place represent amendments to Acts that were rushed through Parliament without sufficient time having been devoted to their preparation by the Government. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport stated that the measure was a delightful example of co-operation between two forms of transport, namely, land and sea, and the honorable gentleman welcomed the co-operation that had become evident between the Railways Commissioners and the Portland Harbor Trust. The
Opposition does not object to co-operation between Departments, provided that the people in the area who have to live with the co-operation know all about it. Recently, in the Williamstown electorate, there was an excellent example of co-operation between a State Government Department and a Commonwealth Government Department, but the people who have to live with that co-operation were not told anything about it.

Without a doubt, the honorable member for Portland will inform the House that the people of Portland are happy with the co-operation that has been shown between the Railways Commissioners and the Portland Harbor Trust. However, I feel that, in respect of this matter, the Minister could have conveyed a little more information than he did in his second-reading speech. For example, he could have informed honorable members of the year when the line to the new wharf area was built and connected to the main Hamilton-Portland line. He could also have stated the cost to the Portland Harbor Trust of the line, and whether that cost has been met.

I recall a very pleasurable excursion which was made to Portland by many members of Parliament to view at first hand the progress being made there. There should be more trips of that character, because to see what is actually being done on the site is much better than reading about it in the inadequate second-reading speeches that are served up to honorable members in this House. Apparently, in this instance, the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners decided that support for the important project which was being undertaken could best be obtained by inviting members of Parliament to look over the works that were proceeding and, if I may be permitted to say so, I believe that such visits by members of Parliament, in their official capacity, should be encouraged.

Many members visited the Snowy Mountains development and inspected the Authority’s works there. Members have also visited a number of other projects that have been developed by either the State Government or its instrumentalities, and I maintain that there is no substitute for seeing a job on the site. Those Opposition members who had the privilege of visiting Portland on the occasion to which I refer were able to absorb some of the enthusiasm that was apparent among the Commissioners in all aspects of the work. It was plain to see that the Commissioners were completely enveloped in their task; they seemed to have the idea that there was nothing else of a worth-while character going on in any other part of Victoria. Members of Parliament have to have a sufficiently analytical judgement to appreciate that the activities of the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners represent only one aspect of the development of the State of Victoria. Nevertheless, they must pay due regard to those enthusiasts who are trying to do a particularly good job.

At no time have Opposition members attempted to block the development of Portland. We realize that it is fashionable in these days to become mesmerized by the great developments that are going on in Bass Strait following the discovery of natural gas and oil. We also know that there are to be satellite towns in Gippsland and that the Government has become mesmerized by that aspect. I trust, however, that we shall not, because of these great discoveries of natural wealth, overlook the fact that, in the western part of the State some manual and physical effort might be needed to balance the development of the State as a whole. In other words, in one part of the State natural wealth is found and in another part of the State there is wealth that must be developed.
Mr. B. J. EVANS.—The natural wealth is not being used to develop the eastern part of the State.

Mr. FLOYD.—I am not oblivious to the fact that the wealth of Gippsland will be sufficient to develop the whole of the State, but we must not become mesmerized over this issue. We must realize that, either fortuitously or by design, hard work or proper investigation, wealth that has been lying dormant for centuries has been discovered. It must also be borne in mind that the early development of Victoria occurred in Portland, which could be regarded as being in the same category as Williamstown, the two places being contemporaneous so far as the development of Victoria is concerned, and so they should be accorded similar privileges. I trust we shall not become blind to the fact that, although great wealth has been found in one portion of the State, it is necessary to develop the remainder of the State, even though such development may necessitate considerable physical effort and the expenditure of large sums of money.

There is to be a changeover arrangement between the Portland Harbor Trust and the Railways Commissioners so that the line between Portland North and Portland may be closed. The relevant arrangement with the Railways Commissioners has been adequately explained in the Bill, and I do not intend to discuss that aspect further. We know all about the exchange area, and we appreciate that, from now on, the main terminal will be at Portland North instead of Portland. I am a little perturbed, however, as to whether the people of Portland are happy about the closure of the line for a distance of approximately 1 mile from Portland North, on the Portland side. In the future, all activities will be diverted from Portland to Portland North and the money that will be handed over by the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners will be used to develop a good terminal at Portland North.

The honorable member for Brunswick East recently visited Portland as a member of a parliamentary committee, and I asked him, whilst there, to spy out the land and ascertain whether everyone was happy about the fact that this 1 mile of railway will no longer be used and about the facilities that will be made available for passengers who, in the past, could be taken from the main line to the main Portland station. It appears to me that the proposition as submitted by the Government is acceptable to the local people, and so the Opposition has no objection to the proposal. I could talk about the thousands of dollars that will be exchanged between the Railways Commissioners and the Portland Harbor Trust, but that would serve no purpose because the Minister of Transport has already dealt with that aspect in his second-reading speech.

The only point which I hope will be dealt with and answered by the honorable member for Portland is whether the local people are satisfied about the proposed transfer of the terminal from Portland to Portland North. It is obvious that all the traffic that is to go to the wharf area will, in the future, go through Portland North, and that about 1 mile of railway track will become derelict. It would seem that the Government will either take that line up and introduce a validating Bill afterwards, or, in its wisdom, introduce a Bill to dismantle the line before actually tearing it up.

The Opposition sees the development of Portland as a courageous attempt to decentralize the activities of the Melbourne wharves with the great hinterland behind Portland, with the view of making Portland an open port. We believe this activity should be encouraged. This is only a minor step along the path of progress. If the Opposition can be satisfied that the people of Portland have accepted the co-operation which has
been obtained between the two Departments, to which reference was made by the Minister in his second-reading speech, I shall be satisfied.

The Opposition does not oppose the Bill, and I do not think any comment which may be made in the course of the debate will cause Opposition members to change their minds. However, we would like to be assured that the people of Portland are happy about the measure.

Mr. McKellar (Portland).—I believe the history of Portland can be divided into two distinct eras, the early history and the modern history. The modern history of the port of Portland commenced in 1950, when three local commissioners were charged with the task of developing the port of Portland. They were charged with the construction of two breakwaters, the deepening of the port area and the construction of berths for shipping. This work was commenced on the 17th November, 1952. The breakwaters were constructed to protect 250 acres of water, particularly from the easterly swells. The main breakwater is 4,200 feet long with a base of 260 feet tapering to 14 feet at the top. This breakwater guarantees still water for the port.

The port area is westerly from the old port. The Commissioners set about their task but, in so doing, met with some resistance. It is to their credit that, in a short time, they have achieved so much. It is only by their persistence and faith that these breakwaters were completed. They have had the good fortune of obtaining the backing of a sympathetic Government to assist them. Victorian Governments have made a total sum of $19,000,000 available to the Portland Harbor Trust.

This Bill is a marriage between rail and sea, which, in future, will do much for the development of the area I represent and those areas represented by the honorable members for Lowan and Dundas, which comprise 40,000 square miles mainly of primary producing country. It is hoped to have the products from these areas channeled through the Port of Portland with more success than has previously been achieved. A grain terminal with a capacity of 1,000,000 bushels has been erected at Portland for the receival of oats and barley. Last year 139,000 tons of oats and 5,000 tons of barley were exported from the port. A total of 176,000 tons of produce was exported and 269,000 tons of goods were imported, of which 258,000 tons were petroleum products.

I assure the honorable member for Williamstown that the people of Portland are happy with the progress that has been made. The closing of the old Portland railway station will present no hardship. This station serves the old port area which comprises two wooden wharves, one of which was built in 1858, and is still used for pleasure craft. The other wharf was constructed in 1902 and is used for the import and export of some products, although maintenance is now becoming quite a problem. Railway locomotives are not permitted to use this wharf, and a light tractor has to be used for haulage purposes. When the 1 mile of railway line covered by this Bill is transferred, it is not the intention of the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners to dispense with it; it will be held for the future requirements of any industry that may utilize the track and yard at the old Portland station.

Tenders have been called for the construction of goods and passenger facilities at the Portland North station to serve the people of Portland as adequately as did the old station. The line runs to the new area from a point north of the old Portland station. I understand that the Commissioners of the Portland Harbor Trust have constructed 40,000 feet of rail line. The area to be transferred to the Trust is 9,960, or about 600 feet
under 2 miles in length. This includes what is known as the "exchange siding" which was so named because it is the place to where the railway has delivered the goods to the Portland Harbor Trust. Beyond the exchange siding there is what is called the "sorting siding", which will still be under the jurisdiction of the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners. The cargo is here sorted into its correct sections for loading into the ships at berth.

I should be remiss if I did not mention that superphosphate works costing $7,500,000 are being constructed at Portland. These works are well ahead of schedule and production may be expected in August, 1968. If it were not for the production of superphosphate, I doubt whether the Port of Portland would have become a reality. The application of superphosphate to the pastures and crops, particularly in the hinterland, has increased production to such an extent that the port became a practical proposition. Approximately 500,000 bales of wool are produced in the hinterland of Portland. Figures provided by the Harbor Trust show that 2,450 wool packs were imported from the port last year. The receivals to the wool stores at the port are expected to be 200,000 bales, which represents two-fifths of the wool produced in this area.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Transport—his statement has been supported by the honorable member for Williamstown—spoke of this project being an example of cooperation between the two forms of transport. If this progress continues in the future as it has done in the past, I cannot see anything but prosperity for the district. It is interesting to note that rail was first brought to Portland in 1876. There was then no direct rail link between Melbourne and Ballarat. When Sir George Bowen declared the line open, in 1878, he had to go to Ballarat via Geelong. The co-operation of all concerned at Portland will ensure that the State as a whole will prosper.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—It is agreeable to the fitness of things Parliamentary, historical and geographical that I should be the first to offer compliments to the honorable member for Portland on his first speech in this House. I was born in Portland, to which my grandparents went in 1841.

What is happening now is a reality corresponding to the venture, not so much of the pioneers but of those members of the first generation born in Victoria. I can remember well enough that the member for Glenelg, the late William Thomas—I was a child at the time—spoke in rhapsodies of what was going to happen to Portland. There were complaints about the differential railway rates and about the unconcern for Portland as a resort. The word "hinterland" was exclusively confined to geographical magazines or dictionaries.

It is indeed pleasant to all of us who were born there and who know anything about it to realize what is going on. I do not know who is now chairman of the Trust, but when I was there in the time of the late John Cain's Ministry, the chairman was Mr. Keith Anderson. He was a member of an old and distinguished merchandising family, and I know the great work that he put in, almost begging for money in Melbourne, until the Government came to his assistance. The honorable member for Portland has rightly referred to a progress largely due to helpful Governments. I agree with him, but I was a little concerned, as was my alert colleague, the honorable member for Williamstown, as to how the people of Portland, especially those in the immediate area, would react to the closing down of portion of the railway line. It is interesting but a bit bewildering to read the following statement in the Minister's second-reading speech:

At the same time, as wharf traffic is no longer handled through the Portland station and the original wharves, the line
Mr. BIRRELL.—I believe an extension of the railway line from Geelong through to Portland could eventually be of great benefit to the State.

The SPEAKER.—That has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. BIRRELL.—With those few remarks, I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. PORTER (Minister of Public Works).—I do not propose to delay the passage of this small piece of legislation, but it has been my privilege over the last three and a half years to be the Minister responsible for the administration of the Portland Harbor Trust. It would be appropriate for me, at this stage, to express my appreciation and that of the Commissioners of the Portland Harbor Trust to the Railways Commissioners for their co-operation in this matter. It would be appropriate for me also to congratulate the honorable member for Portland on his maiden address on a subject of great interest to his constituents, and about which he obviously knows a great deal.

My main reason for speaking is the remarks made by my two friends opposite, the honorable members for Williamstown and Albert Park. The honorable member for Williamstown reminded the House that, some twelve years ago, members of this Chamber were given the opportunity to inspect the newly developed Port of Portland. The honorable member for Albert Park went further back and informed the House that he had been born in Portland, but had not been back very often since, and that he would be delighted to see Portland now. The development of this port in the western part of the State is one of the success stories of decentralization in Victoria, and I think it is proper that all honorable members should have an opportunity to visit Portland. As soon as the House goes into recess, I shall do my best to see that an invitation is issued to all honorable members to do so.
Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—First, I compliment the honorable member for Portland on his maiden speech, and advert to his statement that the present Trust was set up in 1950. As you, Mr. Speaker, will recall, that was a memorable year for Victoria. It was the centenary of responsible government in this State, which at that time had a Government with vision and enterprise. It happened to be a Country Party Government. Sir Percy Byrnes was Minister of Public Works when the Portland Harbor Trust was established under its present constitution, which has been slightly amended since then. Consequently, our party has always taken a keen interest in the Port of Portland.

I remind the Government that it has cost a considerable sum to establish this port, and the money has been very well spent. I emphasize that if anything worth while is to be done by this or succeeding Governments to get a better distribution of our population throughout the State, it will cost more money. Following the passage of this measure, Portland will have an added facility as a terminal for the export of oats. As a result of the enactment of this proposed legislation and some reorganization in Portland, a much better movement of oats during the harvest period will occur. Last year there was a record wheat harvest and when the wheat-growers, the Grain Elevators Board and the Railway Department were looking for trucks, it was found that 600 trucks loaded with oats were in railway yards waiting for their loads to be transferred to ships. I hope that situation will not occur again. I point out that while there are sufficient facilities to unload only three trucks at a time at the port, with anything like a reasonable harvest, a bottle-neck will occur. I urge the Minister of Transport to examine the situation closely, because that is the real reason why there was a tremendous bank-up of trucks, which were lying idle on railway lines at Portland when they were urgently needed to carry other grains throughout the State.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Definitions).

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).—I am grateful that honorable members received this Bill so graciously, because this does not always happen. This is a straightforward measure with nothing hidden in it. I have no amendments to submit to the Committee, which will no doubt meet the approbation of the honorable member for Williamstown. I found the remarks made during the second-reading debate interesting, and I congratulate the honorable member for Portland on his speech. The honorable member narrated a worth-while portion of history. By a coincidence I found on my desk yesterday for signature a document approving the letting of a contract to build the Portland North railway station, and I could not miss this opportunity of mentioning the matter during the debate.

I noted the remarks of the honorable member for Albert Park in relation to white elephants. Perhaps this aspect could have been better expressed in my second-reading speech. I think the honorable member understood that what was meant was simply that, with the development of modern port facilities and the railway line going around to those facilities, there is no need to operate the line between Portland North and Portland. Whilst that section of line is not quite a white elephant, it is near enough to it for that reason. Although it is handling only passenger and goods traffic, the point is that this traffic will be handled more adequately when the new station is built.

Mr. FLOYD.—Will the Portland station remain open?
Mr. WILCOX.—No, the terminus will be at Portland North, and local passenger and goods traffic will be handled there. I thank honorable members for their reception of the measure.

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

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

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (GOVERNOR’S SALARY) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 17) on the motion of Sir Henry Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second-reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—This is a Bill to amend the salary or remuneration attachable to a certain office, irrespective of who is the individual who occupies that office. Therefore, I ask honorable members when considering and voting on this Bill seriously to ask themselves whether the continuation of that office is necessary. I want to make it clear to honorable members that they will be voting on a proposal to increase the salary or remuneration and expenses attachable to a certain position which, by tradition and legislation, has existed in this State for many years. Despite the old traditions, things are changing. This is the only opportunity that members of this House will have to express a clear opinion on whether the continuation of the office of State Governor in Victoria is necessary. There is nothing very upsetting or revolutionary in my asking this House to give consideration to this question. Honorable members will recall that in the old colonial days this State was administered by a Governor appointed by the Crown. The Governor then had almost absolute authority in this sphere. Later when self-government had been established and the Colony of Victoria was set up, it was naturally desired to continue that link with the Crown. Later again, of course, when the States of Australia federated into the Commonwealth, the constitutional link with the Crown was retained through the Governor-General.

In the early years of this House in Victoria—I shall not read the historical document written at the time Victoria federated into the Commonwealth—a communication was sent to this country by the Colonial Office. When the States were granted self-government, the outward forms of the British monarchical system were written into our constitutional lines so that acts of State were done in the name of the Governor or the Governor-General. At that early stage, the Colonial Office asked the State of Victoria whether, in view of the fact that it was part of the Federation of Australia, it desired to continue to have a State Governor. Of course, loyalties and traditions prevailed and nothing was immediately done about it.

Mr. G. O. REID.—The States then had the residue of the powers.

Mr. CLAREY.—I am not now considering the question of dual powers. I should like to quote from the Hansard report of a debate in this House on 5th March, 1903, concerning the office of State Governor. Apparently, a greater latitude was permitted by the Liberal party than is permitted to members by the Government at the present time. The Hansard report reveals that Mr. Toutcher, the Liberal member for Stawell-Ararat, rose to move the following motion standing in his name:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the office of State Governor should be abolished.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member for Melbourne is going too far with this
argument concerning the Governor's salary. I invite him to round off his remarks.

Mr. CLAREY.—Do you mean to say, Mr. Speaker, that during the debate on a measure whose purpose is to increase the salary attached to a certain position, honorable members are not able to discuss whether a continuation of that position is necessary?

The SPEAKER.—I think the honorable member for Melbourne has gone far enough on this preliminary argument.

Mr. CLAREY.—I do not wish to be disrespectful to you, Mr. Speaker, but am I not allowed to continue to discuss whether the continuation of this office is necessary? The Opposition is prepared to vote against the Bill, not on any personal grounds, but because it considers that the continuation of the office is not necessary.

The SPEAKER.—My ruling would be that, on the Bill before the House, debate on the question of abolition of the office is out of order. The Bill deals with the salary of the Governor and a proposed increase thereto.

Mr. CLAREY.—I am afraid that I must bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I direct the attention of the House to the fact that it was not a communist member or a Labor member who moved the resolution to which I referred. Although the debate was short on that occasion, during the following October, the resolution was carried.

The SPEAKER.—I have given the honorable member for Melbourne a ruling on this question.

Mr. CLAREY.—It is apparently no good my continuing the argument and, therefore, I shall sit down.

Mr. MOSS (Leader of the Country Party).—I should like to make a passing reference to a matter raised by the honorable member for Melbourne and say that members of the Country Party hope the office of Governor of Victoria will remain for a considerable time to come. This measure makes provision for an increase, by an amount of $2,500, in the salary and allowances payable to His Excellency the Governor, and the Country Party supports the proposal. I express the Country Party's deep appreciation for the outstanding service that the Governor is rendering in representing Her Majesty in Victoria. Whether a function is in Melbourne or in a remote country centre, His Excellency and Lady Delacombe always bring a great deal of pleasure to the people they visit. On behalf of country people generally, I express appreciation for the intimate interest that His Excellency takes in the rural areas of the State. My party wholeheartedly supports the Bill.

Mr. E. S. TANNER (Caulfield).—I was amazed to hear the sentiments expressed by the honorable member for Melbourne.

Mr. CLAREY.—They were expressed by a Liberal member in this House in 1903.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—The honorable member for Melbourne is interjecting in a most raucous voice, and I ask him to cease.

Mr. TANNER.—Everything that we possess — our defence, our laws, our language, and everything that is good — we owe to Great Britain. I am dumbfounded that any honorable member should suggest that we should weaken the links of our direct contact with Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition).—I wish to correct the statement of the honorable member for Caulfield. My colleague, the honorable member for Melbourne, simply suggested — it has been suggested by many reputable people in the community and by people who do not in any way impugn the loyalty of our citizens to our Sovereign Majesty the Queen — that there should be a Governor-General, who could also carry out the functions of
State Governor as and when required. I appreciate that there could be two views on this question, but I suggest that the honorable member for Caulfield was perhaps misinterpreting my colleague's remarks. There was no suggestion that the Labor Party is anxious to break our ties with either the throne or Great Britain.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I am of the opinion that the second-reading of this Bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the House. The question is—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As there were no voices from the Noes and there are more than 37 members present in the Chamber, I declare the second-reading passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 relating to the principal Act (Principal Act No. 6224 as amended by Numbers 6489, 6505, 6519, 6667, 6690, 6764, 6840, 6863, 6867, 6875, 6886, 6957, 6960, 6961, 6968, 7063, 7106, 7109, 7142, 7149, 7227, 7260, 7270, 7392, 7462, 7510, 7539).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—During a consideration of clause 2, honorable members are usually permitted a certain amount of latitude, and I should like to take the opportunity to point out that the Speaker, who was apparently in disagreement with my remarks, ruled me out of order. As I was accused by an honorable member of having disloyal sentiments, I should like, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, to read an extract from the proceedings of the Australian Natives Association conference in March, 1957, at which there were present members of the Liberal Party and the Country Party as well as the Labor Party—the Hon. W. A. Fulton and the late Hon. W. Slater readily come to mind in this regard. At this conference, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

That this conference re-affirms its policy in relation to the appointment of Australians to all positions, and in particular urges that appropriate and immediate action be taken for the abolition of the office of State Governor and the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor deriving and exercising his power and authority through the Governor-General.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I am of the opinion that the third reading of this Bill must be passed by an absolute majority of the whole number of members of this House. The question is—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

For the reason that there are no voices for the Noes, and there are more than 37 members present in the Chamber, I declare the third reading passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

It was ordered that the Bill be transmitted to the Council.

JUDGES AND PUBLIC OFFICERS SALARIES BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 17) on the motion of Sir Henry Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—A Bill of this description seems to be brought in with constant regularity by the Government whenever there are increases in the awards of ordinary wage-earners. Apparently the Government is always anxious to see that the people on the top range are not left out in any way. I do not suppose there is any good in my saying anything, because the Government has brought the measure...
forward and the members on the Government side of the House, whether they approve of it or not, will vote for it. If they do not approve of it, they remain silent; if they do approve of it, they are still just mummies. One need not go into any detail. One certainly grants that with changes in the wage structure it is necessary to look after those at the top as well as those at the bottom.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—You were looked after a while ago.

Mr. CLAREY.—I think I am well able to look after myself. In his second-reading speech, the Premier said—

Apart from the judiciary, this Bill is concerned with the salaries of members of certain statutory authorities and senior Crown appointees. Since 1965 there have been substantial changes in the salary structure of the community generally. None of these changes, nor the changes arising from general increases in the basic wage, have been passed on to these persons—

I thought he was going to say “or to members of Parliament”—

or to the permanent heads of Departments under the Public Service Act. This Bill is designed to adjust these matters appropriately in respect of all except the permanent heads.

The Bill indicates in a certain number of categories what the salaries of the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Judges of the County Court, the Auditor-General and others are to be. In my opinion, the Auditor-General is one of the most important persons in the community, because, like the Judges, he is free from control by this Parliament and is thus able to express his opinions in any way whatever.

Other amendments increase the salaries of commissioners of the Forests Commission, the Director of Tuberculosis, members of the Licensing Court and others. It is interesting to recall that when members of the Licensing Court were first appointed shortly before I was elected to Parliament, their salaries were fixed at a certain level and since then the amounts paid to them have trebled.

The salary of the chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is to be increased also. In a number of other instances, the Governor in Council is empowered to increase salaries of persons during their current terms of office. All I can hope for is that in those instances in which the Governor in Council has power to increase salaries, there will be some kind of uniformity.

Members have not been given figures. On a previous occasion, I asked why the increased remuneration proposed to be paid to the members of the Melbourne Harbor Trust was much lower in percentage than the increases granted to others, and I was told that the matter would be looked into. However, I have heard nothing about it. Probably, one reason is that an active member of the Labor Party is one of the commissioners of the Melbourne Harbor Trust; I am not talking about the chairman of commissioners.

The Premier has stated that regard is being given to salary increases. I shall not weary the House, because I have not details with me at the moment. The last salary increases were granted in most instances as at 31st December, 1965, and figures that I obtained from a reliable authority—Mr. Hawke, the research officer of the Australian Council of Trade Unions—indicate that, taking into account as a base figure the amount of the basic wage plus certain margins as at 1st July, 1965, and working upwards, the accumulated increases amount to 10 per cent. on the basis of an ordinary tradesman’s wages. In most of the instances referred to in the Bill, the figures approximate 10 per cent. In some cases, they are a little higher; I do not think that in any instance they are lower.

If Opposition members fight for increases for persons receiving the basic wage or that wage plus low
margins, it is also necessary to take into account those in a higher scale. We do not necessarily believe that because the basic wage goes up 10 per cent. the salaries paid to everyone else should also go up by 10 per cent, because the main beneficiary from the increases provided for in the Bill will be the Commonwealth Government as a result of its collection of income tax.

In principle, members of the Opposition do not oppose the Bill. We hope, however, that the Government will see that when adjustments are made to the salaries of any other officers who are not taken into account in this Bill, they also will receive an increase of at least 10 per cent.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I am of the opinion that the second reading of this Bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority. The question is—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As there are no voices for the Noes and there are more than 37 persons present in the Chamber, I declare the second reading passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Salaries of Judges of the Supreme Court).

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—The honorable member for Melbourne complains that he does not know some of the figures of salaries to be paid to certain public officers. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party were given a complete schedule by the Premier when the explanatory second-reading speech was made. Therefore, the honorable member for Melbourne ought to have all the facts and figures at his disposal.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 3 to 7.

Clause 8 (Chairman of Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works).

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—I bring to the notice of the Committee the additional responsibilities undertaken by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works regarding town planning, water supply, foreshores, development of main roads and construction of freeways within the metropolitan area. Only one of the commissioners—the chairman—is a salaried officer and I should like to feel that consideration will be given—not at this stage, but on some future occasion—to the payment to the chairman of the Board of remuneration equivalent to that paid to the chairman of commissioners of other authorities. The Board of Works now has wide ramifications and heavy financial obligations and responsibilities. Therefore, I consider that the chairman's salary should be brought into parity with that of some of the chairmen of other Boards which are responsible for planning other huge Government and semi-Government undertakings.

Mr. MANSON (Minister of State Development).—I suggest to the honorable member for Deer Park that this matter was carefully considered before the figures mentioned in the Bill were fixed. The point he makes is well taken because the officer under review will at some time in the future assume additional responsibilities. When that time comes, if the Government brings in a Bill to provide for an increase in the remuneration of this officer, I hope it will have the support of the Opposition.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 9 and 10.

Clause 11 (Victorian Railways Commissioners).

Mr. DUNSTAN (Dromana).—When the salaries of departmental heads and others were last increased I raised a certain point and I wish to
refer to it again. The general public is not aware of the matter and it is not one that the press will consider worthy of mentioning. I do not wish to refer to any particular departmental officer, but it is proposed, for example, that the salary of the chairman of the Railways Commissioners shall be increased from $15,950 to $17,950. That figure is a little more than double the amount that the Minister of Transport receives, and this analogy could be applied to any other Minister. A great deal of criticism is expressed on the subject of public transport, and the Minister of Transport, as the person responsible, must accept it. To the members of the general public, and I should say to the majority of the members of Parliament, the chairman of the Railways Commissioners is an anonymous figure. If Parliament and the public accept a situation in which the salary of a departmental head is double that paid to the Ministerial head, I will vote for the Bill.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 12 to 14.

Clause 15 (Power to Governor in Council to increase certain salaries, &c., during current term of office).

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I take the opportunity presented by this clause to make a short personal explanation. My Leader was called away on other work and asked me to take charge of this Bill for the Opposition. I am not suggesting that anything "crook" would be done. I expressed the opinion that the Government should try to work out these adjustments of salaries on some logical and systematic basis. What I meant was this: Even if I had the figures in front of me, according to a ruling given on another Bill by the Speaker, I would not have been able to discuss the salaries because they are not mentioned in the Bill. Therefore, I would not have been able to direct attention to any possible anomaly.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and the report was adopted.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—I am of the opinion that the third reading of this Bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority. The question is—

That this Bill be now read a third time. As there are no voices for the Noes and there are more than 37 persons present in the Chamber, I declare the third reading passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill was read a third time.

MOTOR CAR (HOURS OF DRIVING) BILL.

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The purposes of this Bill are, first, to exempt persons who drive motor vehicles within 50 miles radius of their headquarters from the need to carry and enter up an authorized log book; secondly, to make more flexible the limitations on the hours of driving in so far as they relate to rest periods for drivers; thirdly, to insert certain evidentiary provisions in the Motor Car Act 1958 in relation to the keeping of log books; and, finally, to substitute a new schedule of axle weights for the Third Schedule to the Act.

Legislation restricting hours of driving and requiring the keeping of records of hours of driving and rest periods has been in force in Victoria for more than 30 years. Prior to the Act of 1964, many drivers who were subject to the limitations of the hours of driving and the keeping of records adopted subterfuges in order to exceed the limits prescribed. By driving for excessive periods, they became distinct threats to the safety of other road users, because of fatigue. In 1964, the Motor Car (Hours of Driving) Act was enacted by this Parliament with the object of strengthening the law to assist the authorities to
This legislation, which was considered to be essential in the interests of road safety, contained two particular features, namely:

(a) It prohibited any person from driving a commercial motor car of more than two tons weight unladen—which meant a motor truck, although the Act uses the term "motor car"—unless he had in the motor car in his possession an authorized log book issued to him in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

(b) It set down more positively the limitations on the hours of driving and, among other things, required the driver of such a motor car to have at least one period of 24 consecutive hours for rest during the seven days immediately preceding.

Experience since the 1964 legislation was brought into force earlier this year has shown that there is need for some further changes to meet the special circumstances in which drivers are working in the widely diversified activity of road transport. The principal amendment in this Bill is contained in clause 3. It will exempt drivers working within 50 miles radius of their place of business from the need to keep records of their working hours in an authorized log book. I emphasize, at the outset, that such an exemption will in no way alter the requirement that the driver must have the proper periods of rest and shall not exceed the maximum hours of driving laid down. The exemption relates only to the use of log books.

I am informed by the Transport Regulation Board that there has been little enforcement of the law relating to hours of driving against drivers of what may be termed vehicles operating on local or short distance work. Enforcement, which has largely been in the hands of the Board, has been mainly directed against drivers on long haul work, interstate and longer intra-State hauls, in which the element of driver fatigue could be expected to be a factor. The Board also felt that, in the case of short hauls where the driver would normally return to his headquarters at the end of the day, there is far less risk of driver fatigue contributing to road accidents. Those drivers would, in many cases, sign on and sign off each day at their employers' place of business or be working regularly on a day shift of the normal span of, say, eight to ten hours. As I have stated, the law on the maximum hours of driving and rest periods will continue to apply whatever the nature of the work or the distance travelled, although the driver may be under no compulsion to carry a log book on the vehicle with him and to enter up his times of driving in it.

In deciding that 50 miles was a reasonable distance or radius within which exemptions may be granted on the log book requirement, the Government gave consideration to the existing exemption in New South Wales which has somewhat similar legislation on hours of driving. This exemption, which is effected by means of regulations, excludes any vehicle from the operation of the legislation while it is being used "on a journey wholly within a radius of 50 miles from any depot at which the vehicle is ordinarily stationed". It is considered desirable to keep legislation of hours of driving as uniform as possible with that of New South Wales, and the proposed amendment will help in this respect.

I now refer to the matter of introducing some flexibility into limitations on the hours of driving with respect to rest periods. As I have said, one of the limitations on the hours of driving imposed by section 37b of the principal Act is that no driver shall drive a motor car if he has not had at least one period of 24 consecutive hours for rest during the seven days immediately preceding.
It has been found in practice that a compulsory one day off in seven for all drivers of commercial vehicles over 2 tons weight unladen, which includes buses as well as trucks, is too inflexible and cuts across accepted practices with certain types of operations. One example which can be quoted is that bus drivers, whose rosters are normally worked out on a fortnightly basis, are sometimes required to work on more than six days consecutively in order to fill in for other drivers who may be on sick leave or absent for other reasons. The spread of their hours over a fortnightly period indicates some justification for the alternative rest period of two days in fourteen days, as proposed in clause 2 of the Bill. Such an alternative will enable existing practices in this type of employment to continue. Practices in certain other industries are similarly affected.

I now refer to the evidentiary provisions which this Bill seeks to insert into the principal Act. These provisions can be regarded as complementary to the exemptions concerning the keeping of log books introduced by this Bill. They are intended to assist in prosecutions of offenders by making certain defined evidence of operations specified in clause 4 of the Bill prima facie evidence in court proceedings.

I now refer to the last matter with which this Bill deals, that of axle weights. This matter is not related to log books or hours of driving, and I shall explain why the provision is dealt with in this Bill. Section 33 of the Motor Car Act 1958 prohibits the use of a motor car on any highway if the gross weight carried on the axles or group of axles of the motor car or motor car and trailer attached thereto exceeds the weight corresponding to the distances between the axles set out in the Third Schedule to the Act.

At its meeting in Townsville in July of this year the Australian Transport Advisory Council, which is actually the Commonwealth and State Ministers of Transport, accepted the recommendation of the Australian Motor Vehicles Standards Committee that a new formula of axle loading should be accepted throughout all the States and Territories of the Commonwealth. This formula had been previously examined and approved by the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities which is a body comprised of road-making authorities of the various States and the Commonwealth. So everybody is in agreement with the proposals concerning axle loads.

Clause 5 of the Bill substitutes that new formula of axle weights for the axle weights presently contained in the Third Schedule. The effect of the new schedule will be to increase the gross load allowable on multi-axled vehicles commencing with a rise of 2 cwt. at axle distances of 9 feet to 10 feet and rising proportionately to 5 tons at axle distances of 49 feet to 50 feet. However, the new schedule will not affect pavement loadings because it does not increase tyre or axle loads.

Increased loadings will also make practicable the standard 5-axle articulated motor truck with maximum tyre and bogie loads. In practical terms, it will enable a carrier with this type of vehicle to achieve an increase of 4 tons gross. This will facilitate the movement of standard containers 20 feet x 8 feet x 8 feet of a weight of 20 tons. This part of the Bill is aimed at assisting the containerization movement which is taking place. The measure is one which should commend itself to the House and I hope that in due course it does.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), the debate was adjourned.

Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).—I move—
That the debate be adjourned for one week.

There is some urgency about the Bill because it will give relief to primary producers and other interested
parties. If the Opposition is not ready to proceed with the debate at the expiration of one week, a further adjournment will be granted.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, November 1.

SUMMARY OFFENCES BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This short Bill is designed to extend the provisions of section 18 of the Summary Offences Act 1967 to make it an offence for a male person to loiter in a public place for the purpose of inviting a female to prostitute herself for pecuniary reward with himself or with another person.

In the past twelve months or so, there has been a substantial increase in police activity in the St. Kilda area in order to combat the social evil of prostitution and its related offences. The local police have increased their regular patrols and they have been greatly assisted by members of the Vice Squad, Women Police, Consorting Squad and the Wireless Patrol.

In the course of this intensified policing of the area, particular attention has been given to the extremely undesirable practice of men loitering in or frequenting streets in the hope that they will receive an offer from a woman to prostitute her body to them. This practice is colloquially referred to as “gutter crawling”.

In the course of this activity, “gutter crawlers” often approach highly respectable women and girls. These people and their families naturally resent such an indignity and are looking to the Government to afford them adequate protection. Despite the fact that the police are giving the area additional attention, it is very difficult, if not impossible, under the present law to prevent the offence of “gutter crawling”.

Section 18 of the Summary Offences Act 1966 provides that any person who, for the purpose of prostitution, solicits or accosts any person in a public place, or loiters in a public place shall be guilty of an offence. In recent months, attempts have been made without success to charge male persons with the offence of loitering in a public place for the purpose of prostitution.

In the opinion of the Crown Solicitor, “gutter crawlers” do not commit any offence under the section because the relevant words of the section relate only to the offering by a woman of her body commonly for lewdness for payment. Accordingly, this Bill proposes to strengthen the section by making it an offence for any person to—

(a) loiter in or frequent a public place for the purpose of inviting any female to prostitute herself with pecuniary reward with himself or another person;

(b) invite or solicit any female to prostitute herself with himself or another person;

(c) loiter in or frequent any public place for the purpose of or with the intention of being accosted by a prostitute.

I commend the Bill to the House. It is desperately needed by the police to enable them to clean up a grave social evil, and I hope it will have a speedy passage.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 1.

CARLTON (RECREATION GROUND) (AMENDMENT) LAND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 10) on the motion of Sir William McDonald (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.
Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—This is the type of amending Bill to which I have been referring recently; it amends Act No. 7412 which was passed only in May, 1966. The Act contains two important provisions, the first of which is rather intricate and difficult to understand. The land comprising the Carlton Football Ground was reserved by Order in Council dated 9th June, 1873, as a site for a public park under the control of the Melbourne City Council as a committee of management with power to grant leases for the purposes of sport, recreation, social activity or purposes connected therewith, including the erection of buildings.

Although the land was first reserved in 1873, the Carlton Football Club did not play on the ground until 1897. It may be of interest to honorable members to know that the Collingwood Football Club played its first match in the Victorian Football League on that ground in that year. As a former secretary of the Carlton Football Club, I have always taken a great deal of interest in trying to determine who had control of the ground and the origin of the method by which the ground came under the control of the ground management committee. When I was the secretary of the Carlton Football Club for a brief period from 1950 onwards, I discovered that somewhere along the line the Melbourne City Council had been given control of the ground by the Crown and the council vested control of the recreation area in the presidents of the Carlton Cricket Club and the Carlton Football Club for the time being. They in turn enlisted the aid of a committee of management comprising five delegates from the cricket club and five from the football club. This arrangement worked very well for a number of years.

However, the origin of the control of the ground became obscure and probably would have remained so if it had not been proposed to hold the Olympic Games on the ground in 1956. At that time, the ground was extensively surveyed in preparation for the holding of the Olympic Games, but the sad story of how the Olympic Games were eventually held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground is well known to honorable members. A great deal of preparatory work was undertaken at Carlton and thousands of pounds were spent. When it was decided that the Olympic Games should be held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Carlton Football Ground reverted to its original control.

The Carlton Football Club and the Carlton Cricket Club had equal rights to the ground, and there was a Government nominee as the independent chairman of the committee of management, but it was obvious that the football club attracted most of the revenue to the ground. However, the cricket club has the trump card, so to speak, in that it controls the liquor licence.

With others, I spent a considerable amount of time in an endeavour to persuade the cricket club to surrender its licence to enable a common social club to function. This did not eventuate until after I had left the club. Eventually, it was decided that a social club should be formed at Carlton, and the Carlton (Recreation Ground) Land Bill was passed by this House in May, 1966. That legislation enabled the Carlton Football and Cricket Clubs Social Club to become established. It gave the council of the City of Melbourne, as committee of management of Princes Park, the right to grant the social club a long-term lease and to make loans not exceeding $200,000 to the lessee of the ground for the purpose of ground improvements.

Shortly after the Act was enacted, it was found that a complication had developed in that the council of the City of Melbourne does not act as the governing body of the corporation of the city, and that documents such as leases can be sealed
only by the corporation. Although I do not understand the necessity for this amendment, I have enough faith in the Parliamentary Draftsman, members of the legal profession, and the Minister of Lands to agree with the proposed amendment because the lease exists and all honorable members agree that it should exist.

By substituting a new schedule for the existing schedule to the principal Act, it is proposed to adjust the boundaries of Princes Park. When it was suggested that the Olympic Games should be held at the Carlton ground in 1956, the area was surveyed. In the course of the survey, it was discovered that there were two indentations in the western boundary of the area. No one worried about the indentations until the social club decided to erect a very substantial grandstand, when it was found necessary to adjust the boundaries. The schedule to the Act should have been amended years ago. It is disturbing that the grandstand is almost completed and that the Bill is still being considered.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—The stand is being erected on Crown land.

Mr. FLOYD.—A few years ago, when a parking crusader was active in the City of Melbourne, it was discovered that parking fees could not legally be charged at Princes Park or at Yarra Park, where the Richmond football ground is situated. It was also found that a charge could not be made for entry to the grounds. Therefore, a Bill was rushed through Parliament to enable the clubs to continue charging patrons. This situation arose because the cricket clubs had control of the areas on which most of the football clubs played.

After a match was played on the Melbourne Cricket Ground between Carlton and Melbourne football clubs in aid of a benefit fund for relatives of men killed in a disaster at Bulli, New South Wales, the cricket club discovered that, by allowing the football clubs to play matches on the Melbourne ground, quite a deal of money could be earned.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—This is another subject.

Mr. FLOYD.—I am endeavouring to inform the House why it was necessary for a Bill to be passed to validate the charges made for entry to cricket grounds.

The SPEAKER.—I think that is another subject.

Mr. FLOYD.—Very well, Mr. Speaker. The Labor Party does not object to the re-arrangement of the boundaries of Princes Park. I was going to explain to the House how the indentations occurred because the Minister, in his second-reading speech, did not furnish that information. I suggest that it was a complete mistake. Nobody will complain about the re-arrangement of the boundaries because we are dealing with a popular subject and no one, least of all myself, would be permitted to criticize the building of this excellent grandstand on an area of land that does not belong to the Carlton Football and Cricket Clubs Social Club. I suggest that if a person built a fowlhouse on another person's block of land, the council would make him demolish the building. However, it would be ludicrous to ask the social club to pull down the stand. We should have a look at these things before they happen. Something is being corrected by this Bill. It would not matter if the correction were not made, but it is being made
and I have been given the opportunity to express some criticism. If the grandstand went up, no one would know anything about the matter. The Opposition does not object to the Bill but it mildly rebukes the Government by saying: Do not let it happen again.

The motion was agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

GEELONG CITY COUNCIL: UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: TRANSPORT OFScholars—DROUGHT CONDITIONS: PRICE PAID FOR SHEEP SLAUGHTERED.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary). — I move—

That this House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow, at half-past Ten o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary). — I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North).—I wish to bring to the notice of the Government the initiative and concern shown by the Geelong City Council at its meeting yesterday concerning the prospect of a very large pool of unemployed becoming a reality in Geelong within the next few months. As a result of the drought in the western and north-western areas of Victoria, local authorities believe that there will be a direct repercussion upon the Geelong community. It is expected that affected citizens will come to Geelong to seek employment on either a temporary or a permanent basis. I have previously pointed out to the House that, for most parts of the year, Geelong has a larger percentage of unemployed than any other area of the State. At the same time, many Geelong industries rely on buoyant rural areas to maintain production and employment for employees. Therefore, I ask the Government to note the action of the Geelong City Council which yesterday decided to curtail any expenditure on Christmas lighting and other festivities.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The honorable member should be referring to a matter of Government administration. I think he should point out what the Government is expected to do.

Mr. TREZISE.—I request the Government to look into this matter and consider commencing urgent public works to help alleviate the unemployment situation which is expected to occur in Geelong about February or March next year. The council is building up a pool of approximately $1,500 to be supplemented by Government subsidies, and it is the intention to commence street works to assist any unemployed persons next year. I urge the Government to look into the statement made by the Geelong City Council yesterday and, wherever possible, to assist the Geelong community in the near future by commencing works such as the development of the Melbourne highway through North Geelong, the construction of an over-pass at Latrobe-terrace, and perhaps the development of Housing Commission building to the level reached last year. Unless action is taken now, the situation in February or March could have a bad effect on the entire Geelong community and particularly on those people who, it is expected, will come to Geelong in the next few weeks to seek employment.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—I refer to the Assistant Minister of Education a matter concerning school buses. In some remote areas of my electorate a number of primary school students have been attending two schools which have now been closed, and they are now up to 7 miles from the terminus of the high school bus which goes to Euroa. Because of the ages of the children in the
families concerned it will never be possible, under the present policy, for the bus service to be extended because there will not be more than three children of secondary school age from the area attending high school at the one time.

I realize that additional expense would be entailed in the extension of school bus services to pick up primary school children on the same basis as that which applies to secondary school children. If there are three or four children, the buses could be extended to pick up the primary school pupils on a basis similar to that which applies to secondary school pupils. The payment of 10 cents a day per child is the same as it was many years ago. This will not be available to the children and the money should be made available for the extension of bus services to transport primary school children who now have to travel a long distance each way.

Mr. GINIFER (Deer Park).—I wish to refer to a problem associated with the current drought conditions, bearing in mind a statement made by the Minister of Lands. The honorable gentleman indicated that provision was to be made for the slaughtering of an additional 70,000 head of sheep in this State each week. I take it that the type of sheep to be slaughtered would be what are normally considered to be old crackers used for boning, for export, and for small goods industries.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! Is this a matter of Government administration? The honorable member has not yet indicated that it is.

Mr. GINIFER.—I am coming to it, Mr. Speaker. I shall be guided by you in this matter.

The SPEAKER.—I invite the honorable member to come to the point quickly.

Mr. GINIFER.—The matter I raise is associated with the financial provisions which may be made by the Government in respect of farmers who find themselves in desperate circumstances. Until a short time ago, the return to the producer for this type of meat was about 12 cents a pound, but now it is about 3.5 cents or 4 cents a pound, although there has been no great drop in the price of meat on the overseas market. I should like the Minister of Lands to investigate the conditions under which the sheep are marketed, perhaps with a view to ascertaining whether the meat exporters can act as agents for the primary producers so that the primary producers will not lose so much while the exporters make great profits. In turn, that could lead to a saving in the expenses incurred by the Government in reimbursing primary producers who are forced to sell their stock at a loss because of present conditions.

Mr. ROSSITER (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The honorable member for Benalla referred to bus transport for school children, and asked that school buses should be required to travel the extra distance to pick up primary school children who live 7 miles from a high school bus terminal. I have written to the honorable member on this subject, and he knows that the policy of the Education Department is that, unless five high school children also travel in the bus, the length of the route covered by the service will not be extended.

It costs the Government $7,500,000 to transport children to schools each year. This evening, the Country Party opposed a measure introduced by the Government to increase the amount of money available for governmental services. There will be increasing demands for money to be spent on the transport of more school children but, until the Government has extra money to spend, the present policy cannot be relaxed. I shall put the submission of the honorable
member to the Treasurer with the utmost sympathy. I, too, should like to see school buses provided for all children in the country who have no other means of transport to school.

Sir WILLIAM McDoNALD (Minister of Lands).—I simply say to the honorable member for Deer Park that he knows, as other honorable members know, that the method of disposing of stock in this country is by the auction system, and the price paid is determined by the bid in the yard. The only action which the Government can take is to ensure that abattoirs work with as little hindrance as possible. The Government is endeavouring, by all means at its disposal, to increase the throughput of abattoirs so that the bottle-neck which has occurred because of present conditions will be removed. At this stage, I do not regard it as practicable to take any other steps to alleviate the position.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—In view of the remarks of "Dismal Desmond"—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. Vernon Christie).—Order! The Chief Secretary is answering the question, I think.

Mr. RYLAH.—The Premier has, to-day, already answered the points raised by the honorable member for Geelong North. He has said that, where there is or is likely to be an unemployment problem in a city, the Government is prepared to do something about it. It has been made clear in previous crises in which Geelong has shared that, when the type of situation with which the honorable member for Geelong North is concerned develops, the Minister for Local Government is authorized to negotiate with members of Parliament representing the area and with local councils to do the very thing which the honorable member has suggested to-night.

Mr. TREZISE.—You don't mind my booking my seat, do you?

Mr. RYLAH.—I wonder about this. The honorable member also knows the answer to the points he raises, but he emphasizes the dismal prospects of Geelong by giving double publicity to the scare resolution that was passed by the Geelong City Council last night. I assure him and other honorable members who represent the area, and the people of Geelong, that the Government will make every effort to ensure that unemployment in Geelong is kept to an absolute minimum.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.