Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

Consideration is not being given to changes in the provisions of the Liquor Control Act which relate to this matter.

MEDICAL BOARD OF VICTORIA.

(Question No. 608)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

Whether the Medical Board has reviewed the case of Dr. T. R. Achuthan, as requested by the Minister; if so, when, and with what result?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

Yes, on the 15th July, 1976.

The board refused the application by Dr. Achuthan for registration as a medical practitioner in this State.

Dr. Achuthan has exercised his right of appeal under the Medical Practitioners Act 1970 against this decision. The appeal is returnable in the Supreme Court of Victoria at Mildura on the 11th October, 1976.

CHILD MIGRANT EDUCATION.

(Question No. 726)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education—

1. How many migrant children are receiving tuition in English from teachers specially employed to teach this subject at primary and secondary schools within the electoral district of Coburg, indicating—(a) how many migrant children and special teachers are at each school; (b) the various nationalities of these children; and (c) what class-rooms at each of the schools are reserved exclusively for this purpose?

2. What is the present enrolment of all schools within the electoral district and what is the percentage of migrant pupils attending each of these schools?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Number of migrant children</th>
<th>Per-cent.</th>
<th>Effective full time migrant teachers</th>
<th>Ethnic groups</th>
<th>Class-rooms</th>
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</table>

Legislative Assembly. Thursday, September 9, 1976.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) took the chair at 11.4 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

ALLEGED THREATS TO MEMBER.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): On Tuesday I raised with the Premier a serious allegation concerning alleged threats of black-mail and, indeed, murder, against a member of this House. The Premier said that if I provided him with the relevant information he would investigate the matter. Yesterday I sent the Premier a hand-delivered letter containing copies of the press reports in which the allegations were made and I now ask if he is able to inform the House whether the press reports containing the allegations have any veracity.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I am certainly not able to say off-hand whether that is so
or not, and I do not believe the Leader of the Opposition really expects that I could. The honorable member did send me a copy of a press statement, which is in extremely vague terms. I have undertaken to investigate the claims but am not yet in a position to make a comment or decision on the result. All I can say at the moment is that I am surprised the report is in so vague a form.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): It should be pointed out that a question is out of order if it asks whether a press statement is true or false. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a letter, and that should be the basis of the question and not whether the press report is true.

SUNSHINE CITY COUNCIL.

Mr. LIEBERMAN (Benambra): I ask the Minister of Public Works whether the Minister for Local Government has any knowledge of when the report of the inquiry into the Sunshine City Council will be available.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I understand from the Minister for Local Government that the report will be tabled in Parliament next Tuesday. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition would be pleased if the House adjourned for two weeks to enable him to study the report.

WEST GATE BRIDGE.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): In the light of the statement made by the Chairman of the West Gate Bridge Authority that the cost of the bridge will now exceed $150 million, can the Minister of Transport inform the House whether that amount can be recouped by a toll in due course or whether Government subsidies will be required to enable the authority to meet its financial obligations?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I am not able to give the House the information in precisely the terms requested by the honorable member. I am, however, able to say that the West Gate Bridge Authority and the Government are very much concerned about the cost of construction of the bridge which has escalated because of industrial problems, particularly in the past eighteen months. At one time the Government even seriously considered whether the project should proceed, but at present the industrial situation is a good deal better and work appears to be proceeding satisfactorily.

However, the costs have escalated and the authority believes that to recoup those costs a toll, as suggested by the honorable member, will have to be imposed. It is not yet known whether the amount of the toll will be sufficient, by itself, to make a full recoulement but it is hoped that work will continue at a sufficiently reasonable pace to enable the bridge to be opened towards the end of next year, at the latest. That would mitigate the possibility of a call upon the Government for a subsidy.

It is hoped that the toll will be able to be borne by the community, and be sufficient to recoup the costs of the bridge.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): Can the Premier indicate whether the Government is prepared to support the requests by certain municipal councils to have an investigation into the administration of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is, "No". No such request has so far been received. I understand that such a proposal is being canvassed by a prominent member of the Labor Party, but reactions have been mixed and no request has been made to the Government.
QUESTIONS [ASSEMBLY.] without Notice.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth): Because of the confusion in the minds of Victorian farmers following the Federal Government's announcement on drought relief, which included cattle slaughter levies, will the Premier inform the House in what way this announcement will help Victorian farmers and how it will affect the assistance being given to farmers in the State?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): It will not have any direct effect at all. The Victorian Government has been supporting the industry as best it could through the cattle slaughter subsidy, and as announced last week the scheme has been extended for a further four weeks subject to review at the end of the period. The figures so far show the number of cattle slaughtered as 58,000, involving an expenditure by the State Government of about $440,000.

The Federal Government has now agreed to a request made in the last financial year that such a scheme should be included as part of a national disaster plan which would then attract Federal Government support but only after a certain point —only after the State involved had expended a great deal of its own funds. In our case it would be $3.5 million. The net result is that this announcement from Canberra will not bring any additional relief to the Victorian farmers in this drought unless and until the Victorian Government has expended $3.5 million in this financial year, and I certainly hope we shall not be involved in a cattle slaughter programme of that magnitude.

TEACHER HOUSING AUTHORITY.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I ask the Minister of Education a question relating to the Teacher Housing Authority and the rents paid on its houses and flats. During the Parliamentary recess I carried out investigations. I visited a number of schools and spoke to many teachers living in Teacher Housing Authority houses. Apart from the lack of houses available, there was a general complaint about maintenance.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I suggest that the honorable member come to his question and not make a speech.

Mr. JASPER: It has been suggested to me that the question should be directed to the Minister of Housing, but I should still like to have the question directed to the Minister of Education. I ask: When will the Education Department upgrade the rents to a reasonable level so that the Teaching Housing Authority can carry out urgently work on houses which are lacking in maintenance at present?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): In the first place the power to fix rents is vested in the Teachers Tribunal, not in the Teacher Housing Authority or in the Education Department. The power has been vested in the Teachers Tribunal for many years—actually, since its formation.

The problems of the Teacher Housing Authority are in two fields. One is in the area of capital expenditure, and the Government believes it has overcome this to a large degree by providing an extra allocation of $2 million per annum over the next three years.

The other problem lies in the field of maintenance because the authority has used as maintenance funds the money it has derived from rentals. For many years the Teachers Tribunal adhered to a somewhat strange method of fixing rentals based on 5 per cent of the capital value or 10 per cent of the teacher's salary, whichever was the lesser. The tribunal subsequently increased it from 5 per cent of the capital value to something like 6.5 per cent, and this produced an increase in the average rental from approximately $6.50 a week to $7.80 a week.
It was drawn to the attention of the Teachers Tribunal that the average rental for houses in the country erected by the Housing Commission was in excess of $20 and that this was not unreasonable. Further, the point was made that the majority of teachers preferred to have the houses well maintained, and to have a better standard of house they were prepared to pay a higher rental.

As a result of those submissions the Teachers Tribunal made a further decision which will have the effect of increasing the average rental from about $6.50—that is the original figure—to $13 a week. This will provide some additional revenue for the Teaching Housing Authority, and it is understood the total revenue available to it this year from rentals will be of the order of $1.5 million. This will enable a fresh start to be made on maintenance work.

The activities of the Teacher Housing Authority will be watched very carefully to ensure that it carries out its proper function. The Government is quite sure that the tribunal will be able to do this in the capital field of housing purchases and construction, and the maintenance side will be watched very carefully.

MOTOR CAR AUCTIONS.

Mrs. PATRICK (Brighton): I ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs: Has there been any trouble regarding motor car auctions?

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): I am sure there has been trouble in regard to motor car auctions. From memory I answered a question on notice from the honorable member for Ballarat North in the last session and indicated that a couple of complaints had been received by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs about auctions of motor cars. However, the Premier yesterday announced that responsibility for the Motor Car Traders Act will be transferred from the Chief Secretary's Department to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and I presume that will overcome the problems.

WILLIAM JOHN O'MEALLY.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): I ask the Minister for Social Welfare: Did the Adult Parole Board recently recommend the release of William John O'Meally from custody? Was the Minister present when Cabinet made a decision to go against the Adult Parole Board's recommendation? If not, was the Minister consulted on the decision and, finally, when is it expected that another decision will be made on William John O'Meally's release or when will his case be reviewed?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): There is one part of the question that the Minister cannot be asked—that is, who was present at a Cabinet meeting. The Minister can answer the other part of the question.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): The matters concerning Mr. O'Meally have been fully looked into by the Government and a decision has been made to transfer him to Castlemaine. That is where the matter rests.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. McINNERS (Gippsland South): I direct a question to the Premier and I refer him to an answer he gave to the honorable member for Murray Valley. I ask for clarification whether the $3.5 million base line which has to come into effect before the Federal Government gives any assistance includes such things as the rural employment scheme on which $1 million or $1.5 million has been expended to date?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is "No", and I regret greatly that it is so. The Victorian Government originally proposed to the Federal Government that measures taken to alleviate drought, especially for the farming community, should be regarded as part of the
arrangements for a national disaster. It was suggested that any amount expended, particularly on a special form of rural employment of this kind, would be part of drought relief and not just part of general employment relief, and should be regarded as related to a national disaster scheme.

I also suggested that the cattle compensation scheme should be in the same category. What has happened now is that the cattle compensation scheme has been accepted, but too late to be of any real effect, and the rural employment scheme has not been accepted, as part of national disaster arrangements.

SUBSIDY FOR SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): In view of the welcome decision recently made by the Government to continue the subsidy for the slaughter of cattle, will the Minister ask municipalities to request farmers to send their cattle to the market-place and, only if the cattle do not fetch a price of $10, arrange for their slaughter under municipal supervision at an appropriate place—with the provision that cattle in remote areas can still be killed on the farm?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The Government wishes to change the emphasis of the scheme slightly. Those municipalities which in the past arranged for stock agents to dispose of cattle which did not fetch a price of $10 at the market found that the scheme worked extremely well. They incurred far less cost in disposing of cattle than other municipalities which organized a central disposal point and advertised that cattle could be brought to it.

The Government wishes to encourage municipalities to make arrangements to accept cattle which have not attracted the price of $10 at saleyards. However, the two original methods of disposal, where a central pit is provided, and in remote areas where slaughter can be carried under municipal supervision on farms, will continue. But the Government prefers municipalities to lean towards the system I have just outlined.

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTS.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): As there is no mention of increases in Housing Commission rents in the Budget brought down by the Treasurer yesterday, I ask the honorable gentleman whether he can advise the House that there will be no rent increases for commission tenancies during the life of the Budget.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): Housing Commission rentals never enter into the Budget, on either the receipts or the expenditure side.

Mr. FORDHAM: They are hidden.

Mr. HAMER: It is not a question of hiding them; it is a question of what is proper for the Budget. The commission has its own funds and, as the honorable member is aware, they are related to the need to pay back home building loans made each year by the Federal Government. The level of rentals is reviewed from time to time. From memory, the last adjustment was in about January of this year. I would not expect any further review until at least a year has passed.

FREEWAY F19.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe): Has the attention of the Minister of Transport been directed to a resolution of the City of Doncaster and Templestowe to re-evaluate the route for the F19 Freeway extension through Bulleen between Thompsons Road and Doncaster Road, and to a report of the Country Roads Board on the outer ring road foreshadowing the possibility of a connecting road or freeway dissecting the Yarra Valley? As these matters are causing concern, will the Minister give them his urgent attention?
Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I shall deal with the second part of the question, which relates to the ring road, first. An investigation is already being carried out by a firm of consultants, Pak Poy and Associates Pty. Ltd. I understand that the report is not yet available but the matter is being considered.

The first part of the question relates to the resolution by the City of Doncaster and Templestowe. I have seen a copy of it, and I understand that it is being directed to the Premier and to the Minister for Planning. I think it should have been also directed to me as Minister of Transport. If the matter is directed to my attention by the municipality, I shall give it full consideration while keeping in mind the principles laid down by the Premier on further freeways. I repeat that if the matter is brought to my attention officially, I shall ensure that the situation is examined in the way sought by the resolution.

MEETING OF YOUTH AND CHILD CARE OFFICERS.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): Is the Minister for Social Welfare aware that a meeting of youth and child care officers working at Baltara and Turana, sponsored by the Victorian Public Service Association, is scheduled for 1.30 p.m. today? Is the Minister aware that it is the custom on the occasion of such meetings that on-duty staff are allowed to attend so long as the running of the institutions is not affected? Is he aware that an instruction has been issued to staff who will be on duty at Baltara today that they are not to attend? If he is aware of those three matters, will he, between now and 1.30 p.m., examine the situation with a view to having the Baltara staff instruction withdrawn?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): I have no knowledge of the matter referred to by the honorable member. I will investigate and ascertain what it is all about.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn): Is the Minister for Conservation aware of the growing interest in the more remote highland areas of this State? If so, what consideration is being given to the development of an alpine national park in the Victorian highlands?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The Land Conservation Council is at present conducting a study of the alpine regions and that study will ultimately be printed and made public, at which time all interested parties and various groups in the community can make submissions on how that land should best be reserved. After that occurs the Land Conservation Council will make some tentative recommendations which it will make public, again seeking comments. Finally a recommendation which will be tabled in Parliament will be made to the Government.

GELLIBRAND LIGHT.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): My question to the Minister of Public Works concerns an incident which occurred on 21st June last when the vessel Melbourne Trader struck the Gellibrand Light. In view of the fact that the Minister has decided that a court of marine inquiry will not be held, does he not believe it would be in the public interest to disclose the findings of the preliminary inquiries which he ordered in relation to this incident and that such a disclosure would assist mariners?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member is asking for an opinion.

Mr. CAIN: Would such disclosure assist mariners in navigation in the bay in future if they knew what in fact occurred?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): This is a difficult question to answer. I still believe the honorable member for Bundoora is asking
for an opinion. I could only answer this question by giving my personal opinion.

The SPEAKER: Order! Ministers can either answer or refuse to answer questions without notice. It is entirely up to the Minister. He may refuse to answer or he may direct that the question be put on the Notice Paper.

Mr. DUNSTAN: I will answer in this way—"Yes, very probably."

SPEECH THERAPISTS.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong West): I direct a question to the Minister of Special Education with regard to the staffing of the speech therapists centre in Geelong. I am not complaining about the situation in which four out of the five speech therapists who were there at the beginning of the year have left for various reasons. What are the plans of the department regarding a revitalized service for 1977?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The position at present is that the department is currently advertising in the United States of America to attract speech therapists to this nation. An excellent paper on this matter, "Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Service" was prepared by the Assistant Director of Special Services, and discussions have taken place between both him and Mr. Murfett to ensure that the necessary arrangements are made for inclusion of speech therapists in the next flight.

The second part of the proposal is the question of a career structure for speech therapists to enable them to give longer service in the area for which they are trained. The Teachers Tribunal has started to consider the question of a career structure. I hope that the tribunal will soon hand down a determination that will keep them in their vocational situation longer.

The third element of the proposal is the training of enough speech therapists within Australia to fill the various vacancies that exist in the States. The Ministerial Standing Committee on Special Education has this matter under consideration at all times.

I hope that with the proper utilization and implementation of the free policy a much better supply of speech therapists will be assured. The Government is concerned.

DANDENONG RANGES.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): On 3rd June I asked the Minister for Planning a series of questions concerning planning statistics in the Dandenong Ranges area and I received an answer that those sorts of records were not available from Government sources. Will the Minister direct the appropriate authorities, such as the Town and Country Planning Board and the Local Government Department to collect and compile records of a vital statistical nature in the future?

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): Until I am more fully acquainted with the honorable member's previous request, it would be rather difficult to commit myself on the future. I will look into the matter.

SPEECH THERAPISTS.

Mr. McCLURE (Bendigo): Further to the question of the Minister of Special Education by the honorable member for Geelong West, does the Minister's department consider that speech therapists recruited from America are eminently suitable for teaching Australians to speak?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): With the Truxtun in port, I am somewhat apprehensive about the reply that I should give. Speech therapists from the United States of America are highly trained and qualified. There has been no resentment, opposition or criticism of the utilization of American teachers generally in Australia because of their accent.
The question of speech therapy has had full consideration by all of our advisers in this area and they have not commented specifically on this aspect.

PRICE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell): Yesterday I asked the Minister for Fuel and Power a question concerning the Royal Commission into the marketing price of petroleum products in Australia. Has the Minister's attention now been drawn to the criticism made of the Victorian Government in the report that, unlike all other State Governments, the Victorian Government does not seem to have moved to rectify any of the observed deficiencies of the industry in Victoria?

Further, can the Minister advise whether any organization in Victoria, such as the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, has made representations to the Ministry or to the Minister on some of the discriminatory practices concerning discount petrol selling in this State and also the reasons why the Victorian Government and the Minister for Fuel and Power have not acted previously to correct some of these anomalies?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): The matters which were before the commission were not really the concern of the Victorian Government or of the Ministry for Fuel and Power.

I realize that other States did enter into the hearings of the commission but the report is really a matter for the distributors and the marketeers. In addition to what I said yesterday, I recall checking up on the matter. About two weeks ago, the Ministry wrote to the Federal Government commenting on the report. I have also received from the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, a copy of a document which it has prepared. It appears to be a blueprint to which the Chamber would like service stations to adhere. The document certainly is being studied.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of messages from His Excellency the Governor recommending that appropriations be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the following Bills—

Co-operative Housing Societies (Amendment) Bill.
Forests (Advances) Bill.

NEPEAN CENTRE FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): I move—

That this House deprecates the failure of the Government to provide suitable accommodation and facilities for students at Nepean Centre for Physically Handicapped.

This debate will highlight the absolutely insensitive and callous disregard of the Government for the educational needs of the handicapped in Victoria. The matter has been going on for years and promises have been broken. On 2nd June, 1976, this motion was moved in the Parliament but for reasons that are obvious to all it could not be brought on earlier than today. However, since that time the Government,
although it has had a period of three months in which to take action, has done little to alleviate the needs of the physically handicapped students in this State.

The Nepean school was founded as a State school in 1964 to provide for the educational needs of the physically handicapped. It is one of the few centres that in the past twenty years have provided this type of education. It took years for the Education Department to establish State schools for the handicapped. The department relied on charitable bodies to provide that type of education. It was not until late 1973 when appropriate legislation was introduced and passed that the Government received this responsibility.

In 1964 the Nepean school was established temporarily at the Mt. Eliza Geriatric Centre. That centre was previously an orthopaedic wing for children from the Royal Children's Hospital, and was designed to meet the needs of 23 children. Since that period up to 100 students have been forced to receive their education there in the wooden structure which is completely inadequate for their needs. It is situated on a steep slope and honorable members will appreciate what that means to physically handicapped people.

Mr. KENNETT: It would be good exercise for them.

Mr. FORDHAM: I hope every honorable member in the House heard the interjection of the honorable member for Burwood. That is a wonderful attitude by the Government supporters towards physically handicapped children! I shall ask the Minister to comment on that in his reply and to state whether he shares the view of his back-bench member. The honorable member for Burwood may consider the educational needs of the handicapped to be a joke. I do not, nor do members of the Opposition.

The inadequate wooden structure at the school has narrow corridors and is a fire trap, as was recently admitted by the Government. One cannot help admire the spirit of dedication of the parents, teachers and students over the years. They have endured these difficulties and have been prepared to provide a real educational opportunity to the children, despite the attitude of the Government towards meeting that educational need. After many years and much procrastination by the Government—in 1964 it said the school was to be only a temporary centre—by 1972 nothing had been done. Following a deputation and agitation the Acting Minister of Health, Mr. Dunstan, in a letter dated 26th May, 1972, said—

As the Hon. H. R. Ward, M.L.C., has already informed you, an alternative site on which to relocate the school has been secured, and arrangements have been made for the existing premises to be available until the end of 1975. Action to provide a new school by that date now rests with the Education Department.

That was 1972. Then enters the then Assistant Minister of Education, Mr. Scanlan, who on 12th October, 1972, said in a letter to a member of the Legislative Council representing the South Eastern Province—

The Education Department will erect a new school on the Hadley Street site to accommodate 120 pupils. This school is to be ready for occupation in 1975-76. The staff for the school will be provided by the Education Department.

This is the first known involvement of the Minister of Special Education in the school, but since then there has been an ongoing by involvement by him as either Minister of Health, Assistant Minister of Education, or Minister of Special Education. The Minister's record in dealing with this school is nothing less than deplorable. Both the Minister and the Government behind him have time after time misled the parents, teachers and students at this school, as the debate will show.

Later in 1972, in a notice released to the Frankston Standard, the Honorable H. R. Ward announced details of
a new school soon to be built. The release said—

Mr. Ward convened a meeting of the Ministers of Health, Education, Local Government, Public Works, Chief Secretary and Assistant Minister of Education with the Director of Special Education services to get the recommendations to Cabinet.

And he went on to say that those recommendations went through and the school was to proceed.

It was then found, despite all those wonderful announcements, that there was to be some difficulty about the sort of school to be built. What was to happen to the paramedical block, which everyone will admit is so necessary in the education of the handicapped, became the problem. It is obvious that a paramedical block is an integral and essential part of an education facility for these students, but the Government started to equivocate about whether it was its responsibility to provide that aspect of these educational services.

But 1973 was an election year and the then Minister of Transport, Mr. Meagher, made a statement—this was before the elections—in which he said—

People are trying to "whip up a political storm" over the new school for physically handicapped children in Frankston, according to Mr. Ray Meagher, M.L.A., "But they are flogging a dead issue."

He also said—

Some people were asking where the State Government would find the money to provide essential paramedical services at the new school.

He then went on to say—

As has already been stated—the money will be forthcoming. That is that.

Having known him for many years, one can imagine the sort of attitude he would have taken. He then went on—

The money promised for the paramedical services will be forthcoming. It will be provided for in the coming Budget.

He was talking about the 1973 Budget of this State Government which was to provide the money for the paramedical wing. The documentation from which I have quoted is a press release by the Minister dated 18th April, 1973.

So that is the record of the Government's promised free school to be built on the new site and the paramedical wing to be provided by the Government. What has happened since? Absolutely nothing! The elections were held, of course, in 1973 and the Government attempted to sweep the matter under the carpet. On 8th October, 1973, the Assistant Minister of Education, in a letter to the town clerk of Frankston, wrote—

It is anticipated that the completion date of the new school will be during the 1975-76 financial year. This date has been determined bearing in mind the time required to design and construct the school.

That was the situation at the end of 1973.

However, 1974, not being an election year, saw a considerable change of heart by the Government, despite 1974 being the year of a record flow of funds from Canberra for education and a record flow of funds for the education of the handicapped from the Labor Government which was in office in Canberra at that time. The people associated with the school then learned that the Government was having discussions with the Yooralla group about providing facilities for their students at their school and they were most concerned that the Government had done that behind their backs. They made certain inquiries, and on 30th September, 1974, the Assistant Minister of Education said in a letter to the school committee—

The Education Department's responsibility for providing school accommodation is subject to funds being available. Planning for Glen Waverley Special School buildings is proceeding and with modification will provide the basis for the design of Nepean Special School. You are aware that current building difficulties and escalating costs have forced the revision of the Special Education building programme and that Nepean Special School replacement is relatively low on the programme that can be financed from funds currently available. It is regrettable that priorities at this time can not be altered.
He went on to say—

Matters pertaining to the role of Yooralla Committee, the organization and funding of the Nepean Special treatment/training buildings and associated recurrent costs are still unresolved.

And so we have seen the change of heart which became increasingly apparent in 1974. This became a time of great anxiety and concern for the parents, as one could well imagine.

It was at that time the policy of the Australian Labor Government in Canberra that full responsibility for all aspects of the educational needs of children should be taken by Government, particularly the educational needs of the handicapped. It was also State Government policy, the policy of this Government, that it would take full financial responsibility to meet the needs of these children, as is reflected in the Education (Handicapped Children) Act which was passed in 1973. In his second-reading speech on that Bill, to be found on page 1793 of Hansard of 1st November, 1973, Mr. Dixon, the Assistant Minister of Education, said—

The main purpose of the Bill is to remove the obligation to educate handicapped children from the parent, where formerly it reposed almost entirely, and to make it the obligation of the Minister of Education. In fact, the only obligation which the parent will have will be to notify the Minister of Education as soon as the parent becomes aware that he has a handicapped child.

So that Government fairly and squarely faced up to principle espoused by the Labor Government in Canberra and said, “We accept it. We adopt it. We bring it into the legislation”. The legislation itself, of course, makes this quite clear and the key section, 641, which I ask all members to note, states—

A parent who causes his child to undertake special education or to be provided with special services in accordance with this Division shall not be required to contribute to the cost of the special education or the provision of those special services.

Mr. Fordham.

The Act defines “special services” as follows—

includes assistance at a special centre, special unit or special class and any other service specially provided to help a handicapped child overcome any impediment to his educational progress.

As I said, the Government accepted the principle in the Minister’s speech and in the legislation, but since that time the Government has backed away from its responsibility. The performance of the Government, as against its policy, has been to try to force parents to the begging bowl. Parents of these children are being forced to establish themselves as charitable institutions and to raise funds for various of their children’s needs—particularly, in this case, the paramedical block at the Nepean Special School. That is disgraceful and is contrary to the legislation, contrary to the Government’s policy, and it is surely outmoded in the 1970s for parents to have to rely on charity to provide basic educational services for their children.

These are the children whose needs are greatest and these are the parents and children who are being required to take on the greatest burden in providing educational services, whereas the antithesis should apply. If we are to face up to the great difficulties experienced in life by these students we should make every possible effort to assist them during this period of their education.

In 1975 the Government confirmed its attitude of forcing these parents to rely on charity and to go to the begging bowl. The Assistant Minister of Education in a letter of 7th March, 1975, to the school committee said—

As you are aware this department is not able to make any commitment toward the provision of the treatment/training section.

That is a fair and square indication that the Government was going back on its promises and its legislation. Over a period a series of meetings involving the Government was held during which it endeavored to involve the Yooralla Hospital School for Crippled
Children and other charitable institutions in the project so that the Government could use those organizations to raise funds to assist in meeting what should be its obligation.

Early in 1975, the Minister reiterated that it was still planned to construct the building in the 1975–76 financial year, but it has not even now been commenced or designed.

I move on to 1976. The president of the school committee wrote to the Premier on 22nd April of this year explaining that unless the Government was prepared to reverse its stand the children would be withdrawn from the school as a mark of their absolute frustration at the attitude of the Government on this important matter.

There followed a series of meetings and deputations with Ministers in an attempt to convince the Government that it should change its mind. In May, 1976, some of the children were withdrawn. Honourable members will remember the publicity which surrounded that action. One would have liked to think the Government would respond, but on 27th May, 1976, the Minister of Special Education, in answer to a question asked by me, said, as recorded on page 1379 of *Hansard*—

I only regret that at this stage we are not able to advance a positive scheme for the proper development of facilities for the physically handicapped children at the school.

A school will be built, but the commitment of the State Government towards the project is contingent upon a commitment by the Commonwealth Government in this area.

At that stage the Government confirmed its refusal to accept what surely was its responsibility.

On 16th June a press release was issued by the Minister of Education, which was somewhat surprising as he is no longer the Minister responsible for this area. I suggest that the Minister of Education over-rode his Assistant Minister and adopted a different stance altogether. In his press release the Minister of Education stated that tenders for the construction of the new Nepean centre would be called in the current financial year. The honorable gentleman further stated that the paramedical block would also be built as part of the centre and that the parents would not have to pay to help in the construction of this block. Further, the Minister stated that parents in Victoria would not be required to make any contribution.

Supposedly there was a further change of heart as the Government had announced that it was going ahead with the centre. Frankly I thought that would have been the end of the matter, that the Government had finally, under pressure, given in to these remarkable parents, students and teachers and had changed its mind. But it did not take long to find out that that was not the case.

At the same time, the Minister of Special Education indicated that a planning committee would be set up. The announcement was made in June that a planning committee would soon be appointed but that committee is still to be appointed and the discussions have bogged down. In a letter to myself dated 3rd August, the Minister of Special Education said—

The deputation were also informed that negotiations were currently underway with regard to the funding of the project and that it was my intention as the responsible Minister to issue a statement probably before the end of August establishing appropriate planning committees and scheduling a draft time-table for the replacement of the school.

A similar reply was received on 4th August, but in fact nothing has been done.

What next happened was the most despicable act of all. On 17th August, 1976, the Minister of Special Education announced that, in conjunction with the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria, a new centre would be built at Glen Waverley, and that the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria would be involved in the Nepean
centre. The size of the Nepean centre was to be halved; the original plan to cater for 120 children was to be reduced to one to cater for 60 children. The Spastic Children's Society of Victoria was to be involved in the planning and funding of the Nepean centre.

This was all done behind the backs of the parents, teachers and students at the Nepean centre. They were not consulted by the Government on this most important matter involving the future of their children and the property with which they were so concerned. Not surprisingly, people associated with the Nepean centre have rejected the statement by the Minister of Special Education, and I am reliably informed that the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria has also not accepted it. I hope they do not because the principle is worth fighting for. If on this occasion the Government does not accept its full responsibility at the Nepean centre to cater for the educational requirements of these children, it will continue to use charity as a means of raising finance for educational purposes. This is not acceptable to this Parliament or to the public at large.

The Nepean school committee and those associated with the centre over the years have been misled and deceived by the Government on numerous occasions. I suggest that the Government has deliberately gone behind their backs to negotiate with other bodies to have others take over what is the Government's basic responsibility. One cannot help but pay a tribute to the remarkable parents, teachers and students of this centre. They have been prepared to fight for the centre but above all they have been prepared to fight for a principle. Honorable members on both sides of the House must support these people in their fight and the principle for which they have been striving.

I hope honorable members of all parties will have the courage to deplore the failure of the Government to meet the needs of these children. It must be shown once and for all that the Government must accept the undertakings which it has set out in its legislation to meet the needs of physically handicapped children, not only at the Nepean Special School but throughout Victoria.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): I only regret that the debate has taken the turn it has because never have I heard the honorable member for Footscray debate in a worse or less convincing fashion than he has today. As he said, there is a principle involved in the building of the Nepean Special School—not one but a number of principles.

I state clearly and categorically that the Liberal Party Government of this State will uphold what it believes are the proper principles in the present situation. It should be stated at the outset that in this case there is no precedent for the submission made by the honorable member for Footscray. Paramedical facilities for education throughout the nation are provided by those who are most expert to provide the facilities and the treatment. I refer to institutions or to bodies such as the Royal Children's Hospital, the Yooralla Hospital School for Crippled Children and the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria. The honorable member for Footscray has ridiculed this aspect but these bodies have provided the facilities because they believe in giving and in supporting the community.

The honorable member for Footscray is a member of the board of management of the Western General Hospital at Footscray. I presume by his attitude towards charity that he would not attend any hospital which involves itself in fund raising, which of course his hospital does from time to time.

The position is that the hospital system of this nation is dependent on the goodwill and wisdom of hospital
committees of management. These special schools which are established to provide facilities for sensorially or physically handicapped persons rely, in a large measure, on the expertise and skills of those who have become involved in medical, hospital or pediatric administration and welfare.

I wish to quote from a report, if we are to pursue the question of what is important for the child. It is not a question of what is important for the honorable member for Footscray, for Parliament, for a committee of management or for individuals who have strong views. It is a question of what is important in giving the best for the handicapped children of this State.

I should like to quote a statement of Dr. G. Keys Smith, Director of the Handicapped Children's Centre, Royal Children's Hospital, made on 14th October, 1975, about the Nepean Special School. He said—

The Education Department has had many years of experience with such special schools, but the Department of Health, although it should be represented, has no experience. The School Health Service has taken no part in the special schools for the physically handicapped, and for the last 40 years the Royal Children's Hospital has supplied the medical consultative service for these schools, and, until recently, the bulk of the therapy staff.

This is the point—

Moreover, the voluntary societies have been intimately concerned with such schools and in the case of the Nepean Special School the interested parties are Yooralla and the Nepean Centre for the Physically Handicapped. If Government decides to finance the capital costs of the school through the handicapped person's assistance Act and a voluntary society (similar to the new Glenroy school being built by Yooralla) then the voluntary society has a key role to play. The Nepean Centre for the Physically Handicapped is small and has no expertise and there is no possibility whatever of this body being able to finance and run such a school. Yooralla, however, has the fund backing and expertise because it has a wide public appeal and has been in this field for 50 years.

We are talking about skill, expertise and the well-being of children. If these very hollow members of the Opposition, who are now barking like wolves, had wished to bark on this important question of principle, they should have barked when the Labor Government was in office in Canberra. They would have asked that no subsidies be made available, as a matter of principle and philosophy, to any hospitals and institutions that seek to raise funds.

The honorable member for Footscray has made comments about the injection of funds by the Labor Government when it was briefly in office in Canberra. Of course, the Commonwealth Labor Government was not involved in the principle of whether a person should appeal for funds to the community. It went straight ahead and supplemented funds to the hospitals. It increased subsidies in certain areas so that local voluntary committees of management, with their subsidy contributions, should attract greater funds from the Commonwealth. It did not see this as a matter of important principle and, therefore, if the honorable member for Footscray had such a strong feeling on this matter surely he should have raised it at the time.

I categorically deny that this is one of the few initiatives by the Government of Victoria in the field of the handicapped. It goes without saying that the honorable member for Footscray has reflected as ever against those who plan and provide special services in schools in this State. I repeat that special education in this State has an international stamp; it is respected internationally, and it has attracted a great deal of attention overseas because of its excellence. In certain areas, however, the Government does rely on voluntary contributions. The honorable member calls it charity. The Government relies on charity for the Royal Children's Hospital, the Royal Women's Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital, and a whole range of hospitals and institutions that are involved in the well-being of children and people.

If the philosophy enunciated by the honorable member for Footscray on behalf of the Opposition is so im-
important—he made some comment about the withdrawal of children from the Nepean centre as a protest against whether or not the school should be involved with a charity or a fund-raising group for the provision of services—he and other Labor members would not attend any hospital that from time to time appealed to the public for support. One could well imagine what would happen if that philosophy applied to a pregnant woman who would not go to the Royal Women's Hospital because from time to time it appealed to the public for funds, and to patients who might go to other hospitals because they objected to this principle. The real point in the principle is that it is not obligatory, as the honorable member suggested, to take the begging bowl.

Mr. FORDHAM: You do not provide any alternative.

Mr. SCANLAN: There is an alternative. There is no contradiction between the Minister of Education and myself in the statements we have made because the undertaking given is that the Spastic Children's Society, if and when it becomes involved, will fully and effectively cover all the finances needed to provide the daily medical or allied health professional services at the Nepean centre. In view of the general discussion I have had with the society, the parents of the Nepean centre need not put in a single cent. They will not be prevented from doing so, but the honorable member for Footscray wants to prevent them from doing so. The important point is that there is absolutely no obligation upon the parents at the centre to raise funds.

The honorable member for Footscray grossly distorted the interjection by the honorable member for Burwood. He abused his position in this Parliament by twisting that interjection. The interjection was to the effect that exercise and physical care are essential ingredients in the rehabilitation and treatment of people who are physically handicapped. It speaks much of the ignorance of the Opposition that they do not realize this fact. If one were to adopt the attitude and the policies propounded on this matter by the honorable member for Footscray, as spokesman for the Opposition, there would be a gross denial of educational facilities for other handicapped children in this State. I want it to go on record that that is indeed what the honorable member is recommending. There is a limit.

Mr. CATHIE: Utter nonsense!

Mr. SCANLAN: The honorable member should listen. He has not thought through those things that are before the Parliament at present. The position simply is that there is a limitation upon the finances available for special education, as there is upon the finance available in every area of Government administration. If the Government adopted the proposal of the Opposition and fully committed all its funds to cover the needs of the Nepean centre, it would use up the Government's resources in one centre. It would deny to the Government the funds that are available to it from the voluntary fund raising of the Spastic Children's Society. It would mean the State Government would have to use its own precious resources and deny itself of the Commonwealth funds that are available. One of those priority projects, which I dearly wish to see proceed as soon as possible is another school for the intellectually handicapped on the Mornington Peninsula. But if all the funds available to me are to be put into the Nepean centre I might well be denied the ability to proceed, over a longer period, with this additional school for the intellectually handicapped.

The proposal of the Opposition would mean that the Government would have to defer for a much longer period that additional school on the Mornington Peninsula. It would also mean that the Government would have to turn its back on
money from the Commonwealth and other sources, and the State is not in a position to do that. The attitude of the Opposition is regrettable. It is implicitly dangerous because it would deny the allocation of State funds to other projects, in particular to an additional school for the intellectually handicapped which is needed on the Mornington Peninsula.

The honorable member for Frankston has raised this point with me from time to time and has asked when work will start on the additional school. But the Opposition is proposing something which could prevent that. All available money would have to be put into the one project. I repeat that not a single cent is expected to be raised or contributed by the parents of the children attending the Nepean centre. Under the arrangements which I hope to be able to announce soon the Spastic Children's Society can fully fund its commitment to the Nepean centre.

In determining its attitude on the Nepean centre the Government has had to take into consideration the views of the Hospitals and Charities Commission, with which the centre is registered, and the attitude of the Department of Health.

The Department of Health considered its attitude and a meeting was held in October, 1975. Both the department and the commission stated that the proposed facilities for the physically handicapped at the centre—I am referring to allied health facilities or paramedical facilities—should be provided on the basis that—

(1) The project should be initiated by the committee known as the Nepean Centre for the Physically Handicapped, a body which is registered under the Hospitals and Charities Act. This committee should make an approach to the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and seek a four for one grant under the terms of the Handicapped Persons Assistance Act.

(2) The Education Department should be responsible for the construction of the special school attached to the centre and should, of course, assume responsibility for the staffing and conduct of the educational facility.

(3) The medical need of the pupils should be the responsibility of the medical and other allied health professionals attached to the centre under arrangements made between the committee of the centre, the health department and the Hospitals and Charities Commission.

Of course, in large measure the whole question of the Nepean centre is bound up with the development of the Glen Waverley Special School for the Physically Handicapped. We had to be careful, in determining the future objective and capacity of the Nepean centre, that any announcement about it was delayed until the research work had been completed on the ultimate capacity of the Glen Waverley special centre. As is known, the Glen Waverley centre will cost $4.25 million. It will provide for 240 pupils from infancy to senior level.

Mr. WHITING: Where will the funds come from?

Mr. SCANLAN: They will come from the Commonwealth, the State, and from local contributions, particularly society contributions.

Mr. FORDHAM: Charity!

Mr. SCANLAN: If the honorable member for Footscray has such a hatred or abhorrence of charity he should withdraw from the board of the Western General Hospital and not support the hospital or people in need. It is typical of his attitude that, unlike the rest of the community, he cannot give to those who are in need. The Glen Waverley centre will provide top class, world standard facilities. It is not something which is incidental to providing facilities for the handicapped. It will be a key component in the care of the physically handicapped in this State. It will have a profound effect on the future of the Nepean centre.

Some children who attend the Nepean centre come from municipalities such as Dandenong, Waverley and Springvale and from the general area through Caulfield, Oakleigh, Moorabbin, Sandringham, Mordialloc and Chelsea. Because of the location of the Glen Waverley Special School for
the Physically Handicapped it will be easier for many of these children to attend it than it is for them to attend the Nepean centre. This will result in fewer children attending the Nepean centre. It was originally estimated that provision for perhaps 120 children would be needed at Frankston, but it is now estimated that provision will be needed for between 50 and 60 children, over the next triennium, at the centre which will be for children from the Mornington Peninsula.

The committee of management of the centre has always sought a smaller institution and the philosophy is sound. It has wanted a smaller school with facilities for the physically handicapped and it will get that. It will be possible to reduce the size of the Nepean centre because of the ability of the Glen Waverley centre to cater for children who are now attending the Nepean centre.

The Spastic Children's Society has cared for the physically handicapped of this State over many years.

Mr. FORDHAM: It is shameful that it had to.

Mr. SCANLAN: Is that not typical? The honorable member for Footscray is again reflecting on the goodwill and the administration of the Spastic Children's Society. There appears to be no end to his lack of sensitivity. He should be removed from the pitiful, shadowy position he holds and which he might hold for the rest of his life, as he will not be able to move to this side of the table because of the nature of his party.

The Royal Children's Hospital, which has 106 years' experience in providing skilled help and facilities for the children of this State, will also be involved in planning the Nepean centre, as well as in the provision of services at Glen Waverley. May I ask whether the Opposition will bark and say, "Dreadful, disgraceful", because the Royal Children's Hospital has a number of appeals through the year.

Mr. FORDHAM: It should not need them.

Mr. SCANLAN: They are not compulsory. If the honorable member thinks that this is disgraceful, why did he not raise the matter with the former Labor Party Government in Canberra, as a serious matter of principle. He is displaying belated political opportunities.

Mr. COLLINS: The Labor Party has had a number of appeals to pay for its debts!

Mr. SCANLAN: That is so, but they have not been too successful, and the appeals are becoming bigger and bigger. A committee will be established to advise the new Nepean centre. It will include representatives of the parents and the committee and staff of the school.

I know that the Spastic Children's Society, with its expertise, the Royal Children's Hospital, together with the Department of Health and the Hospitals and Charities Commission, can ensure that we have the best possible allied health and paramedical services anywhere in this nation for the children attending the Nepean centre when the new school is built. As proposed by the Government the future facilities at the Nepean centre will be of world class.

There have been a number of problems in providing for the centre as we would have wished. A problem at one stage was the previous Commonwealth Government's attitude to long-term funding. The Assistant Minister of Education at the time was forced, with some reluctance I know, to revise the whole of the special education building programme as a result of uncertainty. This had some effect on the Nepean centre's future. All in all, we know that in future children will be well cared for at the Nepean centre. I have been concerned that delays have occurred and I can only regret them. It is not the intention of the Government to force the people at the school to take up begging bowls. That is speculation on the
part of the spokesmen for the Opposition. These people will not have to raise one cent, which is important to a centre which has adopted its own philosophy and attitude towards this question.

With the full co-operation of all parties the school could be commenced within the next calendar year.

Mr. HOLDING: The planning of the school!

Mr. SCANLAN: The planning and commencement of the school. Provided we can tap the expertise of the Royal Children’s Hospital and the society that has had an involvement in this area, and provided we have the full co-operation of the Department of Health—which I know we have—we can get on with the job. We cannot do so if there is constant friction, sabotage and interference by the Opposition with the planning committee. It is my hope that rather than there being controversy, and a deliberate attempt to delay the commencement of the project, we will have the full co-operation of the Opposition and interested parties to ensure the well-being of the handicapped children of this State.

This centre is the last component in the delivery of education and facilities for the physically handicapped in this State. It is a key component, in conjunction with the Glen Waverley centre, but it cannot be considered in isolation. It must be considered as part of the over-all policy and planning, of which the major key component at present is the Glen Waverley project.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): I support the motion so ably moved by my colleague, the honorable member for Footscray. The wording of the motion is—

That this House deplores the failure of the Government to provide suitable accommodation and facilities for students at Nepean Centre for Physically Handicapped.

Equally, we could enter into a debate with the Minister, and deplore his failure and that of his Govern-
forced to rely on charity for the money to provide the facilities which are required in their schools. That is the law of this State. My colleague, the honorable member for Footscray, has already indicated that not only does the Education (Handicapped Children) Act lay down quite clearly the responsibilities of the Government, but it also states quite clearly what the law of this State is. That responsibility is set out in section 64, which provides that a parent whose child needs special education shall not be required to contribute to the cost of that special education or the provision of those special services, such as a treatment training block. That is the law of this land and of this State. Why then are these parents being forced to rely on charity?

Mr. SCANLAN: They are not being forced to go to charity.

Mr. CATHIE: They have no choice. If there is any doubt about that being the law of the State, it was spelt out clearly by the former Assistant Minister of Education, who is now the Minister for Social Welfare. He claimed that the legislation which he was proposing to introduce on 1st November, 1973, was a real landmark in the history of the State. Three years later where is that landmark when private charity has to provide funds for a treatment training block at the Nepean Special School?

It was clearly the intention of the Act that parents would not have to raise money or be involved with organizations which would have to raise money to provide the essential services for the school. So, there is a clear responsibility. As the honorable member for Footscray has indicated, a history of evasion and deception has been evident concerning this school and the provision of similar schools.

For a technical school, it is the duty of the State to provide the special equipment and services required to train apprentices and anyone who wants to learn a craft. There is no argument that the State provides the equipment. The people concerned with the technical school are not asked to go into the streets with a begging bowl. They are given the buildings, the equipment, and the facilities by the State. Why should the handicapped children of this State be discriminated against in this harsh and indifferent manner?

In a press release issued by the Minister of Special Education on 17th August, 1976, which has already been referred to, the Minister stated—

I will invite the Spastic Children's Society to provide the funds in order to assist in getting a Federal subsidy to provide the treatment and training block at this school. It is all very well to invite an organization such as the Spastic Children's Society to provide one-fifth of the cost of these facilities. The society has to spend a great deal of its time in using the begging bowl to raise funds. The society plays a key role in the Miss Victoria and the Miss Australia quests. Therefore the Minister of Special Education was prepared to use charity funds for the basic educational needs of children in this State.

The Minister wants the Spastic Children's Society to use the begging bowl on street corners or to degrade the status of women by running charity queen quests. This is the way in which the Minister sees the Government's responsibility to provide the funds for the education of handicapped children.

I wonder whether the honorable member for Frankston supports this principle and whether he will vote for the motion and agree that it is the genuine responsibility of the State to provide the funds, or will he shake a begging bowl on the street corners of Frankston and ask the people to provide the money for the buildings and facilities? It would be shameful if he were to do that!

The Spastic Children's Society of Victoria has been asked officially to contribute, but it is a parent-oriented organization. No consultation has
occurred with the committee of parents or the teachers of the Nepean Special School at Mount Eliza. Somewhere a decision was made and at this stage no meeting has been held with the president or the members of the committee of the Spastic Children’s Society or with the committee of management of the Nepean Special School.

I assume that this is the type of planning that the Government and the Minister believe in. We should not continue to plan for the provision of vital services in such an ad hoc fashion. Teachers at the school have been vitally involved in the long struggle to obtain due recognition and to get the Government to meet its responsibility by providing the funds to build the school.

The honorable member for Footscray has already indicated that the existing building is totally inadequate for the teaching of physically handicapped people and is a potential fire hazard. Appalling conditions still exist as a result of four or five years of neglect. While the Government has evaded its responsibility, the cold, dilapidated and inadequate buildings remain. The corridors are so narrow that it is difficult to manoeuvre wheelchairs at any time, let alone in any emergency.

That is what the children, parents and teachers have had to put up with all these years. It is no wonder that the President of the Victorian Teachers Union wrote to me on 10th June, 1976, stating that the parents rightly claim that all children in this State have the right to a State-provided education. The parents are adamant that they will not revert to the begging bowl to finance an adequate school. Those conditions have been allowed to exist for years.

The honorable member for Footscray has already referred to an announcement in the Frankston Standard of 18th October, 1972, by one of the local members that the controversy was over whether the school would get new school buildings, whether they would be on a new site and would be in operation. The buildings were promised one year ago. Yet the House is still involved in a debate on this subject. The new buildings are still awaited and the contracts still have to be let. We are still waiting for a proper planning committee to be set up.

Mr. Richardson: We are waiting for you to finish.

Mr. Cathie: That may well be the attitude of members on the Government side of the House. They do not want members of the Opposition to speak. They do not want local members to fight for the rights of the people whom they represent. The Government wants to close down Parliament and to govern in its arrogant fashion. I am not surprised to hear those sorts of interjections from Government party members.

Many promises were made, particularly before the 1973 State election. The then member for Frankston, Mr. Meagher, said that it was nonsense for anybody to say that the school was not being built or that the Government would not finance it. He said that any persons who made such statements were only political agitators. In the mind of the Government anyone who says that the Government is not carrying out its obligations is a political agitator.

In the Frankston Standard of 18th April, 1973, just prior to the State election three years ago, Mr. Meagher, the then Chief Secretary, said that the Government would provide the money for essential services, including a paramedical treatment training block. He said that the money would be forthcoming and that was that. Where did the money go? It was not mentioned in any of the State Budgets since 1973, and still we have not got the school. The parents are now being told to go to charity with their begging bowls and then perhaps the necessary facilities will be provided.
It is a shameful attitude for the Government to adopt. It is intolerable discrimination against these children. For those reasons I am happy to support the motion. The discrimination against handicapped children must end now with a clear enunciation of the right and proper principle of a clear duty and obligation of the State to provide all the necessary facilities for the education of children regardless of their disabilities or their needs. These families and their children are entitled to the same treatment as children in State schools receive, where the State Government accepts its responsibility. If the education of handicapped children involves the provision of special equipment it is the clear duty of the State to ensure that the equipment is provided. It should not be necessary to resort to the begging bowl or competition between women to become charity queens to raise funds for this education.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): It is unfortunate that this motion has had to be moved in Parliament in view of the fact that on many occasions the Government has claimed to be giving equal opportunities in education to all children in this State regardless of their physical or mental handicaps. In view of the length of time that has elapsed since the first announcement of the provision of additional school facilities for physically handicapped children in the south-eastern suburbs of the metropolitan area, the Government deserves censure.

During the winter recess I took the trouble to visit the Nepean centre and was appalled at the situation that exists there. The school is overcrowded and the terrain is difficult. Many trees grow around the centre and roads run through the school. In fact, a public road runs between two of the class-rooms and from time to time children must be moved in wheel chairs or walk across those roads in calipers. This requires a great deal of caution. If the wheel chair were to get away from the person in charge of it, a child could be in a serious situation. It was unfortunate that the honorable member for Burwood decided to interject while the honorable member for Footscray was speaking because it appears that the honorable member for Burwood does not know the situation that prevails at the school.

In 1964 the building was occupied as a temporary structure and since then, although additional class-rooms have been added, little has been done to the building. It certainly was not meant to serve its present purpose. In 1973 Mr. Meagher, the former member for the area, promised that a new school would be established and completed in the new financial year. The Hadley Street land was purchased for that purpose.

Again, it is unfortunate that the planning committee has not yet been officially announced, although I believe the members of that committee have been decided. In fact, the honorable member for Frankston is to be a member of the committee. I shall be brief in my comments because I should like to hear his contribution to the debate.

Section 641 of the Education (Handicapped Children) Act has been quoted on two occasions and it is the basis of the criticism that can be levelled at the Government in this matter. Although it is not compulsory for parents of handicapped children to contribute to appeals that are run by the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria, for example, I believe any parent with a conscience under those circumstances would feel morally obliged to contribute. Although the Minister of Education and the Minister of Special Education have stated recently in press releases that parents will not be called upon to contribute, the parents feel they have a moral obligation and will do so whether called upon or not. Other members of the community who support these appeals will also continue to do so. The $200,000 required for
the public contribution to the Nepean school, or the $270,000 for the new venture at Glen Waverley is chicken-feed as far as funds are concerned and I cannot understand why the Minister is quibbling. He appears to be requiring the continuance of a principle that was established many years ago. I do not doubt that for many years concerned people will still contribute towards the needs of these handicapped children in education.

The Minister could easily say that the Government will provide the $200,000 for the new Nepean centre and that the funds provided by the Spastic Children’s Society of Victoria will be used for many other purposes throughout Victoria. I wonder why that has not already occurred to the Minister. The Minister contradicts himself when he talks about the smaller centre at Nepean that will now be developed because in a press release to the Age newspaper of 19th August, 1976, the honorable gentleman stated that as well as facilities being world class, he favoured keeping institutions as small as possible and the Glen Waverley centre could be the last major institution. He also said that the school would accommodate 240 pupils from infant to senior level. That is a real contradiction. I do not know whether the Glen Waverley project will be the last grand gesture of the Minister of Special Education before he is no longer a member of this place or whilst he is still a member of this Government. Even given the best conditions possible the new centre at Nepean will not be fully usable before 1979. The motion moved by the honorable member for Footscray should be supported and members of the National Party will do so.

Mr. WEIDEMAN (Frankston): As has been pointed out in the history of this matter that has been put before the House, the Nepean school was established in 1964. I wish to comment about what has happened since I became the member for Frankston at the election in March of this year. During that time the Labor Party has used this particular matter within my electorate as a major issue. The Labor Party used prominent photographs of the school for its own purposes. The principle put to me on the matter by the teachers, the parents and the students was that physically handicapped children should not be used to promote a particular cause. At the time I thought the publicity was unwarranted and a cheap way of highlighting the problem in my community.

Mr. FOGARTY: What did the honorable member do to eliminate the problem?

Mr. WEIDEMAN: I shall explain what has happened since I was elected. I thank the Minister of Special Education, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Public Works and my colleagues in the electorate who, at my request, have visited this school. I know members of the Opposition have also visited it. Some of my colleagues have been there on more than one occasion.

The honorable member for Footscray commented about the steep slope. The school is situated in one of the most elegant areas of Mount Eliza and people associated with the school would love to keep it in that position and use some more of the facilities. However, as they belong to a geriatric hospital that is not possible. I should be happy for the school to remain there because it would make an ideal location for it.

Mr. FORDHAM: That is not what I was told.

Mr. WEIDEMAN: A slope has been mentioned. The photograph used by the Labor Party showed a slope at the front of the street onto the public road. It is not a public road but a road within the bounds of the hospital, and it is used basically by people who go to and from the school and hospital. There is another
major entrance at Williams Road. Very little traffic travels on that internal road. The people who use the road are in wheel chairs or on calipers and often find it difficult to move about. Movement within the school area is a problem. The Minister of Public Works, through the Minister of Special Education, has obtained a portable class-room to aid with the problems of accommodation.

Any person who goes to the school will find that these children are extremely happy in their environment. It is not ideal, but they are happy. The ratio of teachers to pupils is 1 : 3. We have been told by the Minister of Education that an ideal teacher-pupil ratio in the primary and secondary school areas is of the order of 1 : 19. This school has a population of some 30 teachers and orderlies to 90 children. The students are brought to the school by two buses and by taxis and we have heard of the two or four-hour journeys which are necessary to move some of them to and from school, but that situation will be alleviated when the Glen Waverley project is completed, because most of the students are from the peninsula area. That will be a benefit for the honorable member for Carrum in whose electorate the new school will be situated. Of course, I should like the school to be retained in Frankston, but that does not seem to be possible.

The matter of charity was discussed by myself with the teachers and parents involved and I point out that there are many libraries, tuck shops, gymnasiums, and other types of building and capital works projects in the primary and secondary school system which would not have been possible without the work done by those who were interested in the projects.

In my electorate the library at the Davey Street school could never have been built without the assistance of the parents who built it and thereby gave the children a wonderful opportunity. The Woorinyan Day Training Centre for Retarded Children within the Frankston area needed a workshop which was to cost $150,000 and the local community made it a community project, involving local clubs and people, and raised more than $30,000. The centre now has a workshop which provides employment for 60 handicapped people.

There has been some delay in the formation of the planning committee for the new school because of a hold-up by people replying to invitations to form the committee. My previous experience on a planning committee has been in connection with the Walkers Road school, which is in my electorate. I found that a most interesting and exciting experience. The committee consisted of people from all walks of life who were interested in the development of the school and included teachers, members of the community and environmentalists, all of whom were able to put forward their views.

The ground rules have been set for the development of the school within the community and I am sure that the teachers and parents and all others on the planning committee—on which I have been offered a position—will work together to give the community a school which is suitable for the environment.

In conclusion I should like to thank the local members and the Ministers for their encouragement of this project within my electorate. This was the main issue used by the Labor Party during the last election and I regret that it has taken such a long time to bring the project to fruition. But it has taken only three months for this Government to solve the problem and the school will be available for 60 students in the very near future.

The House divided on the motion
(Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes  ...  26
Noes  ...  48

Majority against the motion  ...  22

Mr. Weideman.
Victoria Grants [9 SEPTEMBER, 1976.] Commission Bill. 2265

AYES.
Mr. Amos Mr. Lind
Mr. Cain Mr. McInnes
Mr. Cathie Mr. Mutton
Mr. Culpin Mr. Roper
Mr. Doube Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Edmunds Mr. Simpson
Mr. Evans
(Gippsland East) Mr. Trevin
Mr. Fogarty Mr. Trezise
Mr. Fordham Mr. Whiting
Mr. Ginifer Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Hann Tellers:
Mr. Jones Mr. Crabb
Mr. Kirkwood Mr. Jasper

NOES.
Mr. Austin Mr. McKellar
Mr. Balfour Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. Birrell Mr. McLaren
Mr. Borthwick Mr. Maclellan
Mr. Burgin Mrs. Patrick
Mr. Coleman Mr. Plowman
Mr. Collins Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Cox Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Crellin Mr. Reece
Mr. Dixon Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ebery Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Evans Mr. Skoggs
Mr. Francis (Ballarat North) Mr. Smith
(South Barwon)
Mr. Gude Mr. Smith
(Murrinbool)
Mr. Guy Mr. Stephen
Mr. Hamer Mr. Suggett
Mr. Hayes Mr. Templeton
Mr. Jennings Mr. Thompson
Mr. Jona Mr. Vale
Mr. Lacy Mr. Weideman
Mr. Lieberman Mr. Williams
Mr. Loxton Tellers:
Mr. McCabe Mr. Kennett
Mr. McClure Mr. McArthur

PAIRS.
Mr. Holding Mr. Wood
Mr. Ross-Edwards Mr. Dunstan
Mr. Wilton Mr. Billing

The sitting was suspended at 1.2 p.m. until 2.3 p.m.

VICTORIA GRANTS COMMISSION BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Honorable members from all parties in this Parliament have long accepted that local government today serves people rather than just property and that the ratepayer could no longer reasonably be called upon to finance the full amount of increasing costs through the property tax which rates constitute.

The Victorian Government has consistently argued over a number of years that some access by local government to the national pool of taxation was not only warranted but also essential to assist in the maintenance and provision of services to people and, in some measure, to alleviate the burden of an ever-increasing property tax. Furthermore, we argued that a fixed percentage of Commonwealth income tax revenue should be set aside for local government and that every municipality should be entitled as of right to a guaranteed amount calculated on a basis which took into account both population and the area served. Under our concept these basic payments were to provide a starting point to be supplemented as appropriate by further assistance impartially determined having regard to the special needs and disabilities of particular municipalities.

The Government was delighted when the coalition parties—then in opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament—incorporated these principles into their new federalism policy released in September, 1975. Following the election of the coalition parties to Government in the Federal sphere last December, the detailed task began of developing those policies into workable, fair and effective programmes.

I am happy to say that this was achieved with remarkable harmony over the course of three Premiers Conferences held in February, April and June of this year. The harmony and unanimity which existed was not of course fortuitous: it arose following intensive staff work and preparation at officer level in our own and other States and of Commonwealth–State officer conferences to prepare the ground for the meetings between heads of Government. I desire to pay a special tribute to the competence and dedication and expertise of the Victorian officers involved, including those made available by the Municipal Association of Victoria with whom we worked in closest collaboration on every point in the exercise.
The results are now history. The Commonwealth agreed to provide $140 million for distribution by way of untied grants for local government in 1976–77 as against $79·8 million in the previous year—an increase of more than 75 per cent. That figure is equivalent to 1·52 per cent of Commonwealth personal income tax collections for the year just past and this will represent the minimum percentage of income tax made available for local government in future years. The Prime Minister has undertaken to review this percentage as Budget circumstances permit and that any change will be upward rather than downward. I should mention that the States and local government had sought a figure of 2 per cent of income tax revenue but recognized that achievement of that objective might not be immediately possible in view of the Commonwealth's Budget difficulties at the time.

For the current year Victoria's share of the Australian total is $35·4 million or 25·28 per cent. This apportionment was recommended by the Commonwealth Grants Commission whose recommendation we agreed in advance to accept. The apportionment between the States will be reviewed from time to time in the light of changes occurring in the local government structure. Any changes in apportionment between the States in the future are, however, likely to be minimal only.

Determination of the way in which the sums available to each State should be apportioned between its municipalities was, of course, of paramount consideration and it quickly became apparent that conditions differed markedly from State to State and that a satisfactory solution for one State would produce demonstrable anomalies if applied to another. Flexibility to meet differing needs and conditions in different parts of Australia was therefore essential. After studying the submissions of all States and the advice of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the Premiers Conference agreed that the minimum to be distributed by any State by way of as-of-right payments—which became known as Element A—should be 30 per cent of that State's total entitlement but that individual States would be free to adopt a higher Element A distribution where this seemed appropriate to their particular circumstances. It was also agreed that these as-of-right payments were to be based predominantly on population but that they could be weighted for area and any other factors which might be agreed between the particular State and the Commonwealth. The balance of the State's entitlement was to be distributed to meet special needs and disabilities of particular municipalities upon principles akin to those adopted in the past by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. These latter distributions became known as Element B.

It was also agreed that the individual allocations would in future years be undertaken by State Grants Commissions which should be established in a manner which guaranteed their independence, expertise and impartiality. Of necessity, however, a less formal approach needed to be utilized in advance of legislation in respect of the current year's distributions.

Having regard to the particular circumstances of Victoria, we determined that the most appropriate percentage for Element A in this State was 40 per cent and that in turn Element A should be distributed as to 85 per cent on the basis of population and as to 15 per cent on the basis of area. We arrived at this basis of distribution after detailed computer analyses of many alternatives, and this was accepted by the Commonwealth as the most equitable for Victorian conditions. It was apparent, of course, that the Element A distribution would not result in satisfactory allocations taken alone, and the role of the further distributions on the basis of needs and disabilities was to
bring about a fair and proper balance. The Element A calculation served merely to establish the minimum entitlement of a particular municipality.

We regarded it as vital that municipalities should know the amount of their allocations before the commencement of the municipal financial year so that these could be taken into account in a proper and responsible way in determining estimates and rates for the new year.

To achieve this result we appointed an Interim State Grants Committee and charged it with the responsibility of independently preparing a recommended apportionment between Victoria’s 211 municipalities on the basis outlined above—and of doing so, if possible, by 31st August.

That deadline was achieved and the report was received on 30th August, presented to Cabinet that morning, adopted in full without reservation and publicly released immediately afterward. On the same day advices were forwarded to all municipalities and members of Parliament.

Naturally when faced with the impartial assessment of a court, commission or interim committee of this kind there are always those who will feel that they should have got more, but they are hardly the best judges of their own cause in comparison with the needs of municipalities throughout the State as a whole. Generally the allocations to Victorian municipalities have met with a highly favourable response and I believe the interim committee and the working party which assisted it deserve great credit. The committee was led by Mr. Roy Harle, who is Chairman of the Local Government Advisory Board, an accountant and farmer who has had experience as a mayor, a councillor and a commissioner of the Board of Works. His deputy was Mr. George Pentland, Secretary for Local Government who, prior to his appointment to that position last year, served for 26 continuous years as a municipal clerk. The third member was Mr. Ian Pawsey, Deputy Secretary of the Municipal Association of Victoria, a member of the Municipal Clerks Board and himself a qualified municipal administrator.

At our request the Commonwealth made available the services of Mr. David Moye of the Commonwealth Grants Commission to assist and work with both the working party and the interim committee. Mr. Moye is a graduate of Hawkesbury Agricultural College and has been a practical farmer as well as serving in the Commonwealth successively with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the Treasury and the Grants Commission. In Canberra he graduated in economics at the Australian National University. His unique blend of experience fits him to appreciate the problems of both city and country municipalities and there is no doubt that as the Grants Commissioner dealing with Victorian cases last year, he won the respect and confidence of local government throughout this State. During the past two years he has made a personal inspection of every Victorian municipality at least once, and in the great majority of cases, twice. I desire to record our appreciation to him for his invaluable assistance.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide for a permanent Victoria Grants Commission with guaranteed autonomy and independence to continue the programme of unconditional assistance to local government which has been embarked upon.

The commission will consist of three members, at least two of whom will come from the local government stream and whose office is secure save in the extreme circumstances referred to in clauses 7 and 8 of the Bill. No commissioner can be dismissed except by resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

The Bill in clauses 10 and 12 expressly recognizes the as-of-right entitlement of every municipality in the State pursuant to Element A and sets
out clearly that in making the over-all determination the commission shall consider—

(a) the special needs and disabilities of the particular municipality;

(b) the effort made by the municipality to function effectively and provide reasonable services; and

(c) any other matters which in the opinion of the commission are of special significance in relation to the municipality.

The commission will regulate its own activities but will seek submissions from councils and conduct inspections, investigations and hearings to enable it to properly carry out its functions. Any hearings will normally be open to the public, although there may well be the odd occasion where the commission or the council for good reason desires that a particular discussion be in private. The purpose of these visits, which have been so appreciated by municipalities throughout the State, is of course simply to ensure that the commission is as fully informed as practicable of the situation, needs and problems of every municipality.

The grants, as I have said, will be absolutely untied and free from all conditions whatsoever. The commission will have no power, directly or indirectly, to lay down any requirements as a pre-condition of a grant being made. The result is that the way in which the allocation is used—provided this is lawful—will be entirely within the discretion of the particular council who will be responsible to its own ratepayers for that decision. I cannot avoid expressing the hope, however, that councils will bear in mind that the whole basis of our argument for these funds was to provide some relief to the ratepayer from the national pool of taxation.

Just as open submissions may be made by the Minister for Planning on behalf of the Government to the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal, so too the Government has reserved the right through the Minister for Local Government to make written submissions to the commission in relation to general issues before it. The necessity for these submissions to be absolutely open is recognized by a requirement that any submission by the Minister shall be published in the Government Gazette and tabled in the House.

A list of annual allocations recommended by the commission will be supplied to every member of the Parliament and to each municipality, as well as being tabled in the House as part of the commission's annual report. The Minister may refer further matters relating to local government finance for inquiry by the commission, and information upon these will also be included in the annual report tabled in Parliament.

The new scheme of financial support for local government, reinforced by the provisions in this Bill, represents a great stride forward for local government, but further steps along the road are still required. We are pledged to do our utmost to further the cause of local government in every way possible at both the national and the State level.

The total cost of the Victoria Grants Commission and its support and research staff will be borne by my Government to ensure that the funds made available by the Commonwealth will be distributed in full to local government without any deduction whatsoever.

In presenting this important measure, I have dealt in the main with its philosophy and principles, rather than with the detail of the clauses. However, notes on the individual clauses have been prepared and are available for honorable members in the Papers Room. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), the debate was adjourned.
It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 23.

**MELBOURNE UNDERGROUND RAIL LOOP (FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS) BILL.**

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill implements the decision of the Government to reduce the contributions required by the Melbourne City Council and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works towards the cost of the Melbourne underground rail loop project.

The Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Act passed by Parliament in 1970 provided for a sharing of the interest and loan redemption payments of the project between the railways, the Melbourne City Council, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the general taxpayer. The legislation required the Melbourne City Council and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to each pay one-quarter of the annual interest and loan redemption payments with the balance being met by the rail users, by means of a levy on suburban rail fares, and from the Consolidated Fund.

The unprecedented increases in construction costs and interest rates in recent years have made it necessary for the Government to review the way in which interest and loan redemption payments are to be met. Legislation introduced last year provided that the Melbourne City Council would not be required to pay in any one year more than 10 per cent of its general rate revenue, and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works more than 20 per cent of its metropolitan improvement rate revenue, in the respective preceding financial year.

This legislation was introduced with the intention of covering the situation in the short run until the project was completed and it was possible to review the matter on a permanent basis in the light of known costs and conditions. Following further representations from the Melbourne City Council and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works earlier this year, the Government reviewed the matter again and decided to amend the basis of contributions on a permanent basis at this stage. Under this basis the council will be required to pay 10 per cent of the annual interest and loan redemption payments of the loop project and the Board of Works 15 per cent of these costs instead of the original figure of 25 per cent in each case.

These new arrangements will operate from the beginning of the 1976-77 financial year and replace the limit on maximum contributions introduced by the amending legislation last year.

Honorable members are aware of the importance of the underground rail loop in upgrading the Melbourne public transport system. The loop will enable the capacity of the suburban rail network to be doubled—it is the key to other rail improvements now being constructed to give Melbourne a better fixed track rapid transit system.

Construction of the loop is progressing well. Major works this year include the upper platform tunnels in Parliament station, excavation for Flagstaff station and the construction of the overpass for two extra tracks between Spencer Street and Flinders Street stations. Planning work is continuing on the design of booking halls, station entrances and services required for efficient and convenient passenger movement. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. JONES (Melbourne), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 23.
WATER SUPPLY WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Authority is sought in the 1976 Water Supply Works and Services Bill for expenditure of $57 million on works of water supply, irrigation, drainage, sewerage, flood protection and river improvement throughout the rural areas of the State of Victoria. The Bill provides authority for expenditure during the period of approximately twelve months until the next Water Supply Works and Services Bill has been approved by Parliament.

Honorable members should note that works and services Acts authorize expenditure during calendar years and that actual cash allocations, which are made by the Treasurer in accordance with priorities determined by the Government, relate to financial years.

The amount allocated for expenditure on works during the 1976-77 financial year is $40,955 million. The expenditure of this sum is authorized partly by the provisions of the Water Supply Works and Services Bill presently before the House and partly by the preceding Water Supply Works and Services Act. Although portion of the amount included in the Bill is a reauthorization of expenditure included in the previous Act, this does not mean that there was any shortfall of expenditure in 1975-76 when, in fact, only $33,957 out of a cash allocation of $33,071,542 was unexpended.

Parliamentary authority is sought in the Bill for $57 million so that works may be continued beyond the end of the present financial year until another works and services Bill is passed at the end of 1977.

The explanatory statement and memorandum which accompany the Bill provide details of works proposed to be undertaken and amounts to be expended during the current financial year. Whereas mention is made in the memorandum of the interest subsidy paid to sewerage authorities, a similar subsidy has also been paid to waterworks trusts since 1953-54 amounting to $3,467,801. The actual subsidy paid in 1975-76 was $902,799. Additional private borrowing allocations have been provided to waterworks trusts in 1976-77 to enable them to commence works designed to avoid severe rationing and to install water treatment plants in accordance with the Government's announced policy as set out in the rural policy speech in March, 1976.

Approval of the Bill will enable the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and other authorities operating under the various Acts to continue, within the limits of funds made available, essential works planned for the most efficient use of the water resources of the State. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CATHIE (Carrum), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 23.

DENTISTS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of this measure is to provide for development of the dental profession in Victoria by establishing a scheme for the registration of specialist practitioners, and by permitting dentists to practise in partnership under the name of the partnership.

In addition, the Bill proposes to increase the maximum levels at which the various fees under the Act may be fixed by regulation, to provide for the payment of fees and allowances to members and co-opted members of committees appointed under the Act, to make certain alterations to the registration requirements for dental auxiliaries and to increase the penalty for contraventions of the Act.
The Dental Board of Victoria has advised the Government that there is a need to recognize dental specialties and to provide for the registration of specialist dental practitioners. Accordingly, the board has submitted details of the specialties which it considers should be recognized and has recommended that the procedures necessary for such recognition and registration should be written into the Act. The Government has adopted the recommendation.

Clause 2 inserts a new Part IV A into the principal Act to provide for the registration of specialist practitioners as follows—

(i) Sections 28A, 28B and 28C establish a Specialist Practitioners Qualifications Committee consisting of five persons appointed by the Governor in Council for a period not exceeding three years. The appointees are—

The President of the Dental Board who shall be chairman;
A member of the Dental Board;
A representative of the Victorian Committee of the Royal Australian College of Dental Surgeons, such person being chosen from a panel of three names submitted to the Minister;
A representative of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Dental Association, such person being chosen from a panel of three names submitted to the Minister; and
A person representing the Faculty of Dental Science of the University of Melbourne, such person being chosen from a panel of three names submitted to the Minister.

(ii) Section 28D establishes the functions of the committee which are to determine whether an applicant for registration as a specialist practitioner possesses a qualification of high standing and relevant to a special branch of dentistry and is practising in any one of the special branches of dentistry specified in the section or by Order in Council. Upon being so satisfied the committee certifies to the board that the applicant is in fact a specialist practitioner in a specialist branch of dentistry and is qualified for registration as such. The board may then effect the registration.

A transitory period of three years is allowed to enable the committee to issue a certificate of qualification to an applicant who satisfies the committee that he has been practising in a specialist branch of dentistry in such circumstances as to warrant his being regarded as a specialist practitioner. Provision has been made in clause 3 for any person who is refused such a certificate by the committee in either of the two circumstances to appeal against such refusal to a judge of the Supreme Court in chambers.

(iii) Section 28E establishes a Register of Specialist Practitioners.

(iv) Section 28F prohibits any person from holding himself out as a specialist practitioner unless he is registered as such.

(v) Section 28G enables the Governor in Council to designate by Order additional specialist branches of dentistry for the purposes of the new Part.

The scheme presently contained in Part VI of the Medical Practitioners Act 1970 has been largely followed in setting up the specialist practitioners registration provisions in the Bill.

I turn now to the other matters contained in the Bill. At present a dentist may practise only in his own name, but where he is in group practice he may adopt such description as is permitted by the regulations. The board has advised the Government that the present situation in this regard is unsatisfactory and has recommended that matters relating to group practice and practice in partnership by dentists and specialist dentists should be recognized and controlled in a manner not unlike that which prevails under the Medical Practitioners Act.
Accordingly clause 4 (a) of the Bill is designed to—

(1) permit a specialist practitioner to practise in partnership only with a specialist practitioner;

(2) prohibit specialist practitioners from making or agreeing to make any payment to any person in respect of the referral of a patient to him by a dentist;

(3) prohibit any person other than a specialist practitioner from entering into a partnership agreement with a specialist practitioner; and

(4) prohibit any person from accepting any payment in respect of the referral of a patient to a specialist practitioner.

The new section 30A gives effect to these requirements and prohibitions. Clause 4 (b) amends section 36 of the principal Act to expand the means by which a person is permitted to practise dentistry. The amendment is effected by the substitution of a new sub-section (2) which provides that a dentist may practise—

(a) as an employee of the Crown, the council of a municipality, a society registered under the Friendly Societies Act 1958 or the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1958 or any other body which upon application has been approved by the board for the purpose;

(b) in partnership with another dentist or dentists;

(c) as a salaried assistant employed by a dentist or a partnership of dentists; and

(d) as a locum-tenens subject to the regulations.

Clause 4 (c) inserts a new sub-section (2A) into the section to require any dentist who enters into or retires from a partnership or who is a member of a partnership which is varied or dissolved to notify the board in writing within 28 days of such entry retirement dissolution or variation.

Mr. Jona.

The purpose of this amendment is to enable the board to be aware of partnership arrangements or alterations to partnerships. The new sub-section will in no way enable the board to control or regulate financial arrangements made by a partnership of dentists.

Clause 4 (d) enables dentists, including specialist practitioners practising in partnership, to adopt such classes of names and descriptions as the regulations permit. Clause 5 amends section 7 of the principal Act to increase the maximum levels at which the several fees payable under the Act may be set by regulation. These fees are payable to the Dental Board and are applied to defraying the expenses of the board in carrying out the provisions of the Act and in furthering dental science and education. The proposed increases are warranted in view of the rising costs of administration.

The increases in the maximum levels are—

on application for registration as a dentist—from $15 to $30;

for annual renewal of registration as a dentist—from $15 to $30;

for any certificate of registration—from $4 to $5;

for inspection of any register—from $1 to $2;

for alteration of any register—from $2 to $3;

for registration of any additional qualification—from $4 to $5.

In addition a new fee which is to be paid on application for registration as a specialist practitioner is included in the amendment. The maximum level at which it may be set is $10.

I turn now to clause 6 which—

(a) amends section 8 of the principal Act to enable members of a committee under the Act to receive fees, travelling allowances and other allowances as are prescribed, and
(b) amends section 9 to give the Governor in Council power to make regulations in respect of the following matters—

(i) fees and allowances for board members, members of any committee and for persons co-opted to the Specialist Practitioners Qualification Committee;

(ii) classes of names and descriptions that may be adopted by dentists practising in partnership and specialist practitioners; and

(iii) forms for the purposes of the Act.

Clause 7 amends section 29 to make it clear that the prerequisites necessary before a licence may be granted to a dental auxiliary shall be that the applicant satisfies the standards prescribed and pays the prescribed fee. In addition a new sub-section (7A) is inserted to provide that a dental auxiliary's licence shall not be renewed until the holder pays the prescribed renewal fee.

The amendments are proposed for the following reason. In the course of examining certain draft regulations providing for the licensing of school dental therapists, Parliamentary Counsel advised that although it was the intention of the Act to require that payment of a fee should be a prerequisite to the granting of a licence or renewal of a licence under Part V. of the Dentists Act 1972, the scheme of the Act does not make such intention clear. Doubt about the validity of demanding a fee arises from the fact that no mention is made in Part V. of the payment of fees as a condition to the granting or renewal of a licence under the Part. Counsel advised that section 29 should be appropriately amended to make it clear that the payment of the prescribed fees is a prerequisite to the granting or renewal of a licence. Clause 7 achieves the desired result.

Clause 8 amends section 44 of the principal Act to increase the penalty which may be imposed upon a person who, not being a dentist or a dental auxiliary, contravenes any of the provisions of the Act. The present penalties have remained unchanged for many years and are completely out of proportion with the penalty for similar offences under the Dental Technicians Act 1972. The board is concerned that the existing penalties have very little effect in deterring the illegal practice of dentistry and has recommended that the penalty levels be increased substantially.

The Government agrees with the board's recommendation and proposes to increase the minimum penalty from $10 to $200, the maximum from $200 to $1,000 and the daily penalty of $10 for a continuing offence to $200. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 23.

COUNTY COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for two simple machinery amendments of sections 14 and 24 of the County Court Act 1958 and for the addition of a new section 54B relating to the payment of sums of money to persons incapable of managing their own affairs. The latter amendment adopts the principles of a report by the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee in respect of Supreme Court actions.

Clause 2 provides for amendments of sections 14 (2) and 14 (3) which deal with the pensions of County Court judges on their retirement and the pensions of their widows.

Prior to the amendment of the County Court Act in 1974 to provide for the office of Chief Judge, section 10 (1) prescribed the same annual salary and allowance for all judges of the court—a special allowance for
the chairman of the judges was prescribed by another sub-section. At that time, the pension provisions in sections 14 (1) and 14 (3), which refer to a proportion of "the annual salary for the time being fixed under sub-section (1) of section 10", were appropriate.

However, since the 1974 amendments, section 10 (1) fixes two rates of annual salary and allowance—one for the Chief Judge and the second for the other judges of the court—and the pension provisions in sections 14 (1) and 14 (3) require verbal amendment to accord with this change.

Clause 3 amends section 24 which deals with the duty of the County Court bailiffs and the fees payable to them. Section 24 (3) provides, in effect, that out of the fees payable to them the bailiffs shall provide for the execution of the duties for which the fees are payable, and it specifies that the fees shall be paid "upon the performance of such duties but not before".

In fact, the procedure that has been adopted in the County Court registry at Melbourne for some years is contrary to section 24 (3). Bailiff's fees are collected in cash when each warrant is lodged for issue and are brought to account in separate entries in the Warrant Trust Account. At the end of each day the warrants are forwarded to the bailiff with a single cheque for the fees.

In order to comply with the Act it would be necessary to retain each fee in the trust account until the warrant was returned by the bailiff, and the fee paid out at a later stage. There would be about 10,000 entries to be carried forward each month, and a large number of cheques would eventually have to be written. The bailiff would be operating with a backlog of payments amounting to about $160,000 and the warrant section of the County Court registry could face serious administrative difficulties.

Mr. Maclellan.

There does not appear to be any objection in principle to the existing system, apart from the fact that it is contrary to the section—it is efficient and effective, and is easy to check and maintain. In the circumstances, it is proposed that section 24 (3) be altered to repeal the words "and such fees shall be paid to the bailiff upon the performance of such duties but not before".

Clause 4 provides for the addition of a new Division 8A to Part II. of the Act. This involves a new section 54B.

In August, 1966, the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee recommended legislation to enable an order for payment into court, and investment of moneys awarded to a person incapable of managing his affairs. The committee had in mind persons who were not certifiably insane, and pointed out that the procedures available under the Public Trustee Act were somewhat cumbersome and in some circumstances unsatisfactory to a plaintiff.

I add that those requirements provide for two independent medical examinations to be separately carried out and this is not always possible for the plaintiff.

Action on the report was deferred, pending consideration by the committee of another question relating to the payment of damages—damages that might arise from industrial accidents as opposed to insanity and incapacity that might arise from an injury rather than a cause.

Although the report of the committee was in respect of Supreme Court actions, the principles of the recommended legislation apply also to the County Court. An addition has been made to the proposal of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee to require evidence of the opinion of legally qualified medical practitioners before an order can be made under the proposed new section. Copies of the report of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee are available for interested members.
shall make them available to members of the National Party and also to members of the Opposition if that is required.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Bundoora), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 23.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing)
I move—
That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to effect two small but quite important amendments to the Co-operative Housing Societies Act 1958. To further assist families in the lower-income group who are endeavouring to obtain their own homes, the Government intends to increase to $25,000 the maximum amount of advance which may be made by a society to any member.

Section 76 (1) of the principal Act provides that, in any case where a society makes an advance which, when reduced by the value of the share capital of the member, exceeds 80 per cent but does not exceed 95 per cent of the value of the security, the Treasurer of Victoria may indemnify the society against such of any loss sustained by the society in respect of that advance as is directly attributable to the fact that the net amount of advance exceeds 80 per cent of the value of the security. The present advance limit, which is tied to that provision, was fixed at $22,500 by a similar amendment passed by Parliament towards the end of 1975.

Increases in the costs of obtaining a home continue to keep pace with the saving capacity of prospective homeseekers in the lower income groups. The proposed increase in the advance limit contained in clause 2 will effectively reduce the deposit gap and so give the lower-income families the opportunity to acquire homes of their own.

I have already made reference to the fact that the Treasurer may indemnify certain advances made by societies. Section 77 (1) of the principal Act currently limits the aggregate liability which the Treasurer may incur under indemnities to $5 million. At 30th June last the liability under indemnities subsisting stood at $4,889,884. Naturally, to permit societies to make high percentage advances to persons in the lower-income group, it is necessary to raise the existing limit.

Clause 3 proposes that the aggregate liability which the Treasurer may incur under indemnities be increased to $7.5 million.

Honorable members will be interested to learn that, in the 31 years since the first co-operative housing society was formed, nearly 90,000 advances have been made, of which 11,151 or more than 12 per cent have been indemnified advances.

The fact that societies have raised more than $630 million from all sources, and only six claims involving a total of less than $4,000 have been settled by payments from the Consolidated Fund, amply demonstrates the outstanding success of co-operative housing in this State, and is an assurance of the continued support of the Government.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 16.

HOME FINANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing):
I move—
That this Bill be now read a second time.
Its purpose is to make a small amendment to the Home Finance Act to raise the valuation limit on land and dwelling erected or to be erected thereon from $30,000 to $37,500.

The valuation limit of $30,000 was fixed in April, 1975, but the Government now believes that this limit requires adjustment in view of current building costs to enable more people to avail themselves of a first mortgage loan from the Home Finance Trust.

As a matter of interest to honorable members I would point out that the trust has already made more than 5,600 first mortgage loans and over 3,600 second mortgage loans, involving advances of $42,822,800 and $5,067,540 respectively.

I am certain that all members will support this small amendment and I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 16.

ADJOURNMENT.

SCHOOL SIGNS—BLUE ARMY—ALLEGED THREAT TO MEMBER—LIFE LINE MELBOURNE—TALENT HOUSE ADVERTISEMENTS—COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMME—PAYMENT TO YOUNG EMPLOYEES—GRESSWELL REHABILITATION CENTRE—NOISE LEVEL AT ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY'S SHOWGROUNDS.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I raise a matter with the Minister acting for the Chief Secretary. It relates to the Road Safety and Traffic Authority. I refer to the small town of Corop on the Midland Highway. The Corop Primary School is situated to the west of the Waranga western main channel. Because of a lack of safety signs advising motorists of the school—there is only one sign on the eastern side of the channel bridge—motorists proceeding from Shepparton along the Midland Highway towards Elmore, generally at a fairly high speed, cross the bridge but do not know the actual location of the school. This has created extremely dangerous situations, particularly when children are boarding and alighting from school buses and walking to the school.

A need exists for more signs in the area and perhaps larger, more noticeable ones. I point to the example of the Ballendella school where two signs on each side of the road prior to the school attract the attention of motorists. I ask the Minister to take the matter up urgently with the Road Safety and Traffic Authority. One accident has already occurred at the spot and there is a danger of others occurring in the future.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I raise a matter that lies within the administration of the Minister of Labour and Industry and of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. I refer to the activities of the organization known as the Blue Army and the financial arrangements made to finance persons who sign agreements with that organization. The particular case to which I refer is that of a 34-year-old boilermaker-welder who was engaged in the engineering industry and was working part-time because of the situation in the industry at the time. The Blue Army promised that it would have a $4,000 job ready for him and he signed a contract with Mutual Acceptance Ltd. to pay a fee of $695 to the Blue Army for the work contract. Over approximately two and a half months the man was given twenty jobs. He carried out only five of those for which he was paid $180. Of the balance of the jobs seven could not be performed because they involved different trades, carpentry and so forth, and this gentleman found that the persons involved with the other jobs either were not ready for the work to go ahead or had employed somebody else to carry it out.
The Blue Army had not been requested to pay a tradesman for them. The gentleman was therefore left without those jobs. He has records to substantiate his claims.

When he signed this contract with the Blue Army he also signed a number of documents with Mutual Acceptance Ltd. The interest rate on the contract was a flat rate in excess of 24 per cent. Not only is the Blue Army exploiting the unemployment situation by offering work under contracts which are not being honoured but an arrangement exists between the Blue Army and Mutual Acceptance Ltd, whereby people pay extortionate interest rates on money that is loaned to make contracts operate.

On approaching the Blue Army about the problem the worker was given assurances that the contract would be waived and the payments would not need to continue. However, within three weeks the man received a writ for full payment and is in the process of having to meet that contract. I ask the Minister of Labour and Industry, firstly, to investigate the operations of the Blue Army; secondly, to investigate the contracts that are being made in respect of the financing of operations; and, thirdly, to warn people, who in times of unemployment are seeking alternative methods of income, that there are grave dangers in becoming involved with the Blue Army or Mutual Acceptance Ltd.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): I draw the attention of the Premier to answers given by him on Tuesday and today in the House with respect to the questions that I raised with him. Those questions were the subject of correspondence which I had with the Premier yesterday when I caused a letter to be delivered to him by hand enclosing copies of press reports. The reports purported to convey accurately statements made on behalf of the honorable member for Westernport and/or persons speaking on his behalf. In the letter I made it perfectly clear to the Premier that Her Majesty's Opposition is not concerned to waste valuable Parliamentary time in the pursuit of questions relating to internal problems of the Liberal Party.

The matter which causes me great concern is that in the Age of 30th July, 1976, it was suggested by a public relations consultant, who stated that he was acting on behalf of the honorable member for Westernport, that allegations of threat of blackmail and murder were made against the honorable member.

A threat of blackmail and/or murder that is made against any citizen in the community is a serious matter, but if the threat is made against any member of this House because of his attitude to legislation or his general political philosophies it is an extremely serious matter and goes clearly to the privileges and prerogatives of this House.

An allegation so serious in its importance cannot be allowed to lie. If the statement is true it ought to be the subject of a statement by the Premier. The House has long and well-established procedures by which it is possible to protect any honorable member in that situation. If the statement is not true, that should be said and the reputation of this Parliament should be protected. It is almost cavalier to the point of gross irresponsibility for the Premier to say, firstly, that he was not really aware of these allegations, and, secondly, when I gave him copies of the press report, that he has not had sufficient time to make a decision and that the reports are a bit general. These press reports were not allegations made by members of the Opposition but allegations contained in the daily press as a result of statements made for or on behalf of a member whom the Premier purports to lead. The proper course is for the Leader to pursue such a matter.

Mr. HAMER: The reports are a bit general.
Mr. HOLDING: I do not know whether the Premier is serious. It was suggested by a public relations officer. The statement that a member of this Parliament has been threatened with blackmail and/or murder, has been made. I do not know if that is true. The honorable member for Box Hill laughs. He may know more than I do, but if it is a laughing matter perhaps we should all simply dismiss it as a joke. If it is a joke the Premier should say so and we will all have a good laugh and that will be the end of it, but if there is one skerrick of truth in it, the Premier is under the strictest obligation to make a full statement on the matter to Parliament. We do not want to have a Westernport "Watergate situation" in this State.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister representing the Attorney-General. Life Line Melbourne is a telephone welfare agency, and honorable members will be well aware of its work. The board of management of that organization is a partnership of business, community, church and Government concern. In the 1975-76 financial year the income from agency fund raising amounted to 56 per cent of total income and 43 per cent of total budget expenditure. The Federal Government subsidy under the Hospital and Health Services Commission totalled $19,672. The State Government grant amounted to $28,500. The organization faces an enormous shortfall for this year and has applied to the Attorney-General for permission to conduct an appeal known as a "Mystery Envelope" scheme. Such a scheme has been used extensively by the Methodist Church in New Zealand. Honorable members will be glad to know that the Christian Citizenship Department of the Methodist Church does not consider this to be a raffle; and if the Methodist Church takes that view, who are we to disagree? The difficulty is that the Raffles Board of the Attorney-General's Department does.

In this scheme envelopes are sold for 50 cents and there is a prize in every one. It is true that in many cases sheer inertia will stop people from collecting prizes, but there is some argument about whether it is a lottery in the ordinary sense, where people buy a ticket and get nothing back. However, as I said, under this scheme there is a prize in every envelope.

The firm which has promoted the scheme successfully in New Zealand for the Christchurch Central Mission contends that in a city such as Melbourne approximately $250,000 could be returned for quite a small appeal in a single day. The essence of the New Zealand law is that the licence is granted for one day only, so that it occurs on only one day of the year and is not an ongoing operation.

As honorable members know, I have no passion or personal enthusiasm for gambling, but the only alternatives to a scheme such as this being adopted seem to be for Life Line to fold—which would be disastrous, because it has been the means of help through telephone counselling for many thousands of people ever since it has been established—or for the Government to pick up the tab for the funds it needs.

I should like the Minister who represents the Attorney-General to investigate this matter and see if the decision of the Raffles Board, dated 8th September, 1975, can be reversed.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Talent House and one Peter Bobar continue to advertise in the professional and situations vacant columns in the daily press. The advertisements are
short and read much like this example from the *Sun News-Pictorial* of 30th August of this year—

Part-time. Men and Women 18-45 interested in appearing television commercials and drama series to $10 hour. For appointment, for details and requirements phone 81 9078 to 4 p.m.

Many people answer these advertisements and upon telephoning are told to come in for an interview, which costs them $6. When the applicant is interviewed, Mr. Bobar tells him—and tells all of them, I believe—that he has considerable talent and there is a need for him in the television or advertising world. He then goes on to point out that the applicant needs six lessons which are going to cost $90-odd and that the applicant must first join the organization for a fee of $36 or $37.

Thousands of people have fallen for this and have found, after the foregoing procedure is over, that they must have a series of photographs which will cost between $50 and $70. They are then told that $10 of that amount is for Mr. Bobar's trouble in having told them to do it. Having undertaken the course and obtained the photographs, they then ask about the positions, and Mr. Bobar says, "I am not getting you positions. You go out and beat the pavement for those yourselves. If you are any good the positions will turn up for you."

Many people have written to me and spoken to me about this and none of them had obtained any positions. There are no positions available; Actors Equity will not hear of them; and no television or radio station or recognized advertising agency will even consider Talent House's trained personnel.

I should be grateful if the Minister or his department could investigate this matter to ascertain whether Peter Bobar and Talent House are the clean-skins and lily-whites they claim to be when unsuspecting people first turn up for an interview. I believe people have left the organization and Mr. Bobar's employ because they felt they could be under some cloud if found to be connected with them. There has been mention of strong-arm tactics and "heavies" and some people have been too frightened to speak up.

The situation would appear to be that if the advertisements themselves are not unethical, they at least create an unethical situation for the people concerned. I feel the matter is worthy of investigation and I should like the Minister to advise the House of the true position.

**Mr. ROPER** (Brunswick): I bring to the attention of the Assistant Minister of Health a question I asked on 8th June this year, No. 557, concerning the community health programme. I asked that question because there was at the time considerable concern about what appeared to be Federal cuts in the community health programme and the effect those cuts would have on community health centres and the community health programme throughout this State.

I have told the Minister that I understand the difficulties with which he is faced because of the way in which the Liberal Government has cut community health funding and have also told him that I, at least, did not campaign for the Fraser Government, so I am less responsible than he.

However, the matter I wish to direct to the Minister's attention is that in three months he has been unable to answer this question. If he looks at the question he will see that it is not all that difficult to answer. Of the questions I had placed on the Notice Paper after the end of the autumn sittings, all but this question were answered by the respective Ministers during the recess by way of letter and then subsequently given to the House on Tuesday.

The specific points I raise with the Minister are, firstly, that I should like to know why it has taken so long to answer this question, and, secondly, I should like to know whether he can obtain an answer. I
have had, as I am sure he has, a great deal of correspondence from community health centres which are extremely concerned about the future of the programme and, bearing in mind the Treasurer's statement yesterday, they are quite rightly concerned about the future of the programme and they wish to know where they stand, as do honorable members in this House. Numerous honorable members have asked questions about the community health programme since the commencement of this sessional period, which is only three days old, and if this question had been answered it would have provided much information.

Mr. WEIDEMAN (Frankston): I wish to raise with the Minister of Labour and Industry a matter relating to the unemployment situation of young people. I ask the Minister whether it is a fact that officers of his department have, on occasions, approached several employers who predominantly employ young people to force those employers to pay extra money to their employees to bring their wages up to award rates. One case in point that has been brought to my attention relates to the McDonald food stores, the hamburger chain. Another case concerns employers who employ young people on commission to sell books door to door and who set commission based on an hourly rate which the employees could not possibly attain so that they do not receive any wages over a month even though they may have worked a total of 200 hours.

Can the Minister inform the House whether his departmental inspectors have investigated this problem and has it been revealed that there are many employers breaking these award provisions?

Mr. ROPER: And not being prosecuted.

Mr. WEIDEMAN: Have these offending employers been brought to order and can these facts be brought to the attention of the public so that respectable employers in the community are protected, especially if they employ young people in this way, particularly in light of the current economic situation?

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I raise with the Assistant Minister of Health a matter which concerns the valuable work being undertaken at the Gresswell Rehabilitation Centre to help persons suffering from alcoholic and drug problems. This comes under the control of the Alcoholics and Drug Dependent Persons Services Branch which is carrying out sophisticated and valuable studies in this field. So far as I can ascertain from the Act, persons who volunteer themselves for these studies can at times produce certain confidential information to the persons conducting the inquiry but they are not protected from a later subpoenaing of records. It appears fairly clear that the information they disclose can be subpoenaed by other individuals, such as an insurance company which may be engaged in litigation concerning an accident out of which a certain matter arose.

It seems to me, and I suggest to the Minister, that the value of the statistical information obtained in this way is highly suspect if the persons offering it are under any inhibition or believe what they are saying may be subject to later recall. I suggest to the Minister that he should investigate an amendment to the Act to ensure the utter confidentiality of information supplied during research work conducted at the institution. In the absence of such control, the value of the work is diminished and many persons may not wish to participate, persons who could make a valuable contribution to the work being performed.

I understand that the programme has only commenced within the past twelve months and it is too early to reach a decision or conclusion upon the material so far available, but I urge the Minister of Health to consider amending the Act quickly to
ensure that there is no inhibition in respect to persons offering themselves under this programme in the future.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): I raise with the Minister for Conservation a matter concerning the Royal Agricultural Society and the approaching Royal Melbourne Show. The venue for this annual event which is to occur in a couple of weeks is in the area which I represent. It usually causes much anxiety for the people who live in the immediate vicinity because of increased traffic, the number of people who go in and out of the showgrounds, and particularly the level of noise created by the various activities, including entertainment. In addition, there is usually a fireworks display which occurs late in the evening on some occasions and also causes concern.

I ask the honorable gentleman whether he would be prepared to have officers from the Environment Protection Authority take the matter up with officers from the Royal Agricultural Society before the show commences and to point out some of the regulations and rules covering noise. Perhaps also his departmental officers could monitor the noise levels during the period of the Royal Melbourne Show this year to ascertain whether they are beyond what are considered to be fair and to ensure that the people in the surrounding area are not hindered any more than necessary by extra loud noises emanating from the show.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I will be pleased to examine in detail the matter raised by the honorable member for Rodney.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member for Reservoir raised a matter with me as Minister of Consumer Affairs relating to the Blue Army in its capacity as an employment agency. I express my gratitude to the honorable member for advising me that this matter is subject to litigation between the parties concerned. I will not intervene directly prior to that case being decided but I will certainly raise with the Director of Consumer Affairs the possibility of an officer of the Consumer Affairs Bureau being made available to sit in on the case, and if material or evidence is presented which should be investigated, at the conclusion of the case that will be done.

I will take the matter up with the honorable member for Reservoir at a later stage to see whether further action is required, but certainly a flat interest rate of 24 per cent is a matter of immense concern. The honorable member for Reservoir has performed a public service in raising the matter in a way which will warn the public that these rates of interest are sometimes involved but are not properly disclosed in the documentation when people sign.

The honorable member for Melbourne raised the matter of a one-day event to be conducted by the Methodist Church in an effort to save Life Line and relating to the moneys needed to permit Life Line to continue. The honorable member asked me, as the Minister representing the Attorney-General, to investigate the matter, which stems from the view of the Raffles Board that envelopes which are to be sold with a prize for everyone are in fact a raffle.

I should think that if such a scheme were to raise $250,000 gross on one day, as the honorable member suggested, it should be the subject of some supervision, and I hope the Raffles Board would think it was part of its duties to restrict the promoters.

However, I will raise the matter with the Attorney-General with a view to ascertaining whether he agrees with my view and whether anything can be done to help Life Line on some other occasion. As Minister of Consumer Affairs, I would not like to see anyone sell thousands of envelopes containing a prize without any control, but I will have the matter investigated.
The honorable member for Frankston raised a matter which concerns the employment of young people in some establishments, and he named the McDonald food shops, and the persistent offences being committed. It is true as reported to me in the department that there are persistent offenders who, when caught, never complain but are quite ready to pay the back-wages which they have not paid according to an award, but after they have done that they simply go on offending time after time.

In the implementation of the election promise relating to the establishment of a market court, it may be possible to introduce a provision which could relate to persistent offenders and deter employers from continuing to breach award conditions; otherwise the Government might have to look at the penalty section to see whether the matter could be handled in that way.

By way of interjection, the honorable member for Brunswick indicated that these people were not prosecuted. I should like to say that the prosecution policy adopted by the Department of Labour and Industry—I believe it has been the policy for many years—is that the Minister will not interfere on any question of prosecution recommended by an officer. I know of no reason why officers do not take the responsibility for prosecuting those things which they ought to prosecute. I will not see people until prosecutions are completed. If the honorable member for Brunswick has any information which suggests that prosecutions are not being taken when he feels they should be, I shall be pleased to discuss it with him and to have the officers concerned get in touch with him to see if there has been a different standard applied and one which should be negotiated with him, and understood by him.

The honorable member for Dandenong raised a matter relating to a training scheme for television talent. I will certainly have that matter investigated. I thank the honorable member for the details he has given. If there are not sufficient details from his remarks for the Consumer Affairs Bureau to investigate, I shall ask him to supplement them, but he asked me to report back to the House. In the first instance, I will discuss it with the honorable member after some investigation, and between us we shall decide whether it is a matter to be further raised in the House, or whether it can be discussed with him after an investigation by the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I have nothing to add to what I said to the Leader of the Opposition this morning in answer to a question. When he first raised this matter I said that no complaints or reference had been made to me about it. Subsequently, at my request, he sent me a copy of a press cutting. My only comment this morning was that it seemed to rely on hearsay, but I will give him an answer.

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I thank the honorable member for Bundoora for raising a very important matter, as he sees it, concerning the confidentiality and the use of records of persons who present themselves to the Alcoholics and Drug Dependent Persons Services Branch. However, I am not sure the inhibitions are removed from these people in the sense that they would be protected by the legislation which the former Minister of Health introduced into this Parliament a year or two ago and which gave protection in respect of records and information of people going to institutions affiliated with the Mental Health Authority and the Hospitals and Charities Commission. I will ensure that the matter is investigated and, if necessary, will refer it to the Attorney-General.

With respect to the matter raised by the honorable member for Brunswick concerning question No. 557, it is true that it is a long time since this question was asked. It has not been possible to provide an answer in the time the honorable
member has suggested for the simple reason that negotiations were proceeding with the Federal Minister for Health, Mr. Hunt, right up to the end of August. The answer to the question can now be prepared. It is in course of preparation and should be in the hands of the honorable member shortly. I have the figures he sought before me now, and I shall be happy to give them to him this afternoon if he so wishes, or he may get an official answer through the normal channels within a few days.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): I should have thought that with the Royal Show due to start in about a week's time it would be a little bit late now to endeavour to combat noise from programmes already arranged. I have no doubt that the electronic equipment has already been installed for use during the show. On that point of the matter raised by the honorable member for Ascot Vale, I think we are out of time.

On the general question of noise control emanating from sources of entertainment, as yet no standards have been drawn, and the honorable member might recall that when I introduced the legislation dealing with noise I made it clear that there were sources of noise which required a great deal of investigation and that control was a very complex business. That is a matter of real interest to me. From the point of view of the Environment Protection Authority, it will be worth while to do some research over the show period on that problem.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the matter I raised was for the Minister representing the Chief Secretary. In fairness to the Minister of Education I think I should point that out to him because I do not think he was listening when I raised the matter. The Minister representing the Chief Secretary was taking notes, and I wonder if the matter could be referred to him for some form of reply.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): It is not necessary for two people to take up a matter when it is raised. I understood the honorable member to refer to the Minister of Education. If the matter raised by the honorable member has been taken up by the wrong Minister, I apologize to him, but the honorable member can discuss it with the Minister and no time will be lost.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.26 p.m. until Tuesday, September 14.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

Funds for Health Centres.

(Question No. 557)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

In respect of the Community Health Programme—

1. Which health centres are presently receiving funds, specifying the funding for each centre for 1975-76?

2. Which health centres or committees have made submissions but are not yet receiving funds?

3. What total amount was requested from the Commonwealth Government for 1976-77, specifying which new centres were proposed to be funded?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

1. The following list details the projects funded under the Community Health Programme during the financial year 1975-76 and the actual expenditure on each project from Commonwealth and State sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Expenditure 1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Kilda Community Group</td>
<td>14,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prahran Frail Aged Centre</td>
<td>21,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Liberation Halfway House</td>
<td>51,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Valley Community Centre</td>
<td>43,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eltham Community Centre</td>
<td>15,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flemington High School</td>
<td>12,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barwon Region Child Health Centre</td>
<td>145,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Western Region E.C.D.C.</td>
<td>37,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muroodnah Halfway House</td>
<td>32,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisborne Bush Nursing Hospital</td>
<td>14,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankston Community Resource Centre</td>
<td>33,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Course for Physiotherapists in Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>2,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Gippsland Region E.C.D.C.</td>
<td>38,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Biology Resource Centre</td>
<td>36,351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Administrative Services</td>
<td>34,544</td>
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Questions [ASSEMBLY.] on Notice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Expenditure 1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and Retraining Course for Infant Welfare Sisters</td>
<td>£55,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Nurses Supervising Practical Field Work</td>
<td>£320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiology Programme</td>
<td>£11,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands C.D.C.</td>
<td>£39,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston North-East Primary School</td>
<td>£8,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Conducted Family Planning Services</td>
<td>£30,866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noel Park Toy Library for Handicapped Children</td>
<td>£40,669</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knox E.C.D.C.</td>
<td>£28,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows E.C.D.C.</td>
<td>£5,747</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Administration-Mental Health</td>
<td>£64,654</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Street Outpatient Clinic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Park Outpatient Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballarat Community Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dandenong Community Mental Health Services</td>
<td>£225,643</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenhuntly Rehabilitation Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traralgon Community Mental Health Services</td>
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<td>Camberwell Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£100,060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frankston Clinic</td>
<td>£72,477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warrnambool Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£40,943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandringham Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£95,237</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Heidelberg Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£66,048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brunswick Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£293,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong Diagnostic and Assessment Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janefield Family Assessment Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observatory House Child Psychiatry Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Youth Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitcham Outpatient Clinic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healesville Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balwyn Family Support Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beechworth Community Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo Community Mental Health Services</td>
<td>£7,286</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ararat Community Mental Health Services</td>
<td>£5,596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarendon Outpatient Clinic</td>
<td>£9,139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mont Park Community Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temperate Assistance in Alcohol and Drug Dependence</td>
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<td>Life Line (Melbourne)</td>
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<tr>
<td>G.M., Victoria</td>
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<td>Victorian Foundation on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence</td>
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<td>Burnley Foundation</td>
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<td>Moreland Hall</td>
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<td>Palm Lodge Rehabilitation Centre</td>
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<td>St. Vincent's Drink Driving Programme</td>
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<td>Adult Deaf Society of Victoria</td>
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<td>Anglesea and Aireys Inlet Bush Nursing Centre</td>
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<td>Association for the Blind</td>
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<td>Australian Association for Better Hearing</td>
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<td>Barwon Regional Association for Alcohol and Drug Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo Home and Hospital for the Aged</td>
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<td>Broadmeadows Community Mental Health Centre</td>
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<td>Brunswick Community Health Service</td>
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<td>Bush Nursing Centres</td>
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<td>Buchanan</td>
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<td>Cann Valley</td>
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<td>Dargo</td>
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<td>Drysdale</td>
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<td>Harrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallacoota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Bolac</td>
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<td>Swiftie Creek</td>
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<td>Caroline Chisholm Society</td>
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<td>Caulfield Hospital-Chadstone Paramedical Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Caulfield Hospital-Malvern Day Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Gippsland Hospital—Traralgon C.H.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churchill Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Claremont House for the Aged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craigieburn Community Health Centre</td>
<td>£14,840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dandenong and District Hospital—Dandenong Day Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deer Park Community Health Centre</td>
<td>£346,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doncaster Community Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eaglehawk and Long Gully Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>East Heightsleigh Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>East Preston Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Gawler Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Golden Square-Kangaroo Flat Community Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace Mackellar House—St. James Day Hospital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsval Geriatric Centre—Ascot Vale D.H.</td>
<td>£80,802</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Expenditure 1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inglewood, Wedderburn Community Health Service</td>
<td>£66,334</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kensington Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Kingston Community Health Centre—East Bendleigh Day Hospital</td>
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<td>Lakes Entrance Community Health Centre</td>
<td>£192,716</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leigh Community Care Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moorabool South Community Health Centre</td>
<td>£85,232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marysville and District Community Health Centre</td>
<td>£22,384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moe Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Morwell Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Mountain District Community Health Service</td>
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<td>Mount Eliza Geriatric Centre</td>
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<td>Chelsea Day Hospital</td>
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<td>Rosebud Day Hospital</td>
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<td>North Richmond Family Support Centre</td>
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<td>Orbost and District Hospital</td>
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<td>Portarlington and District Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Quambatook Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Queenscliff and District Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Richmond Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Rosedale Community Care Centre</td>
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<td>Royal Children's Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal District Nursing Service</td>
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<td>Royal Melbourne Hospital—Coburg Service</td>
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<td>Singleton Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Southern Family Life Association</td>
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<td>Southern Memorial Hospital</td>
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<td>Caulfield Community Care Centre</td>
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<td>Health Services Research Group</td>
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<td>St. Andrews Community Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanhope Community Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Vincent's Hospital—De Paul Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunbury Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Tawonga Hospital—Upper Kiewia Health Service</td>
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<td>Timboon Community Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torquay Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Warrnambool and District Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western General Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Footscray Day Hospital</td>
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<td>Sunshine Day Hospital</td>
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<td>Western Region Community Health Centre</td>
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<td>Wimmera Base Hospital—Goroke C.H.C.</td>
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<td>Winchelsea and District Hospital</td>
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<td>Hospitals and Charities Commission</td>
<td>£86,481</td>
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</table>

2. Barwon Region—Research Officer of the Handicapped.
   Barwon Region—Occupational Health Unit.
   Italian Assistance Association—Women’s Refuge.
   North West Region—Women’s Refuge.
   Halfway House—Mentone.
   Pharmacy based Community Health Programme.

   Early Intervention Programme for Retarded Children.
   Relieving staff for Community Mental Health Centres.
   Stawell Community Nursing Service.
   Sunbury Community Health Services.
   Broadmeadows Community Mental Health Services.
Shepparton Community Mental Health Services.
East Bentleigh Community Mental Health Services.
Broadford and District Community Health Centre Society.
Caulfield Institute of Technology.
Chelsea Community Health Centre.
East Burwood Counselling and Care Centre.
Murtoa Community Health Centre.
Northcote Community Health Centre Society.
Waverley Social Health Services Centre Society.
Women's Health Collective.
Whittlesea Community Health Centre.
Carlton Community Health Services.
King Valley Community Health Centre.
Sunshine West and Ardeer Community Health Centre.
Merbein Community Health Centre Society.
Yarram Community Health Centre.

3. No formal request was made to the Commonwealth Government for any specific sum of money. However, several discussions took place at officer level during which State officers submitted figures indicating the cost of maintaining existing projects, expansion of existing facilities and what it would cost to finance new projects which were under consideration. As a result of these discussions an amount of $15·2 million of Commonwealth money was finally allocated to the State.

Details of financial planning and departmental reports and recommendations for allocations are regarded as matters of Government policy which are fully covered from time to time through Budget allocations. Apart from the financial papers released with the Budget it is not proposed to elaborate further on budgetary matters which are under consideration by the Government.

SCHOOLS IN BRUNSWICK ELECTORATE.

(Question No. 619)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Education—

In respect of each school in the electoral district of Brunswick—

1. What is the enrolment, specifying the number of children from non-English speaking migrant backgrounds?

2. How many children are classified as being in need of special migrant English assistance and how many have received such assistance?

3. In what building facility migrant English classes are conducted and which schools have special migrant English portable class-rooms?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

1. Details are given on the attached table.

2 and 3. Because migrant English teachers are resources teachers to all class-room teachers, all migrant children are receiving assistance in English either in the normal class-room situation or in special withdrawal groups according to the degree of their needs. The attached table indicates which schools have special migrant demountable class-rooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Net enrolment</th>
<th>No. of migrants</th>
<th>Portable class-rooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 1213, Brunswick</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 3179, Brunswick East</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 3585, Brunswick North</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 4399, Brunswick North-West</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 2743, Brunswick South</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 2890, Brunswick West</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 1252, Carlton North</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 3110, Merri</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 2837, Moreland</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School 2955, Princes Hill</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School, Brunswick</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School, Brunswick East</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School, Moreland</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School, Princes Hill</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical School, Brunswick</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>180</td>
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</table>
WATER COMMISSION REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.
(Question No. 646)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—

Whether the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has adopted regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

No. The commission's activities have always been highly decentralized and its existing regional centres are permanent establishments, usually located at the centre of its activities in each region.

REFERENDUM IN RED MEATS.
(Question No. 747)

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Whether he has received a petition seeking a referendum in red meats in accordance with the requirements of the statutory marketing legislation; if so, whether he will lay the files, correspondence and memoranda on this request on the table of the Library.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

I have not received a petition in accordance with the requirements of the Marketing of Primary Products Act 1958 seeking a referendum in red meats.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): Following the allocations from the Interim Grants Commission to municipal councils announced approximately two weeks ago, in view of the feeling amongst some councils which are comparing what has happened between adjacent and similar municipalities, is it possible for the Minister for Local Government to make information available on the criteria and other factors taken into account in deciding the grants?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): It is not the practice of the Commonwealth Grants Commission to make criteria available, except in broad, general categories which give some understanding. One can easily appreciate that if detailed reasons were set out one would simply be inviting conflict and disputation. I am not prepared to put independent commissioners into that sort of situation. I shall, however, obtain a copy of the report of the Interim Grants Commission and table it in the House.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY DECISIONS.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province): Can the Minister for Local Government advise whether, because of the recent decisions of the Environment Protection Authority concerning limitations placed on the quantity of liquid waste allowed into sanitary land-fill sites, the Government has reviewed its previous decision on the building of a proposed liquid treatment plant at Brooklyn; if so, what is the current policy of the Government?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I presume the honorable member is referring to the rejection by the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal of a continuation permit at Sunshine?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: No, the Environment Protection Authority.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I am not aware of any new conditions recently imposed by the Environment Protection Authority, but I am having the
facts of the Sunshine decision examined by my department and will have consultations with the Minister for Conservation at an early date.

DARTMOUTH DAM.

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS (Geelong Province): Can the Minister of Water Supply indicate to the House whether the progress of the Dartmouth dam project is up to date and whether it is possible for arrangements to be made to allow members of the Victorian Parliament to visit the project and see for themselves the work which is being carried out?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The Dartmouth dam project is not quite on time, although it is proceeding very well. The water commissioners, who are the constructing authority, are, in conjunction with the staff performing the work, doing a magnificent job.

The Premier has indicated to me that a trip for members of Parliament will be possible and I should hope to be able to schedule this for February of next year. I commend the visit to all members of Parliament because it is a magnificent project and one that members should have the right to see.

POLICE INQUIRY.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomas-town Province): Has the Attorney-General received the report of the Beach inquiry and can he inform the House when he will table the report?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): The Beach inquiry was instituted under the direction of the Chief Secretary and is not within my administration. I have certainly not received any such report, nor am I able to answer the honorable member's question.

BINGO.

The Hon. C. A. M. HIDER (Monash Province): I read with interest in tonight's Herald that the Chief Secretary is reconsidering bingo. Will the Chief Secretary also be giving further consideration to the establishment of a casino in Melbourne?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The report in the press makes it appear as though the Government is legislating for the legalization of bingo. My only comment at the time was that in a general review of fund-raising operations in the community—which has most certainly been a matter of community interest over the past week or fortnight—the Government was looking at the legislation and at proposals relating to raffles generally. I simply said that all I was doing was looking at the original submissions made by the Police Force when bingo was under consideration about three years ago, and that is all I am doing. The Government does not intend to legislate for a casino in the State of Victoria.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province): I direct a question to the Minister of Health representing the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the serious position caused by drought in Victoria and its increasingly disastrous consequences for many primary producers and the effects the situation is having on country towns and country employment, what action is being taken by the Government to expand the availability of carry-on finance through the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission to assist in keeping farmers on their properties and allow those most seriously affected to pay their accounts, thereby easing the burden on business people in the community?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): As honorable members will be aware, the Government recognizes the seriousness of the drought, which Mr. Dunn has pointed out in his question. I am unable to say exactly what the Minister of Agriculture is doing to expand financial assistance in the way
which Mr. Dunn suggests and I will ask the Minister to reply to the honourable member direct.

ALBURY–WODONGA GROWTH CENTRE.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province): Can the Minister for State Development and Decentralization give the House an indication of the current intentions of the Government in connection with the funding of the Albury–Wodonga development project?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The intentions of the Government in this matter are quite clear. The Government has not been able to accept the proposal put forward by the Commonwealth Government at the last meeting of Ministers concerned on 11th August, that the States should enter into matching funding arrangements. The Government made it quite plain that this is outside the context of the existing agreement and no agreement was reached at that meeting.

The Government will be pressing for a supplementary allocation over and above the amount of $15 million made available by the Commonwealth in the current Budget. A further meeting of Ministers is programmed for 8th October and no doubt the funding situation will be further discussed. The State Government is prepared to consider some changes in the funding arrangements but this would mean, amongst other things, a review of the existing agreement. The Victorian Government has diverted resources to the growth centre in those areas of its direct responsibility. This emphasis on resource allocation will continue.

SUNBURY AND MELTON GROWTH CENTRES.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province): Can the Minister for Local Government advise whether the Government still intends to proceed with the development of the twin city growth centres of Sunbury and Melton to accommodate a population of 150,000 by the year 2000 and, specifically, whether it is still the intention of the Government to spend $800 million on that development between now and the year 2000?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): Sunbury and Melton were never envisaged as growth centres, but rather as satellite cities. Their purpose is to add balance to the development of Melbourne and to assist in attracting population to the north and west of Melbourne, rather than to the east and south-east where pressures are already undue.

The objective of attracting additional population to those areas is to ensure that the added population will, in turn, bring added facilities for the whole of the population there. That is still the policy of the Government and development will proceed at both centres.

The assumption that the population is envisaged as being 150,000 is not necessarily correct. The Government has not itself determined optimum limits for either centre and has at all times emphasized that these will be for determination largely by the local authorities after consultation with local residents.

FINANCES OF CITY OF SUNSHINE.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government) presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor, the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Finances of the City of Sunshine.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I move—

That the report do lie on the table and be printed.

The thrust of the report is clear. During recent years the council of the City of Sunshine has been dominated and controlled by a small clique or junta—both words appear in the report—determined to go their own way without let or hindrance. They went that way with utter disregard of—and indeed contempt for—the
laws and conventions applying to local government, the rights of their fellow councillors and caucus colleagues, and the spirit of their party's caucus rules. They went that way in disregard of the advice and experience of their officers and professional advisers, and took pains not to seek that advice when they feared it might be adverse. They went that way with no apparent concern for their own responsibility for sound financial management, or even for the basic elements of local democracy and accountability to the citizens of the city.

The report discloses a history of financial mismanagement which has cost the citizens of Sunshine dearly. It discloses repeated breaches of the law and breaches of the duty owed by members of the council to the rate-payers of the city. It discloses numerous examples of improper conduct and misconduct, and of failure to act with due prudence. It discloses applications of and dealings with money forming part of the municipal fund which were unlawful and otherwise improper. It discloses a series of disastrous decisions arising from the disregard of, or failure to obtain, proper advice.

Derelictions in one or more of the categories just mentioned have probably occurred in an appreciable number of municipalities at some time or another. The feature which will, however, most greatly disturb all those concerned for good government at the local level and for the good name of local government is the wide range and persistence of those derelictions at Sunshine throughout a continuing period. The common thread linking them all, and which led to the unfortunate results they produced for the city and its people, was the disregard of and contempt for the normal rules and procedures already mentioned, which serve and protect the public elsewhere in Victoria but which were irksome and unacceptable to the ruling group at Sunshine.

I must in fairness refer to the creditable role played by the town clerk, senior officers and a number of councillors. In a most difficult situation, the town clerk sought at all times to ensure that the law was observed and fair play safeguarded. For that reason he was regarded as an impediment to the objectives of at least some members of the ruling group, who sought to find means by which they might depose him or undermine his influence. Despite antipathy towards the town clerk from those quarters, which duly became apparent during the hearing of evidence, the board observed—

There was no evidence adduced before me to suggest that Mr. Deutschmann is not a proficient executive officer; indeed, most of the evidence adduced before the board indicated that he has been highly efficient and conscientious and that he performs the duties of town clerk with distinction.

It is noteworthy too that the report makes no findings adverse to the engineer or other officers or staff of the city. A number of other councillors, both within and without the caucus, endeavoured to the best of their ability to apply the same standards as had been sought by the town clerk. I am happy to inform the House that our colleague the Honorable H. A. Thomas was amongst them.

The desire of the ruling group to minimize the influence of the town clerk led in November, 1972, to a drastic—and subsequently disastrous—reorganization of the city's administrative structure. This scheme in the words of the report—

was secretly conceived by the inner A.L.P. caucus of councillors and precipitately implemented without sufficient investigation of its desirability or its feasibility. Neither the town clerk nor any other council officer was adequately informed of what was proposed, let alone consulted about it.

This reorganization was invalidly undertaken, without any formal notice of the proposal which was deliberately withheld so that the town clerk would not know what was afoot, until it was accomplished. In place of the over-all administrative responsibility for the affairs of the
city which had until then been undertaken by the town clerk, what subsequently became known as "the four-headed monster" emerged. Four autonomous departments, each under separate officers, were created. The town clerk controlled only his own department. There was no longer any over-all control. "Unquestionably," observes the board, "the administrative fragmentation which was produced by the 1972 reforms... conducted to inefficiency".

The report notes that the financial position of the city immediately before the reorganization of November, 1972, was reasonably satisfactory. The city then had an accumulated surplus of $293,362, with a credit balance at bank of $21,907. Three years later the position, according to the books, was an accumulated deficit of $723,889 and a debit balance at bank of $1,392 million. The 1975 audit report, which is an exhibit to the board's report, indicates that liabilities not accounted for in the books would have brought the corrected deficit to $1,772 million.

The board comments on that situation in the following terms—

In my opinion the degeneration of the city's financial position from 30th September, 1972, to 30th September, 1975, is substantially attributable to injudicious financial mismanagement; and that in turn was in large measure directly referable to the inefficient duplications of effort, and the consequent excesses of expenditure, stemming from a lack of over-all co-ordination, to which the 1972 reforms gave rise.

I certainly do not propose to go through the various items of mismanagement and impropriety disclosed by the report, but consider that I must refer to the 1974 estimates. When these were prepared there was already a large deficit which was naturally of some political embarrassment. To avoid a huge increase in that deficit, the town clerk's draft estimates proposed a rate increase from 13·5 cents to 18 cents in the dollar net annual valuation, and strictly controlled expenditure. Even so, on the basis of the town clerk's estimates, a further deficit of $133,069 was envisaged.

The estimates as approved by council provided for a reduction of the proposed rate to 17 cents and a consequent decrease in rate revenue by $290,000. At the same time, further expenditures totalling an additional $394,000 were approved. One would have thought that these two decisions would have produced an increase in the estimated deficit by $684,000 to $817,000. But this did not occur, at least according to the council resolution! Remarkably, the prospective deficit was shown as only $12,000.

The apparent improvement of $805,000 upon the estimates prepared by the town clerk was arranged by what can only be described as a complete manipulation of figures—save for a genuine increase in fees amounting to $48,000—in a manner which was designed to disguise the true position from ratepayers, rather than disclose it.

These substantial changes were imposed by the ruling group upon caucus, without any consultation with the town clerk or officers. Caucus determined that the amendments be kept secret and that no executive officer or independent councillor should be informed of them.

The council at its meeting to discuss the estimates was presented with a fait accompli. Councillor Mill read and moved as a single motion a four-page document detailing amendments to the estimates, which had been circulated to members of caucus shortly before. Copies of the document were handed to the independent councillors and one copy made available for council officers, at the time the motion was moved, thus advising them for the first time of the details of the decision which the council was now faced with endorsing as a mere formality. There was no possible opportunity for full comprehension by anyone not previously in the know, or for appreciation of the wide ramifications of this complex manoeuvre. Furthermore the course adopted gave councillors an opportunity of speaking only once on a single
motion instead of on the individual items affected and, even then, with a total time limit of five minutes previously fixed by the ruling group. In the light of this background, it is hardly surprising that the special council meeting held on 3rd December, 1974, to consider the draft estimates, lasted a bare 38 minutes. The board described this meeting as "a travesty of local government procedure" and I cannot but agree.

The report of the Board of Inquiry into the Finances of the City of Sunshine constitutes virtually a text-book on how not to run local government. Its lesson is that local government will falter and fail unless those involved in it are prepared to respect the democratic process and the rules and conventions which this entails. It will falter and fail too unless there is respect for opposing views and the opportunity for the fullest and freest airing of those views, as occurs in this Parliament.

Respect of opposing views and opportunity for frank and public discussion of them has two consequences which are basic to the democratic system. Firstly, those who make determinations must think them through properly in advance, fully recognize their implications, be prepared to subject their actions to public scrutiny and to take the consequences if they have made misjudgments. Secondly, full examination with adequate opportunity for it, and constructive debate following upon this will often lead to improvements, whether major or minor to what has been proposed. At the very least, this process leads to a fuller understanding of proposals and their implications and better information to the public on whose behalf the decisions are being made. None of this occurred at Sunshine.

There is perhaps a lesson too for this Parliament—that an Act such as the Local Government Act is virtually powerless to deal promptly in advance with situations of the kind which occurred at Sunshine. It depends upon a high degree of goodwill and is unable to prevent in advance the evasion of its requirements on the part of those determined to disregard them. But then that is the case with most other Acts. The Motor Car Act does not cause every driver to observe the rules of the road, nor does the Crimes (Theft) Act make every person honest. It would, in the Government's view, constitute a substantial over-reaction, and result in a grave error if councils and councillors throughout Victoria were to be penalized for the events at Sunshine.

Nevertheless, the fact that the course of events there could occur without any opportunity for restraint indicates that some further legislative protection for the integrity of local government and for ratepayers must be added to the Local Government Act. I will discuss the way in which this should be most properly and equitably achieved with the legislative committee of the Municipal Association of Victoria after a reasonable opportunity has been afforded to the association and to municipalities generally to evaluate the report and to consider action which should arise from it. The Government will not act hastily on the basis of the atmosphere engendered by a report relating to a single municipality.

The report recommends a number of procedural changes, most of which involve no major issues of principle. Discussions upon these aspects, with a view to implementation in a satisfactory way to achieve the general objectives envisaged by the board, will be initiated immediately with appropriate bodies.

The important question relating to the appointment of chief executive officers by councils which was raised by the board will be referred for full examination by the forthcoming inquiry into the role and structure of local government.

One major issue of principle raised by the report remains. The board recommends a new power to the Governor in Council to remove individual
councillors from office upon the recommendation of the Minister "in the interests of ratepayers of the municipality generally", upon the report of an inspector of municipal administration which has been tabled in Parliament. I personally have substantial reservations about this course and feel that alternative safeguards ought to be explored and fully discussed with the Municipal Association. This will be done.

The first step along the path which ultimately led to appointment of the board of inquiry was a petition by a number of ratepayers seeking the institution of what is known under the Local Government Act as a special audit of the affairs of the City of Sunshine. The petition relied upon allegations regarding many events there, veiled in the form of questions. These allegations were serious enough to warrant detailed, but preliminary investigation by an inspector of municipal administration. His report, as I subsequently announced, indicated "cause for grave disquiet".

Before that announcement, alternative options were considered in depth after consultation with the Crown Solicitor and in consultation with the most senior officers of my department. We determined at the time that any action which we undertook must satisfy six basic guidelines—to stop the rot at Sunshine, to assist to remedy the situation there, to provide safeguards against future repetition of similar courses of events not only for Sunshine but for local government generally, to do so as promptly as reasonably practicable, to do so as effectively as reasonably possible and to do so in a manner which would be publicly seen to achieve those results on a fair and sensible, and not a punitive basis.

On the basis of those guidelines, we rejected the special audit which had been requested by the petition. A special audit is a procedure which can make councillors personally liable for any misapplications of funds. The invocation of this archaic procedure would have involved steps pursuant to which proceedings for recovery of substantial sums may well have been instituted against individual councillors. Such a course we believe was quite untenable, for Sunshine and as a precedent for the rest of this State.

Cabinet was then promptly appraised of the options and their implications and decided that a full and open inquiry was essential in the interests of the city, its ratepayers and local government generally. The report of the board unquestionably substantiates that conclusion and I commend its thoughtful study to all those involved or interested in the concept and processes of local government. Studies of this kind, in sufficient depth, will I feel confident, result in a more widespread appreciation of the concept, role and obligations of the local government system and in a broad consensus of approach to the development of greater safeguards for their implementation.

The motion was agreed to.

On the motion of the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), it was ordered that the report be taken into consideration next day.

**MELOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.**

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the subject of the failure of the Minister to exercise his powers to adequately control the operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and its officers, and in particular the powers provided by sections 4, 4A, and 4B of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958, No. 6310.

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. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province):** I move—That the House do now adjourn.
Mr. President, the credibility of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is at an all-time low. The actions of senior board officers which have resulted in Government intervention and non-intervention on several occasions are now a matter of public record. The calling by municipal councils for a general inquiry into the board's activities shows that even those bodies which have elected representatives on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works are uneasy about the ability of the board to carry out its functions properly. A recent call by the Nunawading City Council seeking support for an inquiry into the current operations of the board received considerable support. The inquiry suggested by the council was as follows—

That the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. R. J. Hamer, be requested to institute a public inquiry into the current operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, such inquiry to cover all areas presently the responsibility of the board and to include—

1. A detailed investigation on the finances of the board and particularly—
   (i) its capacity to perform its functions under the present method of financing,
   (ii) its internal financial organization, and
   (iii) its financial dealings with councils and other members of the community such as developers.

2. An analysis of the board's role as a regional planning authority and whether this function could be improved, for instance by the creation of a separate regional planning authority directly responsible to the Minister for Planning. The inquiry also be requested to make recommendations on any improvements it may suggest to the existing structure and to outline the advantages and disadvantages of such recommendations.

3. An examination of the present method of representation on the board and consideration of whether the present commissioner system provides enough scope for a wide selection of councillors to nominate for the position.

4. An examination of the merits or otherwise of decentralizing the decision-making processes of the board in regard to water supply, drainage, sewerage and town planning to the regions affected by those decisions, with a view to enabling greater public access.

5. An evaluation of the future needs of urban Melbourne and to consider the board's capacity to meet these needs in the area of its present jurisdiction;

and that all metropolitan councils be invited to comment on the general concept of the request for the inquiry, and an explanatory statement be forwarded, together with a copy of this resolution, to all metropolitan councils so that their views can be determined, and in the statement it be emphasized that the request for the inquiry is constructive and in no way is a criticism of any commissioner or officer of the board, and that the request for the inquiry be subject to a majority of metropolitan councils supporting an inquiry of this or similar nature.

That proposal was sent out by the City of Nunawading to every municipality that has representation on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. To date the results are that 21 commissioners of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works who have representation thereon on behalf of councils are in favour of an inquiry, fourteen are against, and some of those fourteen could not make up their minds; they said they were neither for nor against an inquiry and the Nunawading City Council placed them with the “noes”. Fifteen also did not answer the letter. Obviously there is a great deal of dissatisfaction, not only amongst the public but also amongst the members of the board and the councils which elect representatives to the board.

Earlier I referred to certain activities of senior officers of the board. Recently when the chairman of the board was away, the deputy chairman, Mr. Best, took certain actions that were reported widely in the press. The subsequent actions or inaction by the Government and that officer are not sufficient to satisfy the most gullible observers. I believe it will be necessary for me to relay to the House the incredible actions of the deputy chairman of the board, Mr. E. W. Best, in appointing an advertising agency for the board's $20 million loan while the chairman was overseas. It all began when it was necessary for the board to appoint an
advertising agency to handle the loan. The board's former advertising agency, because of its honesty and because it admitted to the board that it would at the same time be handling an account and seeking a loan for another public body, was ruled out by the deputy chairman, Mr. Best. This happened after 27 years of service by that agency.

There began an incredible series of events. After wiping out the board's previous agency, the deputy chairman appointed three senior board officers to decide which agency out of the three that he nominated would get the account. These agencies were Spasm Advertising, Fortune (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. and Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. Although these officers made a unanimous recommendation that Spasm Advertising be appointed, they were overruled by Mr. Best and the account was given to Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. This company was formerly known as Best and Co. Advertising Pty. Ltd. The Spasm and Fortune agencies were notified accordingly on 16th August, on the same day that Barry, Banks, Blakeney received approval.

On 19th August an article which appeared in the Age under the heading “Cancel ad account, Hamer tells board” stated—

Mr. Best said that senior board officers interviewed the three agencies and made a recommendation to him for approval.

The recommendation was for the appointment of Barry, Banks, Blakeney.

“I then made the decision. I don't see anything wrong with that," Mr. Best said.

I challenge Mr. Best and I challenge the Minister to say whether that is the truth. Did those board officers recommend Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd., or did they recommend Spasm Advertising? It is obvious from subsequent newspaper articles that Mr. Best was not telling the truth when he made that statement and that in fact the officers of the board made a different recommendation.

The Hon. J. M. Walton.
Mr. Best has said that he sold his interest in Best and Co. Advertising Pty. Ltd. in February. So far as the bookwork is concerned, that is true, but what were the terms of sale? People in the advertising agency business—there appear to be a few in the House today who are well versed in it—would well know that advertising agencies are sold on the basis of future business. They have nothing to sell in the way of goodwill other than the business that they will get in the future. Usually they are sold on the basis of what they will get in the next 1, 2 or 3 years and the person who sells is the person who gets paid accordingly. It is true that Mr. Best got out on 19th February, but is he still being paid as a result of the good fortunes of this company over the next 1, 2 or 3 years? Those questions must be answered before the public will be satisfied.

Mr. Best says he has had 40 years’ experience in advertising. He should also be very experienced in the ethical conduct of a person in the public eye. He is either incredibly stupid or highly imprudent. Mr. Best still has a company, Best and Co. Pty. Ltd., which according to its last annual return, gave him 3,999 shares and his wife 15,000 shares. This company was the owner of Best and Co. Advertising Pty. Ltd. So when the advertising company was sold, it was sold by Best and Co. Pty. Ltd., which is still in existence. According to the records of this company which were inspected earlier this week, Mr. Best and his wife are still the major shareholders, only one share being held outside that area. This company was originally called Leyshon Publicity Service and has in its articles of association that its prime objective is as an advertising and publicity agency.

I repeat that according to the records which were inspected at the office of the register earlier this week, Mr. Best and his wife are still the leading shareholders of this company which claims to be an advertising agency. The annual return also divulges that Mr. Best is still a director of Australian Insurance Brokers (Vic.) Pty. Ltd. Section 21 (7) of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act states that the chairman or deputy chairman shall devote his whole time to the service of the board and shall not engage in any employment other than the duties of his office, nor shall he be a member of Parliament or a councillor. However, it appears that he has time to be a chairman of companies. If any member of the Public Service wishes to take a job outside his duties with the Public Service he must obtain permission from his boss and that permission can be refused. How can it be fowl for one and fish for another? Why may Mr. Best do this when any other public servant may not?

Mr. Best decided not to use the services of an outside advertising agency. Why did he not make this decision in the first place? He had had 40 years in advertising and was the experienced part of Best and Company (Advertising) Pty. Ltd. Why could he not have given his experience to the board? After all, his experience in the advertising field was probably one of the reasons why he was elected to the position of deputy chairman.

For some time the delegation of powers by the chairman of the board and various other officers has been of concern. At present the finance committee of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is considering whether those powers ought to be clipped. On this occasion when Mr.
Croxford went overseas he delegated the power to Mr. Best without reference to the board. One of the matters which I have raised today is Mr. Best's decision. The Premier, who described Mr. Best's actions as undesirable and unwise, directed that the account be cancelled, and rightly so. That is where the Premier would like the matter to end. However, there is much more to this than meets the eye. Full details of the terms of sale of Best and Company (Advertising) Pty. Ltd. should be divulged. A judicial inquiry should be held into the whole affair. It is not even good enough for the matter to be sent, as was suggested, to the Public Accounts Committee. If a judicial inquiry were held, Mr. Best, like Mr. Croxford, would have to face the music, and it would be ascertained whether he acted properly and prudently in this instance.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province): I raise a point of order. The terms of this motion relate to the failure of the Minister to exercise his powers to adequately control the operation of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and its officers. What Mr. Walton has stated indicates that the Minister and the Premier control the activities of the Board of Works. Mr. Walton's statements have now degenerated into a personal attack on the deputy chairman of the board. If that is the intention the motion should be expressed in those terms.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): There is no point of order. Mr. Hamilton has made an observation.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province): Mr. Hamilton has lost more points of order than he has made speeches since he has been a member of this place. The Government should stand down Mr. Best until such time as an inquiry has been held. An inquiry would satisfy the persistent rumours of patronage. This is not the first time that the Opposition has found it necessary to call for an inquiry into the operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. At one time it was necessary for the Premier to tell Mr. Croxford to withdraw certain actions he had taken in relation to real estate. The present matter involves Mr. Croxford's deputy. While the cat is away the mice will play. Mr. Best saw the opportunity to give some business to his previous advertising agency to which it was not entitled. When it was found that this could not be done Mr. Best said that no one would get the business and that the board would now run its own loan programme. That course should have been taken in the first place. If it is possible for the board to run that programme now it was possible for it to do so then. Other speakers will probably mention different areas of the board's activities in which the Minister has not exercised proper control. This motion deserves the support of the House.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): Mr. Walton has brought forward a motion which the Opposition is entitled to bring forward. No one disagrees with that; it is the role of an Opposition in Parliament. However, I believe he has been a little unfair in his criticisms of Mr. Best as deputy chairman and I shall endeavour to justify my contention.

Mr. Walton commenced by indicating that the credibility of the board was at an all-time low. I can remember that when I was a boy and the late Mr. Trickey was chairman of the board, the board was always under criticism. The situation is not much different today. It is a little unfortunate at times that the board is criticized because by and large the Board of Works does a good job for Victoria and for Melbourne in particular. The water supply of this State is extremely good and is probably the purest water in the world. I hope it always remains that way. It could perhaps be said that the board is restrictive in a number of its regulations but over the years it has been proved to be correct.
Mr. Walton also mentioned municipal councils and in particular the letter sent out by the Nunawading City Council. He detailed the support that this council has already received from its inquiries. I have seen a copy of that letter. Every council has a right to send out that type of letter if it has a case that it wishes to present to others. I remind Mr. Walton of section 7 of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act. I know that as a past commissioner of the Board of Works he is familiar with that section. It will enable on 18th November of this year municipal councils to have a conference and discuss representation on the board. Each council is entitled to send members to the conference when they will be able to suggest to the Minister what amendments should be made to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act. I am sure this will take place. I recommend to the Nunawading City Council and other councils which are dissatisfied that they instruct their delegates to move motions and to send me the recommendations that this meeting may bring forth.

Mr. Walton then criticized the actions of Mr. Best. He stated that the Minister or the Government did not exercise proper control over the board. I believe Mr. Walton really demonstrated to the House that on this occasion the Acting Minister and the Premier acted properly. Initially Mr. Maclellan called for the file of the deputy chairman to acquaint himself with what it contained. The Premier then directed the board to conduct its own advertising for the September loan. Mr. Best took the action which he did because he was concerned that the board would not raise its $26 million when faced with competition from Telecom Australia, the Sydney Water Board and the Hobart Hydro Authority. The appearance of Telecom Australia on the market for the first time with a $100 million loan was of considerable concern no doubt to the chairman and officers of the board. They believed that with the competition they would receive on this occasion, USP Needham Melbourne Pty. Ltd., the agency that had served the board well for 27 years, would perhaps not be able to serve it as well as its other client, Telecom Australia. I do not say that I agree with the decision. Probably I do not, because I believe USP Needham Melbourne Pty. Ltd. with its high reputation could have successfully carried out the advertising for both organizations. However, I am not one of the experts to whom Mr. Walton earlier referred.

That was the decision made by Mr. Best. He was a competent man in advertising. He then instructed board officers to obtain a submission from three other agencies, namely, Spasm Advertising, Fortune (Australia) Pty. Ltd., and Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. The Premier indicated to Mr. Best that it was an unwise decision and I do not think we
disagree on that. The Premier's instruction was carried out and the board withdrew the contract. No contract was signed indicating that any company would receive the advertising.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Was it on the recommendation of Mr. Best's officers that he accepted that advertising agency?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Is Mr. Walton referring to Spasm Advertising?

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Yes.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: I think it was. I think that is a fair comment.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Mr. Best is reported in the newspaper as having said that his officers recommended his old company.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Mr. Walton has asked me to produce the file and I shall do so. Mr. Best, with his knowledge of advertising and expertise over a number of years thought that the advertising agency of Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. would do a better job. Mr. Walton will see the submissions that were made by the three companies. Spasm Advertising was in a slightly different category because it presented verbal evidence for about two and half hours.

Mr. Best admitted his mistake and any man who is big enough to do that is tops in my opinion. I would always admit a mistake if I made one and I am sure Mr. Walton would do the same.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Did Mr. Best admit he was not telling the truth when he said that his three officers recommended his old company?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: I am not sure of that.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING: It took a long time for him to admit he made a mistake.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Mr. Best admitted his mistake and then informed the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Commissioners. I believe it was right for Mr. Best to inform the commissioners of the Board of Works first. He then conducted a press conference and informed the public what had taken place. I do not believe there is any need for a judicial inquiry, and I do not think Mr. Walton has produced any new evidence.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: Except that he is still in the advertising business.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: As the Minister concerned I contacted Mr. Best almost as soon as I returned from leave and asked him what the position was. He informed me that he has no financial interest in Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. The shares which Mr. Walton quoted are, I understand, of a farm account or a partnership which Mr. Best has with his wife.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: It was set up as an advertising agency.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: That might have been initially. I do not think this is the full text of the motion. I believe the board will probably be attacked in some other way, and it is unfair. I have demonstrated that the board has done a fair and reasonable job for the State over the years. Its budget for this year and in past years can be compared with the Sydney water board, which is $422 million. The actual expenditure of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for 1975-76 is $300.5 million, and this can also be compared with the State Electricity Commission, the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the Victorian Railways, and the Education Department. I noted in one comment in a paper that the Board of Works budget was greater than that of the State of South Australia. I think that must have been a mistake because the South Australian budget, from information I have received, is $1,171 million.
Mention will probably be made of the amount of rates that are charged by the Board of Works and the service that it gives. Although the rate at 22.2 cents in the $1 may be considered high, when one relates it to other commodities I do not think it is excessive. These charges can be compared with the amounts we pay for postage, a carton of milk and other items that we use daily. On a valuation of $750 for a house, the costs each day for water supply, sewerage, drainage and planning is about 45 cents, which represents good value for the cost involved.

I turn to the board's efficiency. The board conducts a continuous review of its operations in engineering, planning and administration. Its objective is to continue updating all methods. Engineering has improved, especially in pipe-laying techniques, and this has brought about a reduction in the cost of sewerage and reticulation of 20 per cent.

The Board of Works also has an improved safety record and its administration, with the advent of computers and other methods, has improved greatly. The board is always looking for new methods to give better service to the people of this State. The board, which commenced in 1891, now has over 800,000 ratepayers and inevitably there will be some breakdown in service and some criticism of it.

I could cite the board's total liabilities and supply full information on the financing of the board, but I do not think that is required. However, I do submit that the actions taken by the Premier and the Acting Minister cannot be condemned because under sections 4, 4A and 4B of the Act the actions that were taken were right. I shall continue to administer the board to the best of my ability. I am thrilled that the Board of Works has officers of such high calibre. I shall name only one who will retire soon. I refer to Mr. Allan Robertson, the engineer in chief, who has given approximately 30 years' loyal service to the State and to the board. Later this month he will be retiring, and I know all honorable members will agree with me that Victoria and the Board of Works will be the poorer for him leaving that service.

I ask the House to reject the motion because I do not believe it has been sufficiently supported.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): The kindly Mr. Granter has made a generous defence of the indefensible. The Board of Works which he has defended is a twentieth-century anachronism and it ought to be abolished. Its budget exceeds that of the South Australian budget. Its functions lie deep in the history of our State and it is no longer a suitable instrument to serve the community. For some years the activities of the Board of Works have been the subject of misgivings in the community. Like the Bourbons, they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The Board of Works should be replaced by a statutory body responsible to Parliament.

The Hon. H. R. WARD: Have you got any ideas?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Yes, indeed I have. If Mr. Ward will listen to me I hope I will be able to persuade him of their goodness—to use an old-fashioned word. First of all, the subject is harshly treated by the Board of Works. In the town planning scheme where a person's property or general rights are affected there is no right of appeal to a court of law. This is a scandal. If one's rights are affected under a planning scheme one can appeal to the Board of Works, so that there is an appeal from Caesar to Caesar. Any practising lawyer who goes down to the Board of Works is aware of how the town and country planning appeals are conducted. There is only one proper place where a right can be exercised by a citizen in our community, and that is in the law courts, clumsy and old-fashioned as
they may seem to be. At least nobody attacks the law courts on the grounds of bias or unfairness. That approach is not new. I urged that in this House many years ago, but it was rejected. It is time now for it to be built into our system of law.

As it acts now, the Board of Works is a kind of Gulliver in Lilliput, without the sensibility and the facility for action that Gulliver displayed. It is as responsive to public opinion as an elephant is to a powder puff or, to put it another way, it has the daintiness of an elephant and the hide of a rhinoceros. This has been demonstrated by the activities that have been outlined today by my esteemed colleague, Mr. Walton. Its town and country planning procedures efface the very concept of the rule of law by shutting out a citizen from our law courts. It has an oddly assorted menagerie of functions, embracing town planning, sewerage, water supply, parks, drainage, river improvements, Yarra River jurisdiction and reservations for freeways.

There is only one attitude to this motion: The Government should say, "In view of the performance of the Board of Works over the past century, we thank it for the good things that it has done but it is," as I pointed out, "an anachronism of the twentieth-century and ought to be abolished".

The Hon. S. R. McDonald (Northern Province): Honorable members are considering the Labor Party's first adjournment motion for the session. I hope as the session goes on that its adjournment motions will improve. Although Mr. Galbally's remarks may have been entirely correct, according to my way of thinking and that of my party, they were not related to the terms of the motion before the House.

The motion, as all honorable members know, refers to the failure of the Minister to adequately control the operations of the Board of Works and its officers, and in particular it relates to sections 4, 4A and 4B of the Act. If the Labor Party had moved an adjournment motion which referred, for example, to the failure of the Government to implement an inquiry into the Board of Works, to assess whether its administration was adequate or to assess whether in 1976 its constitution and its membership are adequate or proper, my party more than likely would have supported the motion. However, the National Party must now decide whether to support the Labor Party in the specific terms of the motion.

On the question of the failure of the Minister to adequately supervise the officers of the board, I believe that it is not possible for the Minister—in this case the Minister of Water Supply—to be informed fully in advance at all times of important decisions of the board and its officers. Having accepted that, the members of the National Party would then expect the Minister, when the situation arises, to act properly and direct the board and its officers on certain decisions. I think it was unfortunate that the Minister was sunning himself in Queensland or somewhere else when this action of the deputy chairman, Mr. Best, was taken. It was left to the Premier to make the proper decision and instruct the board and the officer-in-charge not to proceed along a certain line.

The case put forward by Mr. Walton and Mr. Galbally, generally speaking, rests on the recent controversy concerning the deputy chairman, Mr. Best, and his decision to award an advertising contract to a firm with which he was previously directly associated.

In spite of the assurances and the evidence that Mr. Best is no longer directly associated with this company the National Party believes he was certainly guilty of extraordinarily bad judgment.

I accept and support Mr. Walton's comment in regard to section 21 (7) of the Act, which refers to the responsibility of the chairman and the
deputy chairman to give all of their energies and resources to the responsibilities of the board and not to be engaged in other activities.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in 1976 is responsible for water supply, sewerage, planning and it even operates a sewerage farm. Because of the magnitude of the board's operations in 1976 a good case exists to examine whether the present structure of the board with 54 commissioners is adequate to carry out its responsibilities in a proper manner.

I am not in any way questioning the actions or activities of officers of the board as referred to by the Minister of Water Supply. I am suggesting that a board of 54 members is too unwieldy and that the board would be far better administered by fewer people. With larger groups one sees an emergence of party politics. I have always believed that the place for party politics is in this House and in another place and not in local government or in the Board of Works.

I suppose we could expound on party politics in the Melbourne City Council. However, I am well aware that that is not included in the motion. The National Party has believed in and adhered to the policy for some time that the Board of Works would be best established in the future as an authority along the same lines as the Country Roads Board, or any other of the several Government authorities which have responsibility for certain activities.

The Country Roads Board, which is a board of three members, is an excellent example of the sort of board that would do well in charge of the responsibilities that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works now has. I repeat what I said at the outset of my speech, that the motion is badly framed by whomever was responsible for it. It would have been much better if the motion had been wider in its application. It could well have referred directly to the administration and constitution of the board. Had that been the case the National Party would have been prepared to have a serious look at whether it could support the motion moved by the Labor Party.

However, in terms of the motion that is before the House, members of the National Party do not believe a case has been put forward to date by Mr. Walton and Mr. Galbally which merits our support and therefore the National Party will vote against the motion.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province): I join my Leader and my colleague Mr. Walton, in supporting the motion for the adjournment of the House. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in its operations over advertising reminds me of Tammany Hall in New York.

I say that at the outset so that the weak-minded and narrow-minded members on the opposite side of the House realize that I am not going to malign the engineers and officers of the board, who do an excellent job and I have high praise for them. Once before one small-minded member on the Government side of the House had the temerity to say that I maligned them. Apparently they did not understand what I was saying. That is often the case with members of the Liberal Party because they are so weak-minded.

The Tammany Hall episode occurred when the Minister was away. When the cat's away the mice will play. How does one see Mr. Best and the commissioners—those great democrats of society, the Liberals—who hide behind the pseudo name of independents. I see them come into the corridors of Parliament and suddenly appear at Liberal Party meetings. There they are Liberals, but when they attend local council meetings they are independents.

How can they change their spots overnight? A leopard cannot change its spots. They are Liberals in no greater sense. One should look at
the conglomerate of Liberals who conduct the operations of the Board of Works. Their work is conducted in their caucuses, as was referred to by my colleague, Mr. Walton, who was a former commissioner of the board. We know where the Liberals caucused.

The Hon. J. M. Walton: In the blue room.

The Hon. A. W. Knight: It used to be called the blue room.

The Hon. O. G. Jenkins: Not in the salubrious suburbs?

The Hon. A. W. Knight: Sometimes they caucused in the salubrious suburbs to decide who was going to be the chairman of the committee. The "Labor boy" was told that he must listen to the dictates of the chairman of the committee. Soon he found that he was on one of the committees that he did not want to be on, such as the farm committee. Since then things have changed and commissioners want to serve on the farm committee, and no one can dissuade them from going on to it.

I praise some of the commissioners for their wonderful work which they have given to the board. In the present set-up of the board one is expected to toe the line. I had the audacity to say to the chairman of the board, "Show me in the Act where you can compel me to go on to a committee." He could not do so. He said that the system would not work. That is how archaic the committee system of the board is. One of the commissioners could refuse to sit on a committee and the whole operations of the board would be illegal.

I ask honorable members to look at the Act on that aspect.

The Hon. H. R. Ward: Which section?

The Hon. A. W. Knight: I shall not quote the section; members of the Government party should do their own homework. The matter had to be brought to the attention of the public by the press who had to inform Mr. Best that a person in his position should not obtain a pecuniary interest from his position with the board.

Sections exist in the Local Government Act which prohibit councillors from doing this. Members of the Government party are quick to refer to the fact that the Sunshine City Council is in trouble, but the Liberals should clean up the troubles in which councils in the eastern suburbs find themselves. As the Minister for Local Government knows, if one wants to throw bricks one should clean up one's own house first. I refer to Westernport, on which there has been an adjournment motion. Those are the things that I throw back at the Government. Members of the Government party should know the provisions of the Local Government Act.

In looking at the frustrations of the officers of the Board of Works in respect to the decisions of the commissioners of the board, I am amazed at how they can carry out their work under such an inefficient administration.

If a commissioner wants to raise a matter at a board meeting, he has less than eight minutes in which to put his case. My colleague, Mr. Walton, will agree with me on this point in regard to the operations of the board. The chairman of a particular committee may move that the report of the committee be adopted *in globo* and if a commissioner objects, the other commissioners consider that he is unduly delaying the meeting of the board. The commissioner is chastised if he raises the matter at the board meeting. He is told that he is holding up operations of the board and of the chairman. The meetings of the board pass motions dealing with the investment of money in public relations and this type of thing. If a person had the cheek and the temerity to hold them up, he would be castigated.

The Hon. F. J. Grant: Did you advocate the reconstitution of the board?
The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: Yes, I advocated the reconstitution of the board so that a five-member board would be set up.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Did you serve on a committee of the board?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: Yes, to make the board operate. I was not going to be a party to its not operating.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Yet you condemn the committee system.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: I did condemn it then, as the board's records will show. I had the audacity to condemn the way in which the board operated.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Why did you seek appointment as a commissioner?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: Because I was elected to that position by the council I represented.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: You could not be elected if you did not want to be.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: I know that the Minister is not naïve. He is the Minister for Local Government and Tammany Hall reigns supreme.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: You must have been an unwilling candidate.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: Do not give me that. The Minister should not act so naively.

All the business of the board must be approved by the commissioners. If a commissioner wants to delay a recommendation it is referred back to a committee. The frustration of engineers and administration officers is such that there is a delay of a fortnight or a month in decisions unless a committee meets.

Therefore the costs escalate. We hear a lot from Government supporters about the escalation of costs at present. Cost escalations have been going on for years. The actions of the 54 commissioners who comprise the board have frustrated the officers of the board. I propose that the board be reconstituted as a five-man authority so that it will operate efficiently.

I shall outline some of the dictatorial attitudes which exist. During an inquiry that was conducted by a committee of this Parliament it was found that the board made its own policy on reserves and residential subdivisions. Even though that committee chastised the board about this policy, it still carried out its policy of levying landholders. Now the board has the temerity to introduce a self-help scheme for certain areas where there is no sewerage. It is trying to bludgeon the people into accepting the scheme. The board has tried to implement the scheme in the area that I represent.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: If you are referring to Altona and Werribee, it was requested by the councils.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: This decision has not come from Parliamentary representations. I shall advise my constituents not to be in it. The board has a charter and has some responsibility to the people.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER: Your constituents can refuse to participate in the scheme.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: I hope they do, and members of the Opposition will very quickly advise people of their legal rights in this case. It is incumbent upon me to tell people of their legal rights and I intend to do so. It does not behove any authority like the Board of Works to use this type of stand-over tactic. It tried to do so at Altona when I asked when the sewerage would be connected. The sullage was polluting the bay and making it one of the most polluted parts in Altona. Suddenly I received a plan of the programme so that I would keep quiet.

I assure honorable members that neither Mr. Croxford nor Mr. Best will keep me quiet when the sullage is going into the bay or when the Board of Works is not working efficiently. I shall raise on behalf of the
constituents whom I represent some of the problems concerned in this matter. The members on the committee of the Board of Works are too dictatorial in some of these matters.

I believe the matter of the dictatorial attitude of the Board of Works, which seemed to by-pass the Minister, was raised on the adjournment. With due respect to the Minister I know that Ministers come and go but they have a responsibility. The matter regarding Northcote, which my colleague raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, showed that contrary to the law the work was still carried out. Honorable members will remember that day when the Opposition tried to get the work stopped.

Mr. Galbally raised the point that the trees cannot be watered where the board has carried out work on extensions. That illustrates its dictatorial attitude. It is about time the board was examined. The Minister should exercise his strong powers over it and be stricter in his administration.

I praise the engineers and the administrative officers of the board for the high calibre of their service and their dedication to their work. They co-operate excellently with members of Parliament and the community at large; their degree of co-operation is one of the best one can find. But the board itself and particularly the dictatorial attitude of the chairman leave much to be desired. I do not want to repeat what was said in the Herald last Saturday night but the ivory tower in which the chairman operates and which cost the rate-payers so much is falling down. I paid my rates today. I could not even find a sign on the hoarding outside the building to show where people wanting to pay rates should go.

A constituent of the Melbourne West Province, J. H. H. Burnett, of 101 Heaths Road, Werribee, wrote to the Werribee Banner which is, I might point out, a Liberal Party-front paper.

On 11th August, 1976, the Werribee Banner published the letter in an article which stated—

A Werribee reader who keeps an eye on the activities of the Board of Works has written in to enlist the council's support in calling for an immediate inquiry into the running of the board.

The Editor

Dear Sir: May I comment on an article which appeared in the Age on the 28th July, 1976, under the heading M.M.B.W. probe sought, in which the Nunawading council wants an inquiry into the Board of Works.

It will campaign for Melbourne's 52 councils to back the demand to the Premier, Mr. Hamer. The inquiry wants to include a detailed investigation of the board's finances, its planning role, 'the commissioner system,' and decentralization of tasks.

The town clerk Mr. Jane and city engineer Mr. Wilson gave examples of the board's over-quoting on public works needed by the council, and cited further instances of malpractice and dishonesty.

Werribee council should be the first to back this inquiry. The M.M.B.W. discontinued payment of $14,000 per annum in lieu of rates in 1975, for the 27,000 acres they insist is required for the sewerage farm.

They pay no rates while Werribee shire pays more per capita to the M.M.B.W. than any other shire in the metropolitan area. In spite of the fact that sewerage works were virtually completed and paid for by this shire, prior to inclusion in the metropolitan area.

Cannot this anomaly, this injustice, be taken to the High Court?

All planning for the Shire of Werribee should be undertaken by the shire engineer and his staff in consultation with the council. The M.M.B.W. is far too remote to make any decisions on housing, water supply, drainage and local issues, and is in most cases, incapable of meeting the needs of the people under its jurisdiction.

The letter went on to refer to Werribee's notorious problem, the D.1 drain. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has said that this drain is not its problem although, by Act of Parliament, it is the drainage authority in the area and it is prepared to accept drainage rates from Werribee ratepayers. I direct attention to the fact that drainage and river improvement rates are the first item on Board of Works accounts.

The Hon. A. W. Knight.
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The people of Werribee pay drainage rates but, because of the dictatorial attitude of the board, the Government and the Shire of Werribee must pay for the D.1 drain, so that people's houses will not be flooded.

It is time that the board was sacked and a five-man commission set up. It is also time that some of the Liberal Party men who head the board, such as Mr. Croxford and Mr. Best, were replaced by non-political appointees. There is no doubt that the appointments of these two men were political because the Minister had to ratify them. When the Labor Party Government in Canberra was accused of giving jobs to the boys, all hell broke loose, but these appointments were jobs for the Liberal Party boys.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province) (By leave): As the Minister has said in answer to a question that he would make the file available, to save the time of the House I ask whether the Minister would be good enough to make it available to honorable members during the suspension of the sitting for dinner.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): I did say that I would make the file available, and it probably could be made available during the suspension of the sitting.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I thank the Minister.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Mr. Galbally will appreciate the problems relating to time and space.

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province): In view of the request just agreed to by the Minister, I would have preferred to have spoken on this motion after the resumption of the sitting. However, some comment should be made on what the motion is about. Members of the Labor Party have introduced a large number of subjects relating to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. They have taken a liberal view of the interpretation of sections 4, 4A, and 4B of the Act. The debate began as an attack on a particular member of the board.

Section 4A of the Act relates to the composition of the board and to the number of members. It has been said that members of the board are not elected democratically. We all know that members of municipal councils, irrespective of their political views, elect the board's commissioners. It is the commissioners who determine the policy of the board.

If it were said that because these people are elected in this way, the Board of Works is an anachronism, it could be said that local government itself is an anachronism. That view may be held by some honorable members. Mr. Galbally often quotes from the Bible and other works. If he turns his mind to the Acts of the Apostles, particularly St. Paul's charge to the elders of Ephesus, he will recall that the charge to the leaders of local government was succinctly impressive.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: What about Pontius Pilate?

The Hon. H. R. WARD: The actions of Pontius Pilate in regard to the Crucifixion were the result of a political deal and it will be recalled that the politician survived.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Certain honorable members of this House have been trying to walk on water for years.

The Hon. H. R. WARD: They have just been trying to get over troubled waters. There was an attack on the fact that municipal councillors, democratically elected, are subsequently appointed to membership of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. But that is the way the administration of the board is carried on. There was also an attack on the Minister who was said not to be in direct communication with the board. But, immediately the problem arose, the Premier and the Minister who was then acting as Minister for Local Government, took action. If I
remember correctly, the Acting Minister said that he was a slow reader and that he intended to study the files closely—he is, of course, an extremely able person.

Section 4B is an important provision of the Act. It states that the Minister should approve or disapprove of a scheme. But it was not only the Minister who took action to approve or disapprove of a scheme in this case; it was also the Premier. The Premier made it clear that he disapproved of the scheme proposed by the acting chairman of the board. The Government took specific action on what was said by the acting chairman. So the matter was clearly under the control of the Government. It has been said that there was a failure on the part of the Minister, but there was no failure by the Premier or the Acting Minister.

The debate on this peculiar motion has given rise to questions of sullage and all sorts of things, although it was apparent that the motion referred to the deputy chairman of the board. Anyone can take a point and criticize it and, if there had been a failure to act by the Premier or the Acting Minister, the motion would have been valid and the House may have been able to support it unanimously. But that was not the case. Both the Premier and the Acting Minister took action and the acting chairman of the board subsequently admitted that he had been in error.

The Hon. J. M. Walton: The whole thing should have been taken further.

The Hon. H. R. Ward: All sorts of things could have been done but the point is that action was taken. There was no delay or loss of time, or of face, by the Premier. He had a job to do and he did it. So did the Minister and the Cabinet. In no way at all was the Government irresponsible. The question of the board being an anachronism and the management of the board have been referred to but they are other matters altogether.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy: That is your opinion.

The Hon. H. R. Ward: That is my opinion. Some day, the Labor Party might come up with a good idea. We would appreciate that. We are the supporters of a Liberal Government and we are open to ideas. We believe in moving with the times.

The Board of Works commissioners are not paid. Irrespective of their political beliefs and philosophies, they act in the interests of the people of the metropolitan area. Of course, like everyone else, they may make mistakes. But they give their time in the interests of people. They hear appeals in their own time, and they make the utmost endeavours to arrive at proper decisions in the interests of all. In this way they carry on the administration of the board. Above all, the commissioners try to express the opinions of their municipal councils.

Comments were made about the board meeting for eight minutes at a time but no mention was made of the work the commissioners do in committee; that was overlooked. Honorable members are incensed when some commentators measure their value by the time they spend in this Chamber without referring to the work done in the provinces. Commentators refer to the time spent in the House but give no credit, to Mr. Walton for instance, for the work that he does in his electorate. We have heard comments about meetings lasting for 8 minutes, but not about the 8 or 80 hours spent at committee meetings.

Section 29 of the Act provides that the Board of Works council meetings and so on shall be held with open doors. People can walk in and hear what goes on. I repeat that the Government was not tardy in taking action to deal with the problem to which Mr. Walton referred. There is nothing to answer in what was raised in the debate on this odd motion. The motion does not state specifics, but queries sections 4A and
It overlooks the question of whether the board members did their job. The direct communication was dealt with by the Acting Minister and the Premier as quickly as possible.

This motion should fail; it does not deserve any credit.

The sitting was suspended at 6.30 p.m. until 8.3 p.m.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province): I endorse the motion so ably moved by Mr. Walton and supported by my colleagues, Mr. Galbally and Mr. Knight.

Prior to the suspension of the sitting for dinner Mr. Ward stated that the motion, as moved, could not be accepted by the Government and he gave reasons for this. He said that certain aspects of the motion were not mentioned by members of the Opposition. Mr. Ward has not been listening because it was clear to me that Mr. Walton pointed out that Mr. Best, and nobody else, was the man referred to in this motion.

Section 4 of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958, No. 6310, states, inter alia—

4. (1) For the purpose of carrying this Act into execution, the Board shall be constituted as hereinafter provided.

(1A) Subject to the Minister the Board shall administer this Act and shall have and may exercise the rights powers and authorities and discharge the duties conferred or imposed on it by this or any other Act.

Section 4A provides, inter alia—

In the administration of this Act the Minister shall be entitled at all times—

(a) to put himself into direct communication with the chairman of the Board or the secretary to the Board;

(b) to see all documents papers and minutes in the custody of the Board that are requested by the Minister for Parliament or himself and to be supplied with copies thereof; and

Section 4B states, inter alia—

(2) The Minister may approve or disapprove the scheme proposed by the Board or may approve the scheme so proposed subject to such variations as he thinks fit.

It is apparent that the Acting Minister was not aware of what was taking place. He had not been informed by the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Works of what he intended to do about the advertising of the Board of Works loan.

A statement appeared in the Sun News-Pictorial on Friday, 20th August, headed “Board Ad. Row: Move for Special Meeting.” The article related to the board advertising row. Nothing came out of the special meeting. The article states—

A special Board of Works meeting is likely to be held next week to discuss a row over an advertising contract for a board loan.

The company was formerly known as Best and Co. (Advertising Pty. Ltd).

Mr. Best resigned as governing director of Best and Co. on 19th February of this year. He should have resigned when he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Board of Works last year. Why did he wait so long? Was he aware of what was going to take place within the board in regard to advertising rights? It is quite apparent that he was.

The article continues—

The Acting Water Supply Minister, Mr. Macellon, yesterday asked the board for its file on the issue to “satisfy himself” about it.

He received the file yesterday morning and after reading it would say only: “I was a slow reader.”

Of course he was a slow reader—he was endeavouring to give Mr. Best time in which to slide out from underneath the trouble he had already placed himself in. I have never before heard such a weak statement from an Acting Minister. He was endeavouring to cover up for Mr. Best. The article goes on—

Mr. Macellon said Mr. Best asked for a meeting with the Premier, Mr. Hamer, on Wednesday to discuss “the advertising agency matter”.

I do not need the assistance of members on the Government side who are interjecting, although they
have a responsibility to defend one of their party members. The article continues—

Mr. Maclellan said Mr. Hamer told him that he told Mr. Best it would be unwise to proceed with the appointment of Mr. Best's former agency under the circumstances.

Mr. Best has been quoted as saying submissions for the account were sought from three other agencies—Spasm Advertising, Fortune (Aust.) Pty. Ltd., and Barry Banks, Blakeney.

This was only a blind because Mr. Best went ahead, after calling for three quotes, and appointed a firm with which he had been connected for many years. The report goes on—

Spasm's joint managing director, Mr. Alex Dumas, said his agency was disappointed at not getting the account.

He said the agency was unhappy about several aspects.

Anyone would be unhappy about Mr. Best's actions in not consulting his commissioners but making the appointment himself when he was supposedly in a position of trust. The article said that—

A managing director of USP Needham, Mr. P. Bennett, said: "I was surprised that after 27 years the board did not require our services for their next loan."

That company had had the advertising business of the Board of Works for the past 27 years and was not even considered on this occasion because of Mr. Best's action.

Mr. Walton pointed out that Mr. Best still retains shares in an advertising company. It is all very well for the Minister to say that Mr. Best's wife has only so many and Mr. Best has a certain number of shares not connected with the company concerned, but he still has shares in an advertising company. Mr. Best has had many years of experience in advertising and he should have known better. It is apparent that Mr. Best's salary, of approximately $30,000 a year, is not enough to satisfy his greed.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! Honorable members have already canvassed at some length the question of the gentleman concerned. I have allowed members a reasonable say on that aspect, as one should in such a debate. But I think we should not continue along the line of how much this gentleman is paid. The question under consideration is the failure of the Minister to exercise his powers to adequately control the operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and its officers. I invite Mr. Eddy to relate his remarks more closely to the motion.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY: Very well, Mr. President. I am certain that the Chief Secretary—who was Acting Premier at that time—did not exercise any right in trying to advise Mr. Best what to do. He endeavoured to keep out of this argument altogether; he did not want to get mixed up in it. Ministers have a duty to perform in the interests of the public. Not one of them acted as he should have to overcome Mr. Best's actions in respect of these proposed loans. The Ministers stand condemned for failing to call for an inquiry into the actions of Mr. Best.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province): First, I thank the Minister of Water Supply in what I think we could call "the Best affair" for making available to the Opposition the Board of Works file on this matter. The Minister's action is very much appreciated by members of the Opposition and certainly shows the honorable gentleman's integrity and why we have always held him in such esteem.

The continuing saga of the Board of Works blunders is only to be matched by the equally, it seems, perennial response of the Liberal Government to forgive and want to forget. In the interests of those who pay rates, let alone the public at large, it is not good enough for the Hamer Liberal Government to tolerate what the Board of Works has been doing by way of mismanagement over the years. On his own admission, the Minister of Water Supply was overseas.
The Hon. V. O. Dickie: It was not an admission; it was a statement.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: It was a statement that the Minister was interstate, and I stand corrected. However, the Minister had no alternative but to support the gentle approach of the Premier in taking the mild action of keeping the deputy chairman of the board in his job and enabling him to retain his influence. It might be commendable to display unswerving loyalty to one's own, but in a serious matter affecting public money, it is wrong. The arbitrary, arrogant and defiant abuse of power by the deputy chairman—it is not the first abuse by the Board of Works—is not good enough, not merely for the public of Victoria but for those highly respected, efficient and reputable engineers and officers and thousands of other employees of the board. I do not know how the board can sustain morale in the face of what the bosses at the top do. I suspect that it is not possible.

Before the suspension of the sitting for dinner, the Minister of Water Supply asserted that at least Mr. Best was big enough to admit that he had erred. Of course he did this, but he did not do so until nine days after the first announcement of the appointment of the firm which he formerly controlled, Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd.

It was only following nine days of persuasion and cajoling by his own officers, pressure from the Premier and the media of this State, nine days of persistent and relentless striving for the truth, that the deputy chairman deigned to admit that perhaps he was wrong; even then it was a qualified admittance. This is not good enough. It is certainly not good enough for a Board of Works which is about $900 million in debt and which pays approximately 60 cents in the $1 from rates received in repayment of loans, a board which has demonstrated five or six years of bad management and enjoyed 21 years of Liberal Government endorsement of its policies, despite bad management at the most senior level. It is nothing less than that.

I come now to the meat of what I have to say and to quote something from the file which the Minister so graciously supplied. What I am about to quote is a wholesale condemnation of the deputy chairman's actions, and I defy anyone to provide a reasoned case to make an independent arbitrator adjudge otherwise. I intend to read from a memorandum written by Mr. N. J. Sutherland, who was the Public Relations Manager of the Board of Works. The memorandum was written on 1st August this year and was addressed to the deputy chairman. Mr. Sutherland is not inexperienced in advertising. As Mr. Elliot says, he is a first-class operator, with a considerable public relations experience.

I do not think anyone will dispute the honesty and capacity of Mr. Sutherland, who, with two or his fellow officers, was charged with the task of examining the proposals of three advertising agencies to prepare a campaign for the board's September loan appeal. Of the other two officers, one was from the Treasury Department of the board and the other was a member of its own public relations staff. This panel of officers examined the submissions in detail and interviewed representatives of the firms in question, Spasm Australia Pty. Ltd., Fortune and Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd.

The Hon. F. J. Grantor: They interviewed only a representative from Spasm.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: In the memorandum addressed to the deputy chairman on 1st August, 1976, Mr. Sutherland said—

As directed, inquiries had been made to three advertising agencies to determine possible alternative campaigns for adoption in the board's next (September) loan and perhaps a permanent future appointment.

The agencies consulted were as follows—

(a) Spasm Australia Pty. Ltd.

(b) Fortune.

(c) Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd.

Mr. J. Roberts of the Treasurer's branch, Mr. N. Chippindall, of this office and I together formed a panel for the purpose of
assessing the respective campaigns submitted and it was our unanimous view that the first of the above-named companies offers the most to this board in respect to its loan campaign advertising.

Spasm Australia Pty. Ltd. is favoured because—

(i) From discussions held with the company and from samples of previous campaigns for other organizations, the company offers the greatest degree of creativity.

(ii) There appears to be a greater depth of expertise in this particular company. This is indicated by the fact that if the company is selected to prepare a campaign for the board, three independent creative groups within the company would prepare separate proposals for consideration.

(iii) This particular company appears to offer a greater degree of research into the likely effectiveness of any campaign to be adopted.

(iv) The financial control over the account is quite explicit and the state of the account is readily seen at all times. This will, of course, be particularly helpful in any long-term campaign.

Submitted for your consideration.

(Sgd.) N. J. SUTHERLAND,
Public Relations Manager,
1st August, 1976.

Handwritten with a ball-point pen underneath is a note—

Have Barry, Banks, Blakeney Advertising Pty. Ltd. agreed to do this loan and get reaction to advertising service—prior to any further developments.

I cannot say whether that note is in Mr. Best's handwriting, but I can say that it is not Mr. Sutherland's writing. Therefore, who else could it have been? It is not my task to evaluate the competence of Spasm Australia Pty. Ltd., or to try to reach the same decision that these experienced senior officers of the board reached in their unanimous recommendation to the deputy chairman.

It might interest honorable members to learn that the firm is held in some respect and has a reputation within the community. Its major accounts include the Commercial Bank of Australia Ltd., J. G. Guest and Sons Pty. Ltd.—a name that is not unknown in this Chamber—H. J. Heinz & Co., Jennings Industries, Shell Chemicals, Brash's and so on.

The fact that these large companies share the opinion of the senior officers of the board that this was the firm to do the job and, for the reasons outlined in the memorandum, was recommended, should at least support the most basic judgment about the capacity of the board's senior officers to make a decision.

The memorandum is a damaging document and, in my view, should have commanded the strongest possible response from the Government. The reasons for the decision have never been supplied and certainly the file does not indicate why the recommendation was not accepted.

Prior to taking the formal decision, the deputy chairman had a discussion with Mr. Sutherland and then made a decision. It would be most interesting to know what took place during the discussion, but honorable members will never know. Mr. Sutherland wanted Spasm Australia Pty. Ltd. and Mr. Best did not; he wanted a firm of which he was previously the main shareholder to get the job—a job with a potential for a more permanent relationship with the board and future lucrative contracts for the firm. There is no answer to it. The deputy chairman made a statement on 25th August which was supposed to clear the air and to prove that his actions were correct and proper. I can find nothing in that statement which produces a shred of evidence to suggest the decision taken by the deputy chairman to overrule the unanimous decision of the three officers had any proper basis.

I know the Premier rebuked the deputy chairman and in doing so in effect stated, "I agree, though, with the basis of your selection." I did not know that the Premier was a public relations expert and perhaps he is better informed and has more expertise than the board's own experts in its public relations section because that sort of statement is consistent with the whole sordid exercise of trying to extricate Mr.
Best, the Deputy Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, from a situation about which he must now lie awake at night and have nightmares.

Mr. Best acted improperly and there is no question but that he did. It must be remembered that each year the Board of Works handles hundreds of millions of dollars of public money. It is simply not good enough to display an easy tolerance for this type of exercise, and this Parliament loses if it does not act responsibly in response to the situation which has now arisen, not for the first time. But the only predictable action which honorable members know the Government will take will be to soft pedal by looking after its own, no matter what the cost in money or reputation. If this matter is allowed to rest—honorable members know it is the Government's intention to let it rest—it will be a sordid chapter in the history of Victoria. The Opposition will not let it rest. I fully support my colleague, Mr. Walton, and the motion he has moved, which in justice should be agreed to.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province): I commend the contribution made in this debate by my colleague and fellow representative for the Melbourne Province, Mr. Trayling. Mr. Trayling has hit the nail right on the head and honorable members can see crass stupidity rearing its ugly head right through this regrettable episode.

No honorable member on the Government side of the Chamber can feel any comfort over the revealing tonight by Mr. Trayling of the history of the Best episode. When it comes to advertising I can speak with a little experience and I inform honorable members now that in my 43 years' experience in advertising—I am that old—I have never known anything like this to occur before, because it is a commonly regarded precept in advertising that any man who finds any suggestion of conflict of interest arising should shy clear from it by as great a distance as he can possibly place himself.

I have known Ted Best for 30 years. As a matter of fact he tried to employ me during the Leyshon episode, when that firm was taken over by his own company. At that time he secured the Nicholas account which he subsequently lost, and by no precept in the world of advertising could Mr. Best be judged a fool. Nowadays you cannot get away with lack of experience in advertising but by any standard Mr. Best is a good operator through his membership of the Australian Association of Advertising Agencies, from an agency point of view, he has always acted properly.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Has he always been highly regarded as an ethical operator?

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Generally he has been regarded as an ethical operator. As a matter of fact, any member of the association who is not an ethical operator soon loses his accreditation. Honorable members can find in the history of the Best saga a diminution in the ability of the company in which he was formerly interested to service accounts. Then there is the fact Mr. Best, rather fortunately or unfortunately secured for himself—I wish him well if he can overcome this disability although I doubt it—in the latter stages of his career the position of Deputy Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

It is not good enough to hear the Minister of Water Supply tonight make an open statement to support all the magnificent men—not in their flying machines—but those magnificent men in the balustraded building in Spencer Street, which is another typical folly of the Government. Honorable members can go to the "Bridge over the River Kwai", the Spencer Street railway station, the Westgate Bridge and now the Board of Works building down in Spencer Street—
The Hon. O. G. Jenkins: What about Newport?

The Hon. D. G. Elliot: It has not been built yet so Mr. Jenkins can keep his criticism until it is built and it is located sensibly in the interests of the little people about whom Mr. Jenkins knows nothing whatsoever. I will not ask for your protection, Mr. President, because I can handle Mr. Jenkins, but the fact remains that the activities of the Board of Works should be looked into and investigated not because of Mr. Best but because—I stand to be corrected here—approximately 60 per cent of the entire revenue of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is spent on meeting interest payments.

The Hon. F. J. Granter: It is 54 per cent.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot: I will not argue for the sake of 6 per cent. It is the consumer who is paying and I am sure you could speak personally of this, Mr. President. I submit that there are grounds for an inquiry into the operations of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. I also suggest that you, Mr. President, would have preferred to see the subject-matter put much more broadly in the first place, but it is true that the Board of Works, which is an entity, receives revenue and of the amount it receives 54 per cent is paid in interest. I believe the percentage is higher, although the Minister would know more than I do about what is being expended in interest payments.

It means that every person, even you, Mr. President, in your august position as President in this Chamber, as well as every honorable member who lives in the metropolitan area, pays rates to the Board of Works and would have paid during the past two or three years something like 150 to 200 per cent more in water rates than a few years back. Of the $360 a year I pay in water rates, 54 per cent goes in interest. I should like the people of Victoria to know that 54 per cent of everything they pay to the Board of Works goes in interest payments. How is that protecting the interests of the consumer? I can hear very little from the bleater, Mr. Ward, and the so-called front benchers when I make that statement.

One cannot expect extra charges to be met on any commodity unless one looks into the whole economy, in this case the state of the economy in the Board of Works. I am not going to single out Alan Croxford for any particular criticism, but he is a very competent smoothie and the person he wanted as deputy had to be a similar type of person. The whole set up at the Board of Works stinks to high Heaven.

The board has too much power and when members of the Government, both here and in another place, are asked about it, one finds that unofficially they will readily recognize and accept that fact. It is time that the powers of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works were trimmed to a practical size.

There are many reasons for the board's current financial position. The board is not to blame for the high interest charges that it is called upon to pay each year. The blame has to be sheeted home to where it belongs. The Government has to recognize this and do something about it. The finances of the board have deteriorated to the point where 54 per cent of its revenue—I believe it is more than 60 per cent—is re-allocated straight out in interest charges.

I hope the Minister for Local Government will have something to say in defence of the Minister of Water Supply. I do not denigrate that honorable gentleman in any way because the Minister of Water Supply is an honorable gentleman, but when he visits the Board of Works he needs a little protection. The Minister of Water Supply may say that he does not need protection, that he is capable of standing on his own feet, and of course he is, but in a set up such as
the Board of Works, anyone could be overcome and excused for not knowing everything that is occurring there. That is why Mr. Walton's motion must be supported.

It is not funny and honorable members can find many people who are generally dissatisfied with the situation pertaining to the Board of Works. I concede that they may be talking through their "kick", but I assert that although it has been an expensive and expansive operation in recent years, it has got past the point of logic and has now reached the stage where it has become farcical, and the sooner the Parliament reallocates quite a few of the board's responsibilities the better.

I am proud to support the motion and again commend the excellent factual contribution made by my colleague, Mr. Trayling, together with the contributions made by my other confrères.

As to the remarks by Mr. McDonald on behalf of the National Party, I point out that he can make such comments in absolute comfort because he does not come under the control of the Board of Works and has not been called upon to pay any more for his water because of the efficiency of that wonderful instrumentality under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Water Supply. I suggest he uses more water than anyone else in this House. He has the excuse that he is a country man and that we must support the beef producers and those who are responsible for growing oats, but Mr. McDonald would have had about 40,000 bales of hay to sell at $2.50 to people wanting them in the Western District—to poor old Stan—and if Mr. Gleeson were here I am sure he would be nodding his head.

Enough is enough. Let us get together. The Opposition will give the Government every co-operation but let the Government have the courage and the guts to do something about the Board of Works because action is long overdue.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I rise slowly and reluctantly to my feet, and only because Mr. Elliot has extended to me an invitation which I cannot refuse. Having done so I want to gently chide him and my friend, Mr. Galbally, who displayed some uncharacteristic lapses in his logic and facts tonight. Mr. Galbally based part of his argument on the fact that the Board of Works spends more than the South Australian Government. What sort of argument is that?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I did not say that at all.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Would the Board of Works be more acceptable if it spent only half as much as the South Australian Government? In fact, the allegation was completely incorrect. The South Australian Government in its current Budget proposes an expenditure of $1,171 million. In the year just past the Board of Works spent $300 million, and in the coming year it will spend an estimated $396 million. Mr. Galbally's facts are astray and his argument had no logic—not a tittle or trace of it.

Now I turn to the planning issue raised by Mr. Galbally. He was talking about appeals other than to a court of law, but he was mixed in his facts. Mr. Galbally has never liked planning—he has made it clear often. He has never bothered to study it and never bothered to get the facts straight. Mr. Galbally was talking about the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal when he referred to lawyers going along to the body on appeals. That tribunal is not controlled by the Board of Works but is completely independent. It deals with appeals against decisions in respect of applications for planning permits, whether by applicants or objectors. Zoning proposals and changes in planning ordinances are in a different category and arise either at the local level or at the board. In either event, members of the public are invited to state any objections to the proposal, and those who wish to do so may be heard in support of their objections.
The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: By whom are they heard?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: They are heard at that stage by the Board of Works.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: That is what I said.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I shall deal with Mr. Galbally's argument if he will give me a chance to do so. Then the matter is reviewed by the Town and Country Planning Board. After review by the Town and Country Planning Board, the matter is reviewed by the Minister. Decisions are made as a matter of policy by the Governor in Council. There never was an appeal to a court of law on policy decisions by the Governor in Council.

This is a system that brings in local participation, a right of objection at the board level, a further right of objection during review by the Town and Country Planning Board and the right of further representations to the Minister himself. In the last resort on policy issues, decisions are made not by courts of law but by the Governor in Council, and that is the way they have to be made. This Parliament can impose strictures upon the Government by Acts or in other ways but the elected Government makes the policy, not the courts.

On the other hand, in respect of appeals to which Mr. Galbally referred, there is an appeal to a completely independent tribunal, the chairman of which must be qualified by appointment as a County Court judge. It is a system which enables objections to be heard, all sides to be put, and proponents of and objectors to a proposal to be heard independently. The decision is not made by the Board of Works on these appeals, but by an impartial tribunal which operates in an atmosphere and manner akin to that of a court.

Why is the Board of Works so consistently under attack? The reason is simple; it has always been under attack from the earliest days, and is always likely to be so because of the nature of the work it undertakes. It is a rating authority, and no rating authority is ever popular. Let anyone who likes paying rates stand up.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I do not mind paying fair rates. I also like paying taxes to help my brethren, and you should like it too.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I invite Mr. Elliot to check the price of butter five years ago and rises that have taken place in it since then against his rates.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I resent that because I am a margarine man.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: The result would probably be the same if one checked the price of margarine. Nobody likes paying rates; nobody likes rate increases. Everybody likes salary increases, but if they receive wages or salary increases they must expect to pay more for the same services, whether these are rendered by Government, by instrumentalities such as the Board of Works, or by local government.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Even as a Minister Mr. Hunt's salary increases are well behind the Board of Works rate increases. He should be getting double the amount he is now receiving.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: We have shown in Parliamentary salary rises the restraint that is necessary in times such as these.

I have given as one reason for the unpopularity of the Board of Works the fact that it is a rating authority and that it must from time to time increase rates. Another reason is the fact that until recently the board was a road building authority, and the building of new roads required the acquisition of properties. Everybody who has ever had a property compulsorily acquired objects to it to his friends, members of Parliament, and everybody else, but these projects are necessary in the interests of the community as a whole. Whatever the price paid, the person from whom
property is acquired believes it ought to have been more. The prices are assessed on the basis of independent valuation, on what the market is normally, together with 10 per cent solatium—that is, additional compensation for the trouble, problems and worry of compulsory acquisition—plus all expenses of sale, valuation, removal and any incidental loss occasioned. This is a very fair system—Mr. Knight agrees with me across the Chamber—and yet the fact that properties are from time to time acquired is naturally a source of criticism and attack.

Mr. Galbally, who does not like planning in any event, attacked the board on planning grounds even though he was astray in his facts and logic, but planning work is essential to protect this city and to curb the urban sprawl which would otherwise proliferate everywhere. In the planning for Melbourne provision has been made for green wedges, for open space along major creek systems and for six metropolitan park systems, in respect of which the purchase of land is well under way with a view to protecting the character of this city and its environment into the next century and beyond. That is the job the Board of Works does, but everyone in the green wedge who does not get his land rezoned from farming to urban—

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Do not bring that up, because I am one of the victims and I am not squealing. I am building on my land and am happy to live on it. There is beautiful fresh air there. with jets going right overhead.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Everyone who lives in an area that is not zoned for urban purposes believes he has a grudge. Mr. Elliot calls himself a victim.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: I am a present victim. I have 42 acres of fresh air and am looking forward to the Concorde coming right over my place.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! The debate is degenerating into nonsense. I request members to restrain themselves. I do not want to talk about threats at this stage, but surely honorable members realize that they cannot go on in this manner.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: Mr. President, I am glad that Mr. Elliot does not feel bad about being a victim. If he regards himself as a victim—and that is the way he described himself—and is still happy about it, then he must be a masochist. The fact that sometimes people do not receive the rezonings which they want and which they believe would make them a lot of money also brings criticism on the Board of Works, when what it is really doing is looking after the interests in the long term of this city.

In the six areas set aside as parks, the board has already engaged in massive purchases, and this has involved problems for some people, again compounding the unpopularity which a body such as this that does its job necessarily incurs.

In the field of sewerage the Board of Works provided a magnificent system a long time ago, and Melbourne was the premier city in Australia in the early establishment of sewerage systems. It was up with the best in the Western World, and the board deserves great credit for that. Yet as the system became overtaxed and needed duplicating with the Carrum plant and the Cape Schanck outfall many areas remained unsewered, and the board again receives criticism because of those unsewered areas. The real reason, obviously, is that it cannot do everything all at once and that it cannot, from its rate income or indeed from the loans available to it, achieve miracles overnight.

In a drought the board receives criticism for imposing water restrictions, although it has more than doubled the capacity of Melbourne's water supply over a very short time
and will shortly double it again. However, in doing all this it has maintained the quality of the water supply in a manner which is a credit to that institution.

I refer to the board's road works. The Tullamarine Freeway was a highly creditable endeavour in the field of urban highways and road development and is a landmark in this city.

The Hon. S. R. McDonald: It is the most effective highway in this State.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt: It is indeed, and was magnificently devised, planned and constructed. The board deserves enormous credit for imaginative projects such as the Tullamarine Freeway. It also deserves credit for its waterworks and water supply undertakings and for the way in which it has gone about providing for the future. It deserves even greater credit for the planning it has undertaken to protect Melbourne now and in the future, and for its park systems. Of course, rates must go up in accordance with inflation to meet all these costs. The very nature of the works and services which the boards provides explains why it necessarily incurs unpopularity and comes into conflict with people from time to time.

I turn to the structure of the Board of Works. At least it is a representative board—a board which represents the interests of municipalities throughout this great metropolis and to which each council elects representatives. At least it is closer to the people than if it were simply an agency of Government. I am glad to say it is not merely an agency of Government; that it does in this way represent the municipalities and indirectly enables the representation of local views, aspirations and interests. Through the committee system it is enabled to operate very effectively.

What is the attack made upon the Minister? It is that he does not exercise sufficient control over this board. What is his role? His real role is set out in section 4 of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act which provides that "subject to the Minister, the Board shall administer this Act". What does that mean? It means that the board is responsible in the first instance for the administration of the Act and that it ought so far as is practicable to be left to undertake that administration. It means also that the Minister has a reserve power to intervene whenever necessary. That is precisely what the Acting Minister did in the case that has been raised to support this motion.

The Acting Minister called immediately for the files as he is able to do under section 4A. He consulted with the Premier and a direction was given and it was supported by the Acting Minister. The decision was made by a man who has been described by Mr. Elliot as a reputable and ethical operator in the public relations field. The decision was overruled. It was one which many regarded as being the result of an uncharacteristic error of judgment, just as I said Mr. Galbally was guilty of an uncharacteristic misstatement of fact this evening. The decision was overruled in the proper exercise of this reserve power. That is why the section is in the Act. That is exactly what occurred and it occurred promptly when the facts were known.

That surely is an exercise of Ministerial responsibility in the way in which it was intended to operate. The fact that it was a proper and effective exercise gives a complete answer to the allegations in the debate on this motion.

I have mentioned that under section 4A of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act the Minister is able to call for files. The section also provides that he is able to supply those files to Parliament. That is what he has done this evening in his usual gracious and prompt way without equivocation and without hesitation.
Once again, he has acted properly and in accordance with the best traditions of Ministerial responsibility. For those reasons the motion before the House must fail.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. G. Fry in the chair)—

Ayes...
Noes...

Majority against the motion...

AYES.
Mr. Eddy
Mr. Elliot
Mr. Galbally
Mr. Knight
Mr. Landeryou

Tellers:
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Trayling

NOES.
Mr. Block
Mr. Bradbury
Mr. Campbell
Mr. Chamberlain
Mr. Crozier
Mr. Dickie
Mr. Dunn
Mr. Evans
Mr. Foley
Mr. Gleeson
Mr. Grant
Mr. Grimwade
Mr. Guest
Mr. Hamilton
Mr. Hauser

Tellers:
Mr. Hider
Mr. Houghton
Mr. Hunt
Mr. Jenkins
Mr. Knowles
Mr. Long
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Reid
Mr. Saltmarsh
Mr. Stacey
Mr. Storey
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Wright
Mr. Ward

The motion was agreed to.

PAPERS.

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

Statutory Rules under the Public Service Act 1974—Public Service Department Nos. 101 and 102.
Town and Country Planning Act 1961—
City of Traralgon Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 7, 1976.

CLUSTER TITLES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister forLocal Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling (Melbourne Province): This Bill seeks to repeal section 5 of the principal Act and members of the Labor Party do not oppose it. It is clear that municipalities want this amendment to go through quickly to obviate changes that will come into effect twelve months after the enactment of the original Bill and will cause problems in some municipalities.

During the second-reading stage the Minister took the opportunity of giving the House a progress report on what has happened since the principal Act was introduced. At that time members of the Labor Party commended the introduction of the Bill and any inquiries or comments which have arisen since then have indicated that the legislation was good. Nevertheless, my party stands by the comments it made that some of the delays caused to people who seek to have subdivisions processed have been the result of too much
cross-referencing from one Act to another. In some senses this has made the Act a little formidable to officers of some municipalities.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt: I accept that criticism.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: If the Minister and his committee continue with an examination and an ongoing review of this Act from time to time, as they have indicated, it will be further to the advantage of municipalities and those who seek the advantage of cluster subdivisions. Members of the Labor Party support the Bill.

This innovative legislation by the Government has a good future but municipalities might need a little more encouragement in their treatment of applications forwarded to them for processing. There might then be more benefits to the community.

The Hon. K. I. Wright (North Western Province): The original debate on the Cluster Titles Act took place in November, 1974. Honorable members will recall that on that evening the Minister really earned his money and was exhausted after the debate.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt: I was at the table for four hours.

The Hon. K. I. Wright: Honorable members commend the Minister for that. It certainly illustrated that the measure was complicated and indeed, some of the problems that were foreshadowed have come to pass. The House will probably recall that I made a plea that the strata title be retained indefinitely for the development of villa units and town houses.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt: Wright was right again.

The Hon. K. I. Wright: I thank the Minister for his comment. Members of the National Party stated that they believed it was essential for a developer to have a choice between a strata title development and a cluster title development. Since that time I have made further representations to the Minister and urged that the Strata Titles Act should be retained for town houses and villa units rather than ceasing to be operative on 1st October, 1976.

Last year the Minister visited Mildura and I took the opportunity of taking him over an excellent development by Mr. John Keam. That developer expressed a keenness, with the great experience that he had—he proposes to build 500 more units in the next three years in that area—towards the Strata Titles Act rather than to the Cluster Titles Act for his development.

The National Party commends the Minister and the Government for the common-sense decision to repeal section 5 of the Act and also for the usual courtesy that has been extended by the Minister. The National Party supports this Bill and hopes it will have a quick passage.

The Minister took the opportunity of mentioning briefly some of the problems that have occurred with this legislation and I should like to mention some problems that have been experienced in country areas. Contrary to the viewpoint expressed by the Minister when the original Bill was debated in 1974, it has been found that cluster title developments have been far more expensive than strata title developments and therefore most of the builders and developers prefer strata title development.

The situation has been described to me as chaotic because only a few councils have drawn up cluster title codes. The Minister and his department drew up an excellent model code and it should not have been difficult for councils to do this. Unfortunately, it appears that metropolitan councils in the main have adopted a negative attitude in this matter. I take the opportunity of commending the Swan Hill City Council and the Swan Hill Shire Council which have drawn up excellent codes that have been put to
good purpose. However, there has been much red tape in the administration of the Cluster Titles Act and it is hoped the Minister and the Government will be able to eliminate this.

The Cluster Titles Act removed the siting powers of the Uniform Building Regulations and it appears that some councils—I am not speaking about officers as much as about councillors—have been so overawed by the power that has been given to them by this Parliament that they have been rather cautious in administering the legislation. This has delayed developers and has needlessly cost thousands of dollars. Of course, in the long run this additional money is paid by the people who are purchasing the home.

I should like to mention a rather serious matter regarding the Cluster Titles Act and the Strata Titles Act. I broached this subject in the original debate and advocated that the Strata Titles Act and the Cluster Titles Act should be consolidated to the extent that there would be no need for cross references to other Acts. There are no less than nine Acts that have to be cross-referenced by surveyors, developers and councillors and so on. I commend that suggestion to the Minister. I felt that the Minister was sympathetic to it, but somewhere along the line he was talked out of it.

There are advantages in both Acts. Some developers prefer to use the Cluster Titles Act and others prefer to use the Strata Titles Act. The Minister commended the Cluster Titles Act from the point of view that the developer or subdivider would be able to sell an individual lot to a person or developer. I do not know whether the Minister has had any experience of it, but I have not been able to locate any instance where a developer has been prepared to sell an individual lot. Probably there are two reasons for this. As I mentioned, it is costing more than expected to bring the development of the land to fruition. Having done that, a developer will not sell the land to somebody else to build on and to reap the benefit. That is one reason. Another reason is that if there is a 60-lot subdivision and a developer intends to build homes on it, he will not take the risk of selling lots to individuals who may build excellent homes but which might be out of character and keeping with the type of villa or unit that is going to be built by that developer and so detract from the area as a whole.

It was stated that with the Cluster Titles Act advantage would be taken of natural facilities, such as watercourses, hills, lakes and so on. That is all right in some parts of this State but in other areas the land is as flat as a billiard table, and it is not an advantage to use the Cluster Titles Act unless the developer is prepared to spend extra money to provide these facilities.

I mentioned Mr. Keam of Mildura who is to be commended for the work he is doing under the Strata Titles Act. Under that legislation buildings are inclined to be crowded on the land, but Mr. Keam utilizes only one-third of the land for buildings, and two-thirds of the land is open space which is available for the use of the community. However, there is an anomaly; he still has to pay 5 per cent of the value of the land in cash to the local council for the provision of recreational land somewhere else. In theory that might sound reasonable because it could be said that the two-thirds of the land which is made available for recreational purposes is for people in the cluster title developments, but in practice that land is available for any member of the municipality or development to use.

This particular strata title development is done along the lines of nine properties being built at once; eight of them are sold, and the ninth is tied to the remainder of the land. Then a further nine are built, and so on. This process continues until they are all sold. In his second-reading speech the Minister remarked that the Strata Titles Act deals with air space, and the Cluster Titles Act deals
with the actual land. It would be advantageous and I know of no reason why the former developments could not be sold and registered when the floor is poured. At this stage the outline of the building is known, and it would be of considerable advantage to all concerned if the Minister could agree to the proposal. I commend my suggestion to the Minister. I think it has fallen on deaf ears at the moment.

I quote the following two paragraphs of a letter which I wrote to the Minister on 30th August, 1976, on this point—

I am informed by builders in my province that one vital improvement that could be made to the Strata Titles Act to eliminate a danger point would be for councils to be allowed to seal the plan of strata subdivision when the floors are poured, or building areas defined. This plan could then proceed through the normal channels to the Titles Office for issue of titles, which could be held in trust by the local council until the buildings are completed.

The titles would then be made available with the certificate of occupancy, and immediate settlement could then take place. This would allow valuable time to be used during the course of construction for this procedure. At present, there is always the danger that title will not be issued on completion of the buildings and payment held up. Your consideration of these matters would be appreciated.

The reply to my letter from the Minister, dated 8th September, 1976, reads, inter alia—

I do not favour the suggestion that councils should be empowered to seal plans of strata subdivision as soon as the building areas are defined on the ground. Councils are required to satisfy themselves that the buildings are suitable for their proposed use and that they comply with the requirements of various Acts and regulations before a plan is sealed. However, it would be undesirable to issue titles for units which were only partially constructed.

I ask the Minister again to reconsider this. The municipality issues a certificate of occupancy when the building is completed and this should be sufficient safeguard.

I turn now to the subject of mail delivery to these particular cluster title and strata title developments. The postal commission has a rule which prevents it from delivering mail into these units. I realize that this is a touchy subject, but I consider that I should mention it because of the present cost of postal facilities. The basic postage rate for letters is 18 cents and people who live in this type of development are entitled to have their mail delivered to their property and not left out the front somewhere.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT: Can't they put up a mail box?

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT: They can install 100 mail boxes but the mail is not taken into their courtyard. My colleague, Mr. McDonald, asks why the post office will not do this. The only answer is, because of regulations and the saving of costs. I submit this is very poor thinking indeed.

I refer to the Cluster Titles Committee, and I thank the Minister for accepting my request to rectify the omission of a surveyor from that committee. When the Minister makes his speech on clause 2 at the Committee stage I hope he will inform the House how the title situation is working with cluster titles. When the matter was debated before, it was evident that four sheets of paper would be required. It was said that the Titles Office was not keen on colouring on their titles. The view was put that four sheets was rather cumbersome. I would be interested to learn the outcome of this matter.

Finally I commend the Minister and the Government for bringing in this Bill so expeditiously. The National Party considers that it is essential that a developer should have the choice of using the Strata Titles Act or the Cluster Titles Act. I also repeat my plea for the consolidation of the Acts and the elimination of cross-referencing.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Repeal of No. 8661 s.5).
The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I thank Mr. Trayling and Mr. Wright for their remarks, and for the research which went into them. At some points the honorable members were mildly critical, but their criticisms were justified. The Government was over cautious with this Act, and it now behoves the Government to move forward to eliminate unnecessary red tape.

Clause 2 is of some urgency, and a step along the way, but my second-reading speech foreshadowed a number of other changes including the simplification of the titles system. That has been requested by the registrar who desires to put plans through as quickly as possible. Until the system is simplified there will inevitably be delays at the Titles Office. Delays are being anticipated there. The objective is to remove these difficulties in the light of experience. I have indicated the discussions that are currently taking place and I hope that in the not-too-distant future there will be another Bill which will help in this regard.

Mr. Wright has raised a number of issues which I touched upon in my second-reading speech and can take no further. He also raised the matter of difficulties with the Australian Postal Commission. I have made representations to the Commonwealth Government on his behalf, with a singular lack of success to date. The honorable member knows the reason why I do not propose in this House to make public the results of what occurred. He knows very well that it might be self-defeating for me to do so, and I do not propose to do it.

The last issue raised relates to strata titles. I point out that that is within the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Attorney-General. However, I fully agree that ultimately the Strata Titles Act and the Cluster Titles Act should be combined.

I will shortly be talking with my colleague, the Attorney-General, about that issue. This is not a project for the immediate future, but I should hope that, in the light of experience, it can be undertaken. When that occurs the Government will certainly look again at issues such as the earlier sealing of plans of subdivision subject to bonds or undertakings for both classes of development. It would be essential that those issues be examined in order to prepare consolidated legislation. One problem is that the Parliamentary Counsel who specializes in this field will be taking study leave, but the Government nonetheless hopes it will not be long before the consolidation of all the relevant Acts can be considered.

The clause was agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): By leave, I move--

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until tomorrow at two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I move--

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province): I raise a matter of vital urgency to the children of my constituents in the suburb of Deer Park, which overlaps the provinces of Doutta Galla and Melbourne West. This inept Government looks after the salubrious suburbs in the east, but is not so concerned about what happens in the western suburbs. At present 530 children are enrolled at Deer Park Primary School and the parents of those children have taken umbrage at the fact that the Government proposes to remove the portable classrooms which are presently at the school. This Government talks about how well it looks after education, but the six portable classrooms at Deer Park should not be removed. The
parents of 228 of those children withdrew them from the school both yesterday and today. Both the school committee and action committee agree that the six portable classrooms must remain at the school.

I should like the Minister to give an assurance that the portables will remain at Deer Park Primary School. They are presently used for storage purposes, staff room, recreation rooms and special purpose rooms. I ask that these remain so that the children in the western suburbs can receive the education for which their parents are taxed by this inept Liberal Government, and which will mean that they are not sent forth as dill such as we see on some of the opposite benches.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): Despite the terms in which that request was couched, I will take the matter up with the Minister of Education and advise the honorable member of the answer.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.4 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

RAILWAYS STATE CAR.

(Question No. 116)

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Transport—

(a) For what purpose has the railway carriage known as the State car been used since 1st January, 1974?

(b) Have any interior alterations (structural or fittings) been made to this vehicle during the above period; if so—(i) on how many occasions; (ii) what are the details and costs of such alterations; and (iii) why were the alterations made, and on whose authority?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

(a) The State car has, since 1st January, 1974, been used on 34 occasions by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria for visits to country areas. The State car was also used on the occasion of the visit to the Latrobe Valley by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Margaret, in October, 1975.

(b) In 1973, the then Victorian Railways Commissioners agreed that the interior of the vehicle, which had not been redecorated for some twenty years, required refurbishing. However, this work was not carried out until the carriage underwent a general overhaul in 1975.

Details of the work carried out are as follows—

1. Refurbishing of interior furnishing and fittings in—
   (i) Dining room—sitting room. $1,175
   (ii) Bedrooms. $1,033
   (iii) Aides' compartment. $160

2. Replacement of blinds and carpet throughout the carriage $3,000.

STRENGTHENING OF WHARVES.

(Question No. 119)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Public Works—

Is it proposed to strengthen the wharves adjacent to the Wagglen floating dock; if so, when will such work be carried out?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Public Works is—

It is proposed to develop the area between berths Nos. 12 and 13 South Wharf and the diversion of Lorimer Street for use by the ship repair industry.

As part of this development, it is envisaged that the above berths would be strengthened to carry wharf cranes.

Arrangements for management and financing of the scheme, including possible Federal Government assistance, are still under discussion.

ROYALTIES FROM ESSO-B.H.P.

(Question No. 120)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply, for the Minister for Fuel and Power—

What amount did the Government receive by way of royalties from Esso-B.H.P. in each of the past three financial years?
The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer supplied by the Minister for Fuel and Power is—

Royalty receipts from Esso-B.H.P. in each of the past three financial years was as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Royalty Receipts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>$33,977,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>$37,972,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>$42,477,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$114,427,108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of this total the Commonwealth's share was $36,364,514.

BEACH BACTERIOLOGICAL COUNTS.
(Question No. 121)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister for Conservation—

Why are beach counts made on beaches on the eastern side of Port Phillip Bay and not on the western side of the Bay, and when will counts be carried out on beaches on the western side?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is somewhat detailed, and I seek leave for its incorporation in Hansard without its being read.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

The western beaches have been included in all the three Port Phillip Bay beaches bacteriological programmes conducted by the authority, in 1973-74, 1974-75 and 1975-76. The beaches west of Altona which have been monitored are—

1973-74.
- Campbell's Cove
- Werribee South
- Rippleside
- Eastern Beach
- Portarlington
- St. Leonards
- Queenscliff.

1974-75.
- Rippleside
- Eastern Beach
- Portarlington
- St. Leonards
- Queenscliff.

The criteria for the selection of Port Phillip Bay beaches for monitoring in the beaches programme are those most popular beaches with regard to bathing activities.†

These beaches selected are regarded as the most popular bathing beaches on the western side of Port Phillip Bay and the criteria applied to the counts obtained are bacteriological criteria for bathing waters.

* St. Leonards and Queenscliff were dropped from the 1975-76 programme as they have consistently satisfied both the authority's criteria for bathing waters and have been graded "clean water" in both the 1973-74 and 1974-75 programmes.

† Reference: "The 1973 Port Phillip Authority report on Recreational Demands on the Beaches of Port Phillip."

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN COUNTRY AREAS.
(Question No. 124)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Transport—

(a) Who comprises the special task force set up to report on means of improving public transport in country areas?

(b) When is their report expected to be made public?

(c) Are further regional freight centres under consideration for the north-west?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

(a) The task force comprises the Director of Transport, who is chairman, and two top-ranking officers from the Victorian Railways Board and the Transport Regulation Board.

(b) I expect to be in a position to make an announcement shortly.

(c) Yes.

TULLAMARINE GROUNDWATER.
(Question No. 125).

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister for Conservation—

(a) Further to question No. 29 answered in this House on 17th September, 1974, what are the up-to-date results of the monitoring of three bores at Tullamarine?
(b) What chemical constituents are shown in the flows?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer supplied by the Minister for Conservation is—

(a) The Mines Department is now monitoring groundwater quality quarterly from five bores at Tullamarine of which the three previously referred to in answers were specially constructed observation bores.

(b) The chemical constituents present in the groundwater consist principally of the common inorganic salts and traces of heavy metals normally present in groundwater in this area together with minor amounts of surfactants and phenols.

The total salinity has increased in observation bores located next to the landfill. Surfactant and heavy metals concentrations have remained generally low and have fluctuated irregularly.

DRIVING LICENCES.
(Question No. 128)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

Has any further investigation been made since 18th March, 1975, of proposals to have motor vehicle drivers' licences include a photograph of the driver, in an endeavour to eliminate driving licence abuses?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

The matter of the inclusion of photographs on drivers' licences was considered by the Government early in 1975 and it was decided not to proceed with the proposal. There have been no further investigations into the matter since that time.

CARTAGE OF SUPERPHOSPHATE BY RAILWAYS.
(Question No. 130)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization—

What amount of superphosphate was carted by the Victorian Railways in the year ended 30th June, 1976, and how does this compare with the previous two years?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

The amount of superphosphate carried by the Victorian Railways in the past three financial years is as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tonnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>376,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>469,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>908,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOME LOANS.
(Question No. 132)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Treasurer—

(a) What amount of money was advanced by the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank, respectively, for home loans in Victoria for the year ended 30th June, 1976?

(b) How many individual housing loans were made by each bank in that year?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer supplied by the Treasurer is—

(a) The amount of money advanced by the State Savings Bank of Victoria for home loans in the year ended 30th June, 1976, was $301,648,016.

(b) The number of individual loans made by the State Savings Bank of Victoria in that year was 16,723.

The information requested by the honorable member concerning the Commonwealth Savings Bank is not available in State Government records.

RURAL FINANCE AND SETTLEMENT COMMISSION.
(Question No. 135)

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Lands—

(a) How many applications for carry-on finance for dairy farmers have been received by the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission?

(b) How many of these applications have been—(i) accepted; (ii) rejected; and (iii) not yet considered?

(c) How much finance has been committed in the successful applications?
The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Lands is statistical, and I ask leave of the House to have it incorporated in Hansard without its being read.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—
(a) 2,519.
(b) (i) 1,519.
(ii) 866.
(iii) Seventy-five are in various stages of processing.
The balance of 59 applications were either withdrawn or cancelled by the applicants.
(c) $4,737,599.

TATTERSALL'S.
(Question No. 136)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Treasurer—

What efforts do Tattersall's make to advise the winners of prizes in—(i) Tattersall consultations and (ii) Tattslotto drawings?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer supplied by the Premier and Treasurer is—

(i) In Tattersall consultations, where prizes remain uncollected two months after the relevant drawing, letters are sent to the addresses shown on the application form advising them of their winning prizes.
(ii) In Tattslotto consultations all prizes in the first and second divisions are paid direct by cheque. Since 4th January, 1975, holders of unclaimed prizes in divisions three and four have been notified of their winning prizes by letter forwarded to the addresses shown on the application form, six to eight weeks after the relevant drawing.

PROBATE DUTY.
(Question No. 140)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Treasurer—

(a) What amount of probate duty was collected in Victoria in the year 1975-76?
(b) What is the estimated duty that will be collected in 1976-77?
(c) What amounts do these represent, expressed on a per capita basis of the total State population?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer supplied by the Treasurer is—

(a) $68,375,058.
(b) $77 million.
(c) (i) 1975-76, $18.61; (ii) Estimate 1976-77, $20.70.

RAILWAY LAND IN WILLIAMSTOWN.
(Question No. 141)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Transport—

How many hectares are controlled by the Victorian Railways in the area of the Williamstown Pier railway yards?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is—

11.5 hectares.

RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE HOMES AND HOSTELS.
(Question No. 142)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

Does the Government intend to exempt Returned Services League homes and hostels from municipal rating in this State; if so, when; if not, why?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer is detailed and comprehensive and I ask leave for its incorporation in Hansard without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

Part X of the Local Government Act specifies the properties which are exempt from municipal rates. The present provisions were inserted by the Local Government (Rating Exemptions) Act 1969 following an inquiry by the Statute Law Revision Committee.

To answer the question fully, I set out as follows the full text of a recent letter to the president of the league—

Dear Mr. Keon-Cohen,

Re: Homes for the Aged—Rating.

In view of the many representations made on behalf of your league on the above subject I am writing to you direct and enclose
a background statement which sets out in some detail the history and reasons for the present position.

When the all-party Statute Law Revision Committee some years ago examined the multiplicity of differing rate exemptions granted under different governments, it was appalled at the lack of common principle which existed and unanimously took the view that a simple and clearly understandable principle ought to govern exemptions and replace the anomalies and inconsistent and unsatisfactory ad hoc exemptions which were otherwise bound to exist and did in fact exist.

The resulting legislation in 1969—again supported by all parties—did precisely this and adopted the following general principles—

(i) That charitable institutions which provided hospital or hostel-type accommodation should be free of rates; and

(ii) that those which provided basically self-contained dwellings, units or flats "exclusively occupied" by the tenants should be rated—upon the ground that they were in no different position from a private dwelling, flat or unit owned or occupied by an elderly citizen anywhere.

These principles still hold good and a recent exhaustive inquiry arrived at the conclusion that no basis had been shown to change it, particularly as the existing provision is accepted by the Victorian Association of Voluntary Care Agencies, which represents 27 member agencies.

The Government, and I am sure all members of Parliament, fully appreciate the great service which Returned Services League homes provide, and can also appreciate the Returned Services League view that rate exemptions should exist. I think however that the league in turn will appreciate that Parliament is not in a position to legislate for the Returned Services League in isolation on a matter such as this and that it must apply an equitable rule which applies fully "across the board" to all charitable institutions in a similar position.

I would suggest that the Returned Services League should carefully re-examine the administrative arrangements applying in respect of its homes, as a rewriting of the terms and conditions of occupancy might well take many units out of the classification of "exclusively occupied" and hence entitle the tenants to the benefit of complete rate exemptions. The matter is sufficiently important for your league to involve itself in obtaining the most competent legal advice available on this aspect.

I further suggest that where units in an institution conducted by the league nevertheless remain "exclusively occupied"—and hence liable to rates—the manager of the home should ensure that the local council issues separate assessments for each unit liable to be rated. This is the position which legally should be adopted in any event, but which has been avoided in the case of many institutions because the avoidance seemed administratively more convenient, both to the council and the institution. That avoidance has cost the institutions concerned dearly! The case which I have proposed will on the other hand ensure both that the administrative block and every part of a home or institution used in common by the inmates will receive the exemption to which it is entitled and that all dwellings or units in the institution which are occupied by elderly citizens who are eligible pensioners will in fact attract the Government rate rebate of 50 per cent to which they are legally entitled, and which I am sorry to say has sometimes not been availed of as a result of the erroneous administrative arrangements sometimes adopted as mentioned above.

The enclosed background statement also mentions the Local Government (Rates Amendment) Act 1976 which will come into operation on 1st October next. Where units are separately and exclusively occupied by tenants in a home for elderly citizens conducted by a charitable institution, the conditions which I have proposed will enable the institutions concerned to make representations to the particular council for a substantial lowering of the minimum rate (or even its waiver) having regard to the charitable nature of the institution and the service it provides to the community. It is important to note that these representations will need to be made before the rate is struck! I suggest therefore that the Returned Services League be advised to make these representations in respect of all their homes for the aged as soon as possible as most municipalities strike their rates at some time between the latter part of October and the first week in December.

Yours sincerely.

A copy of the background statement referred to in that letter is being separately supplied to the honorable member.

TEACHER HOUSING IN NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE.

(Question No. 144)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Minister of Housing—

What is the proposed building programme of the Teacher Housing Authority for the current financial year in the North Western
The HoD. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer supplied by the Minister of Housing is—

The Teacher Housing Authority has included the following priorities located in the North Western Province in its capital works programme for the 1976–77 financial year—

(a) New residences—
   Birchip—High School Assistant
   Horsham—Technical Assistant
   Horsham North—Primary School Assistant
   Irymple—Technical School Principal
   Kerang—High School Assistant
   Mildura—S.S.D. Assistant
   Pyramid Hill—Primary School Assistant
   Red Cliffs—High School Assistant
   Robinvale—High School Assistant

(b) Single teacher flats—
   Boort—5 flats
   Ouyen—4 flats
   Birchip—4 flats
   Nhill—6 flats
   Charlton—6 flats

TRACTOR SAFETY.
(Question No. 145)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply, for the Minister of Labour and Industry—

Is consideration being given to the compulsory fitting of roll-bars or safety frames on tractors; if so, for what reasons, and when will such a requirement come into effect?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is—

The present provisions of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 provide for the compulsory fitting of protective frames to tractors. However, the requirement only applies in those municipalities where a Ministerial direction has been issued on the application of the council of the municipality.

So far 31 such Ministerial directions have been issued. Any proposal for a change in the existing legislation would be a matter of Government policy to be decided by members of the Government.

NURSING AIDE TRAINING.
(Question No. 147)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Health—

Is a new curriculum for nursing aide training being considered; if so—(i) why are changes to the present curriculum being considered; (ii) when is it expected that such a curriculum will come into effect; (iii) what will be the basic alterations from that at present in operation; and (iv) will the changes have an effect on the availability of nursing aides for country hospitals?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer is—

A new curriculum for nursing aide training has been approved by the Victorian Nursing Council. Comments on the new programme have been made to the council from hospitals and interested organizations and are currently being considered prior to the formulation of regulations to amend the prescribed course of nursing aide training.

(i) Consideration of changes to the present curriculum stem from a recommendation in the Ramsay report which stated that the current nursing aide training should be replaced as a matter of urgency by a more advanced programme of training and the title of those qualifying from the new course should be "enrolled nurse". The Government at that time adopted the first part of this recommendation but rejected the proposed change of title. The up-grading of nursing aide training has been supported by many hospitals and by registered nursing aide and registered nurse organizations as a means of permitting these members of the nursing team to perform a wider range of nursing duties and provide better basic patient care.

(ii) The proposed date for the introduction of the new curriculum is 1st July, 1976.

(iii) The basic alterations are—
   (1) to lengthen the course of training from 12 months to 18 months;
   (2) to increase the theoretical education programme from 286 hours to 500 hours; and
   (3) to broaden the students' clinical experience in acute medical and surgical nursing and a twelve weeks' period of experience in an area of nursing elected by the student such as—geriatric nursing, eye, ear, nose and throat nursing or maternity nursing.

(iv) The new curriculum, because of its improved standard of education leading to ability to perform increased nursing care duties and take additional responsibilities, will probably attract more nursing aide recruits thus increasing the availability of registered nursing aides for hospitals, both country and metropolitan.
PIER AT SYME STREET, WILLIAMSTOWN.

(Question No. 148)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister for State Development and Decentralization, for the Minister of Public Works—

For what reasons was the pier at the end of Syme Street, Williamstown, fenced in, and when is it proposed to have the fence removed?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for State Development and Decentralization): The answer supplied by the Minister of Public Works is detailed, and I seek leave to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

(i) With the acquisition of H.M.A.S. Castlemaine from the Navy by the Maritime Trust, that body approached the trust for a suitable permanent berth. The trust having lost the use of all its waters upstream of the new Johnston Street bridge, was unable to allocate any other commercial berth for the use of this vessel. The only alternative berth which could be made available was the west side outer end of Gem Pier.

As the vessel, once fitted out as a museum ship, would incorporate a considerable amount of valuable relics, the Maritime Trust requested that a compound fence be erected, fitted with gates, and at their cost, to enclose the vessel as a security measure and also permit a charge to be made by the Maritime Trust to the public to cover maintenance costs. This fence was erected by trust contractors and the cost debited to the Maritime Trust.

(ii) In order that (i) above could be accomplished, it was necessary to rearrange the berthing on this pier of the permanent users namely, Customs and Port Phillip pilots, who between them have four large launches. There were also fishing craft using the pier as a permanent berth. The four craft owned by the Customs and pilots were allocated the east side of the pier and the trust dredged an area at its own cost, inside the Castlemaine's berth so that the fishing craft could be accommodated.

Both the Customs and pilots requested that the new area on the east side of the pier, occupied by their four craft, be fenced in to give protection from many acts of vandalism which had taken place in the past. Trust contractors carried out the erection of this fence also.

(iii) The trust, having requests to fence in berths on either side of the pier, could have simply erected a fence across the pier at approximately the half-way mark and in doing so, isolated the whole of the seaward end. However, having in mind the use of the pier for public recreation and fishing, the trust decided to isolate each berth and leave a 12-ft. right-of-way down the pier and the seaward end clear for the use of the public. The system adopted was far more costly than it would have been had the trust adopted the easy way.

(iv) The fence is intended as a permanent structure.

BREAD INDUSTRY.

(Question No. 149)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply, for the Minister of Labour and Industry—

Is it the intention of the Government to amend section 104 (4) of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 to extend the present bread delivery radius; if so, when, and what will be the degree of the extension, and for what reason?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer supplied by the Minister of Labour and Industry is—

Any proposal for an amendment to the Labour and Industry Act 1958 would be a matter of Government policy which would be announced at the appropriate time after a decision by Government members.

Currently the Committee for Review of the Labour and Industry Act 1958 is examining submissions received including submissions on the provisions of section 104.

WORKERS COMPENSATION PREMIUMS.

(Question No. 151)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

(a) Has the inquiry into workers compensation premiums been completed; if so, will the report be made public?

(b) When does the Government intend to act upon the report to ease the excessive burden of workers compensation premiums on Victorian employers?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

(a) The Board of Inquiry into Workers Compensation is in the process of completing its investigations. As is the practice in relation to boards of inquiry, its report will be submitted to Parliament.
(b) The Government will consider the recommendations made in the report when available and take appropriate action as soon as possible. In the meantime, a decision has been made to reduce from 20 per cent to 10 per cent the surcharge upon workers compensation premiums paid to the Insurers Guarantee and Compensation Sup­plementation Fund and to extend correspondingly the period required to build up the fund. The reduction will apply to premiums paid on and after 1st October, 1976.

UNTIED GRANTS FOR MUNICIPALITIES.

(Question No. 152)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

What were the General Revenue Assistance (Untied Grants) for 1976-77 allocated to each municipality in the North Western Province, indicating also the amounts allocated through the Commonwealth Grants Commission in 1975-76 and 1974-75?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer is as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>1974-75</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
<th>1976-77</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arapiles (S)</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birchip (S)</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlton (S)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohuna (S)</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola (S)</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>67,000</td>
<td>127,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald (S)</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunmunkle (S)</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>97,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon (S)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham (C)</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaniva (S)</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kara Kara (S)</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karkarong (S)</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerang (B)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koowro (S)</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>131,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowree (S)</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowan (S)</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura (C)</td>
<td>112,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>215,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura (S)</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>285,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Arnaud (T)</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stawell (S)</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill (C)</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill (T)</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>291,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walpeup (S)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warracknabeal (S)</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimmera (S)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>102,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wycheproof (S)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>147,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 1,178,000, 1,562,000, 2,889,000

N.A. Did not make a submission to the Grants Commission for assistance in that year.

DESTRUCTION OF UNWANTED CATTLE.

(Question No. 154)

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE (Bendigo Province) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Agriculture—

With regard to the Government's subsidy for the destruction of unwanted farm cattle—

(a) How many cattle have been destroyed to date?

(b) For how long will the present subsidy scheme operate?

(c) In what way will the newly-announced Federal Government subsidy of $10 per head either replace or supplement Victoria's existing scheme?

(d) Has consideration been given to extending this subsidy to sheep destruction?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is—

(a) From the inception of the slaughter subsidy scheme on 10th May, 1976, to 31st August, 1976, claims have been processed for the slaughter of 60,975 cattle.

(b) The scheme will operate until 30th September 1976, at which time the situation will be reviewed.

(c) Assistance announced by the Federal Government on 7th September, 1976, to farmers affected by drought will only become available when the Victorian Government has spent $3.5 million in the 1976-77 financial year.

An alternative offer of assistance was received from the Federal Government on 10th September, 1976, and the implications of this offer are at present being assessed.

(d) Extension of the subsidy to sheep destruction has been considered and the situation is being kept under review.

PROPOSED BOARD OF WORKS LOAN.

(Question No. 157)

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

Will he lay on the table of the Library the file containing the report of the sub-committee of officers of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works charged with the task of recommending an advertising agency to handle the proposed board loan?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer is—

Yes.
REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES.
(Question No. 159.)

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister for Planning—

What was the expenditure for the financial year 1975-76 by each regional planning authority within Victoria (including Albury-Wodonga) in each of the following categories—(i) total salary expenditure; (ii) rental of premises occupied; (iii) cost of management, planning consultancy services; (iv) contributions by other bodies to these authorities; and (v) total expenditure by each authority for the 1975-76 financial year?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer supplied by the Minister for Planning is highly detailed and statistical, and I ask leave for it to be incorporated in Hansard without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item of expenditure 1975-76</th>
<th>Geelong Regional Planning Authority</th>
<th>Western Port Loddon-Campaspe Regional Planning Authority</th>
<th>Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Total salary expenditure</td>
<td>$150,041</td>
<td>$191,316</td>
<td>$1,712,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Rental of premises occupied</td>
<td>$34,880</td>
<td>$17,600</td>
<td>$80,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Cost of management, planning consultancy services</td>
<td>$25,356</td>
<td>$35,901</td>
<td>See footnote &quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Contributions by other bodies to these authorities</td>
<td>(a) Victorian State Government</td>
<td>$70,764</td>
<td>$269,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) N.S.W. State Government</td>
<td></td>
<td>$105,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Commonwealth Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Councils in region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Total expenditure by each Authority for the 1975-76 financial year</td>
<td>$217,945</td>
<td>$279,328</td>
<td>$12,723,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A* The Loddon Campaspe Regional Planning Authority is serviced by the Town and Country Planning Board, including the provision of staff. All expenditure incurred by the authority is allocated from appropriations made to the board.

* B* The Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation is not a regional planning authority and is engaged in other activities besides planning. No consultancy expenditure on regional planning was incurred in 1975-76.

Details of consultants engaged by the corporation on other activities are provided in the answer to question No. 126 asked by the honorable member.

* C* The rentals were in fact paid by the Government.

ACCESS ROAD TO DARTMOUTH DAM.
(Question No. 160.)

The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

Having regard to the huge potential of the Dartmouth dam, when completed, as a tourist area, what provision is being made for construction of a suitable road to give easy access to those wishing to use these facilities?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer is—

The Dartmouth dam is being constructed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission on behalf of the River Murray Commission. The Water Commission has already built a first class bitumen road from Mitta Mitta to Dartmouth. The River Murray Commission will be providing suitable access and viewing points on the embankment but its charter does not provide for the construction of recreation and tourist facilities either on or around the lake. This is a matter for the Victorian Government and an inter-departmental committee is being set up to examine and report on the tourist potential of the storage and the facilities required.

UNTIED GRANTS FOR MUNICIPALITIES.
(Question No. 161.)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

In view of the increase under the general revenue assistance (untied grants) for 1976-77 to $140 million from $79·8 million in 1975-76 (an increase of 74·5 per cent)—

(i) what percentage increase was available to Victorian municipalities between 1975-76 and 1976-77; and

(ii) what percentage increase was allocated to municipalities outside the Port Phillip district between 1975-76 and 1976-77?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer is—

(i) The increase in untied grants available to all Victorian municipalities during 1976-77 as compared with the previous year is 74·88 per cent.

(ii) The increase in untied grants for municipalities wholly or substantially outside the Port Phillip district was 75·95 per cent.
VICTORIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNCIL.
(Question No. 162)
The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister of Health—
Who are the present members of the psychological practices board, and what are their qualifications?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer is—
The present members of the Victorian Psychological Council and the qualifications of such members are as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Herbert O'Dell Crowther;</td>
<td>a person nominated by the Minister of Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander John Maum Sinclair;</td>
<td>a medical practitioner selected from a panel of three names submitted by the body known as the Australian Medical Association (Victorian Branch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Leys Fordyce;</td>
<td>a psychiatrist nominated by the Mental Health Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Hugh Dunon Blomfield;</td>
<td>a psychiatrist selected from a panel of three names submitted by the Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross Henry Day;</td>
<td>a person professing psychology in a university in Victoria who is nominated by the Minister of Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Charles Geoffrey Lea, Victor Raymond Leonard, and Mary Creighton Nixon;</td>
<td>three psychologists selected from a panel of six names submitted by the body known as the Australian Psychological Society (Victorian Branch).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MELTON MUNICIPAL RATES.
(Question No. 163)
The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

(a) Is he aware of the high level of rates being charged in the Shire of Melton, particularly in West Melton?
(b) As this shire is designated as an area suitable for accelerated development as a satellite city and is therefore commencing projects of a large and continuing nature, will he give consideration to making an increased amount of Federal funds available to the shire to lessen the burden on ratepayers?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer is—

(a) Rates are always high when viewed from the ratepayers' side of the fence while councils invariably consider that they have fixed the rate at the lowest possible figure in the prevailing circumstances. Individual ratepayers who consider that they have been treated inequitably can, of course, object to the valuations placed on their properties.
(b) The recent allocations of untied grants adopted without qualification the recommendations of a special committee, assisted by a highly qualified working party, which made their assessments having regard to population, area and need, without political intervention.

Future allocations will be the responsibility of the proposed Victoria Grants Commission which will be independent and impartial and will consider the representations of each council.

SEWERAGE COSTS.
(Question No. 164)
The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

(a) Is it the intention of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to change the system of proportioning costs upon the installation of sewerage to established subdivisions in a similar way to private street scheme charges?
(b) If this change, or any other change of policy, is proposed in this area, will he inform the House of the exact nature of this change?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The answer is—

(a) Section 142A of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act was passed by Parliament in 1973. The section has not yet been used but at the request of some municipalities the board has discussed and agreed in principle to prepare schemes where councils wanted the provision of reticulated sewerage in established subdivisions ahead of the time that the board could provide such service within the funds available to it.
(b) No schemes under section 142A have yet been completed but as soon as the first scheme is finalized details will be supplied to the member.

UNTIED GRANTS FOR MUNICIPALITIES.
(Question No. 165)
The Hon. J. M. WALTON (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

How and when is it proposed to make payments to municipalities of funds allocated as untied grants recommended by the State Grants Committee?
The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): The answer is—

Last year allocations were distributed to municipalities within 24 hours after receipt of funds from the Commonwealth. Again, there will be no delay in the distribution of funds when they are received. It is not yet however known when the funds will in fact be received from the Commonwealth. Victoria has pressed the Commonwealth to make the payment during the first quarter of the municipal year, as in the past, will continue to press that view, and is hopeful that it will be accepted.

Legislative Assembly
Tuesday, September 14, 1976.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) took the chair at 4.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier inform the House whether he agrees with the view expressed, in his absence, by the then Acting Premier, that the State's school leavers are being kept out of jobs by married women who are not breadwinners? Is the honorable gentlemen able to say whether current unemployment figures are artificially inflated, and therefore misleading, because of the inclusion in them of married women in search of jobs?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): This is entirely a matter of opinion. I do not propose to comment on what another Minister said. I did not even read the statement and I have no idea of the context in which the remarks were made.

ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL ELECTION.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): Is the Assistant Minister of Health aware of the problems facing the board of management of the Royal Women's Hospital because of an election which is being contested by two apparently well-organized groups and which will cost the hospital something like $25,000? If he is aware of this, has the Government any plan to avoid similar circumstances arising in the future?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The Minister is aware of the events to which the Leader of the National Party has referred. It is a fact that the hospital is incurring considerable extra expense, probably of the order of $3 to $5 a subscriber, following the rise in the number of contributors to the hospital. I point out that what was done by those who sought to enrol members was done in accordance with the rules and procedures currently laid down.

As the Leader of the National Party knows, the subject of appointments to and elections of boards of management of hospitals was extensively referred to in the Syme-Townsend report, which is currently receiving full consideration by the Government. In accordance with a commitment made to the House it is proposed to introduce legislation during the current session.

PRISONS.

Mr. EBERY (Midlands): What plans does the Minister for Social Welfare have for future prison accommodation in Victoria and what plans does he have for a maximum security prison at Castlemaine?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): The prison population in Victoria has dropped progressively from some 2,500 five years ago to approximately 1,600 today. Unfortunately, with the over-all reduction, the proportion of prisoners associated with violent crime has risen from 1 in 4, or 25 per cent, to 2 in 5, or 40 per cent. This has necessitated a review of maximum and medium-security accommodation. Indeed, shortly before I returned from overseas, Cabinet asked the Social...
Welfare Department to undertake a review of security accommodation in our prisons.

That review is currently taking place. The effects upon prison accommodation of the Government's plans to build a remand centre in Russell Street will have to be analysed because the new centre will make available some 250 single cells at Pentridge. Of course, that is probably some four years off while the statistics I have given are current. This means that our high-security accommodation is under some pressure. Officers of the Prisons Division are examining each of the walled country prisons to determine which of them could be used for maximum security accommodation, after an updating of capital facilities and a review of staff. I am expecting a report on that matter this week, and that will be added to a submission which has already been made to Cabinet.

I should add that a look will be taken at the existing Castlemaine Prison, and the report will certainly be strongly considered to ascertain whether an increase in facilities and staff to accommodate maximum security prisoners would be appropriate. The ultimate building of a security prison in Castlemaine has been stated as Government policy. The matter is under review, but while it is under review Government policy remains as enunciated.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): In view of the Premier's statement that up to 5 per cent preference will be given to country businesses competing for Government contracts, will he undertake to make a statement to the House on when this provision will come into operation and the conditions under which it will apply?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): Yes, certainly. Provision is made in the Budget for a special fund to provide this difference. The general way in which the scheme is intended to work is that tenders will be called in the ordinary manner for Government and semi-Government contracts, and an approved decentralized industry whose tender is up to 5 per cent above the lowest tender will get the contract. The difference will be met under the special fund to which I have referred so that it will not cost the instrumentality or the Government department any more. The idea is to give that differentiation in favour of decentralized industry. I hope we shall be able to initiate this scheme soon, but of course it depends on the Budget Bill at least reaching the second-reading stage. At that point we will issue a complete set of conditions under which this will apply in accordance with the general outline I have given to the honorable member.

AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN.

Mr. LACY (Warrandyte): In view of the expressed intention of the Commonwealth Government to hand over the Australian Assistance Plan to the States, can the Minister for Social Welfare inform the House whether the State Government has devised some alternative plan? If so, what is that alternative? If not, what steps are being taken to devise such an alternative, and will that alternative include a consideration of a modification of the Minister's predecessor's proposal contained in the Ministerial statement of April, 1975?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): At present the Government is undertaking an evaluation into what will be done in Victoria along the lines of the Australian Assistance Plan. The Government has also announced that it is in favour of the principles embodied in that plan. I have asked the Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development to engage in a series of workshops and seminars to enable the people of Victoria to participate in the way in which they visualize an Australian assistance plan being undertaken in Victoria. The Premier has asked the social resources group
of the State Co-ordination Council to advise the Victorian Government through the council of the views of the social resources group on the future of the Australian Assistance Plan in Victoria.

All of this is dependent upon the availability of funds. Some ten weeks ago I wrote to Senator Guilfoyle, the Federal Minister for Social Security, a long letter which was made public outlining the views of the Victorian Government. I explained that the Victorian Government required a block grant to assist with plans to enable a prototype of the Australian Assistance Plan to be developed in Victoria. To date I have not had a reply, and I regret that fact. It is essential that the Federal Government, through Senator Guilfoyle, should give a reply.

Certainly, any plan which will be developed in Victoria will be very much along the lines of the proposal which was put forward by the former Minister for Social Welfare, the Honorable Vasey Houghton.

NINETY MILE BEACH LAND DEVELOPMENT.

Mr. EDMUNDs (Ascot Vale): Is the Minister for Planning aware that the Town and Country Planning Board has frozen the development of approximately 9,000 blocks of residentially subdivided land in and about the Ninety Mile Beach area; if so, can the Minister advise what the Government intends concerning compensation for the owners, as they will be unable to use the land at all, and also what valuation level will be adopted by the Government if it does intend to compensate the owners?

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): As most honourable members are aware, for some years there has been a freeze on 11,000 building blocks in the Golden Beach area. I think the honourable member is referring to the action of the Town and Country Planning Board, in conjunction with the Shire of Rosedale, to alleviate the restraint on development permits in respect of approximately 2,500 of those blocks leaving, for the moment, 8,000 blocks in what is at present known as a non-urban development area.

No doubt the honourable member refers to a press release by the Town and Country Planning Board today, and he will appreciate that the position concerning the 8,000 blocks will be reviewed progressively at six-monthly intervals and that a report is being prepared for me by the board with respect to compensatory or re-consolidation moves which should apply to the 8,000 blocks at present in limbo. Until I receive the report, I cannot comment further.

ALLOWANCE FOR INFLATION IN BUDGET ALLOCATIONS.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): Is the Premier and Treasurer able to give the percentage increase provided for inflation when considering Budget allocations, particularly as related to labour costs and services involving a substantial labour content?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I am not quite clear whether I have the honourable member's question correctly. I take it that he is asking me what assumptions are made as to inflation during the current year?

Mr. McINNES: Yes.

Mr HAMER: It is usual to adopt the kind of assumption made by the Federal Treasury which, luckily, proved to be sadly astray last year because the inflation in wage costs was lower than originally estimated. This year it is of the order of 13 per cent, and current indications are that it will be close to that figure.

NEPEAN HIGHWAY.

Mrs. PATRICK (Brighton): I ask the Minister of Transport: What is the present position regarding the widening of Nepean Highway and what progress has been made towards achieving the commencement of actual construction in two years' time?
Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): A preliminary survey and engineering design work are being carried out. This has been going on for some time. The honorable member mentioned that commencement of actual construction would commence in two years' time. I am unable to give an exact date because of the present lack of funds. I have had additional talks with the Federal Minister for Transport to ascertain whether additional funds may be made available. When I know that I shall be able to provide more information regarding the starting date.

BINGO.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I ask the Treasurer: Has the Government changed its policy on the legalization of bingo in Victoria and, if so, is it intended that bingo should be confined to smaller sporting clubs which are finding it exceedingly difficult to continue because of the Government's restricted policy on the running of even small raffles?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): In one breath the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to two things, bingo and raffles, which are not exactly the same. At present the law does not prohibit raffles; it requires that a permit must be obtained before a raffle is held. This requirement was proposed some years ago to prevent the private enrichment of promoters who might use raffles for their own ends and not for charitable, sporting or other purposes. The Raffles Board has operated ever since to ensure that a reasonable proportion of the proceeds of raffles goes in the direction in which it is intended. I do not suppose any member of Parliament would quarrel with that attitude.

At present bingo is illegal in Victoria. The prohibition was introduced by the last Victorian Labor Government because of many abuses which were occurring at the time in and around the suburbs of Melbourne. Succeeding Governments have continued the ban up to the present time.

As the honorable member will have observed today, and no doubt it gave rise to his question, the Government has directed that the principles of bingo should be reconsidered. I am unable to say what the outcome will be, but it will be known before long, and the honorable member will then be aware of the Government's attitude on the matter.

NEWPORT POWER STATION.

Mr. KENNETT (Burwood): I address a question to the Minister for Fuel and Power. It concerns the comments made by the Chairman of the State Electricity Commission last week, as reported in the Herald of 8th September, regarding the continuing union bans on the construction of Newport power station. It was indicated that the State Electricity Commission will upman the stations at Yallourn, Spencer Street, Richmond and Newport itself. Can the Minister state what effect this will have on the residents of Footscray particularly, with special regard to the environmental effect, if the station at Newport is upgraded?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): Certainly Newport "C" station is an old station. If the Newport "D" station had been erected, "C" station would no doubt have been put out of commission. However, to obviate the shortage of power the station will have to be increased to its practical maximum capacity, and it is suggested that to do that 250,000 tons of briquettes a year will be required. That works out at about 2,000 tons a day or 200 truck-loads of briquettes a day through the area.

I do not know what effect that will have on the community, but I am sure an additional 200 truck-loads of briquettes, taken through that area, must have some effect on the people who live there.
IRRIGATION CHARGES.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I refer the Premier to his Budget speech, in which he stated that there would be no increase in water charges to irrigators. Is the honorable gentleman aware that assessments are going out to private diverters showing a 14 per cent increase in their charges? What action will the Premier take to refund those increases to water users?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I am not aware of any such issue of assessments but I will certainly have it investigated. What I said, stands, and there will be no increase in irrigation charges this year.

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I direct my question to the Premier. Is it a fact that the Secretary of the Premier's Department—

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I have heard an interjection to the effect that the call does not go to the Opposition side at this stage. As I have previously advised honorable members, I keep a running sheet of the calls and today, at this point of time, the calls are equal. I do not want to hear that type of interjection again.

Mr. JONES: The Secretary of the Premier’s Department wrote a letter to the Age which was published on Friday, 10th September. Did the Secretary write on the matter of Ms. Penny Ryan and did he, in his letter, refer to those people who had been agitating for equal rights for women and state this—

They will need to remember, as Ms. Ryan forgot, that fundamental changes of this nature take place only at a slow pace and after much consideration if they are to be effective.

Can the Premier explain whether Major-General Green wrote his letter at the direction of the Premier, or not at the Premier's direction and, if either applies, did he express Government opinion?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The letter was written entirely at the instance of the Secretary of the Premier's Department himself. He was expressing his own opinion, but without necessarily agreeing with all his sentiments I believe it was an accurate letter setting out facts.

WATER SAFETY.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham): I direct my question to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation and I preface it by stating, on behalf of the Sandringham Life Saving Club, that I was delighted to see the press statement yesterday that the State Government will give $50,000 towards the promotion of water safety. Can the Minister advise the House of the source of this money and, further, can he advise what type of assistance is likely to be given to voluntary water safety organizations?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): The source of the funds is $35,000 from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation and $15,000 from the Ministry of Tourism. The money will be used at the discretion of the Water Safety Committee of the National Safety Council for Victoria, which will be advised by the Government’s Water Safety Committee. The areas in which the majority of the funds will be spent are safety equipment, refund of expenses incurred by volunteers who engage in rescue operations and in the running of water safety courses for boat owners.

PROPOSED HEALTH COMMISSION.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): I ask the Assistant Minister of Health, on behalf of the Minister of Health, whether he is aware of the considerable concern being expressed about the future of the proposed health commission in this State? If he is aware of this, can the honorable gentleman inform the House and the people connected with hospitals in Victoria whether the Government has yet
received a report from the internal committee reviewing the Syme-Townsend report? If the Government has received that report, does it intend to make the report public? If it has not received the report, when will it be received? Can the honorable gentleman give the House an approximate date when the process of reviewing the Syme-Townsend report will be completed and legislation introduced?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answers to the first three parts of the question are, "No, Yes, No". The answer to the last part is that the legislation will be presented to the House as soon as possible.

MINING BATTERY AT BENDIGO.

Mr. McClure (Bendigo): Is the Minister of Mines aware that a mining battery which is situated at Victoria Hill in Bendigo and which is the property of the Mines Department has been included in a sale catalogue of Miller and Co. (Machinery) Pty. Ltd? Will the Minister take action to ensure that Miller and Co. (Machinery) Pty. Ltd. are instructed that they cannot sell the battery? Furthermore, will the honorable gentleman arrange for the battery to be transferred to either the Bendigo City Council or the Bendigo Trust?

Mr. Balfour (Minister of Mines): I have some brief knowledge of this. Apparently this battery, together with other mining machinery, was purchased by Miller and Co. (Machinery) Pty. Ltd. from someone about 22 to 24 years ago. It has remained on the site ever since. In about 1974 the Mines Department advised Miller and Co. (Machinery) Pty. Ltd. that if they did not remove the battery within three months it would no longer be their property. I understand that the present situation is that Miller and Co. (Machinery) Pty. Ltd. have been told that the Mines Department believes it is its property. The battery has been advertised for sale in the catalogue with other mining machinery and the sale is "subject to approval of the Mines Department".

I shall be happy to take up this matter with the department on behalf of the honorable member to see whether the battery can be withdrawn or saved from sale and made available to either the Bendigo Trust or the Bendigo City Council.

ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL.

Mr. Wilton (Broadmeadows): Will the Assistant Minister of Health give an assurance to the House that no pressure will be brought to bear on the medical staff of the Royal Women's Hospital from any source in determining questions of a purely medical nature affecting any patient in the hospital?

Mr. Jona (Assistant Minister of Health): It should be fairly obvious that neither the Government nor the Minister of Health have at any time in the past nor will they at any time in the future give directions to a doctor of this State with respect to his relationship to his patient provided that the treatment of the patient is within the law of the State.

ELECTRICITY CHARGES TO DAIRY FARMERS.

Mr. B. J. Evans (Gippsland East): I ask the Minister for Fuel and Power whether he or the State Electricity Commission has ever obtained a legal opinion on whether the average augmentation charge levied by the State Electricity Commission on certain dairy farmers is legal. If so, will the honorable gentleman table such legal opinion together with all other files and documents relating to this question?

Mr. Balfour (Minister for Fuel and Power): I am not sure whether a legal opinion has been obtained from outside sources, but I can assure the
honorable gentleman that the legal advice given to the State Electricity Commission by its own legal department assures the commission and myself that what has happened is quite legal.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

ALLEGED THREATS TO MEMBERS.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I wish to refer to a question asked me by the Leader of the Opposition in this House on 7th September which was in these terms—

Has the Premier had drawn to his attention allegations that Ministers, their staffs, and members of Parliament, have been subjected to threats and intimidation in respect of the Geelong Regional Authority Bill and the Westernport Regional Planning Authority Bill and that such threats allegedly run the gamut of loss of Parliamentary endorsement to the serious allegations of murder and blackmail against the present member for Westernport?

My reply was that if the Leader of the Opposition cared to give me whatever material he had I would have it investigated. The honorable member subsequently sent me a letter with an extract of certain press cuttings and drew my attention to press stories of 29th and 30th July, 1976, where the member for Westernport was reported to have suggested that he had been threatened by virtue of his attitude on planning issues affecting Westernport Bay, and a public relations consultant, alleged to be employed by Mr. Jennings, said that allegations of threats and blackmail and murder made against the present member for Westernport were "pretty well informed".

I have had investigations made into these statements and I have also made personal inquiries.

With respect to the first allegation by the honorable member that Ministers and their staffs had been subjected to threats and intimidations, he furnished not the slightest evidence to support such a statement, and I believe it to be without foundation.

With respect to his allegation in relation to legislation for the Geelong Regional Authority Bill, he merely sent me an extract from the Age of 27th September, 1975, which was in the following terms—

Hard-line Liberals—in the Government and the local party machine—have branded legislation as "Socialist", and threatened at least one member of Parliament that he will be opposed at the next election by an independent Liberal unless he drops his support of it.

This claim is in vague and general terms and in any case is the kind of suggestion with which many members would be familiar from time to time, and is not likely to affect their own judgment. No other evidence has been produced which would warrant an inquiry.

With respect to the member for Westernport, the honorable member informs me that he has from time to time received anonymous telephone calls on various matters, but has not treated them seriously. Indeed, this kind of thing happens to all members of Parliament from time to time, and has to be regarded as an occupational hazard.

Inquiries have been made from Mr. John Bennett, the public relations consultant referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. He says that he was misreported in the press extract forwarded by the honorable member, and that he personally gave no credence to the allegations that threats of blackmail and murder had been made against the honorable member for Westernport.

As I said before, I would be prepared to investigate any reports of substance on matters such as those affecting honorable members.

My initial comment in this matter was that the allegations seemed remarkably vague and insubstantial, and in my view nothing has been produced which would warrant any further investigation, or has given any support to the claims made.

COMMAND PAPERS.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education) presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor, the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Sale of Packaged Beer.
Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works) presented, by command of His Excellency the Governor, the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Finances of the City of Sunshine. It was ordered that the reports be laid on the table and be printed.

**PAPERS.**

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

- Statutory Rules under the Public Service Act 1974—PSD Nos. 101 and 102.
- Eildon Reservoir Planning Scheme 1959, Amendment No. 17, 1976 (Shire of Mansfield).

**MEAT INDUSTRY COMMITTEE.**

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

That the Standing Order prohibiting publication of evidence and documents received by a Select Committee, before such matters are reported to the House, be suspended so far as to allow the reference of such information to interested persons by the Meat Industry Committee during the course of its investigation into future operations of livestock selling facilities.

The purpose of this motion is to grant discretionary power to the Meat Industry Committee to release evidence that has been presented to it to interested outside persons. This will materially assist the committee in obtaining considered views and in rebutting or commenting on evidence previously presented on the important question of the provision and management of stock-yards.

In this case Standing Order No. 208 applies, and this requires Select Committees as agents of the House to present any evidence to the House before it is presented to outsiders. I understand that this is the unanimous recommendation of the committee, and a similar motion will be moved in another place. I also have the authority of the chairman of the committee to say that persons who have given such evidence will be consulted before their evidence is distributed to any outside persons or bodies.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I second the motion, and I assure the House that the committee will be agreeable to the passing of this motion.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): Although the Opposition is working to regulations, we want to assist the Government on this important question, and raise no objection.

The motion was agreed to.

**PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.**

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the Public Works and Services Bill.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize expenditure on Public Works and Services and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I move—

That the Bill be printed and, by leave, the second reading be made an Order of the Day for later this day.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): Leave is refused.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Mr. Speaker, I seek your guidance on whether I need leave under the Standing Orders.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The Minister of Public Works does not need leave to initiate
a Bill, but leave is required to read the Bill a second time today. Leave is not required to move a motion that the Bill be read a second time tomorrow.

It was ordered that the Bill be printed and the second reading be made an Order of the Day for next day.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

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

That the consideration of Order of the Day, Government Business, No. 1, be postponed until later this day,

I realize that we are working strictly to regulations. I was fully anticipating that the Bill would be here and that I could introduce it now. I was led to understand that the Bill was ready yesterday. I understand that it will not be sent over from the Government Printer until after dinner, and I apologize to the House because I am keen to introduce the proposed legislation and expected to be in a position to do just that now.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I desire to move an amendment the effect of which would be that instead of Order of the Day, Government Business, No. 2 being dealt with, Notice of Motion No. 1 under General Business would be proceeded with.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): This matter needs some clarification. Last Wednesday a similar amendment was moved by the honorable member for Broadmeadows and I accepted it.

I know that a precedent has been established but even precedents can be proved wrong. I believe in that case I was wrong in accepting an amendment to suspend Government Business and a part of the Notices of Motion under General Business. On checking through the Standing Orders and Sessional Orders, I found that if the amendment had been agreed to the House would have suspended Sessional Orders as well as Government Business. I apologize to honorable members because I believe I erred in accepting the amendment as it was put. I ask the honorable member for Northcote to reframe his amendment.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): There is no possible way of framing an amendment to bring forward Notices of Motion, General Business. To do so would mean that a motion would have to be moved first to suspend Sessional Orders. Therefore, by leave, I move—

That Sessional Orders be suspended—

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): Leave is refused.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): A motion is before the Chair which states, in effect, that Order of the Day, No. 1, be suspended until later this day. The honorable member for Northcote can move an amendment to that motion but he cannot move another motion.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I oppose the motion for the reason that the position of the Opposition about altering the order of business on the Notice Paper was made abundantly clear last Wednesday. I know that it is early in the sessional period and that the Government has experienced difficulties with printing and with having Bills prepared.

Mr. THOMPSON: You are being difficult.

Mr. WILKES: The Government has had a fairly lengthy recess in which to prepare its legislation for presentation to Parliament.

One would have expected that the Bills that the Government was keen to introduce by leave on Wednesday would be ready at least by today. No other course is open to the Opposition, and in conformity with the policy that it has adopted members of the Opposition oppose the motion moved by the Minister of Education.
The House divided on the motion (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair) —

Ayes .. .. 56
Noes .. .. 22

Majority for the motion .. 34

AYES.
Mr. Austin Mr. McCabe
Mr. Balfour Mr. McClure
Mr. Billing Mr. McInnes
Mr. Birrell Mr. McKellar
Mr. Borthwick Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. Burgin Mr. McLaren
Mr. Coleman Mr. Macelllan
Mr. Collins Mrs. Patrick
Mr. Cox Mr. Plowman
Mr. Crellin Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Dixon Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Dunstan Mr. Reese
Mr. Ebery Mr. Richardson
Mr. Evans Mr. Ross-Edwards
(Ballarat North) Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Evans Mr. Skeggs
(Gippsland East) Mr. Smith
Mr. Francis (South Barwon)
Mr. Gude Mr. Smith
Mr. Guy (Warrnambool)
Mr. Hamer Mr. Stephen
Mr. Hann Mr. Suggett
Mr. Hayes Mr. Thompson
Mr. Jasper Mr. Trewin
Mr. Jennings Mr. Vale
Mr. Jona Mr. Whiting
Mr. Kennett Mr. Williams
Mr. Lacy
Mr. Lieberman
Mr. Loxton Mr. Hudson
Mr. McArthur Mr. Weideman

NOES.
Mr. Amos Mr. Mutton
Mr. Cain Mr. Roper
Mr. Cathie Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Doube Mr. Simpson
Mr. Edmunds Mr. Stirling
Mr. Fogarty Mr. Trezise
Mr. Fordham Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Ginifer Mr. Wilton
Mr. Holding
Mr. Jones Mr. Crabb
Mr. Kirkwood Mr. Culpin

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.
ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) was resumed on the motion of Mr. Kennett (Burwood) for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech, and on the amendment of Mr. Jones (Melbourne) —

That the following words be added to the proposed Address — " and respectfully desire to inform Your Excellency that this House regrets the failure of the Government to foreshadow amendments to the recently enacted Constitution Act 1975, with specific reference to section 48 of that Act relating to the qualification of electors which enactment caused a significant change in the law, despite the assurances of the former Attorney-General that the measure did not involve any changes in principle or practice ".

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): In the Address-in-Reply debate and particularly on the occasion when the address is delivered to a new Parliament a member naturally reflects a little, following a redistribution of seats, as occurred prior to the last election, on what his new electorate now means to him. I am one who physically, financially and in other ways felt the impact of the alteration of the boundaries in the country area.

I consider that it is most necessary for me to inform the House about the area represented by the National Party in the north-east of the State and in the Goulburn Valley. The electorate of Benalla felt the full impact of the small additions to the five seats previously held by the National Party to make provision for the increase in the numbers in the rural electorates. It was a new impact because most of the area comprising the seat of Benalla was not held previously by a member of the National Party. After fifteen years in Parliament I was quite happy to take up the challenge and emerge as the sitting member, much to the dismay of some people in my electorate and also to many outside it.

However, the significant feature of the alteration of boundaries reflected in the north-east of the State and in the Goulburn Valley was that the numbers have been increased in rural electorates, because of the small addition to the five seats held by the National Party.
This was the part of the State where progress was being made, which was attracting population, which industry was considering, and which was providing for those who wished to live away from the metropolis.

One or two electorates have disappeared from the western areas of our State. This was probably because the areas were not attracting industry and did not have some of the resources necessary to attract people. There is a challenge to western Victoria to develop decentralized industry and to attract and hold people to form communities.

The new electorate of Benalla embraces the subdivision of Alexandra, including the town of Eildon, some of Yea, and the subdivision of Seymour, which includes the military camp at Puckapunyal. The Puckapunyal camp is world renowned for the resourceful training of defence personnel. The Army has been established in and has developed this area over a number of years. Colonel Tripp, the officer in charge, has endeavoured to do everything possible not only for the training of personnel but also for their welfare.

The land, of course, is owned by the Commonwealth, and administered by the Defence Department, but our State education system services Puckapunyal with a primary school, pre-school centres, and one or two other facilities, as well as providing school buses to take secondary students to the Seymour High School. While visiting the area I found that I should have an interest in the welfare not only of the members of the defence forces but also of their wives and children to ensure that they received the benefits to which residents of this State are entitled.

As a representative of a rural electorate, one's interest and involvement in primary industry is evident from time to time. At present sections of our rural industry are under great stress. In the main the people working on farms are the owners of the properties. Wages have risen to such an extent and returns in most primary industry have fallen to such a low level that it is almost impossible for men, or women, to be employed in primary industry. In itself this makes a sad day for primary industry. Over the years, thousands of people have been employed on farms—wheat, sheep, dairy or other types of farms—but today this just cannot happen.

To illustrate how rising costs have hit primary industry I point out that a motor truck fitted up for farming operations cost about $22,000 to $24,000 three years ago but today it costs twice as much. This is illustrative of the cost squeeze which is hurting primary industry. Costs have risen by from 18 per cent to 150 per cent on practically everything used in primary industry.

The price of superphosphate is a case in point. It will be recalled that the Governor stated in his Speech that lack of superphosphate must reduce production on the land. The reduction in the use of superphosphate already shows itself in lack of pastures even where good rains have fallen. It will be most evident in the next three years. Unless a greater subsidy is paid on superphosphate or a 50 per cent reduction in its price is brought about in some way by some Government, production in our rural areas will fall dramatically in the next decade.

It must be recognized that Australia is still a primary-producing country. Even if it is not the be-all and end-all of our nation, primary industry is important and must be preserved. Ironically, countries around the world are subsidizing primary production to no end, but in Australia, irrespective of changes of Government, insufficient is being done to ensure that those in primary industry are given the financial and moral support they need.

The north-east of Victoria—particularly the Benalla electorate—is fast becoming one of our greatest tourist areas. We do not have beaches or the sea but we have

Mr. Trewin.
major snow resorts and major inland water storages. Throughout the week, but especially at week-ends and particularly during school holidays, the roads to the north-east and to these playgrounds are jammed with traffic—cars, buses, and whatever other vehicles people can find. The number of metropolitan dwellers who find recreation in these areas must be seen to be believed. Mount Buller has 6,000 people at the weekend. People also flock to the water storages—to Eildon, Nillahcootie, Mokoan, Nagambie and others. At these places people enjoy the water sports which we Australians like so much.

I commend the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for its control of these areas, particularly of the storages themselves. One might not say so much about what is happening on the perimeters where, as well as the commission, the Soil Conservation Authority and the Environment Protection Authority are involved and some problems exist and will grow.

Two great projects which are under way will have an effect on tourism in the north-east of Victoria. Under the extensions of the national freeway plan there will be a divided highway from Melbourne to Wodonga. Such a roadway now runs from Melbourne to Seymour. This financial year $18 million will be spent on the road between Seymour and Wangaratta, mainly on the resumption of land and earthworks. Contractors and gangs of men are already busy preparing foundations for this freeway, which will serve the nation for the next 100 years.

The Country Roads Board is responsible for the over-all construction of the road and the administration of the contract. This will become more evident as projects get under way. I ask the Government to ensure that the Country Roads Board will use local labour along the road. Because of the reduction in employment on farms and in other employment caused by cost structures, it is necessary that people in our rural towns be employed by the contractors to the board. I know that one of the first contractors is already employing local labour, and I hope this policy will continue in greater measure.

The other important project is the construction of the natural gas pipeline to the dual city of Albury-Wodonga. Fortunately, provision has been made for all major towns in the north-east of Victoria and in the Goulburn Valley to obtain supplies of natural gas. Shepparton will also be supplied. This should happen early next year. There have been delays for various reasons, some industrial and some contractual. The work which is being done will enable continuing development to take place in the north-east and in the Goulburn Valley.

As one drives around the perimeter of Melbourne and through our rural towns and cities, one cannot help but notice the number of caravan parks—in the main privately-owned—which have sprung up. This is caused primarily by a lack of housing.

Mr. EDMUNDS: And because people cannot afford houses.

Mr. TREWIN: I take up the interjection—and because people cannot afford houses. In Seymour there are two such caravan parks. One had been open for only two weeks when it had 30 parked caravans occupied by people employed in the district who could not find housing of the type they wanted or at a cost they could afford. These people could be housed in Housing Commission residences, but insufficient are being built. I suppose the answer to that is that there is not enough money. The reason there is not enough is that money now buys so few houses in comparison with what it bought three years ago. Here again we find the impact of high inflation. It is deeply reflected in home-ownership and the availability of housing for people on smaller incomes.
Are we to alter our priorities to ensure that people are given the opportunity of living in suitable residences? One must assume that several thousand more Housing Commission homes are required in Victoria, or homes at rents which the family man can pay. This is the most deserving section of those who need housing.

The City of Benalla, although not geographically the centre, is the population centre of the electorate I represent. It has developed rapidly and well over the past few years. The city has been chosen as the location of several regional offices of Government departments. Some departments have seen fit to decentralize their activities and Benalla is happy to receive them. The city council has done all it can to accommodate these regional offices.

I recognize the need for housing but an urgent need also exists for reasonable office accommodation. Although commitments have been made to other country centres, the need is so urgent in Benalla that action will have to be taken in the next year or two to ensure that office accommodation is available for the many officers who leave Melbourne, accept their responsibilities in their respective departments, and enjoy country life. The Minister of Public Works is playing his part in presenting a case on behalf of country centres, but I make a plea to the Government that offices be made available at Benalla as soon as possible.

I express the loyalty of the electors of Benalla to Her Majesty the Queen and indicate their deep concern for the welfare of the nation and their preparedness to accept responsibility in ensuring that development is undertaken.

I also pay tribute to Sir Henry and Lady Winneke for their involvement in the State. They have moved through rural areas, have visited my electorate and will again be visiting it shortly. They are received graci-ously wherever they travel, and I trust that their stay with us in their present office and later as citizens will be long and rewarding.

I support the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply. Although there may be shortfalls and things are being left undone by the Government, at least in some instances the Government is attempting to play its part in the development of Australia.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): Participation in the debate at this late stage has certain advantages. Since the recess both State and Federal Budgets have been brought down and the people of Victoria have had a longer time in which to assess and judge the performances of the Liberal Party Government in Victoria and the Liberal-National Country Party Government in Canberra. In the past the Victorian Government has been able to pass the buck and blame all the ills of this State and this nation on the Federal Government. With the passing of time the honeymoon is over, and both the State Government and the Federal Government, acting in unison, have to be judged on their performances.

In the latter part of April this year His Excellency the Governor delivered the address at the opening of Parliament. It is now mid-September and it is an insult to His Excellency that the debate has been allowed to drag on for so long. I congratulate His Excellency on the manner in which he read the address. I say "read" because His Excellency only mimed the words of the Premier. The Speech comprises approximately seven pages, but if the performance of the Government were to be judged the back of a postage stamp would have been sufficient. The Government's performance has been almost nil; it has gone into hibernation.

I also congratulate the newer members on the manner in which they delivered their maiden speeches. Most of them were rather parochial in their outlook and they seemed to have formed the opinion that they were...
living in a land of milk and honey. I sincerely hope some of their electors do not read their remarks and think all is well in their respective electorates.

The electors of Sunshine are the salt of the earth and in the main come from countries other than Australia. They are hard-working people. On one side the electorate is bounded by the Williamstown electorate, which comprises the most polluted section of Port Phillip Bay. To the west of the electorate the Werribee sewerage farm is situated and farther west is land set aside for special purposes such as abattoirs and sale-yards, or whatever the Government sees fit to dump out there. To the north of the electorate is a chemical factory and other Government establishments, such as the munition works.

In recent weeks I have taken the opportunity of reading the policy speech delivered by the Premier on 1st March this year, and of relating the policy enunciated to the Budget which was presented last week and the Government's performance as it affects certain areas of the Sunshine electorate which are in need of definite Government action.

Sewerage was mentioned by the Premier on both occasions. I have already referred to the electorate of Werribee, where I have some good friends, and no doubt the electorate will become a Labor stronghold after the next election. At the same time I am interested in sewerage facilities because the greater part of the western area of the electorate, the Glengala estate, is not seweraged. Winds blow in from the west across the head of the honorable member for Werribee, and people in my electorate "cop" the smells, which are not of eau d' Cologne. It may be logical for the Government to decide not to provide sewerage facilities in Sunshine because it is close to the Werribee farm and the night cart would not have far to travel. By the same token, in his policy speech the Premier definitely promised that the whole of Victoria would be sewered by 1982.

Since the Premier's statement, I have written to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works concerning the sewerage programme for the Sunshine West area, and I have been told that in one section it will be four years, in another seven years and in a third section many, many years before sewerage is provided. Admittedly there has been a large cut-back in the allocation of Federal funds for sewerage purposes. When the State Government makes definite promises which rely for their implementation upon finance from a Federal Government of the same political colour, obviously the people have been "conned".

Another matter I wish to raise relates to housing. The policy speech by the Premier referred to welfare and other types of housing. Honorable members opposite have mentioned an estate at Broadmeadows, but in the Housing Commission estate at West Sunshine the roofs just blow off and the tiles have to be replaced every two or three months. During an inspection of the estate by the Minister of Housing and members of the Housing Commission yesterday, it was noted that many concrete homes constructed by the commission's Holmesglen factory were close to completion. Many had reached the lock-up stage but the doors were wide open so that vandals, some young, could move in or the buildings could be used for purposes other than vandalism by persons who are getting past the boy stage.

The Housing Commission's activities at Sunshine need close investigation by the Government and particularly by the Minister of Housing because the commission has dumped 1,200 homes in an area of West Sunshine which has only one access road, Glengala Road, few transport facilities, few kindergartens and the like, and no recreational facilities. The matter merits immediate investigation because homes are
urgently required. Some houses which are in an advanced stage of construction and which require only a few hours’ work to complete them are left unattended. This is an indictment of the Government.

Another matter for concern in the electorate is the unemployment situation. As it is a highly industrialized area, the unemployment problem is more evident than in other areas. Last week it was announced that the Rothman’s factory had closed down and that some 200 adults, mostly women, had been thrown out of work. I recall a Minister in another place stating that the female labour force was taking the place of the male labour force, but in the Sunshine electorate it is often necessary for the females to work and to bring in a second income because most families are in the low-income bracket, and it is expensive to buy a home.

During a debate in this House last week, it was emphasized that the greater number of unemployed in the community were in the 18 to 21 years’ age bracket. I was in that age group during the late 1930s and during a national catastrophe. Although money could not be found for employment in the 1930s, in 1939 it was not long before money could be found for war production and jobs for the 18 to 21-year-olds. This is a time of national disaster when people in the 18 to 21 years’ age bracket are unable to obtain jobs and State and Federal Governments should consider it a national disaster in the same way as they did between 1939 and 1946 and ensure that the youth of our country are gainfully employed. Nothing has a greater psychological effect on a person in that age bracket than to be unemployed.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: Does the honorable member want conscription and direction of labour reintroduced?

Mr. FOGARTY: I did not say that. Being in the same age group as the honorable member, I am sure he agrees with me that we do not want another period such as that which was experienced between 1939 and 1946, but we do want to see people gainfully employed. One person willing and able to work and not employed is one too many.

Education is another matter which is closely allied to the unemployment situation in that we do not relate our university, tertiary and trade courses to the needs of the State or the Commonwealth at a given point of time. Many people hold the degree of bachelor of commerce or doctor of philosophy, but there are not enough skilled tradesmen, such as electricians. Educators should ensure that before young people enter these areas of education they are sorted out to fit the needs of the country according to their abilities.

Another matter affecting my electorate relates to the reference which has been made to the transport revolution. I agree that there is a need for a revolution in the electorate of Sunshine, as the residents cannot even cross Stony Creek in comfort. I have asked the Minister of Transport to visit Sunshine to see at first hand the needs of the western areas of Melbourne, but the honorable gentleman is too busy dangling on the end of a strap in a tram or a train at the other end of Melbourne. The Minister should answer his correspondence and accept the invitation to visit Sunshine and other areas in the western suburbs to learn the needs of the people, particularly for improved transport.

I suggest that the address presented by His Excellency at the opening of the Parliament was vague in its content. Honorable members cannot blame him for that; he is a “good bloke”, and he reads only what is given to him by the Government. I am not concerned about the vagueness of his Speech but I am about what is not contained in it—in other words, the missing link. Nowhere in it is there reference to the needs which really concern the electorate, such as Medibank, welfare
programmes and all those other programmes which have a relationship to local government.

It has been said that there is to be a hand-out to local government. People who live in the western areas of Melbourne freely admit that for three years they received a substantial amount of money through Commonwealth funding. The people accepted it gratefully because no matter how much was received it would not compensate for what has been lost over many years. I thank His Excellency for the manner in which he read his Speech, and I thank honorable members for the way in which they have listened to me today.

Mr. GUY (Gisborne): In many ways I share the concern of the honorable member for Sunshine with respect to matters which are not contained in the Governor’s Speech at the opening of Parliament. However, my real concern is about different matters. The honorable member for Sunshine suggested that this debate should have been concluded in the autumn sessional period of this Parliament. I do not share his concern because on this—the Government—side of the House there are many new members—in fact, the Government has probably the greatest majority of all time in the history of this State Parliament.

A debate such as this affords every member, new or old, the chance of saying things which are parochial or general but which are of importance to himself and his electorate. I was interested to hear the contributions made to the debate by new members on this side of the House. They can be forgiven for indulging in a little parochialism because in one’s maiden speech in the House it is just as well to refer to local matters and to exhibit concern about problems which need solving. It is important to identify the problems of one’s own electorate but it is another to find an answer to them.

The honorable member for Sunshine expressed concern over the sewerage programme in his electorate. I sympathize with him because for the first four and a half years of my membership of this House I represented the Werribee area and had many misgivings about the sewerage situation in the western area. You, Mr. Speaker, will know as well as I that a State Government must determine priorities of expenditure of funds to cater for various projects. If the Government continues to place importance on, say, education, and other areas which need massive amounts of financial assistance, it is difficult to allocate funds which individual members regard as necessary to take care of the problems in their electorates, such as inadequate sewerage. I sympathize with the honorable member for Sunshine over the problems which he has in his electorate.

I see the situation with respect to the Governor’s Speech as a matter of principle. During the years in which I have been a member of this House, the Governor’s Speech has been lacking in that it has merely stated, in the main, that the Government would perform many activities for the benefit of the Victorian community. Occasionally we do not live up to these expectations, but that is another matter. The Governor, however, is to be commended for the way in which he presented the future hopes of his Government. He is also to be commended for the role he has played in his short period of office as representative of the Queen. His Excellency is held with the greatest respect in this State. As an apolitical man he has been made very welcome in my electorate of Gisborne. The Governor is the type of person who tends to represent a philosophy, which unfortunately is not represented in Speeches at the opening of our Parliaments.

In this day and age, I believe the Government of the day, whether formed by the Liberal Party, the
Labor Party or the National Party, does not raise expectations high enough in a philosophical sense. In the past five to ten years all Governments in this country have been guilty of raising expectations far too high in a material sense so that when the Governor makes his Speech at the opening of the State Parliament, or the Governor-General does at the opening of the Federal Parliament, it invariably means to the community, "Your Government is going to do such and such", whereas in fact what we should be saying is, "Your Government hopes to achieve such and such".

I feel something is lacking in the Governor's Speech to this Parliament. The fault is not with our Governor. The Speech is lacking in an expression of the philosophical approach any Government of the State must adopt.

We should ask ourselves whether the State and Federal Governments have to offer more than just material support for the problems facing the community. I feel we have reached a stage in Australia where Governments need to offer more than just a statement of their material intentions for the electorate.

The Speech given by His Excellency is not meant to be a political document, but Australia is a politically divided nation. There are arguments which fall basically into two areas. If one is socialistically inclined one says that the argument is one of equality. If one is liberally inclined, one says that the argument is one of liberty, but both terms are very general terms.

Governments in Australia today do not face just material problems; they face a very real political revolution. It is a revolution not only of rising expectations but one which was stated by Daniel Bell, who pointed out in a recent argument in Fortune, which was repeated in Time magazine on 14th June, 1975—

We are facing a revolution not merely of rising expectations but of rising entitlements—a staggering increase in the number of things people feel they are entitled to, regardless of their own productivity or contribution to the economy.

It goes on to say, with respect to these expectations of equality—

This is not an argument against society's providing a floor of safety for everyone, nor a plea against fighting much harder for true equality of opportunity. But carrying equality of results to its logical end would mean the ultimate destruction of the American promise. The ultimate choice is not between equality and inequality, but between different kinds of inequality. Socialism, for instance, promises (on the whole, falsely) economic equality, but in most cases at the price of political equality.

In the final analysis, total equality can be enforced only by total tyranny.

Here we can see one side of the broad political argument. On the other hand, we must look at an analysis of what it means to Liberals and their philosophy. The term "liberty" is very generally applied when we speak about political arguments. A member of the Labor Party in Great Britain had this to say—

The drive for equality used to be fired by a desire to increase individual liberty, but there is now evidence that the means used can result in liberty being undermined or reduced. In a modern, relatively affluent society, the stage may have been reached where the average person would not prefer a renewed emphasis on his liberty. Equality may have gone far enough to be subsumed or accepted, and the next drive should now be to reassert the freedom of the individual.

We now have both sides of the argument. As I asked previously, are we looking for complete equality or for liberty—freedom of the individual?

Governments as such have to face this revolution of rising expectations. In my situation, Liberalism in its pure form is very relevant, because I share the concern of all to have a public philosophy which considers liberty of our State and liberty of the individual as opposed to the grandiose philosophy of those who approach the doctrine of complete equality which in itself, in today's society in Australia, is overdone.

My contribution to this debate is to highlight what I feel was not stated in the Governor's address to this
Parliament but which I feel ought to be stated in future addresses to Parliament. There should be a statement by the Governor setting out the philosophy of his Government because in the establishment of credible government in this country there has to be meaningful social reform in all aspects of government, and unless these things are reassessed carefully there will be a breakdown of the philosophical foundations on which this country has grown up. The onus is back on the community and there are many organizations which can help to develop the attitude of self-help and self-reliance.

There are desperate areas of need where the Government can and must help, but at present our national philosophy needs restructuring at community level. I hope in future Speeches to our Parliament, the Governor will be allowed more time to express his own philosophy which, I am sure, will see this State very safely into the future.

Mr. REESE (Heatherton): I cannot let this debate conclude without associating myself and the constituents of my new electorate of Heatherton with the Address-in-Reply to the Governor’s Speech. I emphasize the words “the new electorate of Heatherton”, because it has been created by the electoral commissioners, or lines have been drawn on boundaries, so that it could be described as an electorate without a living heart. The heart of the electorate consists of many acres of sand pits, a bit of rural land, an airport, and half a dozen good golf courses, and around this are segments of population without much common interest other than being part of a growing urban Melbourne. In many ways the heart of the new electorate is a planner’s nightmare, made worse over the years by the nightmares of planners.

The segments of population around this heart contain every element of suburban Melbourne. It is an electorate of contrast and challenge which mirrors the challenge faced by the Government in the years ahead and which is reflected in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor to Parliament. The electorate contains a wide range of ethnic groups, each with its own problems, cultures, abilities and contributions to make to the community, and I am proud to have the chance to represent those groups.

If one relates the challenges of the electorate of Heatherton to those facing the Victorian Government, one sees that they go into every area of State responsibility.

Mr. GINIFER: Do you have any dairy farmers there?

Mr. REESE: I have a pig farmer, and I am proud of that. In the field of education the State is spending millions of dollars in this electorate, possibly at the expense of every other area of State responsibility. No over-all education problems exist, but there are areas of problems on which I will dwell shortly. The stage has now been reached where the Government and the community should consider whether they are receiving value for money for the education dollar across the board, whether the money could be used to better advantage in the education area, and whether some of it could be put into other areas of need.

I mentioned the ethnic groups in my electorate, and as an illustration I point out that in one primary school in the South Clayton area with 730 children on the roll, there are 22 separate ethnic groups. The parents of three-quarters of the children were born overseas. This immediately highlights the need for greater emphasis on migrant education programmes.

Mr. FORDHAM: Have you only just become aware of it?

Mr. REESE: The Government has been aware of this problem for a considerable time and has done quite a lot in the area. I am proud to be associated with a Government that
has approached the problems in a practical way and not in a purely destructive way.

Much more is needed in this area. It is patently unsatisfactory to have in a primary school such a wide range of children from basically non-English speaking homes without having available to them teachers with the essential language ability. This area of education must be examined critically overall, and much more must be done. I welcome the recent announcement of the Government that it will seek teachers with specialized experience and expertise in the Greek language. This is a start, but we must go much further.

One finds a similar pattern in the needs of secondary education in the electorate of Heatherton. At present we are reasonably well covered for schools, but there are needs, and this emphasizes the challenge to the education authorities and to the Government. We must now isolate the needs and put our efforts into that area.

In passing, I mention that there is a need for extra land reservation against the day when another secondary school will be needed in the electorate. These are matters to which the Government should now give an increasing amount of attention. It should look forward in the long range, not just at the short-term needs of the area, but at what is going to be the pattern of development and future need. These areas of the educational field mirror the challenge in education in the State as a whole.

A few months ago an autistic children's centre was opened in the electorate. This is an excellent facility, and the people associated with the centre and with the problems of autistic children have struggled for it for a long time. This leads one to think of the need for increased concern, not only with the autistic, but for those born with other deficiencies, and of how they can best be assisted. The new centre is just a start; more emphasis must be placed on this area by the Department of Health or whatever other body the Government nominates. Let us face up to the realities; needs exist and we see what can be done for a few people in that area. Similar opportunities should be made available to any child or adult who can benefit from facilities such as those being developed in the Mentone corner of the Heatherton electorate.

That emphasizes the segmentation of the new electorate of Heatherton, which is based on the City of Moorabbin. Heatherton is a little name within that city, where I understand there is a polling booth that polls about 900 voters in an electorate of nearly 30,000. There is a corner which is part of the City of Mordialloc and which has no affinity to the Moorabbin section of the electorate. Further over is an area that forms part of Clayton. That again is a self-contained segment without much affinity to the Moorabbin end. In the eastern section one finds another segment of the electorate which is more closely allied to Springvale. This is the sort of electorate without a living heart that I am now proud to represent.

The electorate contains the Kingston Centre, which again highlights what can be done and what is being done in the area of health in the face of inadequate finance, and shows that much more needs to be done. The history of the Kingston Centre goes back almost 130 years, and the centre caters for the needs of geriatric patients from the southern part of Melbourne. A parallel centre in the northern suburbs is expected to cope with people from the other half of Melbourne. It is practically impossible for those two centres to cope adequately with the number of aged people in the community who seek their services. In the last 20 to 30 years medical science has been able to keep people alive for a few years longer, but that does not solve the problems of people in their later years.

Mr. Reese.
Although I applaud the work that is done at the Kingston Centre and in similar institutions in Melbourne and other parts of the State, much more needs to be done, and this is an area where I hope the present problems of finance can be re-examined and an increased capital flow can be generated in the shortest possible time. There has been a gradual move out into the community with the provision of day centres which endeavour to keep ageing people in the best possible health within their own homes and communities and not in the confines of the Kingston Centre or a similar institution. This trend must be expanded because we cannot fail this important section of the community.

If one looks at the electorate of Heatherton—and I am being completely parochial—one sees that it illustrates the challenges facing the Government in a wider area. For a long time the hospital needs of people in the electorate were provided within a mile and a half of the Melbourne General Post Office. That has gradually changed, not before time, as a result of the decision of the Hospitals and Charities Commission, and I pay tribute to that oft-maligned body for the job it does in hospitals without sufficient capital to cope adequately with the growing needs of the community.

The area is now commencing to be served by Moorabbin Hospital, with which I am proud to be associated. More than $5 million has already been spent on the building programme, which has reached a stage where approximately 100 beds will be available to the community before the end of this year. The complete building programme calls for a doubling of that figure, but when it is understood that those beds are expected to serve a population of approximately 120,000 within the City of Moorabbin alone, apart from the segments coming from outside that area to which I referred earlier, the fact that a great deal more needs to be done about the provision of adequate hospital beds to serve the community is highlighted.

It is necessary for this State to undertake a programme which will provide adequately for preventive rather than curative medicine. When a large project of this type is embarked upon it is often a little short of controls and may not work in an orderly fashion for a short time. That is something which must be watched very carefully. But more emphasis through community health projects must be placed on the answering of questions such as, “How does one prevent, to the greatest possible degree, a member of the community requiring a hospital bed? How can the stress, which is the basis of so much illness in the community, be reduced?” These are all areas which are essential to the people whom I represent in Heatherton and which this Government must examine critically.

Another area where we in this State have been a little slow—in common with most of the rest of the world—is in the provision of psychiatric treatment. If a person in my electorate requires such treatment today he has to go to a facility some 18 miles away. That is not good enough. The area of psychiatric medicine should be catered for in the general hospital system and there should not be the segregation which has existed up to now. I am happy to see that the Government is moving in that direction, but it can, I believe, move much more speedily and effectively than it has in the past.

As I stated earlier, this electorate has within its boundaries many acres of sandhills, which contain the major deposits of concrete sand in Melbourne. Recently I read a report which indicated that at present 5.7 million tonnes of concrete sand a year is being used in this city and 2.5 million tonnes of it comes from the Heatherton-Springvale area. Well in excess of half the readily accessible known reserves of concrete sand in Melbourne are in this area, so it is understandable that this commodity should
be retained so that it can be extracted as required for the growth of Melbourne. It is interesting to note that under the planning scheme now being mooted 466 hectares of land is to be reserved under a zoning designed to preserve the area for extraction of this sand when required.

I do not quibble with that decision, but I believe there are some points which should be made. The first is that it is essential that the areas of sand be correctly defined. More should be done as soon as possible to obtain a precise definition of the extremities of viable sand deposits than has been done so far.

One of the interesting features about the sand deposits is that the over-all area is divided into halves by Kingston Road. The sand extractors have shown an interest in the half north of Kingston Road, but have shown no interest in the area to the south of Kingston Road. The result is that the area to the south has been zoned for extraction of sand at some time in the future. I do not deny that it will be needed, but it means that a few landowners in the area have been asked to hold the land indefinitely, virtually at the whim of a sand extractor who may wish to purchase it fifteen or twenty years from now. Some landowners of almost pensionable age who own small pockets of land—of, say, 5 acres—are not able to sell their properties because of this zoning. They have to wait until some time in the future when a sand extractor is going to say, "I am now ready to have a look at your little parcel of land". People should not be expected to suffer a loss for fifteen or twenty years because of decisions by a zoning authority which entail an inability to market the land in the short term. There should be some way in which the community at large bears its share of the losses suffered by those landowners. Some limit should be placed on the period of time during which a sand extraction company can take over land reserved in this way for the future needs of Melbourne.

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These are matters which should be examined objectively, but there is another important aspect to the problem. Decisions should be made now on what is to happen to that land when the sand has been extracted, and a reserve of money should be built up over the period of fifteen or twenty years before that occurs to allow for the rehabilitation of the land for the benefit of the community. There is a potential in the area for a worth-while open space and the problem of how the land can be back-filled and made available to the community at that time should be examined now. It may be necessary to consider some form of royalty on the extraction between now and the time when the land is finally available to the community. Those decisions should be taken now, and it should not be necessary in fifteen or twenty years' time to ask, "How can this community land be financed?"

Adjoining that sand area is another problem area. The area of which I now speak has been referred to, by decision of planners, as a rural or green belt, and those in occupancy of the land have not quite known what their future is. The problem is further complicated by the proximity of Moorabbin Airport and the flight paths of the airport.

Last year the creation of a noise exposure zone in the area was decided upon. That was the craziest proposition I had ever heard of because it had no real basis in fact. The area is now referred to as an intensive agricultural area, which contains 403 acres owned by 29 separate landholders. Ten of those holdings are of 2 acres and a number of those already contain two houses. All but six of the holders. Ten of those holdings are of area. They are not viable agricultural properties and there is no way in which they could be. If the present position persists for a lengthy period of time there will be a gradual rundown of these properties, which are only 12 or 13 miles from the General Post Office. With all the good will in
the world, one can only say it is a glorious example of trying to close the stable door after the horse has bolted.

The position in regard to this land should be looked at in the light of reality. It is not viable agricultural land but is an area which must form part of the residential development of Melbourne, and to persist with the notion that holdings of 2 or 3 or 5 acres can be used as market gardens, simply because of the decision of a planner, is obviously nonsense. Evidence can be produced of their non-viability and non-suitability for such use because of the encroachment of suburbia. It is suburban land and should be treated as such.

The sitting was suspended at 6.15 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.

Mr. REESE: Before the suspension of the sitting I spoke briefly of some of the challenges of my new electorate, Heatherton. I suggested that these challenges mirrored those which will face the Government during the next three years, and which I am confident can be adequately handled for the benefit of the electors of Heatherton and of the people of Victoria generally.

I referred to the problems of areas where planning decisions are requiring land to be retained in the form in which it is at present used, land that is not economically viable for the use indicated by those plans. I also indicated that through this area, as in many parts of the metropolitan area, people are concerned with the needs for roads, and through much of Heatherton for many years there has been concern with the proposals for freeway development. Happily, changes determined by those responsible for the planning of this future pattern have almost overcome the doubts and worries of people living in the electorate. The routes that are now determined for the freeway pass through an area which at present is almost completely devoid of housing, and they are a tremendous improvement on previous decisions that caused fear that the freeway would go through areas where homes are situated.

However, there is still a minor amendment that can readily overcome the problems experienced by a few home-owners in the area. It appears that in planning operations such as this the planner is often concerned with lines on a map and not with human beings. In the instance to which I refer, although a very real improvement has been made in the proposed routes of freeways in the area, the proposal could still be slightly amended. I am convinced that the amended proposal would not affect homes, businesses or people. I believe if one home or one business is to be affected, one should fight to overcome that problem. I visualize this as one of the minor challenges.

Looking at the area generally as dormitory suburbs, because they are disjointed segments of Melbourne, one finds it is situated between two suburban railway lines. The line between Oakleigh and Dandenong passes to its north, and the line from Caulfield to Frankston is to the west and the south. It is sketchily served by private bus services. This aspect must be examined. I believe it mirrors the problem of the whole metropolitan area, the problem of where our public transport is heading and to what extent the Government will be called on to play an increasing role. In the past to a large extent some areas have relied on the private bus operators. This is another challenge that I know the Government will meet, but I suggest that in the long term there is a need to consider objectively whether an additional rail line should be built from Westall to the south, ultimately linking with Westernport which will develop into a very large port operation in the future. If one analyses what that will do, one realizes that apart from the goods traffic potential it will open up areas that are now
virtually unserved by public transport, for the benefit of the residents in a large segment and benefit the network system as a whole.

This electorate is an area of industries and homes where employment is available. It must mirror the problems that can arise in a community if the work force cannot be kept employed. In many ways this State is the hub of Australia industrially and financially. Recently I was interested to read a book by the Victoria Promotion Committee, which effectively sells the potential of this State. The book refers to Victoria as the hub of Australia in the 21st century. That may be right. I hope it is, but it is interesting to reflect on the world we live in and what is required if that prophesy has a chance of coming true. At present Melbourne to a large extent is Victoria. This is another challenge.

For a variety of reasons our industry is finding it harder and harder to sell its production. We have a capacity in excess of the Australian market. Our internal costs are such that manufacturers in many industries are finding it harder and harder to sell goods overseas and as a result are finding it harder and harder to maintain their machines and capacities. Therefore, it is becoming more difficult to find the jobs that the people in my electorate expect. A wide range of industrial concerns are still interested in Australia as a production base.

Many people are prepared to come here to provide industrial opportunities to assist the work force, but they are becoming increasingly concerned with the constant publicity of industrial unrest in this country. They are concerned whether they will be making the right decision in putting their capital, their expertise and their plants in Victoria and other parts of Australia. Although to some degree industrial unrest is unavoidable in a democratic community and some is justified, I believe it is increasingly true that within a very real minority of the trade union movement there is an attitude aimed at reducing productivity in this country.

I emphasize the minority because it is not typical of Australians inside or outside the trade union movement. Unless we face up to the fact that this element is having its effect not only on the work force in Australia but on the potential and willingness of investors and employers to come to this country, there is increasing doubt about our ability to provide the work honorable members all desire for their constituents.

I was interested to read only yesterday publicity on the fact that by the year 2000 Australia might have a population of approximately 16 million or 17 million people. In the same paper I read that today India has a population of 605 million and that it is estimated that by the year 2000 its population will be approximately 800 million. This trend can be mirrored throughout South-East Asia and highlights the fallacy of those who claim that in Australia zero population growth is needed. The greatest need of this country, if it is to achieve what the Victorian Promotion Committee publication proudly says, the possibility of being the country of the 21st century, is people.

Australia needs people from a widespread migration base. However, before we can feel confident about having those people we must be able to give them the job security that they do not have in their own countries. This is a challenge not only to Government but to every section of the community and in particular to those responsible elements that control the trade union movement. Productivity is the key to so much good in the community. If both sides of the House want an increasing measure of welfare for those who are unable to stand up to the rat-race of modern living, and there are many of them in the modern community, it must be

Mr. Reese.
realized that the bigger the cake the bigger the share of those people can be. That will not be achieved by falling productivity and constant industrial unrest, in too many cases not for genuine industrial reasons but for the political considerations of a few people controlling others within a certain area.

The population trend to which I have just referred is one of the real challenges that this country faces. If we are concerned, as the previous speaker said, with a philosophy, surely it is a philosophy that in Australia a potential exists to keep, maintain and improve conditions not only for ourselves but for those people who will come here in the next decade or two or the next century, and to give those people something that they do not have within their own territories. If we can do that we will be contributing greatly to the welfare of mankind. However, if we cannot, it is time that we started to look objectively at ourselves, at our attitudes and at what we want in this world for ourselves and for our constituents who share our aims.

I stated that Melbourne is too big a part of Victoria and I make no apology for that statement. The solution is not easy to find. We must now face the realities of what we have in Melbourne and the problems associated with it and try to overcome some of the difficulties that exist.

Earlier I referred to planning problems. Can we justify a situation where planners, with all the goodwill in the world, make a decision and say, "You have a few acres of land that have good potential for development but you cannot develop that land; you must keep it as a farm"?

I conclude by quoting the opinion of a firm that has been investigating an area of approximately 403 acres which is now zoned as intensive agricultural land in my Heatherton electorate. In the opinion of these investigators this land is not viable agricultural land. Its owners are in a serious economic plight because the natural watercourse which had previously been used has become polluted; a good deal of petty pilfering takes place in the area; household pets such as dogs, cats and pigeons invade the market gardens; fences which were erected between the boundaries of nearby residential zones and the market gardens have caused erosion up to 100 feet or more and ruined crops; there is outfall from chimneys which affects the crops; rubbish dumping is becoming rife; there is pollution from motor vehicles; and the water supply during the day is poor. I shall not mention the problem of rates in the new suburban area but it is a real worry to the folks who are expected to maintain viable agricultural land in holdings as low as 2 acres.

The address by the Governor gave us a blueprint of what the Government intends doing. I believe that within the limits of inadequate finance this Government is doing all it can to overcome the problems that exist in this city. In all sincerity I believe a challenge exists not only in my electorate of Heatherton but throughout the metropolitan area and country Victoria. I am proud to be associated with this Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): The long dissertation from the honorable member for Heatherton inspired me to make one or two observations in the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. Firstly I must concede that the honorable member for Heatherton in his travelogue of the Heatherton electorate did well indeed. I am the first to admit that his knowledge of the electorate of Heatherton far exceeds his knowledge of the trade union movement.

His Excellency the Governor delivered his Speech in another place on 13th April, 1976. I had some feeling for His Excellency at being asked to present this four-page Speech that was obviously prepared by the
executive Government. His Excellency must have suffered some embarrassment when presenting it to the Parliament. Much of that Speech is now a fait accompli and one might with some justification make several comments on one or two aspects of the Speech.

Before doing that I should be remiss if I did not pay some compliment to the new members in this establishment. It is true that on this occasion more new members have spoken during the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech than on any other occasion perhaps since 1955. The contribution of those new members augurs well for this establishment. I wish new members of all political parties well and congratulate them on their contributions to what is considered to be a debate that covers many facets of political life.

On behalf of the executive Government the Governor said—

The Government welcomes the new federalism initiatives by the Commonwealth, and the opportunity to build a genuine co-operative federalism in partnership so as to secure a proper arrangement of financial resources and responsibilities between Federal, State and local governments in Australia.

Since 13th April of this year when the Governor delivered that Speech all has not gone well with the prediction of His Excellency. Before federalism had a chance to take effect on this State the Treasurer said that he was very dissatisfied with the amount of money that had been made available for works in this State and the necessity for the curtailment of sewerage works. His prediction had been that the metropolitan area would be sewered by 1980 but because of the effect of the new federalism policy this has been extended, as far as can be predicted, to 1990, at least another ten years. That was the first failure of the new federalism.

During question time today mention was made of the Australian Assistance Plan, the Area Improvement Plan and other initiatives of the former Federal Labor Government. Mention was also made of the present Federal Government's attitude to those initiatives. One cannot imagine what will take up the hiatus in community efforts that are unable to proceed because of the decision of the present Federal Government to cease those initiatives. The only assistance that has been retained is the assistance to local government which has perhaps been extended by advancing local government a grant in respect to the population of each municipality. That was based on what local government received during the previous year, but no consideration was given to the Premier's figure of 13 per cent inflation that the country suffered during the past financial year and which carried on into this financial year.

Therefore although the Commonwealth Government has now decided to reimburse local government on a per capita basis and on the basis of need to be determined by the State Grants Commission, the promise that no municipality will receive less than it received in the previous financial year means that it will receive 13 per cent less because it will be able to do precisely 13 per cent less work with the same amount of money that it received during the previous year because of inflation and rising costs. Therefore federalism has not been so good. That is one of the areas in which federalism could have been deemed to make some significant impact on the finances of local government.

The Government was not satisfied with the previous approach of the Commonwealth Government to regionalism. Sixteen or seventeen regions were established in this State. The State Government of the day said it would be preferable if it handled the funds rather than that the funds be directed by the Federal Government to the regions. One could not deny that, whatever the Government's philosophy towards regions, the projects initiated by the

Mr. Wilkes.
regions which were in receipt of Federal funds created work and had some effect in reducing unemployment. A new member has interjected, "political bias". It has nothing to do with political bias. That member has not been here long enough to understand the position. What it meant was that there were areas of neglect that affected people in the metropolitan area and in country Victoria, and those areas of neglect were subject to the area improvement plan and the Australian Assistance Plan. The money that was received by the regions through those programmes made a tremendous impact.

Not even the Government would deny that if one went to country Victoria and asked people in the various municipalities when their golden years were in terms of financial assistance, they would say that they were when the Federal Labor Government was in office and they came from the initiatives and cash flows provided by that Government. It is a great pity that those initiatives and cash flows are not allowed to continue. I remind honorable members of this other aspect, because the present Commonwealth Government has discontinued the Regional Employment Development scheme, which had an impact on employment, particularly in rural areas.

Notwithstanding criticisms of the actions of the Federal Government by the State Government—quite justifiably—and by myself, the State Government has done nothing to encourage its Federal colleagues—and there is no mention of it in the Speech of His Excellency—to reintroduce the R.E.D. scheme. An employment scheme similar to the R.E.D. scheme is needed today, particularly in country Victoria, to take up the unemployment slack that exists there. Those initiatives could have come from a continuance of the area improvement plan or the Australian Assistance Plan, or through financial assistance to the regions.

The regions were not controlled by members of the Labor Party. They were controlled, by and large, by members who supported the philosophy of the Liberal Party. However, that did not prevent them from doing an excellent job in the projects they initiated. Nobody denied that, least of all myself, but it is incredible that the State Government has not done more by leaning on its colleagues in Canberra to induce them to continue some of those schemes.

There is continual talk about rising unemployment, but honorable members know full well that there are initiatives which could be taken by the regions, through the Australian Assistance Plan, and the area improvement plan in particular, which would create employment in this State. The State Government chooses not to say anything about that, but would rather let sleeping dogs lie. It allows the Commonwealth Government to tell it precisely what to do, and it acquiesces.

The Treasurer was the only member of the executive Government to say that he will make further representations to his colleagues in Canberra. It will not be unlike the pilgrimages of Sir Henry Bolte and the late Sir Arthur Rylah, with the carrot and the stick and the whip. One could not find the carrot, but one could always see the marks of the whip. The same thing will apply to the present Treasurer. Regardless of his good faith in wanting to secure more money for this State, he knows before he goes what the answer will be. That is regrettable, because nobody knows better than the Treasurer that he urgently needs more money for works which his Government said twelve months ago should be slowed down but which now, because of some change in fiscal policy, should be speeded up.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works needs funds. To digress for a moment, there is no mention in the Governor's Speech of any attempt by this courageous Government to do anything about the board.
Its administration does not conform with modern practice, but the Government has ignored pleas by certain municipalities to have an inquiry into it, and perhaps to reduce the board to a more viable body of perhaps five members. The Premier accepts that the board’s programme for sewerage is the programme for Victoria, but he is prepared to let the board handle the money in whatever way it wants.

I hope the Premier is successful in getting more money from Canberra because a lot depends on it. The private sector depends very largely on the amount of work and contracts that it receives from the public sector. All honorable members concede that the economy depends on the profitability of the private sector, but the private sector also depends on assistance it is given by the public sector by way of works contracts. If one considers some of the big building contracts for public works that exist in Victoria today, one will realize that if there is any further curtailment in that sector, as is suggested, this will have some effect on the private sector. For that reason I hope the Premier is more successful than his predecessors when he goes to Canberra seeking more money.

There is one other matter that I should like to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker. It concerns all the people of this State. The executive Government has a bad record regarding the Liquor Control Commission and what it is prepared to do about liquor prices. I shall relate that record. Pressure was put on the previous Chief Secretary to do something about people who were selling packaged beer at $8.88. This price was then charged by hotels. The purchase price was $6.01 plus 48 cents, bringing it to $6.49 on the pallet in an hotel which charged $8.88. The Government considered that hotels were entitled to charge $8.88 and that nobody should sell packaged liquor under that price. The former Chief Secretary regulated, by Order of the Governor in Council, that the Liquor Control Commission should have the right to fix the price of beer, but not of foodstuffs such as milk, eggs, butter, lamb and meat pies.

The Government is always talking about free enterprise and how the market determines value—the law of supply and demand. Members of the Labor Party accept that that is the philosophy of the Liberal Party, and I accept that. But, of course, the philosophy applies only when it suits the Government, and it does not suit the Government to apply the private enterprise philosophy to the sale of packaged beer. So the former gallant Chief Secretary, now the Agent-General in London, proceeded by Order in Council to give the commission power to regulate the price of beer. Then the Parliamentary Subordinate Legislation Committee, acting quite properly, decided that the regulations were void. The then Chief Secretary did not do any more about the matter until more pressure was applied to the Government.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): I do not want to stop the honorable member, but I do not want this debate to develop into a discussion on the Liquor Control Commission.

Mr. WILKES: No, Mr. Speaker; I am relating the history of the Government. I will not pass any comment on what I think the Government should do at this stage. That will probably come later. The Government was told that it had made a proper mess of instructing the Liquor Control Commission what to do concerning the price of packaged beer, and enormous pressure was exerted by the industry—not the breweries, but the retailers—

Mr. STEPHENS: You are only guessing again.

Mr. WILKES: It is not a question of guessing. Members of the Labor Party have had the opportunity of
listening to the same people that Mr. Brokenshire listened to, but I will not talk about Mr. Brokenshire at this stage, Mr. Speaker. Having made that first mistake, the Government compounded it by instituting an inquiry. There is no mention of it in the Governor's Speech. I shall tell honorable members who constituted the inquiry. It was not somebody who was not associated with the industry, not somebody impartial who could not be regarded as having any bias one way or the other in the industry, but a member of the Liquor Control Commission itself, assisted by another member of the commission. Talk about appeals from Caesar to Caesar!

The Labor Party members are the first to concede that the control of the price of packaged beer is not the complete answer to the financial problems of the liquor industry. It is part of the problem, but not the whole problem. The price was determined by the market and not by anybody else. Publicans did not have to sell at the price at which they sold. Toma Bros., Capace Pty. Ltd., and J. Kinda and Co. Pty. Ltd. did not have to sell at the price they adopted. Supermarkets did not have to sell beer; it was because of the policy of the executive Government, expressed through the Liquor Control Commission, that supermarkets were able to get into the field of the sale of spirits and packaged beer. There are many people, including myself, who believe that supermarkets should never have had that right. The Government was warned by myself and Opposition members eighteen months to two years ago that the chain stores could buy licences and transfer them from one place to another, and that they would come to a sticky end. Indeed they did. It is not firms such as Toma Bros., Capace Pty. Ltd. and J. Kinda and Co. Pty. Ltd. who are causing the trouble in the liquor industry; it is the chain stores which have been able to use a "loss leader" to sell cheap packaged beer.

That is why the Government has a bad record and whatever it does now—

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Whatever it does now it will be in trouble.

Mr. WILKES: It will be in trouble now, whatever it does, because of its previous bad record in relation to both the sale of packaged beer and the liquor industry itself. Demands were made on the hotel industry which were considered in certain country and metropolitan areas to be outrageous.

Mr. STEPHEN: But they were made, and they had to be honoured, did they not?

Mr. WILKES: Of course, but I am merely criticizing the policy of the Government. That is all I am permitted to do. It is perhaps easy to say this with hindsight, but if real thought had been given to the problem the disastrous situation that has now been reached would not exist. To set up a price-fixing authority is not the answer. I do not understand how honorable members opposite reconcile their consciences to the setting up of such an authority when it cuts across the free enterprise policy of the Government.

There are in the community many people who, when they go to a bottle shop in an hotel or to a Returned Services League club to buy packaged liquor, but particularly to an hotel, do not believe that because the hotel has an expensive entertainer from overseas or interstate and provides special meals and services they should have to pay more for a dozen bottles of beer. All they want is to be able to purchase beer at a reasonable price, and they do not understand why they should be charged additional amounts which are included in the peculiar system of costing. They do have to pay those additional amounts, and if members of the Government party were to talk to the Australian Hotels Association and examine the submissions made by that association
they would see that those charges form part of the costing complex of hotels in this State.

When a price for the sale of packaged beer is fixed—and that price will be determined by the executive Government—it will be very interesting to the backwoodsmen on the back-benches, but they will not have very much say in it. They may want to express themselves because of the pressures which will be put on them in their electorates by people who have been able to purchase cheap packaged liquor over the past eight or nine months, but they will not be afforded that opportunity. It is interesting to note that some of the larger sales of cheap packaged beer have taken place in electorates represented by members of the Government party, not members of the Opposition, and have occurred in some of the more affluent areas than those represented by members on this side of the House.

If the Government wished to do something about the liquor industry it would not have had an inquiry into Caesar; it would have had an independent inquiry. If it had done so it may well have found that some of the problems of the industry outside the bias associated with the sale of cheap packaged beer would have been more thoroughly examined. They were certainly not examined by the Brokenshire inquiry.

There are many ways in which the Government could assist the industry, and I am suggesting to the Deputy Premier and the executive Government that they should look at those measures very carefully before they determine a minimum price. A minimum price is repugnant and an insult to the people of this State, and it is not easy to see how a Government which advocates free enterprise would even consider it. I believe the Government will rue the day it legislates for a minimum price for the sale of packaged beer and it will not solve the problems of the liquor industry by doing so.

Did Mr. Brokenshire or any Minister or any other member of the Government party attempt to study the economics of the breweries and find out whether they were charging the retailers or hotelkeepers too much for their product? Of course not! It was taken for granted that whatever the breweries did was a matter for the Prices Justification Tribunal, and if the tribunal said that the price was all right the Government was not concerned about it and did not inquire into it in any way.
I am merely pointing out that the Government started at the wrong end of the inquiry. I do not know how the Government could have made the inquiries I suggest through Mr. Brokenshire, because he was not impartial and was connected with the commission which wants to exercise the price-fixing power, but if the Government had started at the other end and ascertained whether the breweries were charging a reasonable price for their product, there could have been some alteration, but there has been no suggestion that the activities of the breweries ought to be looked at. It is the public who are being examined, and they are being told that they will pay a price for packaged beer which has been determined by the executive Government and a price regulated by the Liquor Control Commission at the behest of the executive Government.

Much can be said about this problem. The Government—a free-enterprise Government—has made a fatal mistake in attempting to regulate prices in one section of industry for one commodity and not another. One has only to look at any one of a dozen other commodities whose prices are not regulated. An example is meat. "Meat costs make food prices leap", is a headline, but does that concern the Government? Is the Government concerned about meat prices?

Mr. Stephen: Yes, because they are too low.

Mr. Wilkes: That is the philosophy of the Government—they are too low, so the Government wants to put them up. Provided that one can satisfy the pressure groups and the skilled negotiators who are able to manipulate the Government, one can do anything one likes with prices, but Ministers will have to stand up and be counted for what they are doing in insisting on a minimum price for packaged beer.

Perhaps the Government may, at some time in the future, allow the Parliament to discuss the merits of the two reports—the Brokenshire report and the Labor Party's report. Such a discussion would make good reading in Hansard for those who are interested. The liquor industry has already been supplied with copies of the Labor Party's report and no doubt knew what was in the Government's report before today. As I said, the Opposition hopes to have the opportunity of making comparisons between the two reports in this Parliament and hopes to have that opportunity in the not-too-far-distant future.

The House divided on Mr. Jones's amendment (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes... 19

Noes... 53

Majority against the amendment... 34

AYES.
Mr. Amos
Mr. Cathie
Mr. Crabb
Mr. Culpin
Mr. Doube
Mr. Edmunds
Mr. Fogarty
Mr. Fordham
Mr. Ginifer
Mr. Holding

NOES.
Mr. Austin
Mr. Balfour
Mr. Billing
Mr. Birrell
Mr. Borthwick
Mr. Burgin
Mr. Coleman
Mr. Collins
Mr. Cox
Mr. Dixon
Mr. Dunstan
Mr. Ebery
Mr. Evans

(Ballarat North)

Mr. Evans

(South Barwon)
Mr. Smith

(South Warrnambool)
Mr. Stephen

Mr. Suggett
Mr. Thompson
Mr. Trewin
Mr. Vale
Mr. Weideman
Mr. Whiting
Mr. Williams

Tellers:
Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. Richardson
Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) : Mr. Speaker, I can understand your hesitation in naming my electorate because in this House I first represented the electorate of Grant, then the electorate of Deer Park, and now I represent the electorate of Keilor. This is because of successive redistributions. Fortunately, I am still a member of this House. I offer my congratulations to honorable members who were first elected at the last State elections and congratulate those who have already made their contributions to this debate.

Prior to the elections and during the currency of this Parliament the rural sections of our community and of the economy have found themselves in dire straits. Yet only a few lines of His Excellency's Speech related to primary industry. They were addressed to the functions of the Department of Agriculture. His Excellency said—

In the field of agriculture, Dookie and Longerenong colleges will be provided with their own advisory committees and additional courses will be provided for the rural community.

The new McMillan Rural Studies Centre will be established at Warragul with decentralized faculties in other Gippsland towns. Additional courses in parkland and horticultural management will be instituted at the Burnley college.

No reference was made to the plight of rural industry and primary production in this State. There was no mention of the dairying industry or anything to foreshadow the restructuring of that industry. Therefore, I move—

That the following words be added to the proposed Address— and respectfully desire to inform Your Excellency that this House regrets the failure of the Government to foreshadow legislation to restructure the dairy industry."

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) : I advise the House that honorable members who have already spoken in the debate on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply may speak to the amendment only. Any honorable member who has not spoken in the debate but who does so will be deemed to be speaking to both the motion and the amendment.

Mr. GINIFER : One would have expected the Government to be cognizant of the needs and problems of primary industry, particularly those of the dairying industry. One only has to read the headlines in the newspapers over the past months to know that all is not well. Some of them were—

Dairying will face "trough" price period.
Dairy farmers to face further income fall.
Victorian dairymen charge discrimination in dole benefits.
Dairying—Victoria must move very quickly.
Equalization is only hope for dairymen.
Dairy plan in operation this year?
The large question mark is what worries the dairying industry. A board of inquiry has examined the dairying industry and reported to the Government on its problems. Its recommendations have been supported by the dairy farmers’ organizations. But, unfortunately, the Government has sent the recommendations to a Cabinet sub-committee.

While this is taking place, a tremendous amount of disquiet, unhappiness and insecurity exists among people in the dairying industry. I direct attention to this excerpt from a letter from a dairy farmer in Drouin—

Last October when factories cut the price of butterfat by 10 cents per lb., the reason given right throughout the industry and the press was that the price of skim milk powder had fallen from $400 per tonne to $250 per tonne.
Farmers then worked out that if the remaining $250 per tonne was taken away at the same rate, the actual price being paid for butterfat was 33·4 cents per lb. and since 100 lb. of butterfat makes 122 lb. of butter the farmer's share of one pound of butter selling then in the supermarkets for 68 cents per lb. was a mere 27 cents.

But yesterday came the shocker in the announcement that skim powder price has now been reduced from $520 American to $350 American.
I, together with a lot more farmers, believe a thorough investigation is required into this discrepancy. It could lead to a wider inquiry into what I believe to be the most corrupt business in this country. That is the type of feeling which is emanating from a large number of Victorian dairy farmers. They feel they are being let down by this Government and that their interests are not being looked after. Recommendations have been made by a board of inquiry but those recommendations have not been acted upon.

Mr. BORTHWICK: Who wrote the letter?

Mr. GINIFER: The letter is from Drouin South. I also draw attention to the insecurity felt by farmers at the attitude of the Government in referring the results of this inquiry to a Cabinet sub-committee.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): I raise a point of order. Does the honorable member intend to table the letter from which he quoted? When documents are quoted they are usually tabled, if they are asked for.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): Does the honorable member propose to table the document?

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor): I have no objection to doing so. That was not my intention, but if any honorable member cares to peruse it I shall table it.

The Minister may also care to ask that I table another letter that I have here. He is named in the letter, but I admit that this was before he became a Cabinet Minister and became privy to what the Cabinet sub-committee may or may not have been doing.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What is the date of that letter?

Mr. GINIFER: It is dated 4th August, 1976. It is really worrying dairy farmers that the recommendations of the board of inquiry have been made public but have not been acted upon. The dairy farmers consider that the Cabinet sub-committee is procrastinating. They would like the Government to declare its position in relation to the restructuring of the dairying industry. The Cabinet sub-committee should clearly indicate when this decision will be made.

It is considered that, for reasons best known to members of Cabinet, a decision will not be reached. Many people believe that the recommendations of the board of inquiry have the support of the Minister of Agriculture but that some members of Cabinet have a vested interest in the phasing out of the contract system. If they do not have a vested interest I hope they will take the opportunity of saying so in this debate.

This amendment to the Address-in-Reply will give Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament who believe their position has been misrepresented an opportunity to declare themselves on this question. Accordingly a service is being done to the dairy farmers of Victoria by allowing this question to be debated tonight.

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): I raise a point of order. Allegations have been made that certain Cabinet Ministers on a sub-committee have vested interests. The House should be told who those Ministers are and what those vested interests are; otherwise they are loose allegations.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): There is no point of order. The honorable member for Keilor is making certain allegations and it is within the province of the Minister of Housing and any other Minister to refute those allegations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. McLaren): The statements of the honorable member for Keilor were in broad terms. There is no reason for any further explanation because it is a matter for debate. Members on the opposing side can take up the point when they speak.

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor): At this stage the question has been opened up widely enough for Cabinet Ministers who feel they have been misrepresented in the country, in the
Governor’s Speech: [ASSEMBLY.] Address-in-Reply.

Parliament, or anywhere else, to declare whether they have a vested interest in the phasing out of milk contracts. They would do themselves and the community a service if they declared their position tonight. Accordingly, I shall not pursue the question further, except to say that the Victorian community deplores the fact that this Government has not acted upon the recommendations of its board of inquiry into the dairying industry.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I support the amendment because Victorian dairy farmers are looking to this Government to declare what it intends to do in regard to the future of the dairying industry.

A petition was presented by the industry following the march of farmers through the City of Melbourne. In that petition they called upon members of Parliament to act on a number of proposals for assistance to the dairying industry. Following that petition they made a submission to the Government, and particularly to the Cabinet sub-committee, to consider the recommendations of the board of inquiry into the future of the dairying industry in Victoria. I have a copy of that submission.

The board of inquiry recommended the establishment of a Victorian dairy authority and a new supply and pricing system for whole milk for human consumption; compensation for loss of contracts; new arrangements for the manufacturing of milk; finance for the industry, particularly for the younger people in the industry; and the introduction of legislation at an early stage in this spring sessional period. It is absolutely vital that legislation be introduced as soon as possible and that the Government reach a decision on the liquid milk market and the phasing out of milk contracts.

The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria made this recommendation to the Cabinet sub-committee, but at this stage no indication has been given by the Government of what it intends to do. If anything is to be done in this current year, or early in the next year, a decision must be reached prior to 1st April, 1977. It is vital that that decision be made as early as possible. I understand that at least a prescribed period of three months must be allowed prior to 1st April, 1977, to allow the Milk Board to break current contracts with contract holders.

The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria seeks from the Government an announcement of its intentions because dairy farmers, particularly those who hold contracts, should know at least six months in advance what will happen on 1st April, 1977. If the Government does not propose to take any action on this vexed question it should say so. If it does intend to act it should indicate what that action will be.

Recommendations have been made in the report of the board of inquiry for the phasing out of milk contracts over five years. The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria has recommended to the Government that the phasing-out period should be four years, taking into account the present year so that the period would be three years from 1st April, 1977. Today I received a letter from the President of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria requesting me to ask the Government a number of questions about the future of the dairying industry.

The Ministers and members of the Government party are well aware that they have been advised by the Commonwealth, and in particular by the Prime Minister, that they have a responsibility to get their own house in order. The Government has the responsibility of putting the dairying industry on a sound footing, especially the liquid milk market. There must be a greater sharing and ultimately a complete sharing of this market amongst all Victorian dairy farmers.
Last year the board of inquiry recommended that the phasing out of contracts should commence on 1st April, 1976. The industry had not had time to fully consider the recommendations of the board of inquiry because the two dairy farmer organizations had not then merged. The efforts of the Minister of Agriculture brought about that unity. We accept that a decision could not be made prior to 1st April, 1976, but it is absolutely vital that a decision be made before 1st April, 1977, and necessary legislation should be introduced in this spring sessional period.

Last week, in reply to my question, the Minister of Agriculture said that the earliest the Government would be able to reach a decision on this vexed question would be November. In the meantime, about 10,000 dairy farmers in Victoria are disadvantaged because of the present liquid milk contract system and are in a state of confusion as to the State Government's attitude.

I know of many who in recent weeks have been forced to put their properties on the market because mortgagees are foreclosing as the farmers are unable to indicate that on the present price of butterfat, which varies between 51 cents and 58 cents, the majority being at the lower level, they will be able to carry on their farms as viable operations. This situation is creating hardship to dairy farmers and to the communities in which they live.

The Government is creating a lot of confusion over the whole question by not coming to grips with the problem and making a decision. Instead, it has referred the matter to a Cabinet sub-committee. Allegations have been made that certain Ministers in the Cabinet have indirect vested interests. Perhaps all of us have an indirect vested interest in this matter, but I understand that a number of Ministers have substantial contracts in the names of their children, their families or even their share-farmers.

Mr. Fogarty: The honorable member should name them.

Mr. Hann: They know who they are and the Government knows who they are. It is not necessarily those Ministers who are begging this question of contracts. It is more a matter of the large number of small pressure groups in the various electorates, I understand, more particularly on the outskirts of Melbourne, applying pressure on individual members of the Liberal Party. Those honorable members should take a sincere look at their stand. If a decision is not made before Christmas to phase out milk contracts in Victoria, a group of farmers in northern Victoria have plans, and are working on them, to establish a milk factory in New South Wales and to process, transport and distribute the milk in Melbourne. That may sound like a way-out scheme.

Mr. Scanlan: Why not send it to Sydney instead of Melbourne?

Mr. Hann: The Minister of Special Education has reminded me of the other aspect of the scheme. The farmers also intend to construct factories in Victoria and to send the milk to the New South Wales market. They do not intend to restrict their activities to one State. If they are forced by the Government, and I hope this does not occur, they will take this action.

Mr. Borthwick: Are they Murray-Goulburn suppliers?

Mr. Hann: No, they are not, they are suppliers to proprietary companies in certain instances. The dairy farmers concerned were responsible for instigating the cattle kill scheme, which has been most successful and which fortunately the Government saw fit to support. I congratulate the Government on its foresight on this occasion. Honorable members can see that they are the sort of people who do their homework and succeed in their efforts. I am confident that this will happen if the Government is not prepared to act.
The Minister of Lands is well aware that such a scheme would virtually break down the entire milk distribution system and the Government is responsible to see that this does not occur. I hope that the Minister of Lands, who is so vocal at the moment, will be a leader within the Government to ensure that a decision is made on the phasing out of contracts. Perhaps the honorable gentleman will be prepared to inform the House of his own attitude.

Mr. BORTHWICK: I will speak for the whole industry and not one section of it.

Mr. HANN: I will be interested to hear the Minister's attitude to the phasing out of milk contracts.

Mr. STEPHEN: You have not told us yours yet.

Mr. HANN: My attitude has been stated in this House on a number of occasions. I am in favour of the phasing out of milk contracts commencing from 1st January, 1977. This is the only fair and equitable decision for the dairy farmers.

I direct the attention of honorable members to a request for information by the president of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Mr. Bill Pyle, in which he asks when the Government is going to implement the board of inquiry's recommendation for milk contracts to be phased out and whether it will accept the recommendation of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria on how this should be done.

Mr. GINIFER: Does the honorable member for Benambra support you in this?

Mr. HANN: He will have the opportunity to express his attitude in a moment. Mr. Pyle also asks whether the present Cabinet sub-committee looking into this issue is a time-wasting device. That is a good question because it appears that it might be a time-wasting device. He asks further whether the Government will introduce legislation so that the dairy farmers of Victoria will know where they stand on this vital and important issue. He concludes by asking when the sub-committee will report and when the dairy farmers can expect Government action.

Mr. BORTHWICK: It is rather interesting that the honorable member for Keilor had to move the amendment.

Mr. HANN: The Minister of Lands well knows that I have already spoken on the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply and that I am now speaking to the amendment.

Mr. BORTHWICK: It is obviously collusion.

Mr. HANN: There is no such thing as collusion in this Parliament. Any honorable member has the right to speak and I will be interested to hear the views of the Minister on the matter. I should hope that the Minister will support the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria in its submission for the establishment of a Victorian dairy authority, which is a recommendation of the board of inquiry which was set up by the Minister of Agriculture, and that the Government will support the phasing out of the liquid milk contract system in this State. A decision must be made by the Government.

The subject has been raised on a number of occasions in this Parliament and references can be found in Hansard. The matter has also been raised in private discussions and deputations to the Government. It has been drawn to the attention of the Premier on a number of occasions. I know that the Minister of Agriculture has always supported this proportion and it was largely due to his efforts that the board of inquiry was established in the first instance. The Minister is on record as supporting the submission of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria. What honorable members are looking for is an indication from
the Government and I hope the Minister of Lands will be equally vocal in his support for the propositions that are being presented tonight.

Mr. Borthwick: What about Ian Sinclair?

Mr. HANN: The Minister of Lands refers to his colleague, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, but I remind him that the Prime Minister of Australia, who happens to be a member of his own party although sometimes it appears that members of the Victorian Cabinet forget that there has been a change of Government in Canberra, at the Victorian Farmers Union annual conference in July this year indicated that Victoria had a responsibility to phase out milk contracts in order to share the liquid milk market between all dairy farmers.

In a letter to Mr. George Hunter, president of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, the Prime Minister also suggested that Victoria should get its own house in order. I forwarded a copy of that letter to the Premier. The Premier shakes his head, but in fact I received a reply from the then Acting Premier, the Chief Secretary, in this matter. Perhaps the Premier might refer to the correspondence and the statement by the Prime Minister that the Victorian Government should get its own house in order and sort out the liquid milk market.

Mr. A. T. Evans: What did the Chief Secretary say?

Mr. HANN: I do not have that letter with me, but I remember that the reply was vague and the Minister indicated that this so-called Cabinet sub-committee would investigate the matter and that at some time in the future it would make a recommendation. The subject being debated this evening is the delay by the Government in making a decision. This is causing a good deal of concern to dairy farmers who do not know what the future holds. The situation is causing confusion to farmers, particularly those who have contracts on their properties, because they do not know whether they are going to have these contracts indefinitely in the future or whether a decision will be made to phase them out.

I know of a farmer near Echuca who has a substantial milk contract of some 80 gallons and who, for health reasons, wishes to sell his farm and move to Melbourne. The Minister has been acquainted with the facts of the case. This man is in the unfortunate position of not knowing what to indicate to a prospective buyer of the property. The milk contract has an important bearing on the price that he can obtain for the farm.

With the Government acting the way it is, many honorable members on the back bench will be responsible for forcing dairy farmers out of the industry. If the sentiments expressed in the interjections made by the honorable members for Ballarat North and Ballarat South on the future of the contract milk holder are accepted, it will lead to the liquidation of some 10,000 dairy farmers in Victoria in comparison with the 2,000 dairy farmers who have substantial liquid milk contracts. Those honorable members have their heads in the sand because Mr. Bill Pyle, President of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, has drawn attention to the number of dairy farmers—there would be dairy farmers in the areas represented by the honorable members—who are being forced off the land in the current situation because they are not getting a vital share of the liquid milk market in Victoria. It is an unfortunate situation and the time is long overdue for a change in it.

The industry is facing a situation to which I referred previously and it is pledged to protect the system because it is the livelihood of the dairy farmers that we are looking at. The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria has recommended to the Government the payment of substantial compensation to contract milk holders.
Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I suggest that the honorable member for Rodney entirely disregard the interjections being made by honorable members. I am sure he would not provoke the number of interjections he is receiving if he did that.

Mr. HANN: It is obvious I have hit a tender nerve, particularly with members of the Cabinet and certain back-bench supporters. As I stated, a recommendation has been made by the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria for the payment of $180 a gallon compensation to contract milk holders who have their contracts phased out. That recommendation was made to the Government sub-committee.

Mr. DIXON: Where do they get the money from?

Mr. HANN: The money will come from the enormous profits which are at present involved in the contract milk system.

Mr. BORTHWICK: Does the honorable member support $180 a gallon?

Mr. HANN: Quite frankly that figure is probably rather generous. Many of these people, particularly those with large milk contracts, are receiving compensation from year to year and they have a very lucrative income.

Mr. BORTHWICK: The honorable member should look at the prices they paid for their properties.

Mr. HANN: In suggesting that the contract milk holder has some sort of exclusive right to retain the contract milk system because he has paid a high price for his property the Minister for Conservation kills his own argument. The honorable gentleman is putting his head in the sand because he is the Minister responsible for sending many of these people bankrupt. It is Government policy not to provide carry-on finance to quite a number of these people.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I ask for the withdrawal of the honorable member's statement because the administration of the scheme is laid down in the fine print of the Commonwealth's own terms.

Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The Minister for Conservation, who has raised a point of order, is entitled to put forward his argument and a ruling will be given at the conclusion of his remarks. I ask honorable members to remain silent.

Mr. BORTHWICK: One of the severe objections to the administration of this scheme is the type of matter which the honorable member for Rodney is raising. In fact, only in the past few weeks I have made the strongest representations possible to the Federal Minister to alter the Commonwealth Government's prescription for this scheme. However, the State Government is beholden to administer the scheme according to the Commonwealth Government's principles.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): What I was going to say was that this Government, through the policies of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, and because of the severe restrictions that have been applied to farmers, not only for the carry-on situation but also for the reconstruction situation, must accept the responsibility. The Government also has a responsibility to communicate with whoever made the decision, and one of my criticisms of the Government is that its Ministers do not communicate with their Federal counterparts. Already that has been proved on a number of occasions.

As I indicated previously there are in excess of 10,000 dairy farmers who have paid a high price for their farms but who, at present, because of the position of the
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dairying industry, cannot receive a fair share of the liquid milk market in Victoria. Many of those dairy farmers will be forced into bankruptcy. I do not want to raise it in the House tonight, but I could give six examples at this moment of young people who have purchased farms in recent years and who will lose them. In one instance a young man will lose his life savings of more than $20,000 and will be another $10,000 behind when he is forced off his farm. That is the situation dairy farmers are facing because the Government has not made a decision on this matter.

In his statement the Minister of Agriculture indicated that an amount of 11 cents a gallon would find its way into the pockets of every dairy farmer in Victoria. When the Minister of Agriculture made his Ministerial statement in Parliament, he indicated that that amount was the difference in price between what was being received by the farmers supplying manufactured milk and those supplying contract milk. What honorable members are asking tonight in this debate is that the Government make a decision at an early date.

As I have said, I have drawn the Prime Minister's statement to the attention of the Premier and perhaps he could make a review of the statement. I have spoken personally with the Premier and indicated to him that it is absolutely imperative for a decision to be made at an early date for the Government to fix a date to phase out liquid milk contracts in Victoria.

That decision is vital in the interests of dairy farmers who supply manufactured milk and those who supply contract milk, but if the Government does not intend to make a decision, honorable members are wasting their time in this debate just as the dairy farmers are wasting their time and efforts in making submissions to the Government.

In the past the Government indicated that once the dairy farmers were united in Victoria it would take heed of the farmers' requests. The Government is now saying that it will think about the situation and will tell the dairy farmers later on what it has decided. That is not good enough. The Government has a responsibility to make a decision, and particularly to implement the recommendation of the board of inquiry to phase out milk contracts. It is the recommendation of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria for those contracts to be phased out over four years, commencing from 1st April, 1977, and I appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to indicate to the House that that will occur. I know the honorable gentleman believes in it, but I cannot understand why he will not make a decision.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I oppose the amendment moved by the honorable member for Keilor. The amendment is couched in terms that this House regrets the failure of the Government to foreshadow legislation to restructure the dairy industry. One of the joys of having the agriculture portfolio and representing farmers and handling their problems is that if one deals with a problem like the establishment of a single grain handling authority one is hit down because people feel that they have not been consulted. If one deals with the dairying industry and consults the dairy farmers one is hit down for taking too long to make a decision. Wherever the Government moves in the area of problems confronting the rural industry, it is terribly difficult to make the right decision.

Mr. WILTON: The problem is that the Minister does not move.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: If the honorable member for Broadmeadows will tune in and listen, I shall treat him to some of the delights of Government action in the area of the board of inquiry report. As honorable members who have spoken on this subject are well aware, the Government wanted reports on the terms of reference as they were made rather than consolidated into one total report, for many good reasons. This was appreciated
by the dairying industry because it allowed the industry to digest the reports as they came out. It also allowed the industry to assess its position and to submit evidence as the board of inquiry proceeded. One of the most critical reports was the finance report because any recommendations made, unless they were backed by proper financial calculations, could well be absolutely hollow.

As soon as the Government obtained the finance report from the board of inquiry into the dairy industry, Cabinet moved to appoint a special sub-committee, which is well known to all honorable members who are interested in this subject, and which started a process of consultations with the different sections of the industry.

As the honorable member for Rodney in particular would know, this special sub-committee had been waiting on a statement from the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria and not vice versa. The Government was not dragging its tail at all. However, the dairying industry, although to some extent united on the farmer front, does not consist solely of farmers but embraces the manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors. They were various groups which the Cabinet sub-committee must consult. It would not have been correct for the Government to make a decision based on the report and its consultations in the face of a report from the Industries Assistance Commission on the dairying industry to which the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, the Department of Agriculture and I had made submissions. It would be quite wrong for this Government to move unilaterally whilst further consultations were pending with other sections of the dairying industry and to announce its decision without proper regard to the final report of the Industries Assistance Commission.

After all, our basic submission to the Industries Assistance Commission, which I know members of the National Party support, is that it should be a national industry. That is what we are looking for, and that is the sort of lead that we expect the commission to show and that we expect from the Federal Government. If that does not occur, then members of the National Party, people from the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria and the dairying industry know, and I have stated often enough, that we are looking towards making our decisions based on the report of the Board of Inquiry late in October or early in November.

The reason for that time schedule is simply explained in these terms: There is nothing that this Government or this Parliament can do until 1st April in relation to milk contracts, even if it wanted to, because that is the contracted time. If there is to be a change—and every member of the Government on the Cabinet sub-committee has an open mind at this stage—then plenty of time must be given. The time span which I have outlined to the industry and repeated to the House of looking towards a decision from the Government in October or November is sufficient to allow whatever changes need to take place to occur. To short-cut consultation would

Mr. I. W. Smith: I would not wish anyone in this debate to blind his senses to the problems and I will correct my statement by referring to the Federal Government’s initiative. The decision would have to be made in the face of a report from the Industries Assistance Commission on the dairying industry to which the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, the Department of Agriculture and I had made submissions. It would be quite wrong for this Government to move unilaterally whilst further consultations were pending with other sections of the dairying industry and to announce its decision without proper regard to the final report of the Industries Assistance Commission.

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Mr. I. W. Smith.
simply be to deny people their rights to put forward their points of view on this very important and vexing problem which the Government has to face.

In the meantime, as honorable members will realize, the Government—conscious of the problems of the manufacturing section of dairying industry—has redistributed over-sales as equitably as it can within the law to those dairy farmers who can avail themselves of it. It has gone further than that; in order to stop the bottom dropping out of the price paid for butterfat, particularly from the largest cooperative in Victoria, the Government has joined with the Commonwealth Government in underwriting a base price for skim milk powder and casein which is effectively translated into payment on a butterfat basis. The Government has gone further still and the Premier has announced schemes to help in a small way municipalities in dairying areas to employ people who require work.

As honorable members know, the Victorian Government has also pestered the Commonwealth Government and obtained its agreement that farmers who need work can register for unemployment and receive benefits. The Commonwealth has not gone as far as we should have liked it to go; we should have liked it to adopt the Industries Assistance Commission report, which advocated household support for farmers whose incomes drop below a certain level—about $4,000 a year—and the provision of make-up pay. That is the most dignified and sensible method of distributing money to the private sector when incomes fall for some reason or another, but regrettably, the Victorian Government has not won that point.

I have demonstrated to honorable members how the Government is conscious of the problem. I have outlined to members the course of action and the time schedules that it proposes, and therefore I believe the amendment moved by the honorable member for Kellor is untimely and does not deserve support.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): Earlier this evening I referred to the lapse of time between the original address by the Governor and this day. Since then honorable members have heard a Ministerial statement by the Minister of Agriculture and a debate lasting about two days on the subject of the dairying industry. I wish to confine my remarks in the matter to the period between the Ministerial statement and this day.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member will confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. FOGARTY: Yes, but the amendment deals with the dairying industry. As a member of the Opposition, I sincerely hope the Minister will not get cold feet. The honorable gentleman made several pertinent points in his Ministerial statement relating to the dairying industry, which has cost this State hundreds of thousands of dollars. I commend the Minister for his initiative in establishing the inquiry into the industry, but I do not commend his lack of activity between the dates on which he received the first, second, third and supplementary reports and this date. Recommendations were made to place all the dairying organizations involved in the milk industry under one central body, and the Minister should have taken active steps and reported his intentions on the matter to the Parliament. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were paid to receive reports dealing with the reconstruction of the dairying industry, so that Parliament should be kept au fait with progress reports on what was going on.

Admittedly, a recommendation was made that the first step in the phasing out of milk contracts should be taken in April, 1976, and the Minister has explained that he cannot take the initial steps until 1977. I accept his reasoning on that matter,
but the initial step should be taken now and the Minister should report to the Parliament what the Government intends to do.

A great deal of emphasis has been placed upon the liquid milk contracts, but reports received by this Parliament show that 80 per cent of Victoria's milk production goes into the export market and not into liquid milk contracts. At the same time, most members on both sides of the House know that the milk contracts system originated in the dark days of the horse and buggy when milk was carted for small butter factories and it was necessary to have a continuing supply of milk, but that situation has altered now. Twenty or thirty years ago a big factory was one which put through 40,000 to 50,000 gallons of milk a day, but now one factory in Leongatha puts through 250,000 gallons of milk a day. Therefore, the situation which brought about the introduction of the contract system does not prevail now.

I do not believe the phasing out of the milk contract will be the end of everything for the milk industry, because it is definitely wrong from the democratic point of view to have three adjoining farmers with contracts for 10 gallons, 50 gallons and nil respectively. This can happen to farmers in the same area on the same road, but one of them knows someone, and that is a fact. Hansard will show that in the Neerim-Drouin area, where the bulk of the contracts for Melbourne milk are, many farmers have contracts for 200 gallons a day, while those in other areas have contracts for only 10 or 20 gallons a day.

The problems of the milk industry are related to a complete drop in production at this time of the year. In one area of Victoria production is down 33 per cent, and in another 38 per cent at this time of the year. However, from the Drouin area it is different because everyone has received correspondence from Berwick telling them to hang on to the contract system because it means "hailing in the gangplank I'm on board". One person is getting the lot while some poor cockie up north is getting nothing at all. There is a drop in production and price, as honorable members know; it was previously debated for two days. In one large area the coming year's production of milk powder and butter has been sold, but at subsidized prices. Farmers do not want subsidized prices. They want a reasonable price for their product. A suggestion was made at a meeting that I attended, where I was upstaged by the Minister of Agriculture. He did not even blush when he said that he was the greatest Minister of Agriculture that Victoria has ever had. He pleaded with all the farmers to join a union. I thought by the way he was speaking that he was at the Trades Hall Council addressing the wharfies. He said that he wants all the farmers to unite, fight and take a lead from the trade unions.

They formed themselves into one group and in no time, according to last week's Weekly Times, the Milk Producers Association and the United Dairymen of Victoria were at loggerheads. They kissed and made up and now they do not want each other. I do not know how two farming bodies can work in co-operation with each other in circumstances such as these.

While they are bellyaching about the contract milk system it must be realized that the Federal Minister for Primary Industry stated that Victorians are not paying enough for their milk. The honorable member for Rodney said that we should go to New South Wales. Only about four years ago milk was being produced at Barooga and Albury and was being transported to Victoria and into Melbourne. Section 92 of the Federal Constitution prevented the Government from taking action to stop this.

As is shown in Hansard as a result of questions to the Minister of Agriculture, milk consumption per capita
in Victoria has decreased by 10 per cent in the past four or five years, and that is not because of our eating habits.

Mr. Stephen: It is because there are no deliveries.

Mr. Foggarty: That is one reason. It has been shown now that milk consumption in Victoria is decreasing and that there are no deliveries. A person must go to the supermarket to buy milk in a carton irrespective of whether he wants to do so. He cannot see what he is buying and the processor gets the bulk of the profit. He wants the milk to be sold in cartons because that is where he makes the biggest profit.

I refer to the delivery of milk in the Sunshine electorate. A fortnight ago a person was charged and fined under the Health Act because he was distributing milk from unregistered premises. The milk is transferred from point “A” to point “B” and half a dozen or more contractors pick up the milk from the central location. This means in effect that three people are doing what one organization was doing previously. That all adds to the price of milk. It seems that people are not buying milk because it is too dear.

Mr. Hudson: We have the cheapest milk in Australia.

Mr. Foggarty: The honorable member for Werribee has made the statement that Victorian milk is the cheapest in Australia. This is so because our farmers are more productive, and our workers and factories are geared to the job better. We produce more milk per unit than any other area in Australasia.

I am disappointed with some of the Collins Street cockies who should be looking after the interests of the farmer. Members of the Liberal Party who represent country areas should be on their feet protecting the farmer.

Undoubtedly unemployment is rife throughout Victoria and a cockie losing his employment is a fact that is generally accepted, but it should not be. As responsible people we should realize that if some 14,000 farmers go broke and flood the employment markets and the housing markets in Victoria, people in Melbourne will be in a difficult situation.

I agree with the amendment as moved. The Government has not taken the necessary action and I am disappointed with the Minister of Agriculture. Having initiated a scheme with which I agreed, and having done a reasonably good job in the early stages of his coming to his office, he has not carried the job to its fulfilment. I know that he is subject to pressure from other honorable members and Ministers who are interested in the near Gippsland area. I refer particularly to the Minister for Fuel and Power and the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I asked the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation whether he had a milk contract and he replied that he had. I hope he does not have one and he should not take part in the debate if he has one. Any Minister who has a milk contract should not enter into this debate.

Mr. Burtin (Polwarth): I strenuously oppose the amendment put forward which reads—

That the following words be added to the proposed Address—“and respectfully desire to inform Your Excellency that this House regrets the failure of the Government to foreshadow legislation to restructure the dairy industry.”

My views are well known on this subject. I am in favour of the phasing out of milk contracts and the moving towards a national industry. It is essential that this is achieved. However, this is not the subject honorable members are discussing and what the amendment is about.

An inquiry has been held into the dairying industry in Victoria and all credit must go to the Minister of Agriculture and the Government for instituting it. Immediately that inquiry finished its work, a Cabinet sub-committee was set up by the Government to listen to opinions from members of the dairying industry. All
Members who have spoken today know very well that the Cabinet sub-committee has spent a tremendous amount of time in listening to the opinions from the dairying industry.

I do not know what that Cabinet sub-committee will finally recommend. It may make a recommendation that is against my opinion. However, when it brings down a recommendation, I want the sub-committee to base its recommendation on all the information that is available at present and on all the views that have been put forward. That is what government is all about.

It is extremely important at this time because of what is going on in the dairying industry, both in an economic sense and in an industry sense whereby the dairying industry for the first time has amalgamated into one organization.

It is immensely important that decisions are taken on this matter in the proper way, because any person who does not have his head in the sand knows that there are splinter groups constantly flying off that organization. If the Government is to be bulldozed into making a decision on this matter to suit the Opposition and the National Party, which are coming in on this issue for political reasons, a great wrong will be done.

The dairying industry is too important to this nation for a hasty decision to be made. The Minister has given the time-table for what he intends to do and the National Party must realize that the time-table is reasonable and sensible. It is difficult to understand why that party supports this amendment proposed by the honorable member for Keilor which refers to the failure of the Government to foreshadow legislation for restructuring the dairying industry. Therefore, the opinions expressed by the organization represent a consensus of the industry. The Government should take notice of an organization which comprises 90 per cent of our dairy farmers. We cannot wait until the industry is fragmented but that is what will happen if the necessary leadership is not given.

If all the wisdom is not bound up with the Government—and it is not on this subject—surely it can accept the voice of the industry. Of about 13,800 dairy farmers in Victoria, about 12,000 are members of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria. Therefore, the opinions expressed by the organization represent a consensus of the industry. The Government should take notice of an organization which comprises 90 per cent of our dairy farmers. We cannot wait until the industry is fragmented but that is what will happen if the necessary leadership is not given.

In relation to milk quotas, in its submissions to Cabinet the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria stated—

"We urge most strongly that legislation be introduced to implement the above recommendation."
carry-on financial support have been too frequently rejected. I direct attention to a letter dated 14th September, from Mr. Ian Morton, Chairman of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission, in which he says that the personal stories have been sad. In many cases they have been very sad. Mr. Morton pointed out that most reconstruction schemes the commission was required to administer had within them the element that some applicants could not be supported, usually with the rationale that to do so would in one way or another support uneconomic production in an industry overburdened, at least for the time being, with surplus products.

Nobody can predict the vagaries of the market, but are we to go on waiting for the Federal Government to hold an inquiry? All credit goes to those who compiled the Crawford report but will it suggest anything different from what is recommended by the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria which is representative of those who are responsible for 60 per cent of Australia's dairy production? One of its submissions to the Cabinet subcommittee is that milk quotas should be wiped out so that, almost immediately, additional money will flow to the industry in general. The measures taken by the Victorian Government—and, frankly, by the Federal Government—of patching up here, giving a few bob there, and providing subsidies for the slaughter of cattle, are all band-aid measures. They completely disregard the whole point which is that the industry will get itself out of trouble if it is helped over this difficult period. It will return to being a viable industry without further burden to the taxpayer.

I cannot understand why we continue to lag behind in this. I would have thought it was a role of the Victorian Government to give the necessary leadership. The Minister of Agriculture should lead the way.

Mr. SCANLAN: You said that the Commonwealth Government had not done anything worth while.

Mr. McINNES: Must we always use the Federal Government as an excuse for procrastination?

Mr. SCANLAN: It is a national industry.

Mr. McINNES: Of course the industry is carried on in every State and is therefore a national industry, but Victoria is dominant in the dairying industry of Australia. This is a major industry in Victoria and we have a vital interest in its survival. But we are afraid to grasp the nettle.

It was a great effort to bring about unity of Victorian dairy farmers earlier this year. I compliment the Minister of Agriculture for the part he played in that. He almost had to knock heads together to bring about that unity. In the end, the dairy farmers did agree. Now, because of the procrastination of this Government, which is prepared to wait until numerous boards of inquiry produce their findings, sections of this great organization are beginning to hive off. The main reason that it is foundering is milk quotas. The honorable member for Polwarth said that he agreed with their abolition.

Mr. BURGIN: Where do you stand?

Mr. McINNES: The National Party supports their abolition as one way to bring aid to the industry in general within a matter of months. It has been indicated that this assistance could be available from 1st April, 1977. The purpose of abolishing milk quotas is to give confidence to farmers to help them through this difficult period and to banking institutions which are regrettably getting out from under and providing declining support for the industry. People must be given confidence that the industry has some chance of survival and it is to be hoped that, at the same time, there will soon be an improvement in overseas markets.

The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria represent 12,000 out of 13,800 dairy farmers. It has 90 branches, 20 district councils, and 21 people from the industry forming a central council.
Surely it is able to properly represent the industry and represent it to the Government. It has made this recommendation on behalf of the dairy farmers of Victoria who form the dominant part of the industry in Australia.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: When did you get that?

Mr. McINNES: It is quite recent. The Minister is aware that the board of inquiry appointed at his instigation brought forward most of these conclusions. From talks with people in the industry, which he has not made privy to members of other parties, he knows of their views. If ever a man has had a wonderful opportunity of leading the way and waving the flag it is the Minister of Agriculture. Instead he elects to set up a cat and dog fight with the Prime Minister, who represents his own electorate, and we repeatedly hear the odium that is thrust on the Minister for Primary Industry—a member of the National Country Party—in the Federal Parliament. The Federal Minister for Primary Industry has a responsibility to the dairying industry throughout the whole of Australia. I suppose to some degree he must be compromised. If the industry were evenly spread between the various States, Victoria would be less justified in taking a stand, but with the domination of the dairying industry in Victoria this was an opportunity sadly missed by the Minister.

The National Party received the submission of the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria on 24th August, but I have no doubt it was available earlier to the Minister in one form or another, and that he was certainly acquainted with the draft provisions of the submission and had a good idea of what was going on. He could have got out in front but he did not. Do we now have to wait for the Crawford report, which will be considered by the Federal Government to suit the national dairying industry submission, before we move for the restriction of dairy farm licences, or for revision of the liquid milk market? Again and again we find that no action has been taken to implement recommendations of boards of inquiry. Regardless of the Crawford report, the Government could have taken effective action. I hope it will do so. I conclude by saying that as a State we have been tardy and that this Government has been extremely so.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): At the outset I wish to state that, contrary to the reply given by the Minister in answer to a question asked in this House some time ago, there is a milk contract in the name of M. J. and B. J. Evans which has been in existence for many years. The Minister was asked whether any member of Parliament had an interest in a milk contract. I state clearly that my name appears on a milk contract although I have no financial return therefrom and have not had since I have been a member of Parliament. So that sets the record straight.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: The honorable member is in breach of an Act of Parliament.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: I do not think so because I am a sleeping partner. I have never heard of any requirement that as a member of Parliament I have to forgo any contract. Ministers are in a vastly different category because they have the executive ability to influence decisions which a back-bencher does not have.

For many years I have been involved in the politics of the dairying industry. It certainly did not go down well with me to hear the honorable member for Polwarth talking about waiting a little longer and giving time for some decision to be made by the Government to do something about restructuring the dairying industry. For more than 25 years I have been arguing that the contract system is completely unfair and that the dairying industry would ultimately head for trouble because...
there was within the one industry people who were the "haves" and people who were the "have-nots". It was always my major argument with the Victorian Dairyfarmers Association, of which for a period I was a member of the executive, that it gave too much influence to the people who were the "haves" in the industry, and who had the milk contracts.

Under the constitution of that organization three members of the industry holding milk contracts were automatically members of the executive, and the executive was strongly dominated by dairy farmers who were themselves holders of milk contracts. It was difficult for the ordinary butterfat producer who represented the bulk of the membership of the Victorian Dairyfarmers Association to get his point of view registered through that organization. It was a matter of geography as well as economics for the butterfat producers because they were mainly located farther from the metropolitan area. It became more difficult for them to send representatives and more expensive for them to take the time to attend conferences. In the same way as country people are disadvantaged within the general political life of this State, the dairy farmers who were more remote from the metropolitan area were disadvantaged in getting their point of view across. Therefore, it is clear that we have been waiting for some twenty years at least for action from the Government on the milk contract system.

The honorable member for Polwarth suggested that we were getting impatient and should wait longer. We have been waiting too long. I concede that the Minister personally would probably like to get rid of milk contracts tomorrow if he could, but he is unable to convince his Cabinet colleagues. I suspect those Cabinet colleagues are endeavouring to hold the situation as it is for as long as possible to give an opportunity for the newly re-formed Milk Producers Association to grow in strength to allow that body once again to come into the ranks of the dairy farmers' organization. We will then be right back to square one where we were 25 years ago when two separate organizations were in sharp conflict with one another on this one issue of milk contracts.

I support the honorable member for Gippsland South regarding the work of the Minister of Agriculture in getting dairy farmers united with the Victorian Farmers Union as far as that has gone. He has not achieved full unity but the time in which he had to bring about his stated objective, the abolition of milk contracts, was while that unity was in existence and before the Milk Producers Association had broken away. The longer the Minister delays his move in this regard the stronger the Milk Producers Association will become, and the whole notion will be set back 25 years.

The dairying industry is most important to Victoria. Probably it employs more people outside the metropolitan area than any other single industry. It would be tragic for this State if the industry were allowed to decline much further. Urgent action is needed by the State and Federal Governments to put the dairying industry back on its feet along with every other primary industry.

One hears the Premier talking about turning Victoria into a garden State. When one sees what is happening to primary production in this State, one cannot help but wonder what sort of countryside we shall be confronted with in the years to come.

Instead of seeing prosperous, well-kept and neat looking farms, we will see unpainted farmhouses and buildings, broken down fences, half-starved stock and a very sad and
decrepit looking countryside. There will be no pleasure for city and town folk taking a Sunday afternoon drive to see the countryside. This will inevitably come about because farmers will be unable to afford to repair fences, to buy feed to keep stock in a good condition during poor seasons or to repair and replace their homes and farm buildings when needed.

It will be a sad commentary on this Government and the Commonwealth Government unless they take action quickly to do something to stimulate primary production generally. One of the few fields in which the State Government has some direct and sole responsibility is with milk contracts. That is what the amendment is all about, despite the views expressed by the honorable member for Polwarth.

I take up another aspect concerning the dairying industry, particularly as the Minister for Fuel and Power has now entered the Chamber. An undesirable scheme was concocted by the Minister for Fuel and Power, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Lands to make available interest-free loans to dairy farmers who were under an obligation to install refrigerated bulk milk vats. A number of farmers had already installed the vats although in some cases they were not connected to an electricity supply. Then it was announced that the farmers who received these interest-free loans would be obliged to pay to the State Electricity Commission an augmentation fee for upgrading power lines throughout the State.

This gave rise to a most iniquitous situation because certain farmers whose electricity supply did not need to be upgraded and who had not entered into arrangements with the State Electricity Commission to have any work done were told that they should pay amounts ranging up to and more than $1,000 on top of the cost of installing bulk milk vats, which averaged approximately $4,000 to $5,000. The analogy could be drawn of you, Mr. Speaker, installing a coloured television set and afterwards being told by the State Electricity Commission that you will have to pay an extra charge of $1,000. No citizen could accept that as a reasonable proposition.

Probably the Ministers genuinely thought they were doing the right thing, but if they would only listen and examine the question properly, they would see that they were being unfair to those who did not benefit from the scheme. The Ministers came up with a proposal which they believed would benefit all farmers and now they are in the invidious position that the commission is insisting on the payment although it has been pointed out constantly that it is grossly unfair and completely illegal. It is deplorable that month after month the commission should continue to send out demands to dairy farmers threatening them with prosecution and not taking the threatened action.

Mr. B. J. EVANS: Perhaps the word "destruction" should also have been included but unfortunately it has not. This is precisely what the Ministers are trying to do to that sector of primary industry. The State Electricity Commission is acting completely illegally and it should desist from such action.

I support the amendment. Any person who has any knowledge of the dairying industry must concede that the Government is slow in grasping the nettle. Undoubtedly fingers will be stung in the process. However, the longer the delay, the worse the problem will become. The situation has become worse over the years although the Milk Board has tried to alleviate it to a degree by spreading milk contracts a little farther afield, and tried to compromise or placate the
non-contract holders by giving them a little square of the cake. With the great difference that exists between returns for whole milk production and for butterfat, the Government and the Milk Board will be unable to hold the dairy farming community down. They must recognize the justice of the argument of the have-nots, the non-contract holders, and do something about spreading the gross income of the dairying industry across the board for all dairy farmers.

The House divided on Mr. Ginifer's amendment (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes 26
Noes 41

Majority against the amendment 15

AYES.
Mr. Amos  Mr. McInnes
Mr. Cain  Mr. Roper
Mr. Culpin  Mr. Ross-Edwards
Mr. Doube  Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Edmunds  Mr. Simpson
Mr. Evans  Mr. Stirling
(Gippsland East)  Mr. Trewin
Mr. Fogarty  Mr. Whiting
Mr. Fordham  Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Ginifer  Mr. Wilton
Mr. Hann
Mr. Holding
Mr. Jones  Tellers:
Mr. Kirkwood  Mr. Crabb
Mr. Lind  Mr. Jasper

NOES.
Mr. Austin  Mr. MacKinnon
Mr. Balfour  Mr. McLaren
Mr. Billing  Mr. Macellon
Mr. Birrell  Mrs. Patrick
Mr. Borthwick  Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Burgin  Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Collins  Mr. Reese
Mr. Dixon  Mr. Richardson
Mr. Dunstan  Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Ebery  Mr. Skeggs
Mr. Evans  Mr. Smith
(Ballarat North)  (South Barwon)
Mr. Guy  Tellers:
Mr. Hamer  Mr. Smith
Mr. Hayes  (Warrnambool)
Mr. Jona  Mr. Stephen
Mr. Kennett  Mr. Thompson
Mr. Lacy  Mr. Vale
Mr. Lieberman  Mr. Weideman
Mr. Loxtan  Mr. Williams
Mr. McCabe
Mr. McClure  Tellers:
Mr. McKeffer  Mr. Cox
Mr. Mckeffer  Mr. McArthur

PAIRS.
Mr. Cathie  Mr. Templeton
Mr. Mutton  Mr. Crellin
Mr. Trewise  Mr. Wood
were subsequently made from a number of different bodies that the legislation should be deferred to allow deeper consideration of the problems involved. That recommendation was agreed to and a committee was formed under the deputy chairman of the Advisory Council on Tertiary Education, Professor Buchanan, to look at the subject-matter of the Bill.

The committee made the unanimous and early recommendation that the Government should proceed with this measure before the end of the year. Its other recommendations have played a significant part in redrafting certain provisions of the Bill. It also recommended that the Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board should remain in existence to conduct the higher school certificate examinations in 1976, 1977 and 1978. In passing, I should mention that the Government has provided $1.6 million to allow for the abolition of fees which were associated with the holding of this examination.

Basically the objectives of the Bill are to cover the initial transition period between secondary education and employment or between secondary education and tertiary education. To be more precise, the first function of the institute will be to guide and to advise secondary school students at this transition stage. Secondly, it will have the function of acting as a co-ordinating body in the field of assessment. It has been a world-wide experience that some sort of co-ordinating body is needed in the field of assessment to ensure that there is an equitable system of assessment or examination which is fair to all students regardless of the schools they attend.

The objectives of the institute are set out in clause 2 of the Bill and following the objectives are listed certain powers which the institute is given to achieve those objectives. For example, the institute is required to establish and maintain regular consultation between all those directly concerned with the transition of students from secondary school either to further their studies or to engage in employment. Clause 4 (2) (d) gives power to co-operate with schools, post-secondary institutions and other bodies in the development of curricula. I suggest that this function is essentially an advisory one and the wording of the clause confirms that. There is a safeguard provided in clause 4 (3) to ensure that the results of students are not made available to outside bodies or persons without the approval of the students.

Mr. WHITING: Does that include the parents?

Mr. THOMPSON: As it is worded, it would cover the approval of the students. The composition of the council of the institute is provided for in clause 5. The council will consist of 22 members nominated by the Minister of Education and approved by the Governor in Council. A change from the original measure provides for the appointment of three members of this Parliament, following the principle adopted in the case of university councils.

The other clauses of the Bill are procedural ones governing such aspects as the holding of meetings, the appointment of a chairman to govern meetings of the council, and committees of the council and powers given to the committees. Clause 13 gives the council the power to charge fees. This power will be used to cover research work made available to outside bodies, and it is not contemplated that individual students will be charged fees.

Clause 15 provides for an annual audit. Clause 16 provides for the acquisition of property by the institute. Clause 17 covers the presentation of an annual report. Clause 18 provides for the transfer of staff employed by the Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board and the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education and also provides for the transfer of real or personal property.

Mr. Thompson.
Before concluding, there are two points I should make. First, there has been an indication that a communication has been circulated by a certain organization, or is about to be circulated, suggesting that further consideration should be given to this measure. I stress that this subject has had as much discussion and received as much thought as the seat which Bob Hawke is to take in the next Federal Parliament. In other words, it makes the evergreen, ubiquitous and everlasting Australian Broadcasting Commission serial *Blue Hills* look like a short documentary.

Indeed, over a period of seven years six different committees have been engaged in discussion and research on the best methods of assessment for secondary school students. It started about seven years ago, in 1969, when the Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board made a report on this subject to the Victorian Universities and Colleges Committee. The Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board was originally established under the Melbourne University Act and when Monash University was established, that university was also covered. This body, conducting the examinations, made a report to the Victorian Universities and Colleges Committee which decided to appoint another committee, the Committee on Arrangements for Secondary Courses and Assessments. This committee consisted of 36 representatives and was specially appointed for this purpose. It had consultations with secondary school principals and teachers, independent school principals and teachers, advanced colleges of education, teachers' colleges and universities. Finally, that committee reported back to the Victorian Universities and Colleges Committee.

Then the Government decided to set up a committee under the chairmanship of Professor Buchanan to look at ways and means of implementing the recommendations contained in the report to the Victorian Universities and Colleges Committee. That committee made certain recommendations which were included in the legislation introduced during the last spring sessional period.

When the suggestion was made that further consideration should be given, that the Bill should not be rushed through, the Government acceded to the request and a further committee was set up under the chairmanship of Professor Buchanan. It was comprised of 22 members who represented a wide stretch of interests in secondary and tertiary education. It can be clearly seen that there is no sudden spur-of-the-moment or off-the-cuff decision and that it comes about as the result of seven years of discussion in which six committees have been involved—five of them actively.

Finally, the committee administering the tertiary examination entrance project and which has been conducting experiments in conjunction with the Commonwealth and Western Australia over the past three or four years, also delved into the subject deeply. It is absolutely essential that there be a co-ordinating authority in this important area.

Last year I investigated the position in a large number of countries and my experience was that nearly all of them have some form of co-ordinating authority to ensure that there is an equitable system of assessment. For example, in Sweden three-quarters of the assessment takes place in the school and one-quarter takes place under the control of the central authority. The central authority also prescribes the manner of examination and of marking within the school. In Denmark 50 per cent of the assessment takes place outside the school under the jurisdiction of a central authority and 50 per cent within the school. Here again the manner in which the examinations are conducted within the school is closely and detailedly prescribed by the external authority.
Even in the United States of America, where some attention is paid to high school performance for university entrance, there is some form of examination for entry into the more sought-after universities. The only country where I found there was no co-ordinating authority was Japan. Students there were taking up to seven sets of university entrance examinations to ensure entry into one university. Their Minister said, "Whatever system you adopt, do not copy ours because we are moving away from it next year."

This measure aims to ensure that the difficult period of transition between secondary schools and tertiary institutions, or between secondary schools and employment, is as smooth and effective as possible and as free from injustices and unnecessary burdens as possible. I believe this Bill, in appointing this expert body, will go a long way towards ensuring that those objectives are reached.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, October 5.

ADJOURNMENT.

ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL—UNION BLACK BANS—ELECTRICAL APPRENTICES—HOUSING COMMISSION PROPERTY—INTERSTATE VISIT BY TECHNICAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS—BORONIA WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL—STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA—STAFF RETRENCHMENTS—PRISON ESCAPES—LIVESTOCK TRANSPORT.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education) : I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) : At question time today I directed a question to the Assistant Minister of Health. I sought some assurance from the Minister that no pressures at any time, from any source, would be allowed to bear on the medical staff of the Royal Women's Hospital in dealing with matters of a purely medical nature affecting the patients of that hospital. I got the impression from the Minister's answers that he thought I was referring only to the possibility of a Minister exercising pressure.

I wanted to obtain from the Minister an assurance that no pressure would be allowed to be brought to bear from any source at any time on the medical staff of the Royal Women's Hospital in dealing with matters of a purely medical nature affecting any patient or any person seeking medical attention from that hospital.

I just wanted to clear up that point. I was not referring to the Minister—far from it—but from any source whatsoever.

Mr. STEPHEN (Ballarat South) : I draw to the notice of the Minister of Labour and Industry, or perhaps the Premier, a matter that threatens to cause considerable unemployment in the City of Ballarat. I believe all honorable members will be concerned when unemployment is caused unnecessarily and needlessly.

I refer to two articles which appeared in the Courier at Ballarat on Friday and Saturday of last week. The first one reads—

**Union Moves 'Blackmail'**

—Short tells Parliament

Two Ballarat firms were the subject of "blackmail and intimidation" from union officials, the Federal Member for Ballarat, Mr. Jim Short, said in Parliament last night.

The article went on to outline that an electrical firm had been threatened by a union because employees of that firm were not members of the electrical union, and a black ban was put on supplies of Sanyo equipment from Melbourne.

The other case concerned a produce company which, in turn, had some sort of black ban put on it at the market and was unable to forward produce to Melbourne markets. On
the front age of the *Courier* on Saturday, 11th September, an article states—

Ballarat firm gives its staff two weeks' notice.

**DISPUTES WITH UNIONS.**

Ballarat potato and produce merchant, Stan Farquhar and Sons yesterday gave its entire staff two weeks' notice because the Storemen and Packers' Union placed a black ban on the delivery of onions and potatoes.

In view of promises made by the Premier in the State elections that he would be prepared to introduce complementary legislation, if necessary, to support the Federal Government in any action it was taking to protect the worker, to produce some sanity, decency and freedom in the union movement I ask the Minister to examine the matter that I have raised to see if he can help in any way. I hope the Minister can put into train some action in this field whereby legislation will be introduced to protect the rights of the individuals of this community.

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): I also wish to raise a matter with the Minister of Labour and Industry in regard to electrical apprentices. It appears that the majority of apprentices are employed under the metal industries award, the apprenticeship electrical trade regulation and the electrical contracting industry award. There are two awards involved. Apparently some employers are not members of the Electrical Contracting Federation, and because they are not there are two rates of pay for apprentices. A first-year apprentice under the metal industry award receives $50.80. Under the electrical contracting industry award an apprentice receives $68.70. In the fourth year of apprenticeship the wage is $106.50 in the first instance, and under the electrical contracting industry award $143.95.

This was brought to my attention by a Mr. William A. Nichols on behalf of his son. There has been correspondence with the department on this matter and I refer to a reply received from the Minister on 27th July, 1976, in which he says that this arises from the timing of award adjustments. One small paragraph from his reply states—

Because of the principles, particularly those which relate to the non-granting of increases in awards, unless a significant change can be shown in the value of work performed obliges the Victorian Government to maintain the present rates of pay for apprentices even though this differential exists.

I suggest to the Minister there is no difference between the work performed by these apprentices. If the contractor is in a certain organization the apprentice receives a higher rate of pay. I urge the Minister to look into this anomaly.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I wish to raise a matter with the Minister representing the Attorney-General. Yesterday at 12 noon, Mrs. Larna Matic, who was occupying premises at 63 Pacific Drive, West Heidelberg, was removed from those premises by officers of the Supreme Court Sheriff. These men were acting under a writ that was issued, and upon which judgment was entered a short time earlier. The story is briefly this: Last November Mrs. Larna Matic entered into a contract to purchase a concrete dwelling, semi-detached Housing Commission property which had apparently been bought by a previous occupier. Somehow it found its way into the ownership of Lilbert Nominees Pty. Ltd. She went to the firm of Westgate Real Estate Pty. Ltd. where she was invited, and agreed, to enter into a contract to purchase the property for $28,500. She told them she did not have a deposit, but they assured her that was not necessary and that they could arrange the deposit by loan.

They succeeded in doing that. The lady concerned borrowed a total sum of $1,634 from A.G.C. (Advances) Ltd., covering the $1,500 for the deposit on the purchase. She entered into this loan over a period of four years and the interest disclosed on the note or memorandum of contract
for loan is 22·3 per cent. The contract requires that she make 48 payments over four years with a total amount repayable of $2,483.52.

Having raised the deposit by way of the loan, she then entered into a contract to purchase the property for the total sum of $28,500. At the time of signing the contract she was earning $110 a week as a typist. The contract provides that she repay the sum owed on the contract by payments of $65 a week and the whole of the balance becomes due in March, 1980, with interest running on the contract at the rate of 11·75 per cent. Of the $65 which she paid initially some $61 was interest on the purchase price under the contract and she was also paying the interest under the loan agreement to furnish the deposit by total monthly payments of $51.74.

I ask the Minister representing the Attorney-General to look into this matter because it raises a number of problems which ought to be of concern. Can a free market be said to operate where the parties are so unequal? As the property was mortgaged for a total of $20,000, with a first mortgage of $15,000 and a second mortgage of $5,000, it may well be that the Sale of Land Act has been breached, and this is being considered by solicitors appointed by the Legal Aid Committee.

The problem should be looked at also from the point of view of whether estate agents ought to be restricted from allowing persons to enter into contracts by virtue of a sale note without the proposed purchasers seeking some separate advice. This lady sought and was given no separate advice until last Saturday evening and it would seem that she was "touched". The Attorney-General ought also to give consideration to what I understand to be the South Australian provision that no contracts of this nature, where the purchaser is an individual and not a corporation, can be entered into without a cooling-off period before the contract is binding. I understand that the period under South Australian legislation is four days.

Mr. BILLING (Springvale): I wish to draw to the attention of the Minister of Education a small matter which appeared in the Melbourne Herald last night, 13th September. It is headed, "Principals Bus Off". It is attributed to one Mr. Alan Rowe, the Herald education writer, and states—

One hundred of Victoria's technical schools will be without their principals next week.

The principals are taking a five-day trip to Adelaide by bus to look at education in South Australia.

The organizer of the visit, Oakleigh Technical School principal Mr. J. D. Thomas, said it would stimulate Victoria's principals toward new insights and new ideas.

"There have been some dramatic developments in education in South Australia and we will learn a lot from seeing their schools and colleges at first hand," Mr. Thomas said.

The trip has been organized by the Association of Principals of Victorian Technical Schools.

It is laudable that the principals of some of our technical schools should wish to gain additional information to improve the technical education system in this State, but I should have thought that for a delegation of 100, or 83 per cent, of the principals of our technical schools to take time off at the expense of students and parents to go on this trip was somewhat excessive. I should have thought a smaller delegation would be able to obtain sufficient information for distribution to the rest of the principals. It is also rather strange that this sort of exercise should take place shortly after a fort-night's holiday.

I would like the Minister to investigate whether special leave had been granted for this excursion. On a conservative estimate an amount of $17,500 was expended and I ask the Minister to investigate whether this amount is payable by the State or from where the funds have been provided. This issue is of particular interest to many parents of students in my electorate who, over the past
year, have been deprived of the services of their teachers for various reasons. I should be grateful if the Minister could investigate this matter.

Mr. LIND: You are a bloody idiot.

Mr. BILLING: I want a withdrawal of that remark.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): I did not hear the remark of the honorable member for Dandenong.

Mr. BILLING: I heard the remark and I want it withdrawn. The honorable member for Dandenong called me a bloody idiot.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honorable member for Springvale requests that the remark be withdrawn, and I am sure the honorable member for Dandenong will oblige.

Mr. LIND (Dandenong): I withdraw the remark.

Mr. CRABB (Knox): I raise for the attention of the Minister of Education a matter which will also be of interest to the Minister of Housing, who is also the Minister for Planning. The matter concerns the Boronia West Primary School, which is in my electorate and which was, prior to the last State election, in the electorate of the Minister of Housing. It concerns a sorry tale of duplicity and deceit by this Government and its failure to honour its promises. Perhaps the Ministers can cast their minds back to their pre-election speeches.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I remind the honorable member that this matter is being raised on the adjournment.

Mr. CRABB: The matter is relevant because over a long period this school has been promised an art and crafts room, as well as improvements to its staff room, neither of which has been forthcoming. It is my intention to bring this matter to the attention of the Minister. The Minister first promised art and crafts rooms to all schools with an enrolment of more than 225 pupils in April, 1973, one month before the State election of that year. The school to which I refer has an enrolment of 740 pupils.

At that time, in April, 1973, the school's proposal was supported by the Minister of Housing, who was then the member for the electorate. One year later, in March, 1974, the Education Department, through its "operation upgrade", promised the school an art and crafts room, but still none was provided.

In February, 1975, again one year later, the present Minister of Housing approached the Minister of Education on behalf of the school and sent a copy of his letter to the school, but there is still no art and crafts room and there has still been no honest reply. And then came the coup de grâce in February of this year, one month before the latest election, when a deputation from the school to the Minister of Housing was promised that a tender for the art and crafts centre would be advertised within three weeks. The comment of the school committee is "This did not eventuate".

What did eventuate was that after representations by myself to the Minister of Education I received a letter from the Acting Minister of Education, the Minister of Transport, who said he believed I would be pleased to learn that it is expected that tenders for the improvement of Boronia West Primary School will be advertised in the next twelve to eighteen months. It was expected that it would take twelve to eighteen months. It is three and a half years since it was first promised, and some months since it was specifically promised by the then local member. Both my constituents and I believe it is not good enough for Ministers of this or any other Government to cavort around the electorate, plucking meaningless promises from the pork barrel and denying them after the election. I ask the Minister to look seriously at the matter.
Mr. RICHARDSON (Forest Hill): I draw to the attention of the Premier a matter concerning the State Library of Victoria. It is appropriate that I should do so at this time, because this is Australian Library Week, which is conducted by the Australian Library Promotion Council and I have the honour to be a member of the executive of that organization. There is some concern within the library profession about the state of development of planning for the proposed new State Library of Victoria. This matter was discussed some time ago, and it would be helpful if further information on the matter could be provided. Another area of concern is what is to happen to the existing building, which houses the State Library of Victoria, when the new State Library is completed and the collection is transferred to the new building.

I draw this matter to the attention of the Premier because it concerns the library profession. The State Library of Victoria is an excellent library with a valuable collection upon which the whole community is dependent and about which serious questions are now being asked.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): I direct to the attention of the Premier and Treasurer a matter concerning dismissals at Thompsons (Castlemaine) Ltd., a division of Borg-Warner (Aust.) Ltd. Some weeks ago 57 people were retrenched and on 8th September a further 22 people received retrenchment notices. The honorable member for Ballarat South, who is interjecting, may well condemn me, but a similar situation may occur in his electorate as a result of decisions to cut Government expenditure, which means that valves produced in these plants are not being ordered by Government and semi-Government instrumentalities. One initiative was taken to deal with this problem, and this is an indication of what could be done with Thompsons (Castlemaine) Ltd.

Today I received an answer to a question which I asked the Minister for Fuel and Power on whether officers of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria had recently visited suppliers of industrial valves in Europe. I was informed that the factories visited included Sulzer Bros. in Switzerland, Siemens A.G. in Germany and other factories in West Germany. The officer was accompanied by Mr. G. Hudson, the Project Market Manager of John Valves Pty. Ltd. of Ballarat. I do not know what they were doing there or whether Government expenditure was involved, but I know that some competitors of M. B. John Ltd. are very concerned that their market might be taken away. They employ 37 persons in Sunbury.

Is the Government concerned to maintain jobs in the rural sector, and is the Premier prepared to do something for Thompsons (Castlemaine) Ltd. on a continuing basis? The company is no longer Australian-based; control has been passed on to an overseas company, and I believe the rationalization of the plant in overseas markets is causing some of the retrenchments.

I ask the Premier and Treasurer to indicate whether he will ensure that Government orders are placed in these plants to provide employment.

Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon): I raise a matter which concerns the Minister for Social Welfare following a question asked earlier today by the honorable member for Midlands about recent escapes from the Ararat gaol. I am aware that there is a low rate of escape from the prison system in Victoria compared with that in other developed countries of the world. What concerns me is that some of the escapees are high-risk prisoners.

The Ararat gaol is situated not in Ararat but a few kilometres to the east, and when prisoners escape they do not head for the town but into the nearby forest area where there
are many small farms. The occupants of these farms are becoming terrified, and recently an escapee entered a farm house, terrorized and threatened the occupants and stole a gun. If any honorable member were in the shoes of these people, he would know what they are talking about.

The Ararat prison is outstanding by any standard and one of which this State can be proud. The relationship between prisoners and the prison officers is remarkable. There is a tremendous mutual respect, and this has been evident apart from one occasion which occurred on the golf course. When prisoners are taken out they respect the prison officers and are reluctant to do anything not in keeping with what is expected of them. Other prisoners who remained in the gaol were dismayed at the recent escape by a trusted prisoner.

My request is that the Minister take steps to ensure that high-risk prisoners are not sent to medium security prisons.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Transport. It is one that I have raised before, and I should prefer to deal directly with the department to try to have action taken. However, I shall raise it here and quote a specific instance that happened recently concerning the transport of livestock to Newmarket, and the delays that occurred.

Mr. Reg. Miller, the Manager of Dalgety Australia Ltd. at Yarram, has informed me that part of a consignment of wether sheep was loaded at Yarram on Tuesday, 7th September, at 1.30 p.m. The balance of the consignment was loaded at Welshpool, 20 or 30 miles away, at 6 p.m. on the same day. The train left Korumburra, 50 miles away, at 11.30 p.m. and arrived at Newmarket at 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday. Twenty-four hours elapsed in moving a stock train from Yarram to Melbourne. This meant that the stock consigned missed the sale and had to be held over until Friday for sale. The stock had to be cared for, watered and fed at somebody's expense—certainly not that of the railways, as far as I understand—and then were placed for sale classified as lambs instead of wethers. The reliable estimate of a proficient witness was that as a result the price received was less than half the already diminished value of the sheep.

I ask the Minister to look into this specific matter as well as other similar matters to ascertain the source of delays and to provide appropriate compensation. I do not say that the railways are always late, but this sort of thing happens too often.

I have canvassed this matter in Parliament and have received representations from responsible stock agents and auctioneers in Victoria saying that their clients are being subjected to this sort of treatment. I originally received an answer from the Minister which indicated that the delays were confined to one line. I now point out that delay is not confined to one line; it is more widespread. I ask the Minister to take appropriate action.

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The honorable member for Broadmeadows raised the question of doctors in hospitals being subjected to directions or pressures with respect to their medical and surgical responsibilities. I repeat what I said in answer to a question this morning. Neither the Government nor the Minister nor the Department of Health would in any circumstances direct any doctor with respect to his medical and surgical responsibilities, provided that his practice was within the law.

Mr. WILTON: What about pressures from outside?

Mr. JONA: I presume the honorable member is referring to pressures which might be said to be exercised by boards of management of hospitals. I direct attention to the provisions of section 62 of the
Hospitals and Charities Act which sets out the specific areas in which committees of management of hospitals may make by-laws. It refers to the whole area of management of hospitals but certainly does not include or refer to any direction relating to the medical skill and judgment of doctors. In any event, under the Act by-laws have to be approved by the Hospitals and Charities Commission. It would not be the policy of that commission or of the Government to direct doctors with respect to any skill or judgment that they should use in the treatment of their patients.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member for Ballarat South referred to two firms in Ballarat which had indicated that they might have difficulty in continuing business because of problems with trade unions. One was an electrical firm and the other a firm of produce merchants. The latter has given notice to its employees as a result of a black ban imposed by the Storemen and Packers Union. I should think this is part of a continuing difficulty experienced in Ballarat where relationships between trade unions and employers have been deteriorating since the Medibank strike. It is a matter of great regret that there has been a hardening of attitudes which have led to these difficulties. The situation has been directed to my attention, as was the situation in relation to previous matters arising between employers and trade unions in Ballarat.

Victoria would consider enacting legislation complementary to Commonwealth legislation if that was thought to be helpful.

Mr. WILTON: You could not be so stupid!

Mr. MACLELLAN: I would expect the honorable member for Broadmeadows to welcome any legislation which led to more harmonious relations between trade unions and employers. It is not a matter of legislation being against the interests of trade unionists but in those interests. In this case I believe the trade unionists have acted within the rules of their union and that they should be protected by their union and by the community as a whole.

The honorable member for Murray Valley referred to differences in wages earned by electrical apprentices working under two wage determinations. This is a result of the wage indexation policy being adopted on a national basis by all Labour and Industry Ministers, State and Commonwealth, and a united approach to the wage-fixing tribunals of the nation. All wage-fixing tribunals in Victoria are subject to examination to ensure that their determinations conform to the principle of wage indexation. Where they do not, they are almost invariably referred to the Industrial Appeals Court.

The apprentices concerned are suffering, as other workers are suffering, from the impaction of relativities resulting from wage indexation being introduced at a particular time. The difference between the sums of $106.50 and $143.95, which were the two amounts mentioned by the honorable member, results from one wage being adjusted before indexation and one not having been adjusted before, or since, indexation was introduced.

The whole question of awards and the effect of a national economic strategy has been referred to a working party of officers. It is hoped that, again, all States and the Commonwealth, regardless of political philosophies, in combination, will approach wage-fixing tribunals. From then on it should be a matter of discussion. I will refer the points raised to the working party in the hope that it may be able to take account of the difference in wages and try to produce some satisfactory answer to this lack of relativity.
The honorable member for Bundoora raised a matter for the attention of the Attorney-General. I presume that it related to a writ of possession issued against the occupier of a house who was also the purchaser of the premises and who has been evicted as a result of the Supreme Court writ. I agree with the honorable member that there is a great need to protect some purchasers in relation to documentation and their rights and responsibilities under contracts. This subject has occurred to me, but I will raise it with the Attorney-General.

The honorable member for Bundoora suggested that support devices are required. I suggest that the solicitors of this State could well afford to witness conveyancing documents without charge. That could mean that anybody who wished to purchase real estate would have to have his signature witnessed by a solicitor and therefore would receive some independent advice before entering into a contract. Sales notes have proved to be one of the most pernicious forms of documentation because people are inveigled into signing them without knowing their effect.

I agree with the honorable member for Bundoora that the situation needs attention. I will direct it to the notice of the Attorney-General who, I am confident, will be prepared to take up the matter and make some recommendation to this Parliament. The honorable member has done a great service in mentioning this, and I am sure it is in line with the approach of the Attorney-General to take action to protect people purchasing land or property and therefore involving themselves in paying out large sums of money.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I appreciate that the article to which the honorable member for Springvale referred sounds strange. However, I stress that the principals of our technical schools are a particularly fine group of people. Some of the best schools in Australia are technical schools in Victoria. I shall be happy to discuss with their president the planning of their in-service training next year.

The honorable member for Boronia West referred to an art and craft block at the Boronia West Primary School. It is true that such a block is to be provided at that school. I will examine the file tomorrow with a view to having the matter expedited.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The honorable member for Forest Hill asked about the future of the State Library. It is the policy of the Government that a new State Library, and also a new National Museum, should be built on the site of the wholesale section of the Queen Victoria Market which is alongside the retail market. I hope to introduce a Bill in this session to establish a building committee similar to that which is responsible for construction of the Victorian Arts Centre. That committee would have the task of designing a new State Library and National Museum. Of course, the new project could not be undertaken until the Victorian Arts Centre is completed. It is impossible to find simultaneously two sets of funds for such large projects.

When the State Library and the National Museum move from their present site, the Science Museum will spread, in accordance with Parkinson's law, to occupy the space which will be available to it. At that point we shall have a sort of dumbbell effect with a Science Museum at one end of Melbourne and the Victorian Arts Centre at the other.

The honorable member for Reservoir referred to the retrenchments at Thomsons at Castlemaine. Two days ago I became aware of these, and I will have the matter investigated to ascertain what can be done. The honorable member mentioned that this factory depends to some extent on export trade. It exports some of its products, and I suspect that part of
the trouble is losing their competitive edge from which our industries are suffering at the moment in the export trade generally. We, in Victoria, are using every cent we can lay our hands on and every allocation to ensure that our capital works programme is maintained. If there is any more we can wring out of the funds, we will do so. However, apart from that, the only real answer to Thompsons at Castlemaine, and similar places, is a sort of revival of economic activity which we are all trying to stimulate.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): In reply to the honorable member for Ripon, prisons have legitimate functions to punish, deter and contain. This is done by withdrawing freedom from people who are put into prison. The object of this policy is to ensure that the quality of life in the community is improved and that people in the community are secure from prisoners who may represent some risk to them. It is also to ensure that when prisoners return to the community they will be able to take their place and serve themselves and the community around them. Within those objectives the policy is to ensure that high risk prisoners are contained. Within the prisons of the State there is high security accommodation, medium security accommodation and minimum security accommodation. These three varieties of accommodation are necessary to see that the prisoners are able to move through the various phases to ensure that when they return to the community they have been within an environment which is as near to that of the community as possible, while seeking to ensure that the community is still provided with adequate safeguards from risks of prisoners breaking out. The honorable member asks that high risk prisoners should not be sent to medium security prisons. If I were able to ensure that every high risk prisoner could be positively identified as a high risk prisoner, this policy would certainly be carried out.

Mr. Ross-EDWARDS: A kidnapper would be a high risk prisoner, would he not?

Mr. DIXON: There are murderers, rapists and kidnappers in our prisons. A variety of people serve a certain length of sentence and depending on the prisoner's behaviour within that time, his motivation to improve himself as an individual, and to overcome that for which he is being punished, at some stage or other the classification committee is charged with the responsibility of deciding that the man is fit to be transferred to a medium or minimum security risk prison. It is inadequate simply to say that because a person has committed a certain crime there is never a stage when he should be transferred to a prison other than a high security prison.

Mr. Ross-EDWARDS: This happened a bit quickly in this case.

Mr. DIXON: I agree with the interjection of the Leader of the National Party. Certainly in retrospect there is no doubt that this occurred too quickly with regard to this prisoner. The Government has laid down guidelines which will ensure that extreme care will be taken that prisoners will serve at least half their minimum sentence at Pentridge. The only exception to that guideline would be where the Director of Prisons is personally assured that it would be in the best interests of the community to transfer a prisoner, and I have made certain that the instruction is made in such a way that these guidelines will be firmly adhered to. I believe the number one priority of the prison system is containment and to ensure that prisoners who may be a risk to the general population are contained.

The honorable member's question also raises the matter of whether with the change in prisoner population there is sufficient high security accommodation in Victoria. Officers of the Prisons Division of the Social Welfare Department are presently examining each of the walled country prisons to ascertain whether one, two or maybe three of them—certainly it
is being looked at carefully at Castlemaine—could have high security accommodation. This would involve extra expenditure on capital facilities and on staff.

I assure the honorable member for Ripon that the point he has raised is of considerable concern to the Government. We wish to ensure that people who live in proximity to the gaols of Victoria can feel safe. We will do everything possible by classification and by looking at the various gradations of security in each of our prisons to ensure that that is the case.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I thank the honorable member for Gippsland South for referring to the transport of stock to the markets. It is not the first time this matter has been raised with me. I spoke with the department and will certainly do so again to ascertain whether there is some way in which stock may be transferred from the train in the event of a delay. I will certainly examine the matter and be in communication with the honorable member again.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.58 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

INSURANCE COMPANIES.

(Question No. 554)

Mr JONES (Melbourne) asked the Treasurer—

If he will ascertain and inform—

1. How many insurance companies are licensed to compete for the Victorian insurance market?
2. What terms are fixed to ensure the economic viability of such companies?
3. Whether there is any limit to the number of insurance companies permitted to trade in Victoria?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

1. Under the provisions of section 96 of the Stamps Act 239 companies, persons and firms have been licensed to operate in respect of the calendar year 1976.
2. Insurance companies are required to meet the conditions laid down by the Insurance Act 1973 of the Commonwealth Parliament.
3. No.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC RELATIONS EXPENDITURE.

(Question No. 584)

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora) asked the Minister of Public Works—

What sum was expended by the Public Works Department, both by way of retainer and to finance special projects recommended by the department's public relations consultants, in each of the past three financial years and what total amount has been spent by the department in respect of public relations projects during each of those years?

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

The Public Works Department has not employed public relations consultants for any projects in the past three financial years.

SUPREME COURT LIBRARY BUILDING.

(Question No. 587)

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. When the maintenance and repair of stonework at the Supreme Court Library, William Street, Melbourne was commenced?
2. Whether the work has proceeded continually since the date of commencement; if not, for what total period work has been carried out?
3. How many men are presently involved in the work?
4. When it is expected the works will be completed?
5. What has been the cost of these works to date?

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

1. 6th June, 1961.
2. Yes. At the rate dictated by the funds and specialist tradesmen available.
3. 12 stonemasons including the only two apprentice stonemasons in Victoria.
5. $576,000.
HOUSING COMMISSION UNITS IN GEELONG REGION.
(Question No. 603)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Housing—

How many Housing Commission units are rented in the Geelong region, indicating the number presently occupied by one-parent families?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

2,197. Separate figures are not readily available for one-parent families.

(Highway Lighting, Corio)

(Question No. 606)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Transport—

What plans if any, are contemplated to improve highway lighting at Bacchus Marsh Road, Corio?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

A street lighting scheme was installed by the Corio Shire Council at the intersection of Princes Highway West and the Geelong–Bacchus Marsh Road in December, 1969. The Country Roads Board has no current proposals for improving street lighting at this intersection or along Bacchus Marsh Road, Corio.

LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.
(Question No. 630)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister for Conservation—

Whether the Land Conservation Council adopts regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer is—

The Land Conservation Council has not adopted the regional boundaries prepared by the Town and Country Planning Board.

The council's boundaries were determined in 1971 which was before the board's proposals were accepted.

CONSUMER PROTECTION BUREAU AND SMALL CLAIMS TRIBUNAL.
(Question No. 632)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Labor and Industry—

1. On what dates the Consumer Protection Bureau and a Small Claims Tribunal, respectively, will visit Bendigo and other northern Victorian centres in the next twelve months?

2. Under what criteria or circumstances a person can lodge a claim with the Small Claims Tribunal and where a claim may be submitted?

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

1. A small claims tribunal will be hearing claims at the Bendigo Court on 19th and 20th October, 1976. Hearings will be held in country centres from time to time when there are sufficient claims lodged to warrant a referee travelling from Melbourne to hear the claims.
An officer from the Consumer Affairs Bureau visits Bendigo on the third Wednesday of each month.

2. Any consumer who feels that he or she has had a "bad deal" from a trader has the right to lodge a claim provided not more than $1,000 is being claimed.

In country areas, consumers may lodge claims with the local clerk of the Magistrates' Court. Pamphlets on the operations of the tribunals are available at the larger country courthouses and are available on request from the Registrar, Small Claims Tribunal, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne.

DEPENDENT-RELATIVE FLATS.

(Question No. 635)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. Whether any dependent-relative flats have been established in country areas; if so, how many and at what locations?

2. How many applications for dependent-relative flats have been received from country areas?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

1. Yes.

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Fire control region</th>
<th>Municipal districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morwell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>City of Bendigo, Borough of Eaglehawk and parts of the shires of Huntly, Morang and Strathfieldsaye as delineated in a Proclamation published on pages 4218-4228 of the Government Gazette of 11th December, 1974.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>City of Castlemaine, shires of East Loddon, Maldon and Metcalfe and parts of shires of Huntly, Morang and Strathfieldsaye as delineated in a Proclamation published on pages 4218-4228 of Government Gazette of 11th December, 1974.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creswick</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cities of Echuca and Shepparton, Town of Kyabram and shires of Cobram, Deakin, Euroa, Goulburn, Nathalia, Numurkah, Rodney, Shepparton, Tungamah, Violet Town and Waranga.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Town of St. Arnaud, shires of Bet Bet, Kara Kara and Kerang.</td>
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<td>Wendouree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Borough of Kerang and shires of Birchip, Charlton, Cohuna, Donald, Gordon, Kerang, Rochester and Wycheproof.</td>
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<td>Nurmukah</td>
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<td>Warburton</td>
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POLICE FORCE AND COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.

(Question No. 641)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

1. What are the regional boundaries adopted by the Victoria Police Force for the Bendigo area or Loddon district?

2. What are the regional boundaries adopted by the Country Fire Authority for the Bendigo, Castlemaine, Kyneton, Echuca, St. Arnaud, Maryborough and Boort areas?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1. The member has been provided with a map which delineates the boundaries of the Loddon police district.

2. Regional boundaries are not based on town areas but on groupings of municipal districts and in some cases, parts of municipal districts. The municipal districts within each region which incorporate the areas referred to in the question are—
COUNTRY ROADS BOARD AND TRANSPORT REGULATION BOARD REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.

(Question No. 644)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What regional boundaries have been adopted by the Country Roads Board for the Bendigo division?

2. What regional boundaries have been adopted by the Transport Regulation Board for the Bendigo office?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. The regional boundaries adopted by the Country Roads Board for the Bendigo division include the following municipalities—

   City of Bendigo
   Shire of Bet Bet
   Shire of Broadford
   City of Castlemaine
   Shire of Charlton
   Shire of Cohuna
   Shire of Deakin
   Borough of Eaglehawk
   Shire of East Loddon
   City of Echuca
   Shire of Gordon
   Shire of Huntly
   Borough of Kerang
   Shire of Kerang
   Shire of Kilmore
   Shire of Korong
   Town of Kyabram
   Shire of Maldon
   Shire of Marong
   Shire of McIvor
   Shire of Metcalfe
   Shire of Nathalia
   Shire of Numurkah
   Shire of Pyalong
   Shire of Rochester
   Shire of Rodney
   Shire of Strathfieldsaye
   City of Swan Hill
   Shire of Swan Hill
   Shire of Waranga

2. The regional boundaries adopted by the Transport Regulation Board for the Loddon region comprise the following shires—

   Kerang, Charlton, Kara Kara, Bet Bet, Marong, Metcalfe, McIvor, Strathfieldsaye, Huntly, East Loddon, Korong, Gordon, Cohuna and the southern half of the Swan Hill shire.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.

(Question No. 645)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power—

Whether the Department of State Development has adopted regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): The answer is—

The Department of State Development has adopted regional boundaries. Bendigo is within the Loddon-Campaspe region (called the north central region by the Division of Tourism) which comprises the following municipalities—cities of Bendigo, Castlemaine, Echuca and Maryborough; Town of St. Arnaud; Borough of Eaglehawk; and shires of Bet Bet, Charlton, Cohuna, East Loddon, Gisborne, Gordon, Huntley, Kara Kara, Korong, Kyneton, McIvor, Maldon, Marong, Metcalfe, Newham and Woodend, Newstead, Pyalong, Rochester, Romsey, Strathfieldsaye and Tullaroop.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.

(Question No. 649)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Public Works—

Whether the Public Works Department has adopted regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are serviced by the Bendigo office?

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

Yes.

Bendigo City
Eaglehawk Borough
Strathfieldsaye
Newstead
Maldon
Kyneton
Newham and Woodend
Gisborne
Metcalfe
Castlemaine City
McIvor
Kilmore
Pyalong
Romsey
Charlton
Gordon
Korong
Marong
East Loddon
Rochester
Huntly
Cohuna
Echuca City
Waranga
Deakin
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BENDIGO CENTRE.  
(Question No. 653)  

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

What municipalities are serviced by the Department of Agriculture regional centre at Bendigo?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

The State of Victoria is divided into four regions. Bendigo is the regional centre of the north-west region. The north-west region consists of five districts. These districts service the following municipalities—

BENDIGO DISTRICT:

Shires—
Bet Bet, East Loddon, Huntly, Korong, McIvor, Maldon, Marong, Metcalfe, Strathfieldsaye, Waranga.

Part shires—
Charlton—Parishes of Charlton East, Coonooer East, Narrewillock, Yeungroon.
Kara Kara—Parishes of Bolla Boloke, Carapooee West, Carapooee, Dalyenong, Kooreh, Kooroc, Moolerr, Moyreisk, St. Arnaud, Gowar.
Newstead—Parishes of Castlemaine, Muckleford, Tarrangower.
Tullaroop—Parishes of Carisbrook, Maryborough, Moolort, Wareek.

ECHUCA DISTRICT:

Shires—
Cohuna, Deakin, Rochester.

HORSHAM DISTRICT:

Shires—
Arapiles, Dimboola, Donald, Dunmunkle, Kaniva, Kowree, Lowan, Warracknabeal, Stawell, Wimmera.

Part shires—
Charlton—Parishes of Charlton West, Doboothetic, Teddywaddy, Wooroonook.

MILDURA DISTRICT:

Shires—
Mildura, Walpeup.

Part shires—
Swan Hill—Parishes of Annuello, Brockie, Bumbang, Gayfield, Liparoo, Margooya, Narrung, Nenandie, Tol Tol, Wandown, Wewen, Yungera, Koorkab.

SWAN HILL DISTRICT:

Shires—
Birchip, Gordon, Karkarooc, Kerang, Wycheproof.

HOUSING COMMISSION  
REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.  
(Question No. 655)  

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Housing—

Whether the Housing Commission has adopted regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

Yes.


APPRENTICESHIP SUBSIDIES.  
(Question No. 664)  

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

If he will ascertain and inform of the complete list of subsidies or assistance available from both State and Commonwealth sources to—(a) apprentices; and (b) employers of apprentices?

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

(a) The National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme (NAAS) administered by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations provides a living away from home subsidy for apprentices who have to change their place of residence to undertake or remain in apprenticeship employment. The allowance is $12.60 per week during the first year of apprenticeship and $5.00 per week during the second year.

Country apprentices who are required to undertake continuous courses in Melbourne or Geelong remote from their place of residence are provided with free return rail travel and are paid a subsidy by the Government of Victoria towards the cost of their accommodation in accordance with the following scale—

1st year of apprenticeship—$20.00 per week.
2nd year of apprenticeship—$18.00 per week.
3rd year and thereafter—$15.00 per week.
These rates have been reviewed by the Government and as a result of an increased budget allocation the weekly rates of accommodation subsidy will be increased to—

1st year of apprenticeship—$23 per week.
2nd year of apprenticeship—$21 per week.
3rd year and thereafter—$18 per week.

The appropriate regulations to give effect to this decision are in course of preparation and will be promulgated shortly.

Apprentices who reside outside a radius of 25 miles from the G.P.O. Melbourne and outside the City of Frankston who travel more than 40 miles per return journey to attend day release classes are paid a subsidy by the Government of Victoria at the rate of 2 cents per mile travelled with a maximum payment of $3.00 for each such return journey.

The Commonwealth Government provides an allowance through the National Employment and Training System (NEAT) of $20.00 per week for persons undergoing selected courses of pre-apprenticeship training.

(b) The National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme provides a subsidy in either of the following circumstances—

(i) where the employer's total number of apprentices equals or exceeds 25 per cent of the number of all tradesmen employed by him the subsidy is payable in respect of each first year apprentice employed;

(ii) where an employer has increased the over-all level of his apprentice employment compared with that for the preceding year the subsidy is payable in respect of each first year apprentice employed up to the extent of the over-all increase achieved.

The current weekly rates of subsidies are as follows—

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<th>Under 18 years</th>
<th>18-20 (inclusive)</th>
<th>21 and over</th>
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<tr>
<td>First six months</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second six months</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Following a submission which my predecessor made to the Commonwealth Minister, the Commonwealth Government provided funds to the States which have enabled the training potential of State Government departments and instrumentalities to be utilized to the fullest possible extent. Victoria's allocation is 309 apprentices, the cost of whose employment is being met by a grant from the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Government has also introduced a group training scheme to provide full time off-the-job training, mainly in the fitting and machining trades, in certain Department of Industry and Commerce factories which is now in the second year of operation in Victoria. There are thirteen first year fitting and machining apprentices undertaking training who have been sponsored by private firms with a proven record of training apprentices and training facilities. The apprentices are additional to the anticipated intake of the sponsoring firms.

The Commonwealth is responsible for payment of wages and associated costs during the twelve months' period while the apprentices are receiving concentrated training in their trade.

Employers who provide full time off-the-job training to approved standards or who release their apprentices for schooling in addition to the time laid down in the appropriate apprenticeship regulations are subsidized at the rate of $20 per week per apprentice under the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme.

Employers whose approved facilities are used for full time off-the-job training of apprentices indentured to other employers are also eligible for a subsidy under NAAS. The amount of subsidy is determined by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations on the basis of accepting a proportion of the recurrent cost of the period of training according to the number of "other" apprentices approved for training. Acceptable recurrent costs include salaries of instructional staff and costs of materials used in training.

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations has established a special assistance programme for apprentices whose jobs are in jeopardy. In appropriate cases and under the provisions of NEAT, subsidies at the same rates as those under the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme are available to employers to help them retain apprentices in training. Government departments which are able to provide temporary training for apprentices displaced from employment receive subsidies equivalent to the apprentices' wages. The programme was introduced as an emergency measure in December, 1974, and has been reviewed and extended on a quarterly basis to 30th September, 1976. Continuation beyond that date will be subject to review by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations later this month.

AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL SOCIETIES.

(Question No. 667)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

1. What amount has been made available to agricultural and pastoral societies for 1976-77 for the erection of stud stock facilities, toilets and art/craft pavilions, indicating which societies and the amount each will receive?
2. What is the maximum grant available?
3. When applications close and when grants will be made?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

1 and 2. An amount of $133,000 has been made available from the Works and Services Account for grants to agricultural and pastoral societies in 1976-77. Of this amount $132,587 has been allocated in the following manner on a $2 (Government) - $1 (society) basis—

**Stud stock facilities** (maximum $10,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bunyip and District Agricultural Society</td>
<td>708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobram Agricultural Society</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echuca and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society</td>
<td>1,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heytesbury Agricultural Society</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang Lang Pastoral, Agricultural and Horticultural Society</td>
<td>4,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numurkah Agricultural Society</td>
<td>4,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakenham and District Agricultural and Horticultural Society</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour Agricultural and Pastoral Society</td>
<td>2,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Sheepbreeders Association</td>
<td>2,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool Agricultural Society</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arts and craft facilities** (maximum $10,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berwick and District Agricultural and Horticultural Society</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunyip and District Agricultural Society</td>
<td>9,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glengarry Carnival and Agricultural Society</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stawell Agricultural Society</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimmera Machinery Field Days</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Toilet facilities** (maximum $8,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renalla Agricultural and Pastoral Society</td>
<td>2,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunyip and District Agricultural Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echuca and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham Agricultural Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koroi Agricultural Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough District Agricultural and Horticultural Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallangatta Agricultural and Pastoral Society</td>
<td>2,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool Agricultural Society</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Applications close on 31st March each year and grants are available after the State Budget in the following September.

LODDON–CAMPASPE EDUCATION REGION.

(Question No. 669)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Education—

In respect of the Loddon–Campaspe region—

1. Which schools, institutes or colleges of advanced education conduct courses in—
   (a) sex education; (b) preventive health care; and (c) first aid or home nursing?

2. What provision the Education Department makes to except back "dropouts" from education?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

Departmental schools are listed in Numerical, Alphabetical, Education-Regional, State Electoral District and Provinces order.

No listing of schools exists in Local Government-Regional or in various Regional Study-Area order and the preparation of such lists is not contemplated.

If the honorable member is interested in the same information in respect of his own electorate, an answer will be provided.

IMPROVEMENT OF STATE POLICE FORCES.

(Question No. 676)

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

1. Whether the Commonwealth Government has offered $80 million to the States for the purpose of updating and improving State police forces; if so—(a) what proportion of that amount was intended for Victoria; and (b) whether the offer was rejected and, if so, for what reasons?

2. Whether, in view of the lack of available State finance, the Minister will consider making an application to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance, particularly for the building of a purpose designed police academy, as part of an education grant?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1. No such offer has been made.

2. None of the States Grants Acts appears to make provision for grants for projects such as a "purpose designed police academy". In any event, as the honorable member will be aware, the Commonwealth has deferred the commencement of the new triennium for education spending, which was planned to commence in 1976, until 1977. Consequently, in respect of the proposals of the Education Commission there is to be a slowing down of capital expenditure and a postponement of the development of new expenditure initiatives. In this climate, a submission in relation to the provision of funds for the erection of a "purpose designed police academy" would not appear to have a significant prospect of success.
ACCOMMODATION OF POLICE MOUNTED BRANCH.
(Question No. 678)

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—
1. Whether arrangements have been finalized for accommodating the police mounted branch as a result of the transfer of the existing premises in St. Kilda Road to the Victorian Council of the Arts?
2. Whether a decision has been made as to where the branch will be located?
3. When it is expected that the move from the present location will take place?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—
1. No.
2. Several locations have been examined in an endeavour to find a suitable site for the relocation of the Police Mounted Branch but at this stage no decision has been made.
3. It is not possible at present to give an indication as to when the branch will be moved from its present location.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT WESTERNPORT.
(Question No. 684)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister for Planning—
1. Whether the moratorium on industrial development at Westernport has been lifted; if so, when, and on what conditions?
2. When it is proposed to adopt and gazette Planning Policy No. 1 (Westernport)?

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): The answer is—
1. In January of this year the Premier publicly announced the moratorium on industrial development at Westernport was lifted.
    The Government adopted a set of guidelines for the development of the Westernport catchment and set up a co-ordination group as a management framework for the application of these guidelines.
    These arrangements superseded the temporary moratorium ensuring that development occurs compatible with relevant environmental and planning requirements.
2. Statement of Planning Policy No. 1 (Westernport) was gazetted in October, 1970. A review of the statement is nearing completion.

SCHOOLS IN COBURG ELECTORATE.
(Question No. 688)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Education—
What are the names of the principals, the number of teachers and the number of pupils, respectively, at the following schools—Fawkner high, Fawkner technical, and Moomba Park, Fawkner North, Fawkner East and West Coburg primary schools?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—
Fawkner High School—
Principal, Mr. G. L. Watson.
Actual staff, 52.1.
Base figure 50.6.
Enrolment 911.

Fawkner Technical School—
Principal, Mr. C. M. McLean.
Actual staff 73.
Target 68.
Enrolment 907 full-time, day.
45 part-time, evening.

Primary Schools—
4871 Moomba Park—
Principal, Mr. G. A. Brown.
Number of teachers 30.5.
Enrolment 690.

4779 Fawkner—
Principal, Mr. A. Blackman.
Number of teachers 27.5.
Enrolment 581.

4864 Fawkner East—
Principal, Mr. W. McNaughton.
Number of teachers 12.
Enrolment 267.

3941 Coburg West—
Principal, Mr. A. Semple.
Number of teachers 37.
Enrolment 757.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS BUREAU.
(Question No. 689)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—
How many officers of the Consumer Affairs Bureau are now available to investigate complaints received by the bureau from consumers?

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The answer is—
There are fifteen officers in the Consumer Affairs Bureau who investigate complaints, breaches of the Act and carry out other inquiries. In addition, in the Budget introduced last week, provision has been made
Questions [14 September, 1976.] on Notice. 2399

for the appointment of six additional officers who will enable the bureau to provide a better service to country areas.

COUNTRY ROADS BOARD CONSTRUCTIONS.
(Question No. 703)

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Transport—

If he will lay on the table of the Library the Country Roads Board files, correspondence and memoranda dealing with the proposal for duplication of Mickleham Road and the construction of the Hackett Street deviation road in the City of Broadmeadows, which is proposed to join Mickleham Road in the Shire of Bulla?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Country Roads Board file concerning the Hackett Street deviation has been laid on the table of the Library as directed.

TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS.
(Question No. 706)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport—

Whether the Public Works Committee report on tramway extensions has been presented to the Governor in Council; if so, whether the report contains any proposals for extensions to either the Sydney Road or Melville Road tram lines?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

Under the terms of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Act 1958, proposals by the Tramways Board for the extension of existing tramways must be referred to the Parliamentary Public Works Committee for consideration and report.

The Tramways Board proposal for an extension of the East Burwood tramway was referred to the Parliamentary Public Works Committee and the committee, in its report to the Governor in Council has recommended that the tramway be extended.

The Tramways Board has carried out some preliminary work in relation to the feasibility of extending the Melville Road tramline, however, it will be some considerable time before this proposal reaches the stage where it can be referred to the Parliamentary Public Works Committee for consideration.

I am also advised that it is the intention of the Tramways Board to examine the feasibility of extending the tramline in Sydney Road.

BROADMEADOWS ROAD CONSTRUCTION.
(Question No. 709)

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Transport—

If he will lay on the table of the Library the Country Roads Board files, correspondence and memoranda dealing with the proposal to construct a deviation road from Johnstone Street to Mickleham Road in the City of Broadmeadows?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

The Country Roads Board files concerning the construction of a deviation road from Johnstone Street to Mickleham Road in the City of Broadmeadows have been laid on the table of the Library as directed.

TRANSPORT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.
(Question No. 710)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What resources the Ministry of Transport had for research and development?

2. How many employees, whether full-time or part-time, are involved in research or development work in transport planning for the Ministry?

3. What are the names and qualifications of each such employee?

4. In respect of the years 1972-73 to 1975-76, inclusive, what reports or research papers have been—(a) prepared; and (b) published by the Ministry?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1, 2 and 3.

The research and planning section of the Ministry of Transport comprises a multidisciplinary team of highly qualified people drawn from the Public Service, transport authorities and commerce.

The names and qualifications of staff involved in transport research and planning for the Ministry are—

Bannister, P.—B.Ec.
Chalk, R.—B.Com., A.A.S.A.
Cottrell, T.—B.Eng.
Dymowski, A.—B.Ec.
Ellul, G.—Dip.C.E.
Fellows, P.—B.Ec. (Hons.).
Finley, I.—Dip.C.E.
4. The Ministry of Transport staff are involved with transport research and planning and prepare reports on transport and related matters on a regular basis for advice to me.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.
(Question No. 711)

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister for Fuel and Power—

Whether any officer of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria has recently visited suppliers of industrial valves in Europe; if so—(a) which officer, indicating his position with the commission; (b) what factories or business enterprises he visited or contacted; and (c) whether he was accompanied by representatives of any Australian manufacturers on any occasion, and if so, by whom, where, and when?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): The answer is—

Yes.

(a) Mr. F. A. Martin, Engineer, Class 3, Projects Division, Power Department.

(b) Sulzer Bros.—Winterthur, Switzerland.
Siemens AG—Karlsruhe, West Germany.
Babcock-Persta—Essen, West Germany.
Zikesch—Wesel, West Germany.
Rhein. Armaturen-und Maschinen Fabrik (Sempell)—Monchen-Gladbach, West Germany.
Bopp & Reuther—Mannheim, West Germany.

(c) Yes.
Mr. G. Hudson, Project Market Manager, John Valves Pty. Ltd., Ballarat.
Siemens, 18th September, 1975.
Babcock-Persta, 22nd September, 1975.
Zikesch, 23rd September, 1975.

SEWERAGE WORKS IN RESERVOIR ELECTORATE.
(Question No. 714)

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—

What sewerage works are planned within the electoral district of Reservoir, for the financial year 1976–77 and what funds have been allocated for this work?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works records are not kept on an electoral district basis hence the information requested is not readily available.

The electoral district of Reservoir is contained within the municipality of Preston and the following sewerage work is planned for this municipality in the 1976–77 financial year—

Sewerage reticulation area No. 4252—Robins and Gertz avenues area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4260—Leonor Court area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4253—Tunaley Parade and Burbank Drive area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4254—Churchill Avenue and Joan Court area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4255—Broadhurst Avenue and Barron Street area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4258—Rice and Tracey streets area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 4259—Dredge and Tormey streets area.
Sewerage reticulation area No. 6385—Clough Parade and Mandel Avenue area.

The order of cost of the above work is estimated to be $2,890,000.

Final amounts available for capital works have not yet been determined but as far as can be foreseen it is anticipated that sufficient funds will be available to carry out this work.

HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES.
(Question No. 717)

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. What is the present waiting period for applicants for Housing Commission—(a) flats; (b) 2-bedroom houses; and (c) 3-bedroom houses?

2. What is the expected construction programme of the commission for the year 1976–77 in respect of each of the above categories?

3. How many of the units to be constructed by the commission in 1976–77 will be available for rental?
Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—

1. Waiting period for tenancy is—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Flats</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>3 months to 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Two-bedroom houses</td>
<td>None available</td>
<td>3 months to 3 years depending on location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Three-bedroom houses</td>
<td>3 months (vacated only)</td>
<td>3 months to 3 years depending on location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Waiting time for purchase is—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Flats</td>
<td>None available</td>
<td>None available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Two-bedroom houses</td>
<td>4½ years</td>
<td>3 months to 3½ years depending on location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Three-bedroom houses</td>
<td>3½ years</td>
<td>3 months to 3½ years depending on location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Family flats—66
Two-bedroom houses—Nil
Three-bedroom houses—2,149.

3. The number which will be available for rental will be dependent upon the respective demands of maturing applications for either rental or purchase within the constraints imposed by the 1973 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

Consideration is still being given by the departmental sites committee to the future use of this property which was originally purchased for a senior high school.

The site is currently leased to Mr. J. Spano for grazing purposes and there are no intentions at this stage to terminate such lease.

MULTI-PURPOSE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALLS.

(Question No. 727)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Education—

What is the present Government grant available to schools towards the cost of the erection of multi-purpose assembly halls?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

The department's policy concerning assembly hall grants is at present being reviewed and I expect to be able to make a statement about it in the near future.

NEWLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL.

(Question No. 738)

Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston) asked the Minister of Education—

What is the proposed date of the building additions to be carried out at Newlands Primary School No. 4646?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

Documentation has been completed. Selective tenders have been invited closing the 5th October, 1976. Providing a satisfactory tender is received the project should commence in approximately eight to ten weeks' time.
RURAL FINANCE AND SETTLEMENT COMMISSION.

(Question No. 750)

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

With respect to the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission in the year 1975–76—

1. What total amount was disbursed from each account, indicating the purpose of the account and the interest charged in each case?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme and purpose</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Rate of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Rural Finance Act Loans under Part III.—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Farm purchase, development, refinancing, &amp;c.</td>
<td>3,139,489</td>
<td>Generally at 10·5 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Assistance to country secondary industry</td>
<td>426,414</td>
<td>In the range 7·5 per cent to 11·5 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Rural Reconstruction Scheme—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Debt adjustment loans</td>
<td>1,919,190</td>
<td>4 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Farm build-up loans</td>
<td>4,326,872</td>
<td>6½ per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Rehabilitation loans</td>
<td>3,550</td>
<td>Convertible to grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Dairy Adjustment Programme—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Loans and payments for the installation of farmers of refrigerated bulk milk vats</td>
<td>6,105,410</td>
<td>Interest free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Loans for amalgamation, development and diversification</td>
<td>4,236,861</td>
<td>6½ per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Carry-on loans</td>
<td>302,524</td>
<td>4 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Fruitgrowing Reconstruction Scheme—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation to growers for removal of fruit trees</td>
<td>145,520</td>
<td>Convertible to grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Beef Industry Assistance Scheme—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry-on loans to beef producers</td>
<td>2,177,228</td>
<td>4 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Loans to fruit canneries—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable progress payments to growers</td>
<td>3,401,388</td>
<td>10 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Flood relief—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry-on loans to primary producers and small businesses affected by 1974 and 1975 floods</td>
<td>409,244</td>
<td>4½ per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. General Government agency—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans to primary producers under various schemes for essential carry-on needs, &amp;c.</td>
<td>435,431</td>
<td>Generally 4½ per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Soil and water conservation loans—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans to farmers for farm soil and water conservation projects as recommended by the Soil Conservation Authority</td>
<td>233,496</td>
<td>5 per cent per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Road transport subsidies—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebates on road transport costs of farmers of stock to agistment from drought declared areas as recommended by the Soil Conservation Authority</td>
<td>95,198</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Land settlement—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on developmental projects</td>
<td>2,400,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29,757,815</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What total repayments of loans previously advanced were received by the commission?

3. What was the operating cost of the commission?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): The answer is—

1. Disbursements made by the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission under the various headings during 1975–76 were as follows—

PARLIAMENT HOUSE RESTORATION WORK.

(Question No. 751)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. What was the total cost of restoring and repainting the cast iron lamps and crowns on the front of Parliament House?
2. What period of time was taken to carry out this restoration work?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): The answer is—
1. $16,747.
2. Sixteen months.

SCHOOLING IN EAST PRESTON AREA.

(Question No. 753)

Mr. KIRKWOOD (Preston) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether a new or varied school zone has been created in the East Preston area requiring children residing east of Newcastle Street and attending Preston South Primary School to transfer to Gowerville Primary School; if so—(a) why this change was introduced in September, 1976, causing an interruption and readjustment for some pupils this school year; and (b) whether he will allow those disadvantaged to return to the school they attended before the term holidays, subject to their transfer to the new school in 1977?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

Due to the close proximity of the Gowerville, Preston South, Penders Grove Primary schools and the fact that these schools have been unzoned, a situation has developed in which attendance at the Gowerville Primary School has been declining in recent years. As a result of the drop in net attendance, the Teachers Tribunal considered reclassification of the school from grade one to grade two at the beginning of the current school year. As a result of representations from the school council and from this office the tribunal agreed to defer this step and further consider the situation in 1977.

The Gowerville Primary School had the following list of facilities available for children's education—

- An art/craft room.
- A well stocked library.
- A canteen.
- A film room.
- 5 1/2 acres of well grassed and asphalt area. Unlimited playing space in an adjoining oval.
- Excellent teaching equipment.
- 2 teacher aides (one of whom speaks Italian and Maltese).

In view of the declining school population an official zone has been set up for the school by the Regional Director in order to ensure the facilities provided by the Education Department in the area are being fully utilized, and a phasing-in programme of the transfer of pupils in this zone to the Gowerville Primary School has been established.

The initial group of pupils transferring at the commencement of term 3 are being moved at this time because it is considered the principal and staff of the Gowerville Primary School are well able to handle the transferring group with a minimum of interruption to the quality of their continuing education. This move will also obviate any necessity for recategorization on the part of the tribunal with the consequent re-shuffling of principals and staff that would follow. The continuing process of transfers will take place at the commencement of the school year in 1977.

Parents of children so affected have been invited to discuss the matter with regional office personnel should they so desire, and each appeal received has received careful consideration and attention before being decided, so the matter of return of children to their original school does not arise. Indeed, supported by medical evidence an appeal affecting four children in one family has been allowed.

This whole operation has been decided upon and administered with the assistance and advice of the District Inspector and principals of the schools involved.

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL.

(Question No. 756)

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

During the financial year 1975-76—(a) on how many occasions the Industrial Safety Advisory Council met; (b) who was in attendance; and (c) what actions resulted from each meeting?

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

Twice; Messrs. J. Barwick, S. Barclay, O. Whelan, J. L. Speedy, F. Turley, M. Ponsford and Dr. A. Christophers; as a result of the two meetings a recommendation was made to the then Minister on safety in the construction industry.

PENSIONER FLATS.

(Question No. 760)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. When it is proposed that additional pensioner flats will be constructed by the Housing Commission in the Geelong area?
2. What areas of land are at present set aside in Geelong for such future purposes?
Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): The answer is—
1. It is proposed that a total of 34 elderly persons bed-sitters and six elderly persons 1-bedroom units will be let to contract in the Geelong area during the 1976-77 fiscal year.
2. Two areas, one in Geelong and the other in Drysdale have been set aside for the above units.

SCHOOL BUILDING AND GROUNDS SUBSIDIES.

(Question No. 777)
Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—
1. What specific purpose building and grounds subsidy grants are available to Victorian primary and post-primary schools?
2. What is the basis of the distinction between grants available to primary against post-primary schools?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—
The system of special grants to schools for building and ground work is at present under review and I hope to make an announcement within the next few months.

SILTING IN STRAND SWING MOORING AREA.

(Question No. 772)
Mr. STIRLING (Williamstown) asked the Minister of Public Works—
1. What silting has taken place in the Strand Swing mooring area at Williamstown over the past two years?
2. Whether the source of such silt has been determined?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): The answer is—
1. No measurable silting has taken place in the Strand Swing mooring area at Williamstown during the period that the trust has taken soundings of the depths of water in that area, namely from 1890 to 1976.
2. As in 1.

SPEECH THERAPISTS.

(Question No. 778)
Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—
1. What is the departmental establishment for speech therapists?
2. How many are currently employed?
3. What steps are being taken to overcome the shortage?
4. Whether consideration has been given to the recruitment of bi-lingual speech therapists from Europe?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—
1. Since the availability of speech therapists falls short of the number of children requiring speech therapy services, the department has not yet found it necessary to place a limit on the number of speech therapists who may be employed.
2. 77.
3. A campaign is being launched in the United States of America to recruit an additional 60 speech therapists.
4. At this stage no attempt has been made to recruit such therapists. As the speech problems of children in schools are concerned with the production of English sounds, it is considered advisable to recruit from those countries where English is the native language.

MIGRANT EDUCATION.

(Question No. 779)
Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Special Education—
1. What proposals are being considered for the restructuring of migrant education facilities in Victoria?
2. What consultations have been held with ethnic groups in Victoria?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—
1. Consideration is being given to what may be implied by the term "migrant education". The relative importance of the teaching of English as a second language, multi-cultural education, development of community languages and the provision of translator services is under review. The outcome of these considerations will form the basis of the establishment of an appropriate staffing structure for the migrant education section of the ethnic education branch. Consideration is also being given to the establishment of a representative committee to make recommendations in connection with policy making in the future.
2. All consultations that have been held to date have been in response to requests from individuals or representatives of various ethnic groups; namely Greek, Italian, German and Russian speaking groups.

BOARD OF WORKS SEWERAGE CONNECTIONS.

(Question No. 782)
Mr. CRABB (Knox) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—
Whether the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works will, in future, require home owners whose properties are being connected to the sewerage mains to pay for the full cost or part of the cost of the main
sewerage reticulation works, in addition to the cost of connecting their own sewer; if so—(a) whether this charge will be made pursuant to section 142a of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act 1958; and (b) whether this charge will involve each home owner in a cost of approximately $4,000 instead of the present $1,000?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

Section 142a of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Act was passed by Parliament in 1973. The action has not yet been used but at the request of some municipalities the board has discussed and agreed in principle to prepare schemes where councils wanted the provision of reticulated sewerage in established subdivisions ahead of the time that the board could provide such service within the funds available to it.

In the meantime the board is providing sewerage facilities in accordance with normal policy consistent with funds available to it but if a scheme pursuant to section 142a of its Act is adopted then charges specified in the section would be payable. At this stage no scheme has been completed but it is unlikely that any home owner would be required to pay approximately $4,000 as suggested in the question.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND BENEFIT ASSOCIATIONS.

(Question No. 784)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

In respect of the annual reports of the Government Statist on Friendly Societies and Benefit Associations—

1. Whether the Minister has received the report for 1973-74; if so, when, and when the report will be tabled in this Parliament; if not, why?

2. When it is expected the reports for 1974-75 and 1975-76 will be tabled in this Parliament?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

The figures which have been compiled for this reply have been taken from the following tentative programmes—

(a) Construction Branch—Major works—
(b) Rural Water Supplies Branch—
   (i) Goulburn Division: Cobram, Tatura and Tongala areas.
   (ii) Loddon Division: Cohuna, Pyramid Hill and Rochester areas.

It should be noted that some of the works in the Cobram, Tongala, Rodney and Pyramid Hill centres are not in the Rodney electorate but may be in areas contiguous to the Rodney electorate. Because of the complexity of the distribution system and the works of water supply it has not been possible to indicate precisely into which electoral areas the works will be constructed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Water Supplies Branch—</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channel remodelling</td>
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<td>Subways</td>
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<td>Drainage</td>
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<td>Access (occupation crossings, bridges, &amp;c.)</td>
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<td>Kow Swamp diversion works</td>
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<td>Groundwater investigations</td>
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<td>Replacement house at Rushworth (pt. cost)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Capital Expenditure</strong></td>
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<td>Construction Branch—major works—</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Rochester centre—</td>
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<td>(a) Karanga Western—main channel</td>
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<td>Cattanach canal 8 M 48 regulator</td>
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<td>Irrigation—C.G. 4 seepage</td>
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<td>Drainage—Murray Valley drain 3</td>
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<td>Tongala—Stanhope area—</td>
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<td>Drainage—Cobram drain</td>
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<td>Deakin area—</td>
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<td>Irrigation—</td>
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<td>(i) C.G.9—fencing</td>
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<td>(ii) C.G. 12/9—seepage</td>
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Maintenance expenditure.

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<th>Maintenance expenditure</th>
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<td>Tentative figures based on estimate allocations for 1976/77 are as follows—</td>
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<td>Waranga–Deakin channel maintenance</td>
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<td>Waranga Western main channel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total maintenance expenditure</td>
<td>$1,695,100</td>
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Questions [15 September, 1976] without Notice. 2407

REFRIGERATED BULK MILK VATS.
(Question No. 788)

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

How many dairy farmers received loans for the installation of refrigerated bulk milk vats under the interest-free loan scheme?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Soldier Settlement): The answer is—

One thousand four hundred and eighty-three loans have been approved and payments have been made in respect to 1,459 of these approvals.

Legislative Council
Wednesday, September 15, 1976.

The President (the Hon. W. G. Fry) took the chair at 2.22 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

COMMONWEALTH FUNDS FOR SEWERAGE.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province): Can the Minister of Water Supply advise the House what effects the savage cuts in the Federal Government's Budget will have on the provision of sewerage facilities in both the metropolis and country Victoria?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The cuts in the national sewerage programme will reduce the Victorian programme but, in line with the Federal Government's anti-inflation programme, whilst being detrimental to Victoria, it is a realistic step. The amount of $17.1 million which has been allocated to Victoria for sewerage works will be broken up into $13.1 million for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and $4 million for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for country sewerage works.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province): I address a question to the Minister for Local Government concerning section 153 of the Local Government Act which relates to the forfeiture of the $50 deposit by an unsuccessful candidate at municipal elections which is required to stop candidates standing when they have no hope of success. As there have been instances of sitting councillors being defeated, I ask the Minister whether he will support an amendment to the Local Government Act under which sitting councillors who are defeated will be exempted from the provisions of the section.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): I do not believe the correct way to consider the ramifications one way or another of a proposed amendment to an Act is by a simple answer to a question without notice. I will certainly examine the implications and advise the honorable member in writing.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE STAFFS.

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province): I have been given to understand from a number of sources that there has been a freeze on the employment of people in community health centres. If that is so, I ask the Minister of Health whether it is expected that the freeze will be lifted and, if so, when.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The allocation of funds for the community health programme from the Federal Government has been increased from $10.6 million to $15.2 million. However, in a rapidly expanding programme there was some uncertainty whether the funds provided would be sufficient to keep the programme going. Temporarily, the Government needed to place a freeze upon the replacement of those people who retired. The Government has now examined the figures and I am able to inform the
House that the freeze on the replacement of people who retire from community health centres is at an end, and they can now be replaced.

**POLICE DUTIES AT UNIVERSITY DEMONSTRATIONS.**

The Hon. S. R. McDonald (Northern Province): My question relates to the role played by the Victoria Police at Victorian universities when the Prime Minister or any other prominent member of the Government attends a university function. I ask the Chief Secretary whether any new arrangements have been made concerning the action that may be taken by the Victoria Police on future occasions to ensure the safety of guests and the person involved, and also to ensure that the normal running of the university is not disturbed.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie (Chief Secretary): I am pleased to be able to say that the answer is, “Yes”. Following the demonstration at Monash University against the Prime Minister some three weeks ago, I examined the guidelines which had been drawn up at the time of previous demonstrations when issues were in fact the reason for demonstrations. In this context, I refer to the Vietnam war, when we faced problems with demonstrations on campus and police in uniform moving on to the campus to restore order. Certain guidelines were drawn up, the main thrust of which was that uniformed police, as against plain clothes police—all honorable members are aware that there are plain clothes police from the Commonwealth Police Force and also from the Victoria Police on campus on all these occasions—would go on to the campus only when the university authorities believed the situation had reached the stage where they were needed.

The rules have been changed because we found that they were not appropriate for demonstrations against individuals. In the demonstration that developed when the Prime Minister visited Monash University, the Victoria Police abided by the guidelines and Commonwealth police, who have a prime responsibility for the security of the Prime Minister, were on campus, both within the buildings and outside, and there were Victorian police in plain clothes on campus, but there were no uniformed Victorian police within the precincts of the campus—they were outside.

There was a breakdown at the peak of the demonstration within the building insomuch as the Commonwealth police involved did not have liaison with Commonwealth police outside to indicate that things had got out of hand. In fact, it transpired that the Prime Minister himself rang through to the Victoria Police for assistance.

Following that occurrence, I met with the vice-chancellors of the three universities and with the Chief Commissioner of Police, and it was decided to revise the guidelines. Under the new guidelines, if they believe there could be disruption of an unsavory nature, Victorian police in uniform will be on campus and they will decide whether reinforcements are required to control what could be a most disruptive incident. So the guidelines have all changed from the time when the authority had to seek the assistance of uniformed police. The uniformed police can now make a decision on whether they will enter the campus and control any disruption. It was a most unfortunate incident, but it highlighted the need for a change in the guidelines, and that has been agreed to by the university authorities.

**DERELICT VEHICLES.**

The Hon. J. M. Walton (Melbourne North Province): Is the Minister for Local Government aware of a recent decision by a magistrate on what constitutes a motor vehicle, and the effect of this decision on the by-laws of councils in dealing with derelict vehicles left on the streets?
The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): Daily there are decisions of magistrates in cases of this type. Perhaps the honorable member can tell me a little more about it.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON: As I understand it, the magistrate said that a vehicle is not a motor car unless it has an engine in it. Therefore, councils are now faced with the problems of not being able to deal with the matter under the by-laws which stipulate what is a motor car.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT: I am not aware of the decision or the circumstances of it but I will ascertain the details and their implications.

COMPANIES ACT.

The Hon. O. G. JENKINS (Geelong Province): I ask the Attorney-General whether it is a fact that amendments to section 277A of the uniform Companies Act which came into operation on 1st March last have had some presumably unintended effects in that registered liquidators in certain circumstances may not be appointed in a members' voluntary winding up. If that is so, does the Victorian Attorney-General or the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission Ministerial Council intend to take any action to overcome the problem?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): For the reason specified by Mr. Jenkins I have received a number of representations from persons interested in the operation of section 277A of the Companies Act. As a result of these representations, the matter has been considered by the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission Ministerial Council. Although the section does not necessarily have the effect suggested by the honorable member, because it may be thought to have that effect it appears appropriate to consider the amendments to this section. Further details will be announced later, but I undertake to let Mr. Jenkins know the final decision on the section.

WATER STORAGES.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province): I direct a question to the Minister of Water Supply. The Wimmera-Mallee stock and domestic system, whose supply is based on the storage in the Grampians, which is in a relatively low rainfall area, provides the basic source of domestic water for the towns and farms through an extensive area. In view of the great importance of the system, does the Minister consider that the existing storages are adequate to serve the area under all circumstances? Will any action be taken to look at the need for future storages and perhaps undertake future works in the Grampians to increase the capacity for the Wimmera-Mallee stock and domestic supply?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): The Minister need not answer the part of the question which asks for an opinion.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): The storages are probably not adequate at all times. However, I will certainly ask the Water Commission to investigate the question Mr. Dunn has raised. I cannot answer it offhand.

INTEREST RATES.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the failure of the Government to stimulate the economy by legislating to reduce interest rates.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Does the honorable member mean the failure of the Victorian Government?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Yes.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required numbers of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 53.
The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. President, in 1932 Melbourne was deep in the depression. A paralyzed Government in Victoria was obsessed with the necessity of getting the unemployed out of the streets and into gaol so that they could not make trouble. I was an articled law clerk, fresh from the University of Melbourne. One Saturday morning I was told to go with a clerk of a finance company to Collingwood. We went to the yard of a dilapidated house where there was a mother and a group of little children. The father, we were told, was out. A vehicle had to be repossessed. The payments had fallen behind and the mother explained that work was hard to get. Around the yard were bits and pieces of machinery and junk. The vehicle was taken away, but I had the unshakeable conviction that we were taking away not only the vehicle, but also whatever means of livelihood was left to that poverty-stricken family. I still have that same conviction.

Once more Australia is in the grip of economic recession. Nothing has changed since the thirties. The Government of Victoria is obsessed with keeping interest rates high, so that those who have money can lend it out at high interest and so keep up with inflation. The hedge against inflation is maintained at the expense of those who do not have money to invest at high rates of interest. It may surprise honorable members to know that there is no legislative protection against high interest rates, except section 29 of the Money Lenders Act which prescribes a maximum rate of 48 per cent. That is some protection!

However, the nub of the matter is that, shamefully, banks and their financial offshoots do not have to register under the Money Lenders Act. So the financial offshoots of the banks can and do charge what they like. I have checked and rechecked this with the registrar of money lenders and none of them are registered.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: What does the honorable member call financial offshoots?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Custom Credit Corporation Ltd., Esanda Ltd., and other companies. All the banks have them.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: Except the State Bank.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Yes, I believe its charter is limited.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL: What interest rates are these offshoots charging?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: They vary. It is a nice business. I will supply some figures in a moment.

Hire purchase is subject to a stamps tax. The person who can afford to pay cash does not have to pay the tax, so it is an unjust tax on the poor, or those who cannot afford to buy goods for cash. That is a strange philosophy.

The Hon. S. R. McDonald: It is not only the poor who cannot afford to buy goods for cash.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I am pleased that Mr. McDonald is showing an interest in this matter because the farmer is affected by it when buying farm machinery and other products.

Why tax the poor because they cannot pay cash and exempt the rich because they can! That is the Government's philosophy. It is clear that the policy of the Government to maintain and support high interest rates is a crime against wage earners and a guarantee of further unemployment. The policy of the Victorian Government should be to do exactly the opposite and to cut interest rates which will guarantee full employment.

The Hon. W. M. Campbell: What should be the maximum rate?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: If the honorable member will be patient, I shall tell the House. If the honorable member had been a member of the House in 1956 and examined the Bills...
that were passed, he would have broken away from his party in disgust and might have been sitting with us.

The Hon V. O. Dickie: I remember the old blackboard operation in the corner.

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: Yes, when I explained the difference between simple interest and other forms.

The Hon. V. O. Dickie: I was the only one who understood it.

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: It was a nice exercise and the House was grateful for the mathematical skills which I demonstrated. I did so at the suggestion of a distinguished member of this House, Sir Clifden Eager. The House was most attentive.

The great challenge in Australia today is to get the nation moving. We must offer hope rather than fear to the rising generation. We have everything in Australia to give prosperity to our nation. We are dependent on no one. However, we must get the workshops and the factories rolling. We must get people back to work. We must get employment to young people leaving schools and universities and to those who are out of work. Nothing is more important in Australia today. We must sell more goods and services, build more homes and fill the factories with orders. Never again should money lenders be allowed to destroy a civilization. Some ancient civilizations were destroyed by money lenders.

The Hon. R. J. Long: Is the honorable member advocating no interest? If not, what is a reasonable rate?

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: I will tell the honorable member. The last thing that I imagined would happen was that some honorable members would turn their backs on Sir Henry Bolte, who said that he would never tackle the big institutions, the banks and their financial offshoots.

The Hon. O. G. Jenkins: When did he say that?

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: Quite often.

Work for all is what we need, but the money lenders, who do not call themselves by that name, but that is what they are, sap the resources of the poor by stealing their pay packets through exorbitant interest rates.

As inflation continues to soar the lot of the wage earner continues to worsen. Owing to inflation wage earners in the low-income bracket pay one-third of their income to the Government. That is an intolerable situation. That is why the Governments are rolling in cash.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton: On what level of wages?

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: What remains of the low wage earner's weekly pay packet is taken up in payments on a house, a car and consumer goods at rates of interest up to 50 per cent. Many people faced with illness or unemployment will be wiped out if they fail to meet an instalment. I know the Government has brought down legislation in this respect, but it offers no consolation to the hire-purchaser.

The Attorney-General will doubtless answer this aspect and he will perhaps be able to give members some figures from over the years on how many people have taken advantage of the legislative provisions by going to court. I should be surprised if there are half a dozen, but I have no figures. How does a man with no money in his pocket get to court? If he had money he would be able to pay his instalments.

The Hon. V. T. Hauser: Can you name the responsible company that is lending money and breaking the law by lending it at 2 per cent over the legal maximum?

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: Mr. Hauser is an astute speaker as a rule but I have said that the 48 per cent maximum does not apply to Custom Credit Corporation Ltd.
The Hon. V. T. HAUSER: Can Mr. Galbally name the company that is lending money at 50 per cent?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I do not want to do so. I ask the honorable member to visit used car yards in Melbourne and see what rates of interest they are charging.

I received letters from people during the last election campaign when this matter was raised. I do not want to mention the name of the firm because it is possible that the man who wrote to me gave me the wrong name. The letter was about a hire-purchase matter. The terms of the sale amounted to twice the price of the article in the shop.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: Why did he not go to another company?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: This is not a matter to joke about.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN: I am not joking. That is what I would do.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The person concerned is not earning the same salary nor has he the same resources as the honorable member. Some members of this House do not display the slightest shred of sympathy for the poor.

Hire-purchase agreements do not accommodate themselves to death, sickness or unemployment, but they ought to do so. Failure to meet the Shylock rate of interest is a cause of family breakdown, ill health, crime and suicide.

I have been asked by certain members of the House to name the people who are profiting from this sordid usury. They are the banks and their financial dummies. Disraeli at an early age used to call it “Venetian Oligarchy”. Banks come under Commonwealth law. There is a bank rate of interest, which is irksome perhaps, but banks have managed to get over that small hurdle because of their financial offshoots. They own finance companies which obtain their money from a parent bank. The bank lends the money to them and in the process of lending this sterile thing called money they obtain a profit. It is intriguing to know what the finance company does. The bank sells the money to the lending company. The lending company sells the money to a hire-purchase company and the person at the end of the line, the purchaser, pays the lot. Like Atlas he is supporting the bank, the financial offshoot of the bank, the finance company, and the vendor who is selling him the merchandise. Our laws have underwritten institutional usury.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL: How much interest are they charging?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The subsidiaries of the Australian banks—the finance companies—have all been doing nicely. The Bank of New South Wales, according to the latest figures that I could obtain, made a profit of between $18 million and $19 million in the first half of 1975–76. Its hire-purchase subsidiary, Australian Guarantee Corporation Ltd., almost doubled its profit in the first half of the year.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: How much money does the bank lend to its offshoots?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I could not tell the honorable member, but of course where else would they get it from?

The Hon. R. J. LONG: From debentures.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The honorable member should read the Australian Financial Review. All the subsidiaries of the bank show a strong profit rise. They are not shackled by fixation of interest rates but they ought to be.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL: How much do they charge?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: They charge varying rates.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL: What are the varying rates?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: They are up to 50 per cent.

The Hon. W. M. CAMPBELL: Rubbish!
The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The honorable member asked a question and when I replied he hurled an insult. That is the type of man he is. He has been harrying me all the time but when I give him an answer he says, "Rubbish". What an ornament he is to the House!

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: The House is entitled to one example of a 50 per cent interest charge.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Consumer credit is a billion-a-year-plus business in Australia. There is a billion to one chance that the purchaser knows the rate of interest he is being charged. The purchaser has the right to know what interest he is being charged just as he is entitled to know the cost of any other purchase he makes. If a person goes into Myers to buy a pair of shoes, he knows what the price is. If he goes into Myers to buy a refrigerator on a terms sale, he ought to know what the interest rate is.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: Can the honorable member tell the House to what figure he would reduce the interest rate?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: That concerns a Bill I shall introduce into the House next week, as Mr. Long knows. Apparently he wants some inside information, so that members of the Government can tell their friends in the financial world that Mr. Galbally will introduce one of his terrible Bills.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: How will that stimulate the economy?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I am glad that the honorable gentleman asked that question. No economy is good unless people can buy consumer goods. If money for interest is being taken out of a man's wages and given to a money lender, the man cannot buy goods because he does not have the purchasing power.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: That is untrue.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: It is true. Young couples in the community are holding a first mortgage which carries a 15 per cent interest rate, and a second mortgage at 30 per cent, and are buying consumer goods at 48 per cent.

The Hon. R. J. LONG: Not all of them.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Of course not, but they are not all as well off as Mr. Long. Income tax rates are cutting the guts out of the average person's weekly pay packet and the situation is worsening every time wages goes up. The cowardly Government refuses to examine the question that it should be setting a lower interest rate.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: The record of the Labor Government in Canberra on taxation is criminal.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: The Federal Government's record is super-criminal now if there is such a thing. If consumers are to plan prudently and shop wisely for credit they must know what credit really costs. Honorable members will not be surprised to learn that when father goes to buy a car on hire purchase at a used car yard because he needs it for his four children so that they will not be exposed to the hazards of the road in getting to school, all he wants to know is how much he must pay each month for the car. Nothing else matters. He has achieved his objective of getting the children safely to school.

Not until the Victorian Government acknowledges its obligation to protect the weak against the strong—by the weak, I mean those people of whom I have been speaking—will legislation insist that interest rates be lowered and displayed on every transaction. By standing aside and allowing interest rates to climb higher, we are making sure that Australia will become a vast used car lot of repossessioned cars because no one will be able to pay the staggering interest charges.

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The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): Mr. Galbally moved his adjournment motion proposing to speak on the subject of the failure of the Government to stimulate the economy by legislating to reduce interest rates. He has failed to indicate what interest rates and to what extent they should be reduced or how any such reduction would stimulate the economy.

His speech showed a misunderstanding of how the economy operates and it certainly showed a failure to appreciate the inter-relationship of the many factors that make up our economy. Above all it seemed to show an ignorance of the simple rules of arithmetic.

Mr. Galbally's speech reminds one of an economic primate who has encountered sophisticated machinery for the first time. His remedy to stimulate the economy is like applying a band-aid to a boy's pimple thinking that in some way it will solve the problem.

Interest rates are part of the overall system that operates within the community. It cannot be dealt with in isolation. High interest rates are a symptom of inflation and one must treat the cause of high interest rates, not tinker with the symptoms. Interest rates in the community flow from the action of the Commonwealth Government through the Australian Loan Council, and the Reserve Bank, and it is not possible to deal with interest rates in one sphere in one State and effectively stimulate the economy, or indeed do any of the things Mr. Galbally has been talking about.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER: Mr. Dunstan has not done anything.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I thank the honorable member. I shall refer to Mr. Dunstan later. The effect of reducing interest rates is to lead to a disincentive to invest because money that is lent to consumers in the community comes from companies which have borrowed that money in turn. Mr. Galbally has some weird idea that the banks form financial hire-purchase subsidiaries and then lend them money. The majority of the funds for the financial institutions in this community come from borrowings raised from members of the public. The financial institutions have to pay interest to the lenders. If a financial institution has to lend the money it has borrowed at a lower rate than that which it pays to its lenders, obviously it will not remain in business. The effect of reducing interest rates at a time of inflation is to induce people not to lend money at all. For example, a person who lends money at 12 per cent when there is an inflation rate of 15 per cent will suffer a net loss on the transaction during the course of the year.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Do you think it is unhealthy for a person who has money to lend it at 12 per cent?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: If he lends money at 12 per cent, under the present rate of inflation he will lose money during the course of a year. This adds emphasis to the point I was making that one does not take the end product and interfere with it; one finds the root cause and deals with that. In this case the root cause is inflation. The proposition that Mr. Galbally advanced will not deal with inflation or help to stimulate the economy. In times of inflation it can even be argued that people who have been lending money to the Government have been paying for the privilege of lending.

Mr. Ralph Freeman points out in an article in the IPA Review in April–June 1975 that—

all those who have lent money to the Australian Government in the past 5 or 10 years have paid for the privilege of doing so. Suppose Government paid the investor in bonds 7 or 8 per cent interest; after tax, he might be left with a return of say 4 or 5 per cent. But last year inflation was 16 per cent, so at the end of the year the investor had paid the Government 11 cents out of every dollar for the privilege of lending to it.

That is an argument for dealing with the problem of inflation.
The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: On your argument, you should put interest rates up to about 50 per cent. You say that at 12 per cent he is not getting enough for his money.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: Mr. Galbally's statement indicates that he has failed to learn the lesson which I have been trying to convey to him, that one does not deal with the question of interest rates to solve the problems of the economy; one deals with the question of inflation.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: As my colleague points out, Mr. Fraser's new deal solves everything.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I am glad Mr. Galbally's colleague has so wholeheartedly endorsed the new federalism policy. We are pleased to have support for what the Liberal Party has done for the community.

Mr. Galbally suggested that finance companies have been taking all the money from the poor consumers and that accordingly they are not able to buy and that if interest rates were lowered there would be money within the community to stimulate the economy. That is contrary to the picture of what has happened to savings bank deposits over recent years. Since June, 1973, when the former Federal Labor Government was in full flight, deposits in savings banks per head of population have risen from $987 to $1,390; the amount has nearly doubled during that period. That is a result of the effects of inflation and the loss of confidence which people have in the community. The thesis was founded upon the proposition that financial institutions in this State do not have to register under the Money Lenders Act. That is not true. They do have to register under the Money Lenders Act, and they do in fact register under that Act. Banks are exempted from the Money Lenders Act. Companies which may have affiliations with banks have to be registered in this State.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Perhaps you could provide us with a list of those that are registered. Would that be any trouble to you?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: It would not be any trouble.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: My information is different. It would be interesting to get the truth. We checked up before I came into the House.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: We will check up again for Mr. Galbally. As I have said before, interest rates follow inflation.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: The trouble with you is that you are a member of the legal fraternity. There is not one lawyer who knows anything about finance and that includes my boss and the Minister. The only thing you can do is charge 40 per cent for first mortgages out of your trust account. Why don't you talk about that? It is a mutual self-protection society. Mr. Hauser agrees with me.

The Hon. C. A. M. HIDER: Some of us do understand finance.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: Mr. Galbally has demonstrated his understanding of it this afternoon.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: We are supposed to be living in a democracy. I should have given him a couple of examples.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I shall give a couple of examples of the way in which Governments in other States have operated in this field. For many years Tasmania, which has a Labor Party Government, has had a limitation of 10 per cent interest in its Money Lenders Act.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Is that flat or simple?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: That is flat.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: You should have quoted that.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I know the difference between the two and I am simply referring to what appears in the Tasmanian Act.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: What Mr. Galbally said is right.
The Hon. HADDON STOREY: Mr. Elliot should wait until I tell him what the Tasmanian Labor Government did. Earlier this year that Government introduced legislation to eliminate the limit on interest. They realized that it was causing people in Tasmania to be deprived of the opportunity of getting loans for all sorts of consumer goods because if there is a state of inflation, interest rates must keep pace with that inflation. There was an artificially low level—an interest rate of 10 per cent—in Tasmania and the Government decided not to deprive the people of Tasmania of the privilege of acquiring goods and services on credit. I shall cite an example. In Tasmania at that time the average personal loan per head of population was $1 whereas in the rest of Australia it was about $50 per head. That is what the Government of Tasmania did. It had to face up to real problems instead of talking about them.

The South Australian Labor Party introduced the Consumer Transactions Act to deal with hire purchase. The Government did not put a limit on interest rates because it realized that one cannot control the matters which Mr. Galbally was talking about, other than by imposing a rate of interest.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: No small print was allowed in that Act and people had to know what they were paying.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I entirely agree. I agree with Mr. Galbally that there ought to be disclosures.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: You are starting to protect him against me now.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: Who needs protection now? It is desirable that there should be disclosures of the effective interest rates being paid by a person who acquires special services on credit.

At the moment the States are considering draft legislation for a consumer credit Bill which will contain such disclosure provisions. It is better to do it upon a uniform basis between the States and in a way properly researched and considered than to do it as perhaps Mr. Galbally would have it done.

The Adelaide Law School Committee, which was asked by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General to look into consumer credit, examined the fixing of rates and recommended against the fixing of an interest rate. That committee gave two reasons. The first was that unduly restrictive interest rates would have the effect of driving available credit into other areas. The second was that if interest rates are set above market rates they tend to be regarded as the norm instead of the ceiling. It was that report which led to the South Australian legislation which in turn led to the motion Mr. Galbally has moved this afternoon.

The effect of Victoria alone introducing interest fixing limits in the field of hire purchase, as suggested, would not help the consumers of Victoria. It would have the effect of either leading people not to provide money for finance companies to spend in this State or money going into other States, thus enabling consumers going to other States to acquire their goods or services on credit. If a financial institution is forced to charge, by way of interest, less than it has to pay to raise the funds, it will not raise the funds and will not operate in the market at all. For those reasons Mr. Galbally’s proposition cannot be supported. It has not been supported by Labor Governments in other States which have had to grapple with these problems and should not be supported in this State. As for the suggestion that it would have anything to do with stimulating the economy, it is clear that it is a question of grappling properly with inflation in the way that the Victorian Government is seeking to do. It has supported the concept of wage restraint. The Government has supported the concept of control of inflation by good management. Last year
the Treasurer managed to achieve a surplus in his Budget. This year he introduced a balanced Budget. He brought Government expenditure under control and introduced such provisions as second mortgages under the Home Finance Trust at the rate of 10 per cent in order to reduce the cost to people in our community who are obtaining their own homes.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: Does the Attorney-General recollect what Franklin Roosevelt did in 1933 when he was elected President of the United States of America?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: I was a bit young at the time.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: I thought the Attorney-General might have read about it. The first thing he did was to reduce the interest rate to get the economy rolling, and he led the world out of a depression.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: That is a simplistic approach to these problems and one which ignores the failure of the former Federal Government over three years to control inflation by monetary measures, whereas the present Federal Government's fiscal procedures will now succeed.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Granted that we have inflation, how do you control unreasonably high interest rates? You have to start somewhere!

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: If inflation can be brought down, interest rates will follow it down. Interest rates are set on a competitive market and they will find their own level within the range of inflation if allowed to do so.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: It is controlled by fringe bankers within the State system and it is those areas which should be controlled in the first place.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: That is completely wrong; they are controlled by the Finance Corporation Act which is a Commonwealth Act. That Commonwealth legislation requires them to be controlled and that is a fact.

The notion that a high interest rate, such as 48 per cent, should be set to protect people may be of some assistance but realistically what is best is the production of free market conditions and the provision for disclosure of interest rates so that the consumer will know the amount of money he is required to service. There should also be a setting aside of hire purchase and unconscionable agreements. Those measures will do more to protect people in the community than has been suggested. They will lead to a stimulation of the economy which will be achieved by proper measures to control inflation. For those reasons the Government rejects the motion.

The Hon. S. R. McDONALD (Northern Province): If Mr. Galbally had based his motion on consumer protection, I am sure he would have received a far more sympathetic hearing from both sides of the House. He based his case on the effect of hire-purchase and other agreements on persons in the low income bracket. He related those possible effects and called for legislation to reduce or control interest rates to stimulate the economy.

On behalf of the National Party, I suggest that Mr. Galbally has not substantiated his case and has not shown that the economy could be stimulated by legislating to reduce interest rates. The National Party considers that in the wider field of the national economy, the control and setting of interest rates is largely a matter for the Federal Government through the Loan Council and the Reserve Bank of Australia. If we are going to attack inflation, that is the appropriate starting point.

I agree entirely with what Mr. Galbally said about hire-purchase agreements where persons buy consumer goods, such as motor cars, washing machines or even houses, and they are not fully aware of the implications of the contracts they sign. I agree that they should know in specific terms what the current
interest rate is, together with the simple interest rate and what that means in terms of the final cost of the article. This is what the Parliament should be looking at in considering consumer protection.

I have no desire to enter into a debate on the state of the economy as I can see some colleagues on my left ready and waiting to enter the fray. I reiterate that I do not believe Mr. Galbally has substantiated his over-simplified case. The National Party does not accept that a lowering or controlling of interest rates in the hire-purchase field will do anything to stimulate the economy, and will therefore vote against the motion.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province): This motion brought forward by Mr. Galbally is a singularly inappropriate motion to come from the Labor Party. Members of the Government party agree with some of his statements. His claim that the reduction of interest rates will affect and benefit the economy is undoubted and is in fact the aim of the Liberal Party. Indeed, the day after the new Federal Government was elected in December last year, I personally wrote to the Federal Treasurer and congratulated him and took the liberty of suggesting that one of the first actions to be taken by the Government should be a reduction in the interest rates.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Did the Federal Treasurer write back?

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: I will deal with that in a minute. That was because the basic point at which interest rates are fixed in this country is in the sphere of Commonwealth loans which virtually act as a cornerstone for the whole of the interest rate structure within the community. The fixing of that rate constitutionally rests with the Loan Council. By some constitutional arrangement, which being a layman I do not fully understand but which at least I appreciate, the decisions of the Loan Council have a validity which cannot be challenged by either State or Federal legislation. This relates back to section 105 of the Constitution and the method by which the Loan Council was originally structured.

Two things virtually fix the interest rate structure in Victoria. It is an extremely complicated and sensitive mechanism, which reacts to the interplay of economic affairs throughout the community and is far more sensitive and touchy than most other economic indicators. Interest rates, for better or for worse, are largely determined by the state of the economy, particularly in inflationary times, and there is a direct relationship with the level of inflation.

Mr. Elliot asked me whether the Federal Treasurer had replied to me. He did answer in a long letter in which he agreed how essential it was to reduce interest rates in Australia for the benefit of the economy. He went on to point out how difficult it was to arbitrarily fix interest rates by government or legislative action. I took the trouble of going to the Library and taking out a brief summary of the movement in interest rates over the past few years. I found that in December, 1972, the Commonwealth Development Bank was charging about 6·25 per cent on rural loans and about 7·25 per cent on industry loans. The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Is that simple or flat?

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: That is simple. In March, 1974, that rate had risen to 8·5 per cent on rural loans and 9·5 per cent on industry loans. By June, 1975, it had reached the exorbitant level of 10·5 per cent on rural loans and 11·5 per cent on industry loans. The year 1976 has shown a marginal fall—which the Federal Treasurer indicated to me the Government was trying to achieve—and that was brought about to some degree by policy decisions within the Loan Council against the current of economic events.

To continue the comparison, the interest rate on savings bank loans rose from 6·25 per cent or 7 per cent
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in December, 1972, to 9.25 per cent or 10 per cent in June, 1975. Interest on insurance loans on own policies increased from about 6 per cent to 9 per cent in 1972 and ranged up to 13 per cent in 1975.

A key factor which will be discernible is that during the Labor Government's term of office in Canberra, where interest rates are really fixed, there was a massive and unconscionable increase in interest rates. That was done by a party which in its policy statement was committed to a reduction in interest rates. In its policy statement relating to rural affairs in 1972, the Australian Labor Party stated—

Labor supports the provision of long-term loans to farmers but only if interest rates are around 3-4 per cent, not at the high rate of 7-8 per cent.

The Hon. S. R. McDonald: That statement had a bad effect on the re-election chances of Mr. Al. Grassby in the Federal electorate of Riverina.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: I am aware of that. After two years of Labor control, if we had believed in Mr. Galbally's hypothesis, by 1974 the rural community would have been delighted to pay 7 to 8 per cent for their loans, but by 1975 they were being charged 13 per cent to maintain the floor price of wool.

The Hon. D. G. Elliot: It is the same throughout the world.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: I will deal with that in a minute. Whatever honorable members might say about what the State can do to control interest rates, it must be remembered that it is within the province of the Commonwealth Government to control the economy with monetary and fiscal policies and anything the State can do has little or no effect. If we legislate to reduce the rates in the areas in which we have some legislative responsibility we might as well give up because it will simply mean that money will not flow into those areas.

Therefore, the policies enunciated, espoused and implemented in Canberra are the policies to which we have to look for the control of interest rates. Those are the policies which have been so disastrous for Australia over the past few years and in particular have brought Victoria to the stage of near financial collapse. There is only one reason for it and that is the complete and inept monetary management in Canberra by a Labor Government. That is why I say it is singularly inappropriate that a motion of this type should be brought forward by the Labor Party Opposition.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: Does Mr. Hamilton approve of the restriction of cash flow into this country from overseas in the years prior to the Labor Government, a policy which caused many financial problems?

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: That is an interesting question. Amongst the disastrous errors of the Labor Government in 1973 was a restriction on the inflow of capital into Australia which made money a scarce commodity and helped to force up interest rates.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: Every reputable economist approved of it.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: The honorable member means every left-wing economist who liked to put up an academic argument. It resulted in a 25 per cent tariff reduction which increased unemployment in this country to a disastrous level.

The President (the Hon. W. G. Fry): Order! The interjections on the Federal economy have been answered. I ask the House to return to the question which concerns this State—the failure of the Government of Victoria to stimulate the economy by legislating to reduce interest rates.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: As I have pointed out, interest rates are not dependent on anything Victoria can do. Interest rates are fixed as a result of policies determined outside this State. In order to examine the motion adequately, we must refer to policies adopted by the people who
determine these matters for us. These are the policies which determine the level of inflation within the community. I shall refer to them as little as possible, but it is a waste of time discussing the motion if we cannot discuss the policies governing interest rates within the community.

The Hon. I. B. Trayling: Does the honorable member say that the buck stops in Canberra?

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: I say that the buck is 90 per cent in Canberra and perhaps 10 per cent in Victoria, but that would probably be an over-estimate. There is a direct relationship between interest rate levels and inflation. As the Attorney-General pointed out, people who are lending to the Government at 10 per cent in an economy which is facing a 14 per cent inflation rate, quite apart from the amount they lose in taxation on the interest they receive, are losing 4 per cent per annum of their actual capital. They are paying for the privilege of lending their money.

The same applies throughout the community. After all, money is only a commodity which is bought and sold. If its cost is not economic, obviously it will not be available. The position is as simple as that. As the price level rises, so must the interest rate rise. If the rate of interest, which is central and critical in an economy based on the private ownership of property, is below the price level, there is no incentive for funds to be released for investment. Without investment there can be no development, and then there will be falling employment and the situation we face today. It is critical that we stimulate the economy, but we will not do so by legislating for a reduction in interest rates.

It can be said that the difference between the inflation rate and the interest rate is something of a crude measure of the extent to which inflation retards investment. It is not the rate of interest which is important but rather the relationship between the rate of interest and the price level. That is the crucial factor which the Opposition and its party in Canberra have never recognized. It is a paradoxical situation. If the rate of interest is reduced in isolation, it does not improve the employment situation. The rate of interest can be effectively reduced only if there is a reduction in the rate of inflation.

The Hon. J. W. Galbally: Would Mr. Hamilton deal with the situation by getting 16 per cent from the wage earner who has no money to invest and loses everything?

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton: Mr. Galbally’s opening remarks relating to hire purchase were interesting, but it should be observed—he would be the first to recognize it—that the majority of items bought by hire-purchase agreements are luxury ones. I have no way of measuring, but I would say that the majority of hire-purchase outstandings today are those of people who would normally be regarded as affluent. I agree that hire purchase is hardest on people who can least afford it. In this sense it is a disincentive to those people who cannot really afford it to expend beyond their means.

The honorable member referred to a 2.25 per cent stamp duty. This in itself is a problem because stamp duty was initially imposed on hire-purchase transactions. As a result of the operations of smart lawyers the Act was amended to include the total charges involved on a transaction including the procurement fee, and so on, and with the rising interest rates today when it is difficult to get a first mortgage loan at anything like a reasonable rate—it is usually about 13 per cent or 13.5 per cent—by the time a procurement fee is added the transaction attracts this prohibitive 2.25 per cent stamp duty. Therefore, we are in a bind. It is interesting that that matter has been raised, because only recently I have been looking at the question of stamp duty.

I remind the House that in 1973 I drew its attention to the direction in which the economy was pointing
and the fact that the measures then outlined in Canberra which determined Victoria's economy and interest rates were leading to disaster. I said that I was afraid that in rejecting the Budget approach of controlling the economy the Government had had to adopt alternative measures which would generally be regarded as long-term and largely irreversible. These included the manipulation of the exchange rate and a change to extraordinarily high interest rates.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: Mr. Hamilton is a bit of a prophet.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: If Mr. Elliot will read the speeches I have made in the past he will find that they were right on the knocker, in spite of interjections.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: It has happened to me many times.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: People do not realize how far-sighted Mr. Galbally and I are.

The final point I make is that it is easy to introduce inflation and push up interest rates. The hardest thing is to get inflation under control.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY: But it must be tackled.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON: It is being tackled. The exorbitant proportion of our incomes that is being stolen from us in the form of taxes by rapacious Governments was referred to. The Labor Party Government in Canberra did that, and the Liberal and National parties introduced indexation, which is the first move in bringing this problem under control.

A leading article in a local newspaper, the Standard News of 18th September, was drawn to my attention. The article refers to the fact that it takes a long time to bring these matters under control. It states—

To say the Liberals are responsible for the present state of the nation is to ask the public to pretend it has no recollection of Labor's years in office.

The article concludes—

The Labor boys ought to curb their enthusiasm. It's too soon to blame the Coalition for the nation's ills. The economy turned sour and unemployment escalated in the Whitlam era and only the feeble-minded have forgotten this.

That is true.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT (Melbourne Province): Mr. President, I fully acknowledge Mr. Hamilton's expertise in matters financial. He has been dabbling in figures for most of his life in one way or another. The fact remains that he has omitted to report to the House one fundamental fact which was touched on by my Leader, Mr. Galbally, in moving the motion before the House—an honest endeavour to protect little people. So I return to the 1930s when the only way a person could buy what may be classified as a luxury by Mr. Hamilton, such as clothes, was to take out a cash order and work like hell to pay it back every week. That was the only way the average person could do it and he had to pray he would stay in employment in order to pay back the cash order at four or five shillings a week.

At that time I was working for a firm called J. B. Were & Son. I remember applying for a job as a clerk at one pound a week. There were 327 applicants. Rodney Eggleston and I were the two successful applicants, so I must have had something to get into the august firm of J. B. Were against those competitors. One of the greatest experiences I had was working under Mr. Frank Sholl, the brother of Sir Reginald Sholl. He was a financial genius and a top man with the Were organization.

I recall once being ushered into the august presence of the senior partner, William Foster Geach, and Frank Sholl and I heard a comment by their finance and exchange expert, Mr. Martin, that unless the State fringe finance houses and the burden of usurous interest rates through hire-purchase agreements could be limited
in some way, the return on private finance would be so great as to visibly affect and be extremely harmful to the raising of Commonwealth loans.

The rate of interest was 4 per cent for loans due to mature in 1937, 6 per cent for those due in 1939 and 7 per cent for those due in 1941. It was not policies that determined existing rates; it was the advantageous interest rate in the private sector which virtually forced up the Commonwealth loan rate.

We could argue all day and all night about fiscal policies and interest rates, and frankly, I would be presumptuous if I said that I was expert in this field. However, I spent a few years in the wonderful house of J. B. Were & Son and learned quite a lot there which has stood me in good stead ever since. For instance, I did some accountancy, and worked with some great people. That is what I heard at J. B. Were & Son, and it has stuck in my mind ever since.

Today if one goes to the Australian and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., which absorbed, or to put it more charitably, combined with the English, Scottish and Australian Bank Ltd., one finds Esanda Ltd. where one can borrow virtually any amount at rates that are double normal bank rates.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: But security does not have to be provided.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: They look after themselves for security, and bad debts—which Mr. Storey probably knows nothing about—are infinitesimal in the hire purchase field because one is dealing largely with honest people. I shall never forget the man who said that in this House because he, too, was a man of principle. I refer to Sir Arthur Warner, and that was the exact remark he made. This is very important for this country.

It is a fundamental piece of common sense to say that if interest rates are lower, more money will circulate. I agree that the task of bringing down interest rates now is a gargantuan one, because General Motors-Holden's Ltd. is willing to pay 14 per cent interest for its finance for General Motors Acceptance Corporation Australia. If one adds to that the cost of obtaining and servicing that money, one realizes that there is no way that it can get out of it under about 11 per cent or 12 per cent flat. In this way the unhealthy financial state of this nation is starting to grow and grow.

In the first place it came about because people were persuaded to invest in what are called the fringe backing houses, such as Associated Securities Ltd., Custom Credit Corporation Ltd., Cambridge Credit Corporation Ltd., Lombard Australia Ltd.—one could go on for ever. People were encouraged to invest in these houses because interest rates were much higher and they came almost solely not under Commonwealth control but under State control. This is where the unhealthy situation began.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY: They are now under Commonwealth control.

The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT: They commenced under State control, and the only thing that can be done about it now is, as Mr. Storey suggested, for the States to have the guts to get together and insist on an over-all conference with the Commonwealth Government. Even if it is decided that something can be done about it, it must be done so gradually that it will not upset the economy and the financial situation of firms which have borrowed money at high interest rates and which of necessity must lend that money out at even higher interest rates.

As to the protection of the individual under hire-purchase agreements, the details cannot be made clear enough to the average consumer, because even with the legislation already introduced by the Government, there is still not a clear picture in the mind of the average hire purchaser of what he or she is up for in repayments. It is up to any Government to protect the consumer at least up to that level. Beyond that
it may be a case of *caveat emptor.* One finds that in a typical four or even five-year agreement with a repayment interest rate at 13 or 14 per cent flat, interest rates can get up to 38 or 39 per cent and even higher in some cases, depending on the methods and practices adopted by people from whom one borrows. As Mr. Hamilton said, into that must be thrown accommodation charges or whatever one wants to call them—commissions, legal fees attached to the documents such as stamp duty—and that is why it costs so much to borrow money today.

I felt it incumbent on me to support my Leader's motion, because it is a fundamental sickness in society that interest rates must be increased to enable us to survive. It means that something is wrong somewhere, and the States and the Commonwealth must get together to see how this can be rectified—as it can be. I am not advocating totalitarianism—I would fight that to the death. In places like China, Russia and other totalitarian countries, when things get tough they can just pull in the strings to such an extent that inflation can be beaten literally overnight. That cannot be done in a free society, and perhaps one should thank God that that is so. That places on us the responsibility of doing something about it by disciplining ourselves where we can help the individual to have some security and be able to spend his money without being charged too much for it. That is the thought I leave with the House in supporting this motion proposed by my Leader, Mr. Galbally.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER (Nunawading Province): Rarely in my term of six years as a member of this House have I heard such unmitigated hogwash as that which was dribbled out by the Leader of the Opposition on this motion this afternoon. Everyone knows that this situation of high interest rates was created by the financial madness of the Whitlam Government, and followed here this afternoon by Mr. Jack Galbally representing the Victorian Parliamentary Labor Party.

The inflation rate during the dying months of the McMahon Government in 1972 was a humble 4.2 per cent. Within two years, because of the financial madness of the Whitlam Government, it had increased to a rate of approximately 16 per cent; and now, as a result of careful housekeeping under the new Federal Government, it has dropped to approximately 12.3 per cent.

In November, 1972, the long-term borrowing rate of hire-purchase companies when they obtained their money from the public was 8 per cent. Under the Whitlam Government this borrowing rate rose to 14 per cent. Again, because of the careful housekeeping of the Fraser Government, it has fallen back over the past few months to approximately 12.5 per cent. Mr. Galbally mentioned Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. and intimated that that company borrowed money from its parent bank, the National Bank of Australasia Ltd. The truth is, of course, as most of us know, that Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. borrows its money from the public. As at April, 1976, its outstanding borrowings were some $424 million and its current prospectus proposes to raise an extra $110 million from the public. The public is paid a rate of 12 per cent by the corporation on this money. To the 12 per cent one adds approximately 1 per cent for procuration fees and direct borrowing costs, making a total of 13 per cent. The cost of running the corporation and paying wages, salaries, rentals, etc. would be another 2 per cent or 3 per cent, which would bring the rate to approximately 16 per cent. That is the rate at which the corporation must lend out money to cover its outgoings. The approximate rate at which it lends out—because in this
private enterprise community, thank God, it is permitted to make a profit—is approximately 18 per cent.

How is it that companies like Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. can "fiddle" the public when they are taking a margin as small as 2 per cent on the total borrowing costs of 16 per cent? Sometimes the moderation of these hire-purchase companies astounds me. This point could be proved to some extent by backing up the fact that Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. is not alone in giving 12 per cent interest for money. General Motors Acceptance Corporation Australia—an American-owned corporation where the interest and principal are guaranteed unconditionally by the parent company—goes up to 12·5 per cent. Another large company, Mercantile Credits Ltd., goes to 12·25 per cent. The Australian Resources Development Bank Ltd. in its latest prospectus gets away with 10·8 per cent because it is a Government instrumentality. All margins taken by these companies are as small as that taken by Custom Credit Corporation Ltd.

According to the quarterly summary of Australian statistics produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, interest rates for short-term loans and for Commonwealth bonds have moved at the following rates: In June, 1972, during the McMahon régime, the rate for 13-week Treasury notes was 4·5 per cent, a low interest rate in an era of low inflation. In June, 1973, after seven months of the Whitlam Government, the rate had risen to 4·91 per cent; and by June, 1974, the rate had escalated by over 100 per cent to 10·75 per cent. This situation was caused by financial madness and by a Government that would not hesitate to print notes whenever it needed them.

In June, 1972, the 20-year bond rate yield was 5·99 per cent. In June, 1973, it rose to 6·99 per cent, and in June, 1974, during our darkest days and hours, it had risen to 9·49 per cent, an increase of more than 50 per cent from the time when the Liberal Government was in power. The interest rates increased by 50 per cent during the dark middle years of the Whitlam régime, and inflation quadrupled. There is some correlation between inflation and interest, of course; why should people lend their money at low interest rates during highly inflationary periods?

The following exercise may be of some value: Let us assume that a person lends $100 for one year at 12 per cent interest to Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. During the year his interest would amount to $12, but he would have to pay at least $4 out of that in tax, so the $100 would become $108. However, supposing that during this period there was 15 per cent inflation, then $15 would have to be deducted from the $108. This means that at the end of the year the $108 that the person obtained was really worth only $93, so the person who lends money to the hire purchase company loses.

In times of high interest rates it is obvious that inflation represents a hidden bonus to the borrower, because he borrows a fixed amount of money, and at the end of the loan repayment period he has an increasing amount with which to pay it off.

Although Mr. Galbally mentioned Custom Credit Corporation Ltd. and the bank hire-purchase companies, he was not really complaining about their operations; what he was alluding to was the high interest charges made by a few back-yard money-lenders. They charge 48 per cent when they lend money. Admittedly they are small operators who lend small amounts of money—from $20 to $50—on unsecured terms and their bad debt rate is very high. In some areas it is suggested that the usurer is entitled to charge 48 per cent because his net profit at the end of the year is less than it would have been if he had fewer bad debts.
I suggest that John Maynard Keynes, the well-known economist of world standing, would have apoplexy if he listened to Labor leaders in the Federal, State and municipal areas talking about finance, interest rates and inflation. The Labor Party knows nothing about finance; that has been proved time after time, particularly in the past three years. The Labor Party knows so little about finance that it brought this country to the verge of economic bankruptcy, although its members do not realize it.

The wealthy tend to borrow more money than the poor. The biggest borrowers in the market are private companies, including hire-purchase companies. They pay the high rates which were created by three years of Labor mismanagement. Obviously we should like interest rates to be lower, but they cannot be lowered by legislation.

If legislation interfered with free market movements and with the margins that people are entitled to charge over and above the bond rate, the money would not be lent and it would remain in other areas where it might not work so actively.

Mr. Galbally has proved that he does not know as much about finance as a constipated cat. We have heard him state today what we can do to arrest interest rates but we must remember the remarks made earlier in this debate by his colleague Mr. Elliot, who said, "Lawyers know nothing about finance, and I include my boss, Mr. Galbally".

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. G. Fry in the chair)—

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PAPER.

The following paper, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, was laid on the table by the Clerk—


ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, September 21.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.16 p.m. until Tuesday, September 21.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

(Question No. 146)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister of Education—

Does the Government intend to implement any of the recommendations of the Russell report into religious education in Victorian schools; if so, what recommendations will be adopted and for what reasons?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General): The answer supplied by the Minister of Education is—

The Minister of Education has set up a small representative committee to assess the recommendations of the Russell report on religious education in Victoria and in the light of these considerations to advise him in respect to appropriate action. The committee is still giving consideration to its task.
LICENSING OF SWIMMING POOL OPERATORS.
(Question No. 150)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Health—

Is licensing of swimming pool operators being considered; if so, what will be the requirements of the licence, and for what reason is licensing being considered?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Health): The answer is—

(a) The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation has convened a committee to consider aspects relating to the licensing of swimming pool operators and representatives of my department attend meetings of that committee.

(b) As yet, consideration has not been given to the requirements of the licence.

(c) Licensing is being considered as a result of representations by the Swimming Pool Superintendents Association. My department is also concerned in any measures which might lead to improvement in health and safety in connection with swimming pools.

GOVERNMENT BOARDS AND AUTHORITIES.
(Question No. 156)

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

(a) What permanent boards and/or authorities have been set up by the Government since 1st July, 1972?

(b) What was the total expenditure of each of these boards and/or authorities for the financial year 1975-76?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer supplied by the Premier is—

I shall make inquiries and supply the information to the honorable member as early as possible.

CRIME STATISTICS.
(Question No. 169)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

What percentage of the wrongdoers mentioned in the crime statistics released by the Chief Commissioner of Police are—(i) full-time students; and (ii) unemployed?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

The information requested is not available as statistics of this nature are not maintained.

RIVER MURRAY.
(Question No. 170)

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

(a) Is he aware of the serious erosion problem on the River Murray, between Lake Hume and Yarrawonga weir, due to unnatural river flows?

(b) Can he confirm that, following the completion of Dartmouth dam, there will be higher flows in the river for longer periods?

(c) Has any study been undertaken of the probable effects of high flows on low lying areas; if not, will he, in conjunction with the New South Wales Minister for Conservation, authorize such a study?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply): As the answer is lengthy, I suggest that, by leave of the House, it be incorporated in Hansard without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

(a) On 22nd July, this year I inspected the River Murray between Corowa and Albury in company with the Deputy Chairman of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Executive Engineer of the River Murray Commission, representatives of the River Murray action group and local Parliamentary representatives.

During that inspection, I saw a number of instances where erosion of the banks of the River Murray was evident. I also inspected areas where desnagging works were currently being carried out under the general direction of the River Murray Commission in order to improve stream flow conditions.

(b) It is my understanding that in relation to River Murray operations in the post-Dartmouth situation the duration of high regulated flows would be extended from time to time.

(c) The Victorian Government recognizes the significance of the River Murray not only to Victoria but also to the States of New South Wales and South Australia and has been endeavouring to consider the general problems of management of the River Murray in conjunction with the Governments of these States and the Commonwealth.

The recommendations of the River Murray working party which deal with some aspects of management of the river are currently
being studied by the Governments concerned and it is expected that a decision on future action will be made by all Governments in the very near future.

The River Murray along its border with Victoria is, in fact, in New South Wales and, consequently, Victoria has limited constitutional powers to deal with problems of overall river management. Victoria, however, as party to the River Murray Waters Agreement, is involved in the activities of the River Murray Commission and is associated with the works of that commission in the improvement of the river to prevent the loss of regulated flows.

The River Murray Commission is carrying out extensive geomorphological and hydraulic studies of the section of the river between Lake Hume and Echuca and this should add to a better understanding of the behaviour of the river under conditions of both flow and regulated flows.

I understand that the results of recent comprehensive investigations dealing with this section of the river will shortly be available for consideration by the River Murray Commission.

**PRIMARY PRODUCERS' MUNICIPAL RATES.**

(Question No. 172)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

In the event of rural municipalities accepting his suggestion that rates be remitted or deferred for primary producers affected by the rural crisis, made at the seminar on the rural crisis at Shepparton on 19th August, 1976, will the Government make special grants available specifically to overcome the shortfalls in revenue which such councils will incur?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister for Local Government): As the answer is lengthy I suggest that by leave of the House it be incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows—

The honorable member's question is framed in a manner designed to obtain political capital, whatever the answer. Its phraseology does not fairly summarize or accurately report any suggestions which I made at Shepparton, and reports one aspect of one suggestion of strictly limited applicability, without regard to qualifications or context, as if it were a general suggestion, applying in all cases to all municipalities. It was not, and I repudiate the honorable member's approach.

At Shepparton, I emphasized that completely differing situations existed in different municipalities, and said—

"It is quite obvious that in meeting these different situations that exist, different approaches, different perspectives, and different solutions will be needed. No one has a magic wand to wave and to find an answer to all the problems of the rural crisis as it affects people and as it affects local government.

The essence is that these are all different and that different situations will need specific examination on the particular merits and facts. One thing I would urge upon you is the willingness to adopt new approaches and new solutions."

In discussing the different nature of differing municipalities, I noted that some municipalities (predominantly rural) might have no unutilized rating capacity whatever, whilst others may well have, in cases where there were substantial township populations whose incomes rose in accordance with inflation, whereas those of the primary producer did not. I said—

"It may well be that some rates should rise proportionately, that the unutilized rating capacity ought to be better utilized and that councils ought more greatly to exercise their discretion to impose lower farm rates and to afford relief to a greater range of persons regarded as being in 'necessitous circumstances' many of whom will be in the rural sector.

Please don't take what I'm saying as a general plea to increase rates. Nothing could be further from my mind. But I do suggest, and suggest very seriously, that each individual council will need to look most closely at its own situation and to see whether there is an unutilized rating capacity which should be called upon whilst at the same time affording relief to those in need and to the rural sector generally, through the two measures which I've mentioned.

Now earlier I mentioned the need for Governments to maintain a course which will assist as best Governments can, to restore prosperity to the rural sector.

It is obvious that if the course envisaged above appears appropriate to the circumstances of a particular municipality, then the result will be on the one hand an increase in revenue to the municipality, and on the other greater relief to those most needing it.

**STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE CONTROLLER FOR WERRIBEE.**

(Question No. 173)

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

(a) Who is the State Emergency Service co-ordinator for Werribee?
(b) When was he appointed, on what basis, and what experience has he in such work?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

(a) The local Victoria State Emergency Service controller for the Shire of Werribee is Mr. F. H. Waters.

(b) It is the prerogative of a municipal council to select and appoint a State Emergency Service controller for such municipality. The Shire of Werribee advised the Co-ordinator of the State Emergency Service by letter dated 24th December, 1974, that the council had appointed Mr. Waters as controller, in a voluntary capacity for the shire.

POLICE INQUIRY.

(Question No. 175)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomas-town Province) asked the Chief Secretary—

When will the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Police Force (Beach inquiry) be tabled in Parliament?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Chief Secretary): The answer is—

The report has not been received and I have no indication as to when it will be submitted. When it is received, the usual procedures relating to reports of boards of inquiry will be followed.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, September 15, 1976.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) took the chair at 2.34 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

BEER PRICES.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): In view of the profound interest shown by the Premier in the state of the liquor industry and his apparent lack of interest in the consumer, can the honorable gentleman indicate what action he will take in respect of the latest announcements on prices by Carlton and United Breweries Ltd.? What price does the Government intend fixing as the minimum price for packaged beer?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): It is difficult to sort the accuracies from the inaccuracies in that question. The Government has no intention of fixing the price of beer. It is proposed, as was recommended by the report of the board of inquiry that was tabled in the House yesterday, that the Liquor Control Commission be given the power to fix a fair price for beer. That is the first point.

The second point is that this procedure is not new; it applied in Victoria and other States up to the end of last year for many years, without query or complaint. It is not new to have a fair price for packaged beer fixed by the Liquor Control Commission.

The third point is that in fixing that price, if and when this Parliament gives the commission power, the commission would, of course, have regard to the wholesale prices at which the beer is obtained from the breweries.

NORTH WING OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): I ask the Premier: Does the fact that certain renovations have been carried out in the temporary section of Parliament House indicate that the building of the north wing has been postponed?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): Not at all. The new temporary section was built to enable the north wing to be constructed and that will be done with the utmost despatch, according to the funds that are available, and it is proposed to make funds available.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: I mean the renovations of the existing temporary part of Parliament House.

Mr. HAMER: That question should be directed to the Speaker, who is in charge of such things. The Government merely provides the funds.
EAST PRESTON TRAMLINE.

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe): Is the Minister of Transport able to provide any further information on the proposal to extend the tramline in East Preston?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board has put forward a proposal that the line should be extended as far as Settlement Road, through Plenty Road, past the La Trobe University. The proposal was approved by the Governor in Council about a week ago, and approval was given for the matter to be referred to the Public Works Committee. That has been done. The Tramways Board suggested that sufficient patronage would be available to provide at peak periods a four minutes' service and at off-peak periods a fourteen minutes' service. The cost for the installation and the extension of the line would be $6·7 million and $1·6 million for the trams. The proposal has reached that stage at present.

BEER PRICES.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): I ask the Premier a question arising from the answer he gave to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with respect to the powers of the Liquor Control Commission to fix beer prices. The Premier stated that these powers, if exercised by the commission, would take into account the wholesale price charged by the breweries. In view of that statement, does it follow that the Premier excludes any consideration of the commission, if it is exercising these powers, having the power to include the wholesale price charged by the breweries and, if so, why does the Premier believe the breweries should be subject to such privileged treatment?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The last part of the question asks for an opinion. The first part is admissible.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I find it difficult to follow that question. I was asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition whether the manufacturing price from the breweries would affect the price ultimately fixed by the Liquor Control Commission. In my reply I said it would be taken into account, and of course that is one of the bases on which the fair price will be decided. I do not follow the rest of the question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Of course, that will not be the only factor. The Liquor Control Commission has authority from this Parliament under its own Act to have regard to the economics of this industry. It can take into account a wide range of factors in reaching its conclusion, of which the price of packaged beer coming from the brewery is only one.

HOUSING COMMISSION RENTS.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): Following the statement by Commissioner Ashman in the press last week that there would be an increase in housing commission rents can the Minister of Housing inform the House when it is expected that the increase will take place and whether it will be of the order of $9 to $10 a week?

Mr. HAYES (Minister of Housing): Honorable members will recall that last week the Premier answered a similar question couched in more general terms. The Premier indicated to the House then that as the last increase in Housing Commission rents occurred in January of this year it was unlikely any increase would occur until January of next year, in terms of a twelve-month adjustment. The Housing Commission is required to consider all cost factors annually under the terms of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and to make adjustments accordingly.

There is certainly no validity in the suggestion that any increase would be of the order of $9 or $10—perhaps 9 to 10 per cent, the way we are
looking at it, but certainly not $9 to $10, which would be quite over the fence.

**YOUTHS SLEEPING IN CARS.**

Mrs. PATRICK (Brighton): Has the attention of the Minister for Social Welfare been drawn to an article in the Herald stating that many youths sleep in cars because they have nowhere else to sleep?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Social Welfare): My attention has not been drawn to the particular article referred to by the honorable member for Brighton, which relates to young people having to sleep in cars. This could be a reflection on our inability in the community to establish family relationships which ensure that there is care for each and every person. It could also be caused by the fact that young persons, because of unemployment, have insufficient money with which to obtain low-cost accommodation. Alternatively it could be a matter of choice by the young persons concerned for a variety of reasons. If the honorable member can furnish me with more details I shall look into the matter.

**HOSPITALS SUPERANNUATION SCHEME.**

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): Is the Premier aware that there is extreme concern amongst the various organizations concerned in the hospital area over the continued failure by the Government to make any specific commitment for a hospital superannuation scheme? If the Premier is aware of this, is he also aware that those organizations have written to him today and, in a letter delivered by hand this morning to his department, asked for a deputation to meet him and other persons? If the Premier is aware of this, will he agree to meet that deputation in order to prevent industrial action occurring which could destroy or make difficult the operation of Victoria's hospitals?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): It appears that the honorable member for Brunswick was handed a copy of the letter before I was, because I have not seen it yet. However, I am quite prepared to meet a deputation from the hospitals. A great deal of work has been carried out on a superannuation scheme for hospital employees and I hope by the time the deputation is arranged I shall be able to give them some details of it. A great deal of work has been performed, particularly by the Government Actuary, and I believe the scheme is now approaching the stage when it could be presented to Parliament.

**LAND COMPENSATION.**

Mr. COLLINS (Noble Park): I direct a question to the Minister for Planning with reference to the committee established by the State Government to inquire into land compensation. Firstly, can the Minister inform the House what stage the committee has reached in its deliberations in reviewing submissions sent in by individuals and groups affected by various zoning proposals? Secondly, is the committee of inquiry prepared to receive a personal representation from each applicant so that he can elaborate on his submission? Many of the people who made submissions are new Australians who do not speak good English, and they would like this opportunity.

Mr. HAYES (Minister for Planning): I expect that the inquiry will be completed and a report provided to the Government about next March. As I understand it, the board of inquiry is at present looking at each of the submissions which it has received. The board intends to call before it particular witnesses where there is an argument which the board, of its own volition, thinks is worth pursuing. Beyond that I do not think the board intends to invite each person who has submitted evidence to come before it as a matter of course.
PETROL PRICES.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): I ask the Premier: In view of the Government's decision to fix the price of beer, does the Government now intend to examine the difficulties of petrol resellers in view of the unfortunate circumstances in which many proprietors of garages find themselves, and does the Government intend to fix a minimum price for the sale of petrol? If not, why not?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The Government does not intend to fix the price of anything. It intends to restore to the Liquor Control Commission the power which it has exercised for many years in this State of determining a fair price for packaged beer. The commission exercised that power for many years, until this time last year, and everybody observed the price which it recommended.

The recommendation from the commission is that that power be restored for the future maintenance of this industry, and for the protection of some hundreds of small businesses and some thousands of jobs.

Mr. WILKES: That is not true. Look at the state of unemployment in the industry.

Mr. HAMER: I invite the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to look at—

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! the honorable member for Northcote has already asked a question. He did not ask this one.

Mr. FOGARTY: The free enterprise system!

Mr. HAMER: I thank the honorable member for Sunshine for that interjection. The Government believes in free competition. It also believes that when an Act of Parliament lays on the Liquor Control Commission, as one of ours does, obligations to maintain the economics and the stability of this industry, and when under that Act tremendous burdens are laid on licensees based on a fair return for their operation, there is a special case, as the Government sees it and as the commission saw it, for acting as the Government determined to do.

YARRAM TO SALE BUS SERVICE.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I ask the Minister of Education: Has a decision been made on the provision of a departmental school bus service between Yarram and Sale for senior technical school pupils? If so, what form will it take and is other information available on this subject?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): Yes, it is intended to run a bus next year from Yarram to Sale. It will take students wishing to attend the technical school in Sale, and will also, if there is room, take pupils to registered schools from form IV. onwards, and possibly from form III.

HOSPITAL FOR SUNBURY.

Mr. GUY (Gisborne): Could the Assistant Minister of Health ascertain from the Minister of Health the current priority for the construction of a public hospital in Sunbury, which hospitals have a higher priority in potential construction terms, and what criteria were used to determine the higher priorities?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I shall be delighted to have inquiries made on the honorable member’s behalf and to have the information forwarded to him.

MOTOR TRADERS COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. AMOS (Morwell): Will the Minister representing the Chief Secretary ascertain whether it is a fact that the annual report of the Motor Traders Committee was received by the Chief Secretary’s office a considerable time ago, and if so, when it is likely that the report will be tabled in Parliament to give members an opportunity to gauge the worth of the committee and of the legislation which it set up?
Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): I shall be happy to ascertain whether the information given to the honorable member is accurate.

JETTIES ON GIPPSLAND LAKES.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East): I direct a question to the Minister of Lands. Is it a fact that it was at the behest of the Lands Department that the Public Works Department indicated that it proposes to remove mooring facilities on rivers leading into the Gippsland lakes? If so, is the Minister aware that no other mooring facilities are available to owners of boats using the existing facilities, and can he advise which department will accept responsibility for boats that are lost or damaged if they are removed from these jetties in the absence of the owners?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): I am not aware of the situation to which the honorable member refers, but if an instruction has been given to remove any moorings in the area, it would be only because they were originally constructed without permission—in other words, illegally.

EMERGENCY RESCUE SERVICE VEHICLES.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham): I direct a question to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary. Yesterday at 8.30 a.m. in the height of the morning peak traffic a serious head-on collision occurred in Beach Road, Beaumaris, resulting in a driver being trapped in one of the cars for at least one hour before he could be extracted by emergency personnel. In the light of this and other similar accidents which occur regularly, can the Minister advise whether any action is being taken to provide suitably equipped rescue vehicles for emergency services, both in Melbourne and in major provincial cities, to alleviate this type of problem?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is, "Yes": at all times through the Hospitals and Charities Commission, the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board and police units available to the Government action is being taken by the provision of equipment to prevent the type of unnecessary distress caused in situations such as that to which the honorable member referred.

GELLIBRAND LIGHT.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): My question to the Minister of Public Works concerns the collision of the Melbourne Trader with the Gellibrand Light. Has the Minister considered the preliminary report to which I drew his attention last week, and is it a fact that that report indicates that evidence was given suggesting that the fog signal on the light was not sounding immediately prior to or at the time of the collision? If so, can the Minister tell the House how that omission occurred?

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): It is six or seven weeks since I read the report and the evidence given in the preliminary inquiry. I cannot remember the exact evidence of each witness but I can state that when I studied the report I could see no reason for setting up a court of marine inquiry, and that is why there is none.

MILK CONTRACTS.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): Will the Minister of Agriculture lay on the table of the Library the files from the Milk Board containing all the names of Victorian dairy farmers who have milk contracts?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): I am not sure that that information is on a file; it may be contained in a computer. A computer would be rather incongruous on the table of the Library. I will make arrangements with the honorable member to see if the information he asks for can be made available to him.
GOLDEN SQUARE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mr. McClure (Bendigo): In respect to tenders currently being called for additions to the Golden Square Primary School in Laurel Street, can the Minister of Public Works give an undertaking that all builders interested in tendering for the job will be given the opportunity of doing so?

Mr. Dunstan (Minister of Public Works): Many tenders are invited by the Public Works Department. I can only say from memory that this one is under the selective tendering scheme which has been used by the Public Works Department for approximately ten years now. I will not give the assurance asked for by the honorable member.

BUSES TO HIGHPOINT WEST.

Mr. Simpson (Niddrie): I address a question to the Minister of Transport. It relates to the five additional bus services introduced last week to service the ailing shopping centre of Highpoint West. Are any of those bus services being subsidized from public money and, if so, by how much and from what source?

Mr. Rafferty (Minister of Transport): At the moment I cannot inform the honorable member on this matter. I think this was arranged while I was overseas. I recall that the bus services were introduced for a period of six months. I will obtain the information for the honorable member.

DROUGHT RELIEF.

Mr. Austin (Ripon): I address to the Premier a question on drought aid from the Federal Government. Initially, that Government offered a subsidy of $10 for the slaughter of cattle, a subsidy of 15 cents for the slaughter of sheep, and aid for water provision, on the condition that the State Government spent $3.5 million on this relief during the financial year. That was unacceptable. Since then the Federal Government has made another offer of $1 for $1 which is also unacceptable. Will the Premier approach the Federal Government to see if it will make a sensible offer which will really benefit the drought-stricken farmers of this State?

Mr. Hamer (Premier and Treasurer): I remind the House that we have a national disaster plan. What the Federal Government has done is to add to the acceptable expenditure under that plan the three items mentioned by the honorable member for Ripon. As the honorable member said, that would require the State Government to spend $3.5 million in any year before it became eligible for any subsidy from Federal funds. The alternative which has since been offered is that, instead of that form of the national disaster scheme, the State Government should agree to share with the Federal Government on a $1 for $1 basis right from the start.

However, it has been laid down that if we adopt that form of the scheme we cannot revert to the first scheme. We therefore have to make a choice on whether to adopt either of those schemes. That is giving rise to considerable thought at present. What the honorable member is asking is whether we should seek a third and better scheme. Neither of the schemes which have so far been proposed directly benefits the drought-stricken farmers to whom the honorable member referred.

Mr. McInnes: It makes no difference either way.

Mr. Hamer: That is so. Undoubtedly, a more acceptable scheme would be one which gave direct assistance, with a number of measures. I should have thought, for instance, that the family household support scheme would be one, and some form of rural employment scheme would be another, which would bring more direct aid to those concerned and which would be more acceptable.
BREAST CANCER.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park): I ask the Assistant Minister of Health, who represents the Minister of Health, whether he is aware that despite extensive national campaigns and improvements in surgical techniques the mortality rate in women suffering cancer of the breast remains unchanged over the past 25 years? I ask him further whether he is aware that deaths from breast cancer are the most common form of cancer deaths in women? In view of these extremely serious figures will the Minister provide money for a special research centre to be established in Victoria to bring this State up to date with research which has been carried out overseas with a view to finding a cure for this dreadful disease?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I am not aware of the details of the statistics to which the honorable member refers, but no doubt these figures are readily available. The question fails to take into consideration the extensive programme which has been undertaken within the Department of Health for a long time and the large injection of Department of Health funds which has been ploughed into areas concerned with both cancer research and treatment through established institutions and at research level.

I am not in a position to either confirm or deny the trend to which the honorable member refers, but I will certainly have the matter examined by the department.

CRICKET PLAGUE.

Mr. BURGIN (Polwarth): Because of the extensive damage being done by crickets throughout the western areas of Victoria and the effect this is having in creating additional problems because of the continuing drought, will the Premier present a case to the Prime Minister for a joint Federal-State eradication programme to be instituted as an approved drought aid?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The proposition might be on firmer ground if it were divorced from drought aid and made a separate programme. I should prefer it to be a parallel programme to the arbo-encephalitis programme which eradicated mosquitoes in the Murray Valley. The cricket infestation has now reached plague proportions in western Victoria, which would justify such an application. I thank the honorable member and will take the matter further.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North): Is the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation aware that in New South Wales the Totalizator Agency Board, in contrast to what happens in Victoria, pays out dividends to winning punters after every race? This method is believed to boost the Totalizator Agency Board turnover in that State by a large amount. In view of the importance of the Totalizator Agency Board turnover in Victoria, not only to the sport of racing but also to the State's economy and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, could consideration be given to the Victorian Totalizator Agency Board paying out after every race?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): This matter has been the subject of serious consideration by the Totalizator Agency Board from time to time. I, personally, do not believe there will be any change in policy, but I will refer the honorable member's query to the board and once again examine its reply.

NATIONAL WATER POLICY STATEMENT.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): By leave, I move—

That there be laid before this House a copy of the National Water Policy Statement which was adopted by the Australian Water Resources Council on 24th October, 1975.

The motion was agreed to.
The following papers, pursuant to the directions of several Acts of Parliament, were laid on the table by the Clerk—


DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): By leave, I move—

That a chair be provided on the floor of the House for the Right Honorable Margaret Thatcher, M.P., Leader of the Opposition in the United Kingdom Parliament.

The motion was agreed to.

GORDON TECHNICAL COLLEGE BILL.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the establishment of an institution to be known as the Gordon Technical College to assume certain of the functions performed by the Gordon Institute of Technology at Geelong, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

RACING (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): I move—

That I have leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Racing Act 1958 and for other purposes.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): I ask the Minister to give the House a brief explanation of this proposed legislation. I do not like to vote blindly on these matters. It is a responsibility of a Minister to provide honorable members with information on the Bills that are presented.

Mr. DIXON: I should be only too happy to read the second-reading notes at this stage.

Mr. WILTON: The Minister has moved a motion that he be given leave to bring in a Bill and the question before the House is that this Bill be read a first time. I do not know whether the Government has reached the stage when Ministers are so ignorant of what is going on in their departments that they are unable to inform the Parliament on proposed legislation until a public servant places the second-reading notes in their hands. If that is the situation I am not surprised, because of the laxity of the Government over the years. Surely it is not beyond the Minister's capabilities to give a brief description of what the Bill is about.

Mr. DIXON: Yesterday I issued a press statement on the content of this Bill.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn): I raise a point of order. As I understand the situation, nobody is entitled to speak on the first reading of the Bill and it is put to the House without debate.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! There is no point of order. The question that was put to the House was that the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation and the Minister of Agriculture have leave to bring in this Bill. At that point the Bill may be debated. The honorable member may rise to a point of order if the question is that the Bill be read a first time.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I support the remarks of the honorable member for Broadmeadows. It is worth while to know that this is one of the few Parliaments in Australia where explanations of Bills are not given at this stage. At one time the Opposition took the view, and the Executive Government responded to that view, that explanations should be given at this stage.

Mr. HAMER: When requested.
Mr. WILKES: Yes. I thought the request by the honorable member for Broadmeadows was reasonable. The Minister may not have thought so, but it does not behove the Minister to pass it off as being just a whim. It is of interest to members on this side of the House to have a brief description by the Minister of the contents of the Bill.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): It is still the prerogative of the Minister whether he does as is suggested by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): The request is reasonable. Briefly, the Bill seeks to enable the Trotting Control Board to stage trotting events both at Moonee Valley racecourse and at the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds. The Town Planning Appeals Tribunal restricted the number of meetings that could be held at Moonee Valley racecourse to 43 a year. It is the wish of the Trotting Control Board to continue metropolitan trotting weekly and the Royal Agricultural Society is only too happy to enable that to take place by having some meetings at the showgrounds. The Bill facilitates that by enabling the Minister to issue a licence to both venues.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): I move—

That the Bill be printed and, by leave, the second reading be made an Order of the Day for later this day.

There is some urgency in this matter because it is desired to provide the Liquor Control Commission with the authority to grant a licence for the Exhibition Building in time for a function to be held in the first week of October.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I have discussed this matter with the Deputy Premier and there is still plenty of time.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! From those remarks I take it that leave is refused.

Mr. WILKES: Leave is refused.

It was ordered that the Bill be printed and the second reading be made an Order of the Day for next day.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

I present to the House the Public Works and Services Bill 1976. It seeks approval to appropriations totalling...
$372 million from the Works and Services Account to cover expenditure on a wide range of public works during the next twelve months.

The bulk of the estimated expenditure covered in the table to clause 2 relates to works carried out by the Public Works Department on public buildings and port facilities under its immediate control, and by that department on buildings and services for the purpose of its "client departments". The Bill also provides the necessary authority for expenditure on the general hospital building programme carried out by the Hospitals and Charities Commission and on those works, grants and other purposes which fall outside the scope of standing appropriations and of the three annual Bills appropriating funds from the Works and Services Account for water supply, transport and forests.

In accordance with established practice, the proposed provisions have been calculated to cover expenditure on the various items during a period of approximately twelve months from the coming into operation of this legislation until a similar measure is passed late in 1977.

Two documents have been circulated with the Bill for the information of honorable members—an explanatory statement and an explanatory memorandum. The printed explanatory statement sets out for each item in the table the proposed expenditure in the current financial year compared with actual expenditure in 1975–76 as well as the proposed provision in the Bill. The explanatory memorandum contains explanations of the content of each item and details of proposed expenditure in 1976–77 to assist honorable members in their consideration of the Bill.

There is one particular matter to which I want to draw attention in relation to the Bill. It relates to the numbering of the items in the table which, for the first time, are not consecutive. It has been traditional for the items to be numbered in strict numerical sequence. However, with the increased use of the computer in handling financial transactions and records, it is desirable that the numbering of items in the table should remain constant over relatively long periods of time, and that the numbering should provide scope for additional items to be inserted as necessary without affecting the numbering of existing and continuing items.

This is the present situation in the case of the various divisions in the annual Appropriation Act. Honorable members will note from the explanation given in the explanatory memorandum under item 18 that substantial increases to the capacity of the Public Service Board central computer will be made during the coming year. It is expected that the largest users of the increased computer capacity will be the Education Department and the Public Works Department.

It is not my intention to comment on the individual items of the Bill at this stage because of the availability to honorable members of the information which has been furnished on each item in the explanatory memorandum to which I referred earlier.

I might add that in the past the second-reading explanation of the Public Works and Services Bill has taken anything up to one or one-and-a-half hours. I am sure that honorable members will be pleased that I have condensed the second-reading speech on this occasion because the information on the various items is contained with full explanation in the papers that have been circulated. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Bundoora), the debate was adjourned.

Mr. DUNSTAN (Minister of Public Works): I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday next.

Last week, the Leader of the Opposition moved that the Budget debate be adjourned for one week. It is most unusual to hear the screams of derision from members of the Opposition because I have suggested an adjournment of one week on this Bill.
This measure is of equal importance with the Budget or perhaps even less important, and therefore I have taken a lead from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. EDMUNDS** (Ascot Vale): The Minister is entitled to his opinion concerning the importance of the Bill. The Opposition considers that it is an important measure because it deals with capital works throughout the State. If the Opposition is to give the Bill its full attention to ensure what the Government is about in its proposed appropriations, more time is needed. The Minister might reconsider the period of adjournment and extend it to two weeks, which would provide the honorable member for Bundoora with the necessary time to give the Bill the scrutiny which its importance deserves.

By leave, the motion was withdrawn, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, September 29.

**CLUSTER TITLES (AMENDMENT) BILL.**

**Mr. DUNSTAN** (Minister of Public Works): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its object is to repeal section 5 of the Cluster Titles Act so that villa unit developments may proceed under the Cluster Titles Act or the Strata Titles Act, whichever is more convenient. In another place, the Minister for Local Government gave an extensive second-reading speech and reviewed the operations of the Act. I do not propose to follow that course.

I merely inform honorable members that it is a simple Bill to repeal section 5 of the Cluster Titles Act so that either the Cluster Titles Act or the Strata Titles Act can be used for unit developments. I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr. EDMUNDS** (Ascot Vale): The Opposition has received representations on this matter. The Bill has been thoroughly debated in another place and has the support of all parties. The representations reveal that the Cluster Titles Act has caused a great deal of confusion to applicants for permits in various municipalities. Probably, the Government has received similar representations and therefore now proposes this amending Bill. As the Bill has been thoroughly debated in another place, the Labor Party does not oppose the measure.

**Mr. McINNES** (Gippsland South): The Bill tends to reflect the somewhat sloppy legislation that was originally brought in on this important matter concerning the development of new subdivisions. In its first two years of operation, the Act has led to considerable confusion amongst developers with the result that the whole scheme has not really got off the ground in the manner that it should have. The National Party has no great objection to the Bill, which simply repeals section 5 of the principal Act and thus gives developers the option of electing to use either the Cluster Titles Act or the Strata Titles Act.

The Minister's second-reading notes indicate some of the problems and that the new scheme still has all the difficulties and disadvantages of the earlier legislation concerning subdivisions with none of the advantages. It appears that rather sloppy and weak drafting was involved in bringing the principal Act into operation. However, the National Party does not oppose the Bill which has come from another place.

The motion was agreed to.

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

**APPROPRIATION (1976–77, No. 1) BILL.**

**(Budget Debate.)**

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of Mr. Hamer (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.
Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): The Treasurer has presented to the House a Budget which is inadequate in the statistical data it should provide as a basis for informed discussion by members of this House. By way of illustration, if one takes the Consolidated Fund and the various trust funds in their totality, it appears that an amount as much as $1,000 million on general outlays of the State has been excluded from the normal budgetary process. This includes figures involving the specific purpose grants which, in recent years, have become one of the most volatile areas of State expenditure. It is exceedingly difficult for all honorable members to make an intelligent contribution to the debate, which the people of this State are entitled to expect from their members, if the Budget Papers do not provide the range of material upon which honorable members can either make positive criticisms or put whatever arguments they wish on the Budget.

I suggest to the Treasurer, and particularly to the Director of Finance, that, in future, Budget data should be prepared in the form of the presentation of the Commonwealth Budget and in conformity with standard national accounting. That would require, first of all, that there should be data of total outlays and receipts in the Budget sector, classification of outlays by economically meaningful categories such as current expenditure on goods and services, classification of receipts by meaningful categories and classification of expenditure such as education and health.

The honorable member for Knox will enlarge on this important aspect which the Labor Party believes is a matter of Government accounting, and which it is hoped will be taken into account by the Treasurer and will involve a change in the future presentation of Budget Papers.

I move as an amendment to the second-reading motion—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words, "this House refuses to read this Bill a second time because the Budget (a) accepts the economic strategy of the Commonwealth Government's Budget which will (i) increase unemployment; (ii) maintain existing levels of inflation; and (iii) lower real wages, thus decreasing consumer spending; (b) will increase areas of unemployment in the Victorian work force; (c) underwrites a reduction in real terms of 9 per cent in the works and services programme; (d) fails to produce any meaningful economic strategy for the development of manufacturing industry; (e) fails to provide effectively for the future of growth centres at (i) Albury-Wodonga; and (ii) Geelong; (f) makes no significant attempt to alleviate the economic crisis in rural industry, particularly in areas of dairying and beef production; (g) reduces the availability of services to the whole community and in particular those most affected by hardship; (h) fails to reduce land costs and prevent the urban sprawl; and (i) accepts the 'new federalism' without ensuring sufficient resources for Victoria to maintain its existing programmes and ensure the future viability of local government".

The Treasurer stands condemned for introducing into the House a Budget which is incomplete in its accounting, deceitful in its rhetoric, and fundamentally irrelevant to the economic problems confronting the people of this State. The Budget is irrelevant because it fails to come to grips with the problem of unemployment that is currently casting a shadow over thousands of homes throughout the length and breadth of Victoria. The Budget is irrelevant because it is based on the falsity—to quote the Treasurer—that unemployment has fallen when, in fact, as the seasonally adjusted figures show, unemployment is clearly rising in Victoria, and it is rising month by month. The Budget is irrelevant because it prefers the Fraser strategy to create a permanent pool of unemployment to a strategy geared to the revival of economic activity and prosperity in Victoria.

The Opposition accuses the Government of having brought down a Budget which quite specifically ignores the needs of 77,546 Victorians who in August made up the pool of unemployment. If, in our national economy, the future of the Commonwealth is in the hands of a head prefect, this Budget proves that Victoria's economic destiny is in the
The expenditure by the State Government involves a high degree of involvement of the private sector. I would say that more than 80 per cent of virtually every dollar we spend in public works and services programmes would be absorbed by the private sector. There is no increase in real Budget outlays to provide a stimulus for Victoria's ailing economy. There is no Budget deficit to stimulate creation of the jobs so desperately needed by 77,000 Victorians.

Over the past twelve years the real value of all State and local government expenditure has increased at a rate of 5.7 per cent. That increase in local government and State expenditure has provided a shield against suffering in time of private sector recession. The action of the Victorian Treasurer withdraws that shield from the community at the very time it so desperately needs it. This Budget wantonly and wastefully drives people and other resources out of the public sector, which needs them most urgently, and into the private sector at a time when the private sector can offer people nothing but unemployment.

Perhaps the Treasurer might consider that I am somewhat uncharitable, by virtue of my political philosophy, when I condemn the fact that he talks with pride of the $14.6 million current account surplus. I point out, however, that the Federal Minister for Education, Senator Carrick, a man who shares the same political philosophy as the Treasurer, attacked the Tasmanian Government for having finished the financial year with a Budget surplus of $4 million. Senator Carrick said that the Tasmanian Government had the money to relieve the unemployment situation but it did nothing about it and that "borders on criminal negligence".

If Senator Carrick sees criminal negligence in a Budget surplus of $4 million in Tasmania, what will he say about a $14 million surplus in the Budget in Victoria? In the Senate...
on 8th September, the Treasurer's Liberal Party colleague and fellow Liberal Party Minister said—

If in the knowledge that there was gross unemployment in his State, a Premier deliberately withheld moneys which were available, then the Premier was creating and condoning gross unemployment in the State.

They are the words of Senator Carrick; they are not mine. I am bound to say on this issue that I believe it is a fair judgment to make.

It ought not to be a matter for the Treasurer to say, "I have saved $14 million". Rather he should explain to the House and to his party why those funds have not been used in the public sector to stimulate growth and employment.

Mr. HAMER: That is exactly how they are being expended.

Mr. HOLDING: I will leave it to the Treasurer to explain how they are being used. He begins with this surplus of $14 million, and perhaps the honorable gentleman can explain it to Senator Carrick, who seems to have one standard for a Budget surplus of $4 million in Tasmania but a completely different set of standards for a Budget surplus in Victoria.

Any Budget involves an exercise of options, and the Treasurer had options to exercise. At this stage last year when unemployment was lower, when the problems in the economy were not quite as bad as they seem to be at present, the Treasurer was content to budget for a deficit. This year, despite the fact that there is an allowance made for a $56 million hospitals pre-payment, there has been an increase in Treasury cash balances of more than $150 million, making a total of $284 million. At the same time the Treasurer has presented a Budget that is in balance.

One of the options that were available to the Treasurer was to produce this year a Budget that maintained a deficit, perhaps even slightly higher than the deficit of last financial year. But I am interested to know why the Treasurer considers it necessary to keep these cash surpluses and cash balances at such a high level given that, on the Treasurer's public admission, the economy needs a boost. Indeed, to listen to the injunctions of the Federal Treasurer, the Victorian Treasurer, like every other citizen in this State, is being urged to spend more.

I can understand the incapacity of a Victorian worker earning $150 a week, whose real income has been slashed almost daily as a result of the policies of the Federal Government and the Victorian Government, to spend more, and not to accept the economic advice of the Federal Treasurer. But I am at a loss to know why the persuasive Federal Treasurer cannot convince the Treasurer of Victoria—given the present state of the economy—that now is not the time for the Victorian Government to be sitting on large cash surpluses.

Mr. HAMER: Where?

Mr. HOLDING: I have already pointed out where. Perhaps the Treasurer has more difficulty in understanding his own accounts than members of the Opposition do. He should ask the Director of Finance to explain what a cash balance means. One must invite the Treasurer to make some statement to the House on the total Budget strategy which he seeks to employ and the economic philosophy he is pursuing. It seems the Treasurer is holding these funds in reserve. He accepts the economic philosophy of the Federal Treasurer under which he has approved of cut-backs in the public sector which will mean mounting unemployment and, in turn, in our view, a further recession in the general economy of the State.

Mr. HAMER: Where are the cash balances you speak about?

Mr. HOLDING: I have pointed to them. I should be happy to take this up with the Treasurer, but I suggest that he discuss it with the Director of Finance. What reaction does the
Treasurer have to the economic indicators which show that we will have a huge unemployment problem by December of this year? There is much talk about inflation in the Budget documents—the Premier sees that as a single issue—but there is little reference to the problem of unemployment. I think it is covered in one sentence. The Budget provides for a 1 per cent ceiling on the growth in the number of Government employees other than police and teachers, and a 13 per cent increase in expenditure from the Consolidated Fund. Provision in the Treasurer’s advance for unanticipated costs such as wage increases has been reduced from $80 million in 1975-76 to $50 million in the current year. In other words, any increases in wages which were about to take place will be cut on the basis that only $50 million will be allowed this year as against $80 million last year.

Mr. Hamer: Inflation will be a little lower.

Mr. Holding: An examination of these factors shows that the Government has based the Budget on an increase in the average wage cost which is actually lower than the 12 per cent increase assumed in the Federal Budget. In real terms the increases for this year amount to a reduction in purchasing power of massive proportions. In the light of a fairly certain rise in the consumer price index totalling 8 per cent in the final quarter of 1976 and the first quarter of 1977, this represents indexation at a rate which would reduce the real benefit of any indexation by 65 per cent. That is a huge reduction in the real purchasing power of wage and salary earners who rely on movements in the prices index for their salary increases.

I do not know how, in that situation, and with these sorts of indicators, the Treasurer believes the average member of the Victorian community can respond to an economic philosophy which says that he should spend more and by doing so increase the turnover of goods, thereby stimulating the private sector and so solving the problems of inflation. Things will not work out that way. It is that aspect of the Budget strategy which needs urgent review by the Treasurer.

Another matter of great concern is that the appropriation from the Consolidated Fund for works and services is reduced by about 4 per cent to a sum of $408.5 million. That means a reduction in real purchasing power amounting to almost 20 per cent. Even allowing for the application of the $14.6 million current account surplus for 1975-76 to the 1976-77 works and services programme, the total amount available in this area of the Budget remains lower—even in money terms—than what was provided for 1975-76. Even assuming that, contrary to all recent experience, all available funds for works and services will be spent in their entirety in the financial year—that is almost never achieved—it is an increase in money terms of only 1.4 per cent.

Given the inflation rate which, during question time, the Treasurer agreed would apply, that involves a reduction in real purchasing power of 13 per cent in the works and services programme. In our view this is a reduction which strikes at the most sensitive and exposed areas of Victoria’s economic well-being. It transfers resources from the public sector, which can put these funds to immediate use and provide the movement which is so desperately needed in the private sector.

The Budget succeeds in maintaining public sector spending in the current account areas which have least significance as a source of private sector recovery. It slashes the public sector capital expenditure on which the private sector so largely depends.

For example, the railways, which are a major customer for private sector goods and services, have had their funding for capital works
reduced in money terms from $32.3 million to $31.4 million. In purchasing power, that is a reduction of about 18 per cent. The honorable member for Melbourne will speak in more detail on this aspect of the Budget.

The Housing Commission is another major prop for the private sector. In real terms its expenditure is being reduced by 13 per cent, and its plants will be operating at only 55 per cent of capacity, despite Victoria's appalling waiting list for welfare housing. That aspect will be enlarged upon by the honorable member for Ascot Vale. The expenditure on sewerage works is being cut from $31 million to $13.1 million. That is a two-thirds reduction in real activity.

Mr. HAMER: That is a reduction in Federal funds.

Mr. HOLDING: I shall be interested to hear the comments of the Treasurer on this. It is a significant reduction. I understood the Treasurer to indicate publicly last week that that could cause substantial reductions in the work force of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. The honorable gentleman does not have to wait; I am indebted to the honorable member for Reservoir, who points out that Thompsons (Castlemaine) Ltd. recently stood down 54 workers and that another 23 were stood down on 9th September. The reason, as it was given to the workers who were retrenched, was that there was a lack of forward orders from the Government and from semi-Government utilities.

The same pattern is emerging at Ballarat, where another firm has laid off between 20 and 30 workers because of the lack of forward orders.

Mr. STEPHEN: There are two problems.

Mr. HOLDING: There are many problems. When these cut-backs occur in the public sector at State Government level, they adversely affect the private sector. We of the Opposition have been pointing this out to the Government for more than three years. That is the reality.

At the outset of his Budget speech the Treasurer claimed that unemployment had fallen in Victoria, that the slowing down of the economy had been arrested, and that there were clear signs of an upturn. The Treasurer must be the only person in Victoria who believes that. If one reads the financial journals and examines any of the economic indices, indicators, statistics, or figures, one must reject that proposition. I accuse the Treasurer of making assertions for which there is no support whatsoever in current economic indicators. We accuse the Treasurer of predicting a recovery which must inevitably be still further postponed as a result of the Budget strategy he has adopted.

The Treasurer almost indulged himself in an orgy of self congratulation over what he claimed was the absence from the Budget of increases in direct taxes and charges. Certainly there are no direct increases referred to in the Budget documents. But I challenge the Treasurer to deny that that apparent lack of increased charges is anything more than a fraud on the people of this State. I challenge him to deny that, before he introduces another Budget—which may also be free of increases—Victorians will be paying more for gas and electricity, motor registration and insurance, public transport, Housing Commission rents, and other charges for which his Government is directly responsible.

Mr. HAMER: You are probably right.

Mr. HOLDING: The Treasurer acknowledges that I am right. The honorable gentleman knows that since the beginning of this year the community has been hit with one set of increases after another in charges which are the direct responsibility of the Government. What a deception
to say that we are doing well because there will be no increases in State taxes! Government back-benchers smiled and congratulated each other when that statement was made. But the Treasurer, when invited to deny that there will be increases in the cost of gas and electricity before he introduces his next Budget, and increases in Housing Commission rents, in fares and other Government charges which are his direct responsibility, says that of course there will be increases.

With that one response, the Treasurer has wiped the smug smiles of satisfaction from the faces of his inane back-benchers. What is the good of making a song and dance about not increasing taxation in the Budget documents when the Treasurer now publicly and candidly admits that in what is probably a matter of months all these further increases in charges must be made.

Mr. HAMER: If inflation goes on.

Mr. HOLDING: The honorable gentleman knows that the Federal Treasurer, who is a member of his own party, will tell him that he has no real hope of bringing inflation under control in less than a year. What he is proposing to do is to create the largest pool of unemployment this country has seen in years in the hope that that might bring down inflation. That is the strategy of Mr. Lynch, a strategy which is accepted by the Treasurer of Victoria and which runs through the Budget documents.

There is less than one sentence in the whole of the Treasurer's Budget speech which deals with the problem of unemployment. Moreover, he makes an analysis of the economic situation which he knows is not true and which would not be supported by any economist or by one financial journal. Only this Treasurer would be so glib as to say that unemployment in Victoria has fallen, that the slowing down of the economy has been arrested and that there are clear signs of uplift.

The Opposition is concerned to put to the Government that even now it ought to be adopting alternative economic strategies which can, at least at State level, reduce some of the economic hardships which are going to fall upon the people. Our criticism of the Budget is that it does not do that. Instead, the Treasurer, almost as a throw-away line—and I have no doubt it deeply impressed the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation—complains about the modern jargon of economics—its "inputs and outputs" and "micro-economics and macroeconomics". The Treasurer may not be aware—though doubtless the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation could tell him—that that terminology is more than 50 years old. However, I suppose if one gives the Treasurer a 50-year time lag, that just about brings him up to the year 1976. This Budget fails to establish any positive strategy to deal with the mounting problem of unemployment.

Another interesting aspect is raised when one considers the philosophic aspects of the Budget and what might be described as the Hamer-Fraser new federalism, and what they mean. I shall examine what that philosophy means. It is a philosophy which, in the words of the Treasurer—who is himself one of the principal architects of the new federalism—marks the beginning of a new era in the mechanics of State finance and in the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and the States.

Let me say immediately that the view of the Opposition is that the new federalism is simply one more fraud perpetrated on the community by Liberal Governments, Governments which are determined to minimize in every way the quality of all those services, such as education, health care, public transport, and social welfare, which communities provide for themselves through the agencies of the public sector and which the private sector cannot supply and does not pretend to be able to supply. This concept of the
new federalism has produced a situation in which the Government of this State stands convicted in its own Budget of having been elected on a fraud and of presiding over an economic debacle.

Thanks to the new federalism the promises made by the Treasurer as recently as March are already in the process of being thrown overboard. Thanks to the new federalism the Treasurer's solemn undertaking to the people of Victoria that he would extend and enhance the quality of all those services which are the key to the quality of life in a modern community are already in the process of being dishonoured. I say to the Treasurer that the new federalism is turning out to be the root cause of a reduction in public sector spending which threatens to disadvantage every member of our community. I say to the Treasurer that his election promises of better public services were made cynically—if he fully understood the nature and ramifications of the new federalism of which he was an author. Despite his rhetorical championing of the new federalism in his Budget speech, his election speech was carefully designed to conceal more about the operation of new federalism than it revealed.

I draw the attention of the House to examples of the way in which the new federalism has acted to the disadvantage of Victoria and its people. I quote from Federal Budget Papers because of the light they throw on the facile attempt of the Treasurer to implement and colour the policies of new federalism, because it is those policies which are going to pose many problems for the economic future and well-being of this State.

The increase in payments to the States made by the Whitlam Government in 1973-74, 1974-75 and 1975-76 were respectively 21 per cent, 33 per cent and 32 per cent. Under the new federalism, which the Treasurer advocates, that increase has been cut to 12.6 per cent. Let me repeat those figures so that the enthusiastic supporters of the new federalism on the Government back benches can understand them. In 1973-74 under the Whitlam Government there was a 21 per cent increase in payments to the States and local government; in 1974-75 under the Whitlam Government there was an increase of 33 per cent in payments to the States and local government; in 1975-76 under the Whitlam Government there was an increase of 32 per cent in payments to the States and local government; in 1976-77 under the Fraser Government and the Treasurer's new federalism the increase in payments to the States and local government has been cut to 12.6 per cent.

The Treasurer was quoted in the Australian of 5th February as saying—

Victoria wholeheartedly supports the new federalism policy. It will mark the end of the oriental bazaar.

The Treasurer, in abandoning his bazaar, finds his cupboard is empty and bare.

There was never any way in which Victoria could be better off under the new federalism, which is the creation of the Treasurer and some of his Federal colleagues. There is no way in which this State would not be better off under a continuation of the policy of grants which flowed from the Whitlam Government.

Mr. STEPHEN: The nation would be bankrupt.

Mr. HOLDING: Honorable members do not have to share my views on that.

Mr. STEPHEN: Tell us about the unemployed.

Mr. HOLDING: The number of unemployed under the Whitlam Government will be made to look small by the time the economic philosophies of the Lynch—Fraser regime are felt in this State by December and January. Make no mistake about that!

That is, of course, why there is virtually no mention of unemployment in this Budget. I realize that
honorable members supporting the Government might think that, as a result of my political philosophy, I am prejudiced on this matter, but I shall quote an editorial which appeared in the Age of 6th February. The editorial's view of the new federalism is that under it all the States will be poorer than they would have been under the old scheme. They will get less because under the agreement with the Whitlam Government the betterment factor of 1·8 per cent was to be boosted to 3 per cent. This would have been worth an extra $40 million to all the States, including $9 million for Victoria, which they will now forgo. I do not necessarily endorse everything said in Age editorials, but I do say that it is patently absurd for the Treasurer to say that the new federalism automatically has the support of all Victorians. It does not even have the support of all members of his own party.

Mr. Hamer: It has the support of all Premiers.

Mr. Holding: Sir Gordon Chalk was never enthusiastic and is not now enthusiastic about it, and he is a far more experienced Treasurer than Victoria's.

Mr. Stephen: What about Mr. Wran?

Mr. Holding: Mr. Wran is definitely not happy about it and has made that clear publicly. The honorable member is very good at misquoting people; I suggest that if he wishes to quote Mr. Wran he should do it with accuracy and precision.

As the Treasurer well knows, the so-called increase of 12·6 per cent in payments to the States and local government—the so-called increase which contrasts so miserably with respective increases of 21 per cent, 53 per cent and 32 per cent in the three Budgets brought down by the Whitlam Government—will not even compensate the State for the inflationary pressures now operating on the economy.

The position with capital works is even more serious. Loan Council funds for capital works are up by 5 per cent, but there is a cut in specific purpose grants for capital works to the tune of 6·9 per cent. Overall the States are worse off in capital expenditure to the extent of $62 million, or a massive 15 per cent. The Treasurer may sit and smile but as a result of his new federalism the construction industry is collapsing around his ears. The Treasurer should talk to architects, surveyors, draughtsmen and builders and see what future orders they have available. He should talk to the large consultant firms or the large building companies and see what their future is when their current projects come to a close.

The fact is that the construction industry in this State, as its leaders have pointed out, needs a boost and a stimulus, and that boost and stimulus could have come from the State's being prepared to pursue vigorously its own public works programme, but the cuts which have been made in that programme have caused grave concern throughout the building industry, and the Treasurer knows it.

Mr. Dixon: Can you give one example of a successful Government which has spent its way out of inflation?

Mr. Holding: I shall be happy to deal with that matter later. The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation is concerned to argue about anything but the facts. What I want to do is take him through the figures of what this State is to receive under the new federalism.

Mr. Dixon: You are good at detail but your basic assumptions are wrong.

Mr. Holding: The Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation is not only bad at making assumptions, but is even worse at detail.

The damage inflicted on Victoria by the new federalism amounts to tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars. The combination of new federalism and tax indexation is a
formula for the ultimate impoverishment of the State and all the services of the community. I shall quote specific examples to show the new federalism in its true colours. In his policy speech in March the Treasurer promised that Melbourne would be completely seweried in 1982, but thanks to the Treasurer's new federalism Victoria's share of national sewerage funds has been slashed from $31 million to a pitiful $13.1 million. That is a very beneficial result of the new federalism! When the work chits are being given out and the termination of service notices are in the pay packets of the day labourers employed by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works the Treasurer should send down the responsible Minister to explain that one of the reasons those workers are out of jobs is the marvellous benefits of the new federalism.

The Treasurer's promise of March has now been declared inoperative by him and by the Minister of Water Supply. I challenge the Treasurer to deny that he promised that Melbourne would be completely seweried by 1982. When that promise was made, was the Premier aware of the level of funding that would be provided under the new federalism? Did the honorable gentleman presume that the existing level of funding would be maintained? If the Treasurer believed the level of funding would be maintained he was being misled by the Leader of the Federal Government and the Federal Treasurer about the flow of funds that could be expected under the new federalism.

In his policy speech in March the Treasurer promised strenuous efforts to strengthen the Police Force to enable it to be more efficient. How has the new federalism affected the Victoria Police Force? A sum of $23 million is needed for the maintenance of law and order and public safety in Victoria. The amount that will be available is $6.9 million. Recent figures from the Australian Institute of Criminology show that in Victoria less is spent per head on law and order and public safety than in any other State. I challenge the Premier on his promise to the people of Victoria that the Police Force would be made more efficient at a time when he had certain knowledge that the people of Victoria would be denied that service because insufficient funds would be provided under the new federalism.

In his policy speech in March the Treasurer promised that education would continue to receive top priority from the Government, but the impartial findings of the Schools Commission reveal that Victoria is heading for a new crisis in school accommodation. There is no point in the Treasurer's trying to paint the same old "you have never had it so good" picture for education purposes. The effect of the new federalism will be that the school building programme will be thrown back many years. I challenge the Treasurer to deny that when he promised vigorously to support the extension of adult education activities and the new neighbourhood centres, which were the most hopeful and forward recent advance in adult education, he knew the projects would receive the death sentence under the new federalism. Either the Treasurer knew and deliberately misled the people of this State or he was misled by his Federal colleagues about the funding of these programmes under the new federalism.

Federal funds for school building have been slashed by $4 million; funds for universities have been slashed by $4.5 million; funds for building colleges of advanced education in Victoria have been slashed by $3.5 million. I challenge the Premier and Treasurer to deny these reductions in cash terms and the even greater reduction they represent in buying power. As these reductions are the direct result of the new federalism, the House is entitled to know whether, at the time he made his commitment to the people of Victoria, the Premier and Treasurer was deceiving the people or whether he was being deceived. That matter should be seriously examined by those hon-
orable members who talk about the benefits of the new federalism, without looking at the reality of the cash flow to the people of this State.

How will the grants that are lost to Victoria be made up? Under the new federalism the people of Victoria will lose tuberculosis control grants which last year were worth $4.6 million. Will the $4.6 million be provided by the Victorian Budget health allocation? Certainly not. Under the new federalism Victoria will lose unemployment relief grants which last year were worth $8.2 million. At a time when unemployment is a major issue where will a substitute be found for that $8.2 million? Is it any wonder that, caught with that shortfall, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and the Victorian Premier believe the way to solve the unemployment problem is to juggle the statistics; one no longer talks of seasonally adjusted figures. Surely these matters require answers.

How many back-benchers, particularly those who represent country electorates, have spoken about the importance of regional development to the State? Under the new federalism Victoria will share only $15 million for the Albury-Wodonga growth centre instead of the $35 million which was shared last year. What does the new member for Benambra think about that? Last week I was in Albury-Wodonga and found there grave concern at every level of the community about the future of that major regional development programme.

Members of the Government party who assert that the new federalism is marvellous should explain to the people of Albury-Wodonga, who last year received $35 million for that important growth project, why, under the concept of the new federalism, they now will receive $20 million less.

I should be extremely impressed if the Treasurer were to state where that shortfall will be made up. The honorable gentleman may write letters to the Prime Minister and say, "Really, we have that commitment and we should like some money." Malcolm Fraser is entitled to say to the Treasurer of Victoria, "We cannot give you any more money but I shall give you a personally autographed, bound copy of the new Liberal Party policy on the new federalism". The people of Albury-Wodonga cannot build their growth centre on that document, and the unemployed kids in this State cannot eat it or obtain any substitute for it. This new federalism did not produce one squeak of protest from the Victorian Premier, who is so malleable that he responds to a group of publicans but not to unemployed kids who are without benefits for three months. However, one can obtain an autographed copy of the new federalism policy of the Liberal Party.

When the crime rate goes up, as it will, the right-wing reactionaries who lean all over this Cabinet, the Dickies of this world, will want the provision of minimum sentences and the reintroduction of the lash and the triangle. They believe in a bit more discipline.

This Government must face the realities of what the new federalism means to the actual funding of major important projects in Victoria. In practice Victoria will receive 12 per cent less money for hospital construction and 12 per cent less for welfare housing construction than it received last year. The new federalism means the abolition of the area improvement programme.

I will be delighted to hear from some of the back-bench members representing rural electorates. Last year that programme was worth $4.9 million to this State and it was expanded in the area improvement programme, but that provision has disappeared. That is one of the results of the new federalism. Where in the Budget Papers is there to be found the $4.9 million which ought to be paid to those municipalities so that they can continue with their own programme?

Mr. Holding.
Mr. HUDSON: In the increased grants to local government.

Mr. HOLDING: The problem is that the honorable member for Werribee might even believe that. What does the new federalism mean in terms of the road construction programme? It means that 9 per cent less will be spent this financial year on roads than was spent last year. What does the new federalism mean for dairy farm reconstruction? It means that $6.6 million will be available this year instead of the $10 million made available last year.

I should like to know how our colleagues in the National Party feel about that. After all, honorable members were told last night that the National Party has the interests of the dairy farmers at heart. How do members of that party feel about the new federalism? How do they explain its implications to the dairying community? What it means is that for dairy farm reconstruction, a programme which is desperately needed in the dairying industry, last year $10 million was made available and this year there will be $6 million.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: That is not the finish; that only goes to the end of December.

Mr. HOLDING: I am delighted to hear the interjection from the Leader of the National Party. Honorable members heard the Treasurer try to explain the benefits of the new federalism policy, but undoubtedly he has not done much of a job. It may well be that our friends from the National Party can make a better fist of it.

This year $64,000 will be received for the soil conservation programme under the new federalism, whereas last year $467,000 was received. At a time when this State is suffering one of the worst droughts in its history and when soil conservation programmes are vital and needed throughout the State, it would seem odd that the new federalism results in such a massive cut in funds available for this programme.

Nothing goes untouched, even the development of tourist facilities. Only $59,000 will be received this year instead of the $511,000 made available last year.

An interesting question arises from the commitment made by the Treasurer in March of this year. He promised the people of this State that the flow of funds would continue; that Victoria would not be worse off as a result of the new federalism. As I said earlier, either the Federal Leaders of the Liberal Party were misleading the Premier and Treasurer or he was consciously and deliberately misleading the people of this State.

Areas other than those I have mentioned are affected. If honorable members examine the other massive cut-backs in the Federal Budget they will discover a massive cut in funds made available for the 5,500 Aboriginal citizens of this State. Previously they were the beneficiaries of massive grants for Aboriginal advancement. It should be remembered that this State used to have a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs but now the 5,500 Aboriginal citizens are confronted with a massive cut of $33 million.

How does the Treasurer feel about the future of the 108,000 tertiary students, who, for the second successive year, have failed to receive any increase in their tertiary education living allowance? Does the State Treasurer have a viewpoint about that? What will be the effect on the chronically ill members of our community following the $23 million reduction in outlays for pharmaceutical benefits which has been achieved by increasing prescription charges? This is a significant aspect of the Federal Budget which is glossed over in the Treasurer's Budget speech.

There is not one word of significant criticism over the failure of the present Federal Government to maintain levels of expenditure which this year, I should have thought, would have
been necessary for the future well-being of many of the citizens of this State.

I invite honorable members to cast their minds back to that period when the Whitlam Government was in office. Not a week went by without the Premier or a senior member of the Cabinet being openly and publicly critical over some aspect of a Federal Government project—not merely critical, but critical to the point of refusing a flow-on of Commonwealth funds. All the things to which I have referred have occurred without one word or even muted criticism from the people who occupy the Treasury bench in this State.

What will be the effect on Victorian industry? What will happen to the $4 million grant for industry research and development and the massive reduction in export incentives from $62.8 million to $7.5 million. Does any honorable member believe that is not going to have some effect on our community? Do honorable members believe for one moment that if those types of reductions had taken place under a Government with a different philosophy from that of this Government it would not have been the subject of the strongest statement in this Parliament and the press by the Treasurer and his Ministers? Of course political loyalties run high and when these things occur what is important is to preserve some sort of facade of party loyalty and support irrespective of what effect it has on the operation of the Victorian economy.

I castigated the Treasurer for failing to speak out against the pernicious effects of the new federalism. The Treasurer is caught in a situation where he cannot be too critical of the new federalism because he was one of its authors and he has to bear the results and the consequences following its implementation.

Mr. Ross-EDWARDS: Does the Leader of the Opposition agree with the principles or not?

Mr. HOLDING: I am glad of the interjection from the Leader of the National Party because being a farmer he will understand what I am saying. If you bull a cow, you have to keep the calf and that is what has occurred over this new federalism. The Treasurer was one of the authors of this document and he is now caught with it.

Mr. Ross-EDWARDS: But does the Leader of the Opposition agree with the principles or not?

Mr. HOLDING: No, I do not agree with the principles and I do not think I have kept that fact a secret. The Treasurer interjects and claims that if I do not agree with the new federalism then I am a centralist. That is the silliest argument I have heard from the honorable gentleman.

The fact is that these massive cuts in the flow of funds to Victoria have taken place and they have all been virtually obliterated in the Treasurer's Budget statement. Surely the $18 million lopped from this State's funds for sewerage has to be the subject of concern. The reduction from $11.3 million to $6.9 million for our urban public transport programme is also a matter of concern. The loss of $3.7 million for the building of colleges of advanced education and $4 million for school buildings and of $4.5 million to renovate buildings is not something which can be glossed over by this Parliament or this Government.

It is not good enough for the Treasurer, on 24th December last, to say that “What the Liberals offered in the Federal election programme under new federalism was that there would not be domination from the centre but co-operation which is a welcome and fundamental difference.”. I should have thought that co-operation meant a continuance of funds and the maintenance of progress. What we have is a new concept but not the funds. Whatever co-operation the Treasurer has received from his Commonwealth colleagues is not evident in the flow
of cash to the State. The Premier and Treasurer has been guilty of misleading the people of Victoria on the whole implications of the new federalism policy and this House is entitled to call him to account because it is not good enough that this loss of funds to the State should be simply glossed over.

The reduction in funds for the Albury-Wodonga growth centre puts that centre in jeopardy. Moreover, the Commonwealth has virtually failed to involve itself in the development of Geelong, which means that the whole future of that centre as a regional development project attracting Commonwealth funding is now in jeopardy. I wonder what honorable members opposite who represent the Geelong area think about this. The sort of funding that was necessary to get Geelong moving as a major regional development programme needed a Commonwealth commitment and Commonwealth funding. No State Government could hope to get concepts and projects such as Albury-Wodonga and Geelong moving without Commonwealth involvement and funding. The reduction in funds for Albury-Wodonga could be a calamity for this State and for the project.

The fact that the Geelong project has virtually been stillborn is a matter of deep concern to members of the Opposition and should be a matter of deep concern to the Treasurer. By their own political obstructions, the Treasurer and the Government lost an important flow of funds from the Commonwealth to get Geelong moving. That flow of funds is not only no longer available, but also there is virtually no commitment from the Fraser-Lynch Government to the concept of the future development of Geelong. That surely should properly be a matter for the strongest complaint by this Parliament and by this Government. The future of the Albury-Wodonga complex is in jeopardy but, so far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned, the Geelong project is not even a starter. So much for the implications of the new federalism!

During the debate, other members of the Opposition will deal with specific heads in some detail. I want to leave the House with the thought that in the Budget one of the mistakes made by the Treasurer is that he sees inflation as the only major problem which the State Government has to deal with in the prevailing economic climate. The Treasurer considers that there is one simple cause and one simple answer to all our problems. The honorable gentleman has involved the State in the acceptance of the economic strategies of the Federal Government, which strategies I believe will cause grave hardship to the people of Victoria and will not predicate any effective economic recovery.

Inflation is not our only economic problem, as the Treasurer would have us believe. It is conceded that inflation is a major problem, but it is not the single problem. Effective economic policies must aim not only at reducing inflation but also at reducing unemployment, increasing the rate of economic growth, reducing inequalities of income, and maintaining a balanced economic development throughout the State.

By its single emphasis on inflation and its blind adoption of the Lynch strategy of high unemployment and cuts in public sector spending, the Budget spells out a continued reduction in employment opportunities, particularly for our young people. That factor is so significant that it will certainly delay any effective economic recovery. By blindly accepting the Lynch doctrine that there is inherent conflict between the public sector and the private sector, this Budget will do great damage to the capacity of the public sector to assist the economic recovery of the private sector.

Members of the Opposition challenge the underlying economic thesis on which this Budget is postulated. We challenge the naïve dishonesty
of its economic projections. We challenge the cynical destruction of living standards and job opportunities which it creates. We challenge the Premier and Treasurer and the Liberal Party to put the Budget thesis to the test in the forthcoming by-election for the Doutta Galla Province. We will meet the Premier, who so skilfully avoids debate in this Parliament, or any of his Ministers on any public platform at any time to debate this matter so that the public may judge the effects of these economic policies. Let the electorate pass judgment on this extraordinary document which endeavours to pass for a Budget.

I have no doubt that when all the facts are fully examined the people of Doutta Galla Province will speak for the people of this State and support the Labor Party in its rejection of the Budget and more particularly the underlying economic thesis which it adopts. The thesis involved in the Budget is one which endorses the Lynch doctrine that the economic problems of this State and the Commonwealth will be solved by creating a record level of unemployment, by endeavouring to blame the trade union movement and the working force of this community for the failures of the men who now operate at Canberra and their allies in Victoria, the dwarfs, who follow them so blindly. If this economic doctrine is allowed to stand, it will destroy much of the basic economic development of this State, lower in real terms the working standards of all Victorians and turn the economic clock backwards.

The Opposition rejects the Budget and, more importantly, it rejects the underlying economic thesis of the Budget and the economic thesis which the Government has so blindly followed, supported and capitulated to their masters in Canberra. The Opposition recommends that the House agree to the amendment.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! Before I call on the Leader of the National Party, I announce that honorable members speaking from now on will be deemed to be speaking to both the motion and to the amendment.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): In introducing the Budget, the Treasurer indicated that he approached the task with an eye on restraint and to the allocation of resources where they would be put to the best use in the present circumstances of the economy. The honorable gentleman said that a basic objective of the Budget was to provide for continuation and expansion of the programme begun four years ago to improve the quality of life for all Victorians. Members of the National Party agree with the Treasurer's general approach, but question whether the right emphasis has been placed on the allocation of these scarce resources.

In the final analysis the wealth of any community depends on the initiative and enterprise of its members. Four years ago Australia was indeed a lucky country. We all felt secure in the knowledge that our children had a sound future owing to the underlying strength of the economy. However, that was four years ago. Today there is a frightening lack of confidence in our future. Many self-employed people in our society, small businessmen, farmers and contractors are questioning the wisdom of remaining in business. If this country is to retain and advance its standard of living, we must recapture the spirit of enterprise born from the knowledge that hard work and initiative will be adequately rewarded. Quality of life improvements are possible only if a nation has increasing productivity and a sound economy. The economy of this country is far from what we were used to since the end of the second world war.

In the Budget presented by the Treasurer, payments from the Consolidated Fund compared with 1975-76 are increased by 13 per cent. The Treasurer claims that the necessary income to cover this increased level of expenditure has been obtained
without increasing taxation. It is fair to say that this claim is not entirely accurate. The fees payable for a wide range of Government services and licences have been sharply increased in the past few days. I am not referring to the effect inflation will have in the new year. Understandably adjustments will have to be made at that time. For example, abattoir and meat inspection fees have risen by 20 per cent, a heavy blow to our hard-pressed beef producers. It is interesting that since 1974 charges have increased by 130 per cent. Lamb has gone up from 10 cents to 22 cents, and beef from 70 cents to $1.76. At the same time the profit of the Victorian Abattoir and Meat Inspection Authority for the past financial year was in excess of $250,000.

There have been huge increases in many other fees. Pipeline licence fees have increased by 40 per cent, licence fees for proprietary medicines, irradiating apparatus and radioactive substances have been increased by 20 per cent. There are many more examples of increases in this area of Government revenue, and their effects must be generally inflationary. An increase in motor registration fees is to be announced in the next few weeks. The forecasts vary between 30 per cent and 50 per cent. Time will tell what the figure will be.

Three basic problems face this State. Firstly, there is the drought. There are many unknown factors about how long it will continue and what will happen in the next few weeks; hopefully, the situation will improve. Secondly, there is the Newport power station; and, thirdly, inflation and unemployment. I group inflation and unemployment together because they are an intertwined problem.

I was interested to hear an interjection from the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I do not always agree with the honorable gentleman, but I wholeheartedly agree with his statement that, "You cannot spend yourself out of inflation". That was a wise remark. That is what Dr. Cairns tried to do. When Mr. Hayden was Treasurer he changed direction. He did not have long to do so, nor many opportunities. Dr. Cairns tried the theory of spending out. One cannot get out of inflation by spending. Inevitably spending must be reduced in certain quarters. No one wants to see cuts; there will be arguments on where they are to take place. However, if there is to be an academic argument on the subject, one must agree that it is necessary to cut down on expenditure to tackle inflation.

The handling of those three matters are vitally important to the future prosperity and well-being of the State. I shall refer to them in some detail later.

There are many major aspects of the Budget to which I shall not have time to refer, but they will be handled by other members of my party during the debate. The National Party applauds the Treasurer's decision to eliminate probate duty on all property passing to one spouse on the death of the other. I repeat the request I made a few days ago—I hope the Premier will name the date when this decision will apply.

Mr. HAMER: 1st October.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: I was hoping it would apply from 1st July, but the main thing is that a person can now make a will and order his or her affairs knowing what will happen. That applies to honorable members on both sides of the House.

Mr. GINIFER: It will not assist the family farm, though.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: It will help. There is another important matter which may not be of vital concern to the Budget but which can cause complications in a family when someone lives to a great age and the family estate is tied up beyond a reasonable time. Contrary to the beliefs of the Labor Party, the National Party believes probate duty is an unfair and unjust tax. This tax commenced in the nineteenth century in England with the prime aim of breaking up the large estates and evening up the
assets or the good things in life between the community. In Australia a remarkably even spread of wealth exists. Members of the National Party believe the accumulation of assets by people who have worked hard and been prudent in the conduct of their financial affairs should be encouraged. Tax on those assets has already been paid time and time again and it is unfair that they should be severely taxed again on death. The sooner this State follows Queensland's example of abolishing probate duty, the better. It will be abolished in Queensland on 1st January, 1977. Otherwise many people will arrange their financial affairs to avoid Victorian probate duty.

My colleagues and I also support the Government's decision to reduce by half the workers compensation supplementary surcharge. We agree with the Treasurer that workers compensation is a heavy burden on business. It has been a most important aspect in the retrenchment of many workers, particularly those employed by smaller firms. We again urge the Government to examine the proposal previously put forward by the National Party to reduce the cost of workers compensation to employers—that a twelve months' cut-off point be established for employers' liability. After that time the employee would be looked after by the normal Commonwealth sickness benefit. The insurance industry has put forward this proposition, and I believe a free-enterprise Government should adopt it.

Mr. WILKES: It is not a free-enterprise Government; it is fixing the price of beer.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: That will be the subject of another debate on another day.

Today agriculture in Victoria faces its greatest threat since the 1930s. Farmers are struggling to overcome the crisis caused by uncertain world markets, huge cost increases and adverse seasonal conditions. Farmers are looking for new initiatives from the Victorian Government to assist them to overcome these problems. Frankly, these new initiatives are missing from the Budget. Most of the relief measures detailed in the Treasurer's speech were already in existence and are due to be phased out in the near future. As he said, these were short-term measures for short-term problems. The National Party has constantly urged the subsidizing of grain for stock feed and the appointment of a special Minister responsible for drought relief. The National Party has urged the appointment of an all-party drought committee. It has urged that regional committees be set up to advise the Government. The National Party urges rate relief as an emergency measure for primary producers, and on a longer-term basis it has brought to the Treasurer's attention the ridiculous situation where administration of drought relief and of agricultural matters involve both the Minister of Lands and the Minister for Local Government.

But what of the long term? Apparently the Government is prepared to wait for Federal initiatives to solve many problems confronting agriculture in this State. It is, of course, true that certain aspects of agricultural policy must be executed in conjunction with the Federal Government. These include most orderly marketing schemes, income stabilization programmes, farm and industry reconstruction schemes, and general economic policy.

The Fraser Government has shown that it is well aware of its responsibilities in this area by its positive actions during the past nine months.

Mr. GINIFER: Tell us what it has done.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: I thought that question would come. I thank the honorable member for his interjection.

Mr. WILKES: For how long will there be a Fraser–Anthony Government?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: The last time the Liberal–Country Party Government was in office it remained
there for about 27 years, and there was a Labor Government for only three years.

I shall mention some of the action that the present Federal Government has taken. Inflation has been tackled, and that is the most serious problem facing Australia. Unemployment benefits have been given to the primary producers, something that a Labor Government would never provide. The superphosphate bounty withdrawn by the Labor Government has been reintroduced. Joint action has been taken with the State to provide carry-on finance. Assistance to beef producers amounting to $15 million this year has been provided.

Income equalization deposits have been introduced. Other measures include subsidies to the dairying industry, including milk powder subsidies; a promise that when the Crawford report is received—it is due for release today—it will be implemented and financial support will be given; and amendments to the tree-pull scheme. A lot of hard work has gone into this scheme by the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, and I pay tribute to the people who have played a part in it. Not one thing happened with this scheme during three years of Labor Government; the scheme got bogged down. People tend to forget what Governments did yesterday and think only of what they should do tomorrow; in this I am as guilty as anyone.

There are many other areas of agriculture policy which are completely in the State field and in which leadership is badly needed. Farmers today, as never before, are crying out for more research by the Government into a multitude of different subjects. They seek the findings of research into less common soil types, higher yield crops and new crops suitable for their districts, and they want to know how new methods work on actual farm properties.

Farmers are also seeking independent research and advice on different types of farm machinery available to them. There is currently, and there always has been in this State, a serious lack of market forecasting and market research available to farmers. This is particularly evident in the livestock field. In fact, the only information readily available is that contained in the reports of prices in rural newspapers. This is not enough to help a producer make a reasoned decision on when to sell his stock to best advantage. Farmers are given no information about the likely state of markets next week or next month. It is therefore disappointing to see no reference in the Budget to the trial project under way in the Department of Agriculture designed to predict supply accurately one year ahead. This project is deserving of more financial help than it is currently receiving.

Mr. WILKES: Have you ever heard of the problems in the city?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: I shall come to the city. The whole role of extension services needs revision. I pay tribute to the Department of Agriculture for the advice given by its staff to farmers, which led to enormous increases in productivity. However, marketing has been ignored and now the chickens have come home to roost.

A good example is the dairying industry. Guided by the advice of departmental staff, Victorian dairy farmers are among the most efficient producers in the world. But as pointed out at a recent symposium, the industry has been inactive in the general area of marketing. The development of such products as cultured butter, a wide variety of fancy cheeses, low-fat milk, high-fat milk, fortified milks and custards has been left to the less efficient dairy industries in other States.

Farm education involves new challenges. More and more educationists are accepting the principle that training for a career should be done as much as possible on the job. The concept of removing young people from farms for several years to gain
a formal qualification is outdated. They should be able to obtain the same qualification while continuing to work on their properties, and by attending regional study centres part-time.

The Victorian Government still retains a big responsibility in the area of rural finance. The Federal Government has committed itself to set up a rural bank, and undoubtedly it will do so. Currently the most important source of long-term rural credit in this State is the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission. I pay tribute to the officers of the commission for their courtesy and efficiency. I am in contact with them five or six days a week. The chairman certainly works more than five days a week. Anyone who goes there is treated with common sense and courtesy. The Government has often been niggardly in supplying finance to the commission, and this is hard to understand. It has a revolving fund; when loans are repaid the money can be lent out again. The process of building up this long-term fund to lend money to farmers has been very slow.

More long-term rural credit is needed, firstly, to re-schedule the debts of farmers who have been forced to buy long-term assets on short-term loans. In the past two or three years high interest rates in the private sector have hit the man on the land. The best rate at which money can be borrowed in the private sector on rural land is 12 per cent, and rates of 12.5 per cent, 13 per cent and 14 per cent are not uncommon. Secondly, it is needed to help farmers to expand the size of their holdings and to increase flexibility, and thirdly, to transfer assets between generations. This is one of the gravest problems facing the man on the land, and is particularly common in agriculture.

There is a tendency for the Government to sit back and let matters take their course, and this is typified in its approach to agriculture. Victorian farmers deserve much more from their Government. They deserve and must have a Government prepared to accept the challenge offered by change and to develop policies which solve not only the problems of today, but those of tomorrow.

The drought is the severest problem facing agriculture in this State at the moment, and I urge the Government to accept the Commonwealth Government’s offer of $3.5 million. In other words, the State would provide $3.5 million and the Federal Government would meet the balance.

I remind the Premier and Treasurer—there should be no need to remind him, because he knows it only too well—that in the past two years the States had their $3.5 million matched by $8 million in one year and $10 million in another. The drought is more serious than most people realize, because it is patchy. One part of Victoria is virtually a Garden of Eden, but in areas 50 or 100 miles away desperate drought conditions prevail, and I do not think the public realizes how serious it is. Before this financial year is out, the amount of $3.5 million will be a small proportion of what is needed to enable those farmers stricken by drought to remain on their properties.

An interesting feature which has come up in recent weeks has been the need for encouragement of the primary producers to help Australia’s balance of payments. In recent years the city people have said that they do not need the farmers any more because the balance of payments can be met by the mining industry but recently it has hit home that we will need every export industry we can get to say clear on the balance of payments.

There is an urgent need for a constructive, intelligent and, most importantly, a diplomatic approach by the State Government in dealing with the Federal Government on primary industry affairs. Some recent public utterances by Victorian Ministers are quite unreasonable and are making the task of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet—who already carry a heavy responsibility—infinitely more difficult.

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I turn now to education, and I am the first to congratulate the Government on achieving over recent years a teacher to pupil ratio which is well below the average throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. One of the rewards of this will be that it will remove some of the strain from education financing, because the other States have to catch up. This State has virtually achieved the target which has been set down as desirable by the Federal Government. Victorians generally and members of this Parliament particularly must feel proud of that ratio.

One of the problems that affects education, particularly in country areas, is teacher housing. Unfortunately, it is a complete joke, and the lack of accommodation in country centres, particularly the smaller ones, is critical. Teachers often have to live away from the centres where they are teaching, and the centres miss out on the advantage of having people of their training and background living in the towns. That might sound strange to people living in the cities, but teachers play an important part in country life, because they are frequently young, enthusiastic and have a lot to offer, but if they do not live in the town and become part of its life, it is not advantageous to the students of the school.

One of the matters that has been of concern to the Government in recent years is the uneconomic rentals being paid for teacher accommodation. The rents are insufficient to enable basic repairs and maintenance to be carried out on teachers' houses in country areas. The procrastination, which has gone on year after year, should not be allowed to continue.

Members of the National Party support the Government's inquiry into post-secondary education. Obviously there is currently a grave mismatch between the skills being provided by this level of education compared with the employment opportunities available. There are already too many graduates from some faculties, but skilled tradesmen remain in short supply. It has been estimated that the Government is spending only about $1,200 for each student at technical schools, compared with $20,000 each for students at colleges of advanced education. Members of the National Party are concerned that in the terms of reference of the committee, in contrast with a similar inquiry in Tasmania, nothing specific has been included for education in non-metropolitan areas of the State. We are also concerned that there appears to be no expertise on the committee in the area of continuing education. This is undoubtedly the future big growth in education.

Education is no longer a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The system must be able to prepare the individual for employment and later in his career upgrade his skills, update his knowledge and retrain him for a new job. In view of the urgent need for firm Government decisions in the post-secondary field, we are surprised that no completion date for the inquiry has been set.

I turn now to water supply. The decision not to increase irrigation charges will be welcomed in country areas because it gives a respite for another twelve months. Since 1972-73, charges have risen by approximately 74 per cent, so the Government's decision to call a halt at this stage is not before time.

There is an urgent need for an inquiry by an outside body into the functions of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. After much prompting and pushing, the Minister of Water Supply has agreed to an inter-departmental inquiry into the Water Commission's operations in the Murray-Goulburn Irrigation District, but it is ridiculous to have public servants in an organization inquiring into the administration of their fellow employees. The situation is laughable.
The cost of capital works constructed by the Water Commission has been the subject of criticism by irrigators for many years, because invariably the same work could be done by competent outside contractors for a much lower price. Of course, it would have to be done under the supervision of the Water Commission—no one challenges that—but the overhead costs imposed by the Water Commission at present are unbearable.

A decision to initiate an inquiry into the Water Commission would be welcomed by honorable members, but I am sure an inquiry into the administration, and particularly the structure, of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is even more necessary, because it is laughable to have about 60 commissioners who have no say in what happens. The numbers are too large; the board is being run by the chairman and, unfortunately, when he is away, by the deputy chairman.

Two matters relating to capital works must be mentioned. The first is the Newport power station. I do not want to say anything which would upset negotiations currently taking place. However, I stress the need for the Premier and Treasurer not to delay a final decision on the future of the project beyond the point of no return. A power shortage in this State resulting from a lack of generating capacity would be most serious. It would have long-term implications on future State development and employment opportunities.

The change in the policy of the Government on the financing of the underground railway in Melbourne disadvantages people who live outside the metropolitan area. This will be the subject of separate legislation. One cannot help but feel cynical that, at the time the former Lord Mayor persuaded the Treasurer that the long-term liability of the Melbourne City Council should be reduced by $180 million—that sum being accumulating interest and capital repayments over the years—he was able to say at the Lord Mayor's dinner that the Melbourne City Council would not increase its rates because it was efficient. As the honorable member for Gippsland East points out, it was probably the only municipality in Victoria which did not have to increase its rates. What is more, there will be no increase this year.

I repeat that one can only be cynical about the new arrangements. The sum of $180 million was the estimate of the former Lord Mayor. It has never been confirmed by any other source. He is rather proud of the negotiating ability he showed on that occasion.

I next direct attention to conservation and land-use planning. In doing so I refer to the Budget allocations to the Ministry for Conservation and the Ministry for Planning. The two Ministries deal with different aspects of this general matter. Their share of the Budget has grown rapidly in the past few years. Since the 1971-72 Budget the combined annual expenditure of the two Ministries has grown from approximately $4.5 million to approximately $24.5 million. During the same period the total growth in Government expenditure was only 59 per cent. The Ministry for Planning was created only last year but the Town and Country Planning Board has been in existence for many years.

During the past few years there has been a marked shift in community attitudes towards the environment and planning. The previously held national goal of economic growth has been challenged by a new concept called the quality of life. In its haste to adjust to this new ideology the Government has formed new Ministries, statutory authorities, and other bodies as well as making large financial contributions to a number of independent organizations.

Quite early in the inquiry into the Victorian Public Service by Sir Henry Bland, it became apparent that the administrative arrangements relating to conservation, environment, and

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land-use planning were most unsatisfactory. Two major weaknesses were apparent. The first was that there was too much fragmentation of activities among various Ministries, agencies and other bodies, which led to an inability to formulate general policy and, as a result, an inability to make consistent decisions. The second was that too much responsibility was being delegated to unelected officials.

In view of the rapid escalation in the costs of the Ministries for conservation and planning, it is astounding that the Government has made no effort to implement the recommendations made by Sir Henry Bland. Three of the most important recommendations were—

1. The formation of a commission for conservation, the environment, and land-use planning to develop an integrated policy within which all the various departments and authorities involved could operate.

2. The substitution of one appeals tribunal for those now provided under the Environment Protection Act and the Town and Country Planning Act.

3. The creation of committees rather than regional planning authorities to deal with interwoven conservation, environmental, and land-use planning issues arising in particular areas. These committees would require no legislative charter.

Despite the soaring costs to the taxpayer of planning as departments rush to put on staff, the Government can point to few concrete achievements. Departments continue to tug in opposite directions. In his Budget speech, the Treasurer announced that the Ministry for Planning would be preparing a south-western coastal planning scheme. Yet only a few days earlier the Ministry for Conservation announced that it was drafting legislation to take over full control of all coastal areas.

New regional planning authorities are to be formed, despite the failure of those in existence to achieve their objectives. In 1969, the Westernport Regional Planning Authority was established with the objective of preparing a plan for industrial development in the area adjacent to the deep-water anchorage near Hastings. In addition, it was requested to develop, either jointly or separately, a conservation and recreation plan for the southern part of the Mornington Peninsula. Now, after seven years and the expenditure by the authority of $1.25 million to cover operating expenses, there is still no approved planning scheme for conservation, industry or recreation in the area.

The whole general field of the environment and land-use planning has become an important aspect of government. The administration of this function by the Victorian Government is highly inefficient and wasteful. Despite the best advice available the Government refuses to change its management tactics.

On the subject of local government, I agree with the Premier’s statement that 1976 marks a great step forward. It is to be hoped that local government will use its new-found revenue wisely. Expenditure restraints are just as necessary at that level of government as they are at State and Federal levels. In view of the current situation in rural areas, where unemployment is more than double that in the city and where farm income is down, country municipalities must avoid large rate increases at all costs.

In other words, local government must realize that what it receives under the new federalism policy is meant to subsidize rates to some extent. It is not to be regarded as something extra. If local government adopts a view that this revenue is a bonanza which will be increased every year and uses the money for special projects, it will be acting quite wrongly. It will have to use the money in the same way as the State Government. It must be regarded as part of its basic income and be used to subsidize rates.

The policy of new federalism implies that there will be a steady devolution of powers from the State Government to local government. We look forward with interest to new initiatives by the State Government.
to ensure that its policy-making departments and statutory authorities work in conjunction with local government in regional matters.

When one considers inflation and unemployment, one must remember that general economic policy remains largely in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. I believe—and this is a belief which is shared by, I think, the majority of the public—the Federal Government has set the right priorities to get this country back on the rails. Firstly, inflation must be reduced to manageable levels and, following that, unemployment will drop as consumers regain their confidence to spend. A course has been set and there is a plan; there was no plan under Cairns.

The Government must remember that it has a vital role to play in assisting all sections of the community to adapt to changed conditions. People, particularly young people, must be trained for new jobs which are available and a boost in apprenticeship is badly needed. New industries must be sought for the State to increase job opportunities and farmers must be assisted in producing new products for new markets. Small businessmen must be trained to take advantage of new business opportunities.

The Government was returned with a substantial majority at the last election and this is the first Budget to be brought down since that election. The National Party supports the Budget but makes no apologies for the various criticisms I have made or for the other criticisms that my Parliamentary colleagues will make during the debate. To do so is the duty and responsibility of members of a political party which is not in Government.

I point out to the Government that the outlook and mood of the people of this State are changing. They want the Hamer Government to show initiatives and govern, even if that brings the inevitable criticism. The people of this State want to be governed by democratically elected Parliamentary members and not by a section of the trade union movement. I do not want to see a confrontation with the trade union movement for the sake of confrontation. Heaven forbid! However, if a minority group wants to achieve its political aims by strike action, the Government will have to take a firm stand and will have the support of the National Party.

The people of Victoria have had a magnificent heritage passed on to them and it is our responsibility to ensure that this heritage is both safeguarded and developed for the benefit of all sections of the community.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): This debate, following the bringing down of the Budget by the Treasurer, has singularly lacked fire and colour and, indeed, purpose, particularly from the Opposition. That is because the Opposition does not understand the significance of State finances within the ambit of economic affairs in general.

I congratulate the Leader of the National Party upon his speech. Honorable members are all familiar, of course, with the drought and the repercussions it has had upon the rural industries of this State. The points made by the Leader of the National Party were constructive and many of them deserve serious consideration by the Government, and I am sure that is exactly what they will receive.

It is, however, unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition confuses Federal budgetary policy, monetary policy, wage policy and foreign exchange policy with the bringing down of a State budget. He also completely ignores the history of recent economic events in this community. This community's economy was basically well run, the levels of inflation were low by world standards and the levels of unemployment were extraordinarily low until, from December, 1972, Australia had the misfortune to be governed by a Federal Labor Government. That Government decided to massively expand the level of public expenditure,
notwithstanding the impact that decision would have upon the economy. The rate of inflation was then running at approximately 4 per cent, but rising. There is no doubt that there were dangers in the air.

Mr. FORDHAM: Four per cent!

Mr. DIXON: Exactly. There were dangers in the levels of expenditure and what was happening in world events which indicated that inflation could be precipitated by any unusual change of events, such as a large increase in Government expenditure. The Federal Labor Government decided to engage upon a record increase in the rate of Government expenditure, 19 per cent, and at the same time it told the trade union movement that this was the time it could apply for and get increases in real wages at the expense of the business sector and profits. The Government also told the trade union movement that this was the time when it could look for and receive increases in nominal wages which the Government would support because it would give employees an increased share of the whole cake. Both nominal and real wages were to be increased and the desire was to increase the share of the national cake going to wages. Wages would increase faster than productivity.

Those two decisions, taken hand in hand, precipitated a disastrous economic consequence with which Australian Governments have had to try to cope for the past four years, yet the Leader of the Opposition in this Parliament has the temerity to speak about a return to the very errors of policy which caused the difficult situation the country now faces.

I challenged him, by interjection, to name one successful Government that has been able to spend its way out of inflation—and in answer to the honorable member who interjects and mentions Sweden, I am quite happy to deal with Sweden. The Leader of the Opposition said that he would be able to answer my interjection and would be able to produce examples of world Governments which have spent their way out of inflation. He has not and cannot name one Government. And by spending their way out of inflation he seems to think they would in some way be able to solve unemployment. There is no doubt that an increase in Government expenditure in the short term would create a temporary improvement in unemployment and would immediately make certain that some people were employed. The real problem is, however, that unless production and productivity increase in real terms and in the long term, all that then happens is that price rises occur and inflation becomes even greater.

During an inflationary period both consumers and investors lose confidence in the future. Consumers decide that it is not a period in which to spend, because unemployment may increase, and they then put their money into savings banks instead of spending it. Bank deposits have reached a record level because consumers are frightened of inflation. Investment depends on the expectations of investors of what will occur in the future, and investors have been concerned with the problems of inflation and are unable to understand how any form of productive investment could bring a reasonable return which would ensure employment opportunities. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition, who is fond of issuing meaningless challenges, to accept this challenge.

Mr. HOLDING: I accept it. What is it?

Mr. DIXON: It is a challenge to name a government which has spent its way out of inflation.

Mr. HOLDING: I did not say that.

Mr. DIXON: It can be checked in Hansard. The Leader of the Opposition attempted to confuse honorable members by introducing many irrelevancies. Firstly, he said that the way the Victorian Budget had been framed was a reflection of federalism. The
Victorian Budget actually reflects a policy of reasonable restraint. The total expenditure that is envisaged for Victoria is to increase from $2,568 million to $2,901 million, an increase of more than 13 per cent. If the Federal Government, which is ultimately responsible for inflation and unemployment, is successful with its economic policies, as I suspect it will be, and inflation rates are reduced below 13 per cent—there is every reason to expect that by the end of this financial year the inflation rate will be about 9 per cent—it will mean an increase in real terms of about 4 per cent in the Victorian Budget.

Mr. HOLDING: It is a bit of a gamble.

Mr. DIXON: If the Victorian Treasurer had increased levels of expenditure to the figures that the Leader of the Opposition would have liked—an increase of about 18 per cent to 20 per cent—Victoria would have plummeted into a wage-price spiral of the type that occurred when the last Federal Labor Government was in office. As a result of that spiral the people of Australia decided that the Federal Government needed to be changed. They wanted the inflation rate to be controlled. They were wiser than the words spoken by the Leader of the Opposition. They knew that unless inflation was brought under control there would be no chance of improving the position of the unemployed. Not one member of this House would dispute that the first priority of government is to ensure that people have jobs. However, there must be pre-conditions for that to occur. The pre-condition in this community is to control inflation.

What does the Victorian Budget provide? It provides that no price increase will flow into the consumer price index. That is significant. All honorable members know that the consumer price index is used by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission when determining wages policy. The economy depends significantly on the wage policy of that commission. As a result of this Budget many householders will be far better off because they will be able to take advantage of decreases in many taxes.

The Leader of the Opposition displayed his usual economic ignorance when he spoke about a State being in deficit, in surplus or balanced, and the effects this may have on economic matters. If the honorable member had been able to pursue the matter and to understand where State budgets are included in over-all budgetary policy, he would have found that it does not matter whether there is a budget surplus, a budget deficit or a balanced budget; the annual receipts are determined by taxation and, now, a share of income tax, and capital receipts are determined by what is approved by the Australian Loan Council.

Mr. FORDHAM: Are not the opening and closing balances relevant?

Mr. DIXON: Of course not. I am talking about economics now, not accounting. There is a big difference. The levels of expenditure are important. Whether they are determined by taxation sources or by loan funds is important, but the over-all level of expenditure is critical. The only place in which the State Government can have an impact on the level of expenditure is through its taxation policy. The State Government made the policy decision to ensure that there would be no increases in prices through that policy. If the Treasurer had determined to budget for a deficit, how would that deficit be financed? It would be financed through the loan funds, the total of which has been determined by the Australian Loan Council.

If the Victorian Government were to follow the lead given by the Leader of the Opposition and budget for a massive State deficit to enable the State Government to spend its way out of inflation, the result would be a reduction in the loan funds which would be available for State works. The Leader of the Opposition does not understand the position I have never before seen him read almost a
whole speech as he did on this occasion. The only reason I can think of is that he lacks understanding of what he read.

Mr. WHITING: Is the Minister inferring that somebody else wrote the speech?

Mr. DIXON: I am sure somebody else wrote the speech, particularly the matters related to economics. If the Leader of the Opposition had understood it he would have recognized the paucity of the arguments contained in it.

The State is, of course, faced with a difficult problem. Keynes is probably the most important economist who has lived. He provided an economic approach to deal with inflation—that there should be a reduction in demand. He also gave an approach for dealing with unemployment—that there should be an increase in demand and levels of expenditure. However, he did not provide any satisfactory solutions to the type of dilemma which faces a community with rising rates of inflation and unemployment. That is the problem with which Victoria is faced. World leaders have spoken on this subject. At a recent Ministerial council meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which took place in Puerto Rico this was stated—

Experience in the United Kingdom and elsewhere has demonstrated that Governments cannot spend their way out of recession when prices and costs are increasing rapidly.

I propose now to quote from the Secretary of the United States Treasury—

The policy errors of the past and our hopes for the future force us to recognize the basic reality that inflation is the greatest threat to sustained economic development and the ultimate survival of our basic institutions. If we are to sustain the output of goods and services and reduce unemployment, we must first control inflation.

This Government stands fairly and squarely behind the thesis which has been put forward by Mr. Fraser and Mr. Lynch. It believes inflation must first be controlled, and this Budget attempts within its limited powers in that area to make a contribution in that direction. In the Commonwealth Budget Papers it is estimated that over the course of the current financial year employment will grow by more than 2 per cent and that over the same period the labour force will increase by 2 per cent at the most. This means some reduction in the level of unemployment can be expected, although little if any of this is likely to take place during the 1976 calendar year. In the longer term more significant reductions in the level of unemployment are envisaged.

Much has been made of the actual figures and the seasonally adjusted figures covering unemployment. It is important that honorable members should be aware of the actual unemployment statistics in Victoria. I shall compare the figures for July, 1976, with those of July, 1975. In July, 1975, the actual number of unemployed was 74,553. In July, 1976, the figure was 64,868, which is a drop of approximately 10,000 human beings. The figures have dropped in successive months over a period of four months in comparison with last year.

Irrespective of whether honorable members want to enter into an argument on whether the figures to be used ought to be on a seasonally adjusted basis or an actual basis, the fact is, as honorable members would recognize, that if one compares the same set of figures for two different years, the comparison is valid. The point which emerges is that in actual terms approximately 10,000 fewer people are unemployed today than one year ago. I invite honorable members to compare the political nature of the Government which was controlling the economy in the two years which I have used for the comparison.

The Leader of the Opposition tried in a most ungentlemanly way to discredit the policy of federalism, which the Liberal Party in this State
and the Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government in Canberra have adopted. The ungentlemanly way he chose was to try to link it with what is going on in the economy. In answer to an interjection from the Leader of the National Party I point out that he was not prepared to analyse the principles concerned which led to the interjection from the Treasurer that the Leader of the Opposition is a centralist. After that he simply said that that was far too simple. The policy of federalism, which has been enunciated Federally and in this House, is a significant step forward in terms of the liberties of human beings.

Basically this Budget has been analysed only in terms of the economy. It has not been analysed on the basis of whether people have a chance to participate in decision-making at the local level, the State level and the Federal level or whether there is some opportunity for those decisions to be judged in terms of financial responsibility at each level of government. That is the federalism policy of this Government.

When in the history of this community has local government ever had a percentage share of personal income tax upon which it can rely and can budget and determine the areas in which it would like to enter with the attendant expenditure and non-expenditure decisions which it would make? When in the history of Australia have the people at local government level had the opportunity to be involved in those decisions? I suggest never, because basically Australia, in terms of its policy decisions at the Federal and State Government levels, has never deigned to give financial freedom to local government. This is a significant step forward in the three-tiered system of government.

Furthermore, if honorable members analyse federal systems throughout the world—I do not mind whether they take Canada, the United States of America, Sweden, or West Germany—wherever there is a viable federal system of government there is a degree of preparedness and capacity to make use of a basic tax, such as income tax. This is the first time that a share of income tax has gone to State Governments and local governments. There is no doubt, in terms of principles, that this will enable decision-making by each of those two levels of government to be far more responsible.

It will make worth while the participation of people in those levels of government because in the past local government was able to say only that it had its rates as taxes and could not be expected to pay for health benefits, elderly persons' homes, social welfare benefits and other matters associated with the whole range of the social service delivery system. There is now a financial capacity to be involved in those areas and to enable people to participate in neighbourhood and local community groups in a way which has not been possible before.

A degree of financial responsibility has now been placed on the State Government which it has not had before. The decision which has been made by the Treasurer of this State is that he will not increase taxes to increase expenditure. If honorable members examine the argument put forward by the Leader of the Opposition in which he advocated massive increases in State Government expenditure—an area where the State is governed by a Loan Council which determines the amount of loan funds which it is able to obtain—they are left with only one conclusion, that if the Leader of the Opposition were the Treasurer of this State he would massively increase State taxation because there is no other source in the present governmental conditions in Australia to enable him to increase State expenditure.
I should like to discuss in detail all those matters of importance, the policy decisions which are involved in this Budget, and the increases in expenditure in education, social welfare, and the whole range of areas which have been selected and determined as making an important contribution to the well-being of this State, but other members of the Government party will do that.

The point is that the Opposition's case stands condemned because of its assumption that a Government can spend its way out of inflation. The Opposition's assumption is that the Government must immediately cure unemployment, regardless of the ultimate cause, but in dealing with inflation, as I have illustrated to honorable members, that does not work.

The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition includes a statement that the Budget accepts the economic strategy of the Federal Budget. Of course it does, and the sentence which is first proposed in the amendment includes a strong reason to vote for the Budget.

The claim is made that the Commonwealth Budget will increase unemployment, but not one argument has been produced to substantiate that claim. It is also said that the Commonwealth Budget will maintain consistent levels of inflation. One way to assist to reduce the level of inflation is to reduce the level of Government expenditure and help to ensure that the private sector resources of the community are encouraged to be fully employed.

The case is made that there will be lower real wages, thus decreasing consumer spending. This ignores the point that consumers will not spend unless they have confidence in the recovery of the economy, and that confidence returns when inflation is being brought under control. If consumers do not have confidence in the recovery of the economy, then they will increase their savings bank accounts and withdraw from spending. In those circumstances, there will be no way in which investors will be encouraged to invest. That is the only way we can work at reducing inflation and unemployment combined.

Each of the matters which have been put forward in the amendment relies upon the basic fallacy that one can spend one's way out of inflation. As I have illustrated, that is not possible. Finally, the amendment must be rejected in terms of the policy enunciated by the Treasurer concerning the new federalism. As I have demonstrated, the new federalism will enable, in a way not previously possible, local and State Governments to be financially responsible in their expenditures and encourage participation by people in local and State Government decisions in a way which was not possible before.

On the motion of Mr. WILKES (Northcote), the debate was adjourned.

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

MARKETING OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS (MARKETING BOARDS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 2) on the motion of Mr. I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Marketing of Primary Products Act for reasons best known to the Government, and which I cannot find out because the Minister has not been particularly communicative in the matter.

The Opposition favours the orderly marketing of primary products through producer-controlled marketing boards. Where a board is producer controlled there is an incentive for the producers to determine the policy of the board. Unfortunately, in the past Victoria has
had examples of statutory authorities which were supposedly working in the interests of primary producers but which, because of the disinterest of the Minister of the day, have been allowed to fall into disrepute to the extent that the system has broken down.

The best example of this in recent years was the Victorian Inland Meat Authority. A ridiculous situation was allowed to develop under the present Government whereby the processing sector of the meat industry enjoyed a lucrative period of viable contracts and good financial returns. However, for reasons which should have been obvious to the Minister, the authority, which was a statutory body, established for the protection of producers and indirectly the protection of consumers by preventing collusion, because of the lack of initiative by the present Minister of Agriculture, was allowed to fall into disrepute and, having achieved that objective, the Government introduced legislation to abolish the authority on the basis of the financial losses incurred by the authority.

The Government argued that it was not right and proper to allow the authority to continue to be a drain on the Consolidated Fund. If the Minister had been prepared to get off his backside and appoint members to the board who were prepared to do a selling job, the authority's operations could have been a viable proposition. The Government let the authority die and then, when it was in its death throes, the Government completed the kill. The authority went out of business.

I return to the Bill. The Government has decided that in future marketing boards will consist of 6 members—3 producers and 3 non-producer representatives. The Opposition contends that marketing boards should be producer controlled and the most practical way for this to be brought about under the Bill as drafted will be by an amendment that I will propose during the Committee stages making it mandatory on the Governor in Council to appoint as chairman a producer who derives a substantial proportion of his income and is actively engaged in the production of the commodity which the board will be handling. Bearing in mind that the chairman will have a casting vote, the policy of the individual boards can be influenced and determined by the producer representatives.

In that way, the incentive will be maintained through producer representation. The producer representatives will be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the particular organization of which they are members. No producer organization will stand idly by if representatives on the boards do not do their jobs.

Mr. WHITING: One member still has to be invited by the Minister.

Mr. WILTON: Yes, one member still has to be invited by the Minister through the organization which the Minister elects to be representative of the producers. The Deputy Leader of the National Party may be prepared to argue why that should be amended. Members of the Opposition would be happy to look at the matter.

The other point I want to make is that the poultry section of the Victorian Farmers Union has been quite critical in correspondence, which I understand has been circulated to all members of Parliament calling on them to preserve the existing situation of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board. The important point which should not be overlooked is that the members of the board are elected by the egg producers and can be removed by the producers. That situation should be retained.

Members of the Government party may argue that some expertise is needed in marketing and it is not to be taken that simply because a person is a
producer he knows all about marketing. To my knowledge it has never been claimed, certainly not by the Opposition, that a producer has expertise in marketing. Many Ministers are experts at nothing. It is one of the tragedies of the State that it has to put up with these “no-noes”, but they survive because expertise can always be bought. That has been the situation in industry, commerce and politics since the year dot. Therefore, it is fallacious for the Minister to attempt to justify that producers should not have control of boards on the grounds that marketing and retailing experts are needed to sit on the boards and determine their policy. Members of the Opposition do not accept that. There is no disputing that those experts are needed, but they can be obtained and utilized as servants of the board. I do not believe any member of the Government party can make a worthwhile argument on the activities of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board, which has been producer-controlled. The circular to the Victorian Farmers Union states, inter alia—

Over the past twelve years, during which the egg industry has experienced extremely difficult times with low prices and huge unprofitable export surpluses, there was sufficient confidence in the elected producers for them to remain unopposed. Surely, this expresses the satisfaction of producers over the quality and integrity of the producer members. The egg board has faced the same problems as the Victorian dairy industry is now facing but the capable board members have been able to achieve stability without a State Government subsidy. The Hen Stabilization Act has also been achieved under a producer-controlled board. No one can deny that. The board has acquitted itself extremely well in the best interests of the producer and the consumer. The Bill proposes to abolish what is known as the Consumers Committee. The Minister has justified this in his second-reading speech by a brief statement that—

In view of the appointment of a Consumer Affairs Council under the Consumer Protection Act 1972, it is now considered that the operations of this committee, which comprises a number of women appointed by the Minister, should be discontinued.

The Minister is advancing a false argument. When one studies the consumer affairs legislation, it is seen that this legislation is designed to protect consumers from misrepresentation, malpractice, and manipulation carried out by a whole variety of people in the business of retailing or selling goods under a variety of arrangements which covers the misleading marketing of prices, door-to-door sales, unordered goods, pyramid selling and so on.

The Consumer Affairs Council has a function to advise the Minister or to carry out a variety of duties as required by the Minister. I should have thought the Government, having decided to remove the Consumers Committee from the Marketing of Primary Products Act, would have consulted with the Consumer Affairs Council and sought some mode of operation on how it considers the council should function. When I made inquiries through the chairman of the council, I was advised that there had been no discussion. The chairman said that his view was that unless something was specifically written into the consumer affairs legislation or the Marketing of Primary Products Act, it would not be the council’s function to be looking at the operations of statutory authorities.

The sitting was suspended at 6.14 p.m. until 8.35 p.m.

Mr. WILTON: Before the suspension of the sitting I was discussing several important aspects of the Bill. The points that I wish to establish are that, first of all, members of the Labor Party believe it is most important for long-term stability within the primary industry that the Government has a responsibility to establish a series of marketing boards so that those who produce a particular commodity have the machinery at their disposal to influence the marketing of their produce beyond the farm gate. Honorable members would agree with me that at present most sections of primary industry feel a considerable amount of instability
and uncertainty concerning the future of the industry, and this is all related to marketing. It is important when Parliament is dealing with the formation of marketing procedures, marketing boards or statutory authorities, that it is satisfied that what it proposed will be adequate, and those that have a vested interest in primary industry will be able to maintain this influence over the policies of the marketing board.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: Senator Wriedt and all that.

Mr. WILTON: I think the Minister would agree that Senator Wriedt, during his term as Federal Minister for Agriculture, discharged his duties in a responsible way. He also demonstrated that he had a genuine desire to create within his own sphere of operation a situation in which the primary producer would receive adequate rewards for the labour he invests.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: You can't be serious!

Mr. WILTON: If the Minister wishes to refute that, I shall be interested to hear his arguments because the track record of his own colleagues in the Federal sphere leaves a lot to be desired. If the Minister wants to go back over the years—

Mr. I. W. SMITH: No, it would be too painful.

Mr. WILTON: I agree with the Minister that it would be too painful for him to go back over the record. It would reveal the inefficiencies which have existed for far too long. It is accepted that in Australia it is most difficult to achieve the ultimate objective of a national marketing authority. That is where the responsibility should lie, but that is a difficult undertaking. The only two areas in which marketing of primary produce has been achieved are the wheat industry and the wool industry. The stability of both industries today can be related to the marketing systems that prevail in the respective industries. The wheat industry goes back many years. It is significant that, with all the problems that beset primary industry today, the stability of both the wheat and wool industries has been obtained only as a result of actions by Socialist governments. Honorable members on the other side of the House will find it difficult to concede that point, but it is a fact of life, and in their hearts they cannot deny it.

I accept the Minister's proposal that people who are going to represent producers on boards should not only be deriving a substantial proportion of their income from the production of the produce in question but should also be actively engaged in the industry. People who are not primary producers may be deriving, as a result of wise investment, a substantial portion of their income from primary production, but are not necessarily actively engaged in the industry. This is a result of the development that has taken place in recent years with the creation of agricultural companies. If the Government is going to establish marketing boards with a limit of six members, then the chairmen of those boards should be actively engaged in and deriving a substantial portion of their incomes from the industry.

As I have already said, the incentive built into any board established to market a primary product is that the producers who hold positions on the board have a personal interest in the marketing of the product, and have to answer to their colleagues who are actively engaged in the industry. To that end I will be submitting amendments at the appropriate stage, and I hope that the Minister and the Government will be prepared to accept them, because I do not believe they restrict or inhibit the activities of any board that will come into existence in the future or any existing boards which will continue as a result of the passage of this legislation.
I have already mentioned the role which the Minister believes will be taken by the Consumer Affairs Council. It is a hopeful sign that perhaps, after the Opposition has for years tried to instil some sense of responsibility into the Minister of Agriculture, who is interjecting, he has at long last started to show some response. However, he has not demonstrated this in a practical way. Even the farmers of Victoria have lost confidence in the Minister. They carried a motion of want of confidence in him and called for his resignation.

As I understand the consumer affairs legislation, it is largely responsible for the actions of people engaged in the retail trade and the promotion of sales of a variety of commodities, but not necessarily for statutory authorities. This view was reinforced by a discussion I had with the Chairman of the Consumer Affairs Council. The existing consumers' committee established by the principal Act made a practical contribution, because people on the committee concerned themselves with the operations of marketing boards, and built up a personal relationship with them.

This is reflected in a document which was circulated by the Victorian Farmers Union, which I understand the Minister accepts as being a responsible body qualified to speak on behalf of producers. The poultry section of the union which sent this circular to members of Parliament, in dealing with the consumers' committee, made this point—

The poultry section is concerned that the Minister intends to remove the egg board consumers' committee.

It is not an egg board consumers' committee; it is a consumers' committee established under the principal Act to deal with the marketing of primary products. The circular continues—

We see no need to remove this committee as it serves an important function as a means of liaison between producers, their marketing board and the important consumer.

The advice I have received is that the committee made a practice of conferring with the Victorian Egg Marketing Board and discussing with it matters concerning prices, packaging, presentation, marketing and so on. The Victorian Farmers Union document goes on—

The consumer committee has met with the egg board at regular intervals and has accepted increases in the price of eggs, when the facts to justify such an increase have been presented to it. The comments of this committee over the years have played an important part in the marketing of eggs.

This committee provides a very important bridge between the consumer and the marketing board, simply because its members are consumers such as housewives and people who go into shops and purchase the commodities that are marketed. Accordingly they are able to express a point of view. The fact that the Minister's predecessor saw fit to re-appoint these people over a number of years indicates that the Minister of the day accepted them as being people capable of discharging their responsibilities.

Because of the way in which the section is phrased, the Minister has wide scope on whom he appoints to a committee. It has always been open to the Minister at any time, if any consumers' committee was not fulfilling its function, to change the situation. For that reason the Labor Party believes the committee should be maintained. The Consumer Affairs Bureau would not fill the role. Certainly the bureau has an important function to perform in curbing the practices of some private retail organizations. There is no doubt the Consumer Affairs Council would also play an important role. But there would be a gap if a consumers' committee were not established under the Marketing of Primary Products Act, particularly in relation to one section of the Act, in view of the responsibilities placed on the committee by it.

Members of the Labor Party do not oppose the second reading of the Bill. However, we believe it needs
amending and, at the appropriate stage, we will submit a number of amendments with the intention of making the legislation better.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): This Bill to amend the Marketing of Primary Products Act with respect to the constitution and powers of marketing boards is a unique legislative measure. It contains provisions which, not long ago, one would never have expected a non-Socialist Government to present to the Parliament. I do not know whether it results from changing times, Ministerial attitudes, or bureaucratic influence, but this Bill displays a Socialist attitude to the marketing of primary products. It will affect the lifelines of our primary producers.

The measure will curtail the rights of producers to elect members to marketing boards. The Marketing of Primary Products Act was first enacted in 1935. I well remember that year and the years before. The prices of primary products were low. Unemployment was worse than it is today and had a much greater effect on the community. Farmers in those days wanted the opportunity to have a say in the marketing of their products. Farmers such as my father and his neighbours worked all the year growing their produce, but when they took it to market and asked how much was offered for it, they could not even put a price on it.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: What was the produce?

Mr. TREWIN: It was wheat.

Mr. I. W. SMITH: That is not dealt with in this Bill.

Mr. TREWIN: I am just relating a little of the history of the marketing of primary products. Apparently there is a need for some members on the Liberal Party benches to know a little about how the legislation came into being.

Mr. WILTON: Who introduced the original Bill?

Mr. TREWIN: I did not examine the records to see who introduced the original measure in 1935. We are living in 1976 and, if we are not careful, we will soon have a socialistic State. I hope we will not. I will do anything I can to see that we do not and I hope there are many honorable members who agree with me. The measure will certainly have a marked effect on the constitution and powers of marketing boards. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that the Bill made a number of amendments to the Act. He said that they would—

1. Reconstitute the extant marketing boards with effect from 1st July, 1977, and provide for the constitution of any future marketing board to comprise six members, all appointed by the Governor in Council, three of whom shall be producers;

In a letter which has been handed to me, the State President of the Victorian Farmers Union refers to opinions expressed within that union. He said that one further opinion which was expressed was that if the amending Bill went through Parliament in its present form it would provide an opportunity for political patronage. Irrespective of what party is in power, this Bill would leave the door open for that sort of patronage and I believe that the primary producers of this State, no matter what their political beliefs, would not seek to have political appointees imposed upon them. The Minister said also that the Bill would—

2. Repeal the section of the principal Act under which the Minister may appoint a consumers’ committee;

The National Party will support that if necessary. My colleagues and I appreciate that if a marketing board is to deal with several areas of the production, distribution, and marketing of a primary product, the consumer should have a place. The Minister went on to say that the Bill would—

3. Provide power for the Treasurer of Victoria to guarantee financial accommodation for any marketing board constituted under the Act;
This is a pertinent point which is appreciated by the National Party and by primary producers. Not many months ago a marketing board went out of existence; the Minister did not have this power. That is not the main reason why the board ceased to exist, but this amendment will provide for boards to receive financial accommodation. Another amendment to the Act will—

4. Extend the power given to the Citrus Fruit Marketing Board in 1973 to provide a specific power for all boards to enter into contracts, arrangements and undertakings and give marketing instructions relating to the handling, packing, marketing or processing of the commodity in respect of which the board is constituted;

I understand that the citrus growers are not deeply opposed to this provision.

The fifth proposed amendment is to change the name of the Egg and Egg Pulp Marketing Board to the Victorian Egg Marketing Board and to make some amendments relating to the operations of the board. That proposed change of name is acceptable to the National Party and is necessary for convenience sake, although I do wonder whether the ordinary egg producer had an opportunity of expressing his views on some aspects. My knowledge of the industry is not sufficient for me to pursue that point.

The sixth proposed amendment makes provision for a reduction in the minimum age for eligibility to vote at any poll which may be conducted under the Act from 21 years to 18 years. The National Party accepts that such a reduction in age is in line with the current trend in electoral matters and will provide an opportunity for the sons of farmers and other young people involved in the industry to petition for a poll and participate in the creation of a board. That is the final opportunity a primary producer has to indicate his desires or opinions to marketing boards. He is able to seek, by petition, the conduct of a poll, and the proposed reduction in age is reasonable and acceptable at this time.

The most definite objection of the National Party—which has been confirmed by many primary producers—is that growers must not have taken from them their right to elect members of a marketing board. That is the last line of defence of primary producers and I have been told on several occasions in the past six to eight weeks that farmers do not want to come wholly under the influence of bureaucrats. The present influence of Government authorities such as the Soil Conservation Authority, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and the Environment Protection Authority, to name a few, is great. It is often difficult even to put a shovel into the soil or trim the branch of a tree without seeking permission. The tendency for bureaucrats to take over should be watched with some care because primary producers should not be deprived of the few opportunities which are now open to them, particularly as they often work for twelve months to have their product ready to market. Therefore, they need to have their problems understood by the marketing board concerned.

The Minister suggested that the growers concerned elect a panel from which the Minister can choose a representative. That is a point on which the National Party is very much at variance with the proposed legislation, because the Minister, through the Governor in Council, has all the power and authority.

Having indicated the National Party’s strong objection to that section of the proposed measure, I now move the following amendment—

That all the words after “That” be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words “this Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide that—(1) grower representatives constituting at least half the membership of a marketing board be elected by eligible producers; and (2) the chairman of a marketing board shall be a grower”.

It is not long since legislation was passed regarding the Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board which specifically defined the powers of the board and
the rights of the growers. The tobacco industry is a closed industry; one cannot market tobacco unless one has a quota. That board controls the flow of tobacco to the marketing floor through a quota system. The opportunity to appeal against decisions of the board has been provided and the board consists of six members, four of whom are growers.

A ballot to elect those members will be taken on 20th October next and the primary producers concerned are extremely worried that the passing of the legislation presently before the House may affect their rights to elect grower members to that board. Whilst the Australian Tobacco Board sets prices and schedules of rates and so on, the Victorian Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board has an important role to play. I mention the Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board to the House to illustrate the concern of those involved in that industry, as well as other primary producers and the National Party, about the influence of this proposed legislation upon that and other industries. At present the right to elect members to the board follows normal voting procedure under the Electoral Act and the eligibility of growers is quite clearly defined.

One can quite easily appreciate the concern of the tobacco growers, particularly when they have been faced with the difficult task of uniting their industry over the past several years. Approximately ten or twelve years ago the tobacco industry was split into two factions and the establishment of the board created a situation where, irrespective of the faction to which he belonged, the grower had an opportunity to vote, thereby reflecting his influence on the board. The industry is now close to achieving a united front and its members are particularly concerned that those rights will be eliminated if the Bill is passed.

The Bill provides that the Minister will notify organizations which he considers should submit to him a panel of five names, of which he shall choose three. However, if an industry consists of several sections, as does the meat industry, what will be the outcome of his considerations?

Mr. I. W. SMITH: I ask the honorable member to tell me about “Sinclair’s Meat Board”.

Mr. TREWIN: I shall be factual on this matter because I have still to be convinced about it. If this Bill is passed, which sector of the tobacco growers will receive the invitation to submit names? Will each sector have an opportunity to nominate 5 persons and will only 3 persons be chosen from the 10 submitted? I appeal to the Minister to consider the amendment as a suitable way of resolving the present position in the industry.

In the not-too-distant future the opportunity will arise for other boards to be created. I mentioned the meat industry and the Minister threw in a question which I hope I have answered in a practical way. If a marketing board for red meats was sought and the Graziers Association of Victoria, the Victorian Farmers Union and others wanted representation on the board, the Minister would have to make a decision. He would have to accept one and not another. I do not know whether he actually wishes to have the responsibility that this Bill provides. Political questions could arise. I know the honorable gentleman has many good advisers but bureaucrats in a particular position might say, “We do not wish to be humbugged by farmers who are too old—or too young—and who are trying to tell us what to do when we already know the answers”. The result could be similar to what was reported on the front page of Stock and Land this week—the increase in meat inspection fees which is meeting strenuous objection. Although some people are making profits on meat inspections, they plan to increase the fees.

Mr. Trewin.
Primary producers throughout the State have indicated clearly, through their respective organizations and as individuals, to me, to other members of the National Party and no doubt to other members of Parliament, their concern about the impact of the proposed legislation and particularly of clause 3 which removes the opportunity for grower representatives to be elected to marketing boards. I remember the first election for the Australian Wheat Board when growers throughout Australia met to select their representatives on a State basis. That procedure has not changed greatly although the producer organizations are now notified and requested to elect members. At the request of any organization an election of members of the Australian Wheat Board could be carried out today. That door must always be kept open. On behalf of primary producers of this State, I indicate that clause 3 of this Bill would not suffice for any industry or be satisfactory for the beneficent continuation of marketing of Victorian products.

Mr. CRELLIN (Sandringham): I support the Bill and oppose the amendment. It may cause a little surprise that a member who represents a metropolitan electorate is interested in speaking about the marketing of primary produce. In reply to the interjection about my having a farm somewhere, I do not, unlike some members of the Opposition, have a farm somewhere.

Mr. FORDHAM: There is nothing wrong with having a farm.

Mr. CRELLIN: That is correct, and I should love to have one. The problems of rural Victoria are appreciated and acknowledged not only by the members in this House representing country electorates, including those in the Government party, but also by honorable members who represent the metropolitan area. I make clear to our country colleagues that they are not alone in discussing the crisis in rural Victoria. It is also acknowledged that Australian farmers are equal to the world's best, and better than most. Usually what they put their minds to in the area of primary production they do well. It is appropriate to say that today, on the opening of the Royal Melbourne Show, the State of Victoria puts on display the things that it does well in primary production.

This Bill deals with the marketing of primary produce, to which I wish to direct my attention, because I believe that in the area of marketing lie many of the answers to the problems facing rural Victoria. A couple of years ago, in Queensland, I took particular notice of how that State marketed its dairy produce. It is interesting to note that my family was able to buy five types of butter. I was particularly interested in one brand marketed under the name of "Butter Royal" which was a premium product attracting a premium price. We took the trouble to bring some of this butter back to Victoria because we were so impressed with its quality.

The Queensland Butter Marketing Board was attempting to market a product to suit a particular section of the market and it was doing it well. A study should be made of how Australian rural products are marketed and of how Australian marketing methods compare with those of other nations. The Scottish people market their whisky as Scotch whisky; the Irish market their linen as Irish linen; the Danes market their dairy produce as Danish dairy produce; and the New Zealanders market their Canterbury lamb as New Zealand Canterbury lamb. However, what happens regarding Australian wool, the best in the world, bar none? Under an international label it is lumped in with wool from the Argentine, South Africa and any other country where it is grown. It is not marked as premium Australian wool, the best in the world without question. When
Mr. TREWIN: Have you heard of blending?

Mr. Crellin: I have heard of blending, but it is nearly impossible to buy a pure wool product in Melbourne. On the shelves of Australian shops at this moment there are products from every other nation in the world. I can go into shops in my district and purchase cheese from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, France and Italy but I have the devil's own job to find some variety in cheese from Australia. I venture to suggest that each honorable member has at some time sampled some of the premium cheese which Australian manufacturers make, but where does one find it on the shelves?

Mr. HOLDING: You can buy it in my electorate.

Mr. Crellin: I am glad to hear that. However, we should be able to buy premium Australian cheese anywhere. The same thing happens with margarine. At the grocer's in my electorate one can find three market brands of butter, "Western Star", "Peters" and "Tucker Bag" but ten brands of margarine. There are odds of ten to three that a person will buy margarine in preference to butter. In the self-service store in the country town in which my mother lives there are six varieties of margarine and two varieties of butter.

Mr. HOLDING: Whose fault is that?

Mr. Crellin: I do not know, but it is interesting. The artificial product is marketed better than the natural product.

Mr. WHITING: An artificial product?

Mr. Crellin: The ingredients of margarine do not always come directly from a primary source; some ingredients come from a secondary source. The products of Australian manufacturers should be in our shops and should replace the imported products. The Australian manufacturers could do it. I shall give some examples of what can happen when an Australian manufacturer decides to "spend a dollar" and engage experts to overcome the problem. At the Perth airport the wine makers of Western Australia have set up a small shop, which markets nothing but West Australian wine, and they do it very well. When one purchases a couple of bottles of wine they are placed in an attractive cardboard container fitted with a carrying handle. Unfortunately that does not happen at Melbourne. The West Australians have done it, and full marks to them.

Mr. HOLDING: Adelaide does it also.

Mr. Crellin: I understand that it also occurs in South Australia—good luck to them. That is a further example of what I am talking about in the marketing of primary products. Marketing is the key word. If one has a good product, one must get out and sell it.

Mr. HOLDING: Like Carlton draught!

Mr. Crellin: The Carlton brewery does not seem to have any trouble selling that either, and it also has a pretty good export market.

In his second-reading speech the Minister of Agriculture said—

The aim of a marketing board should be to ensure that the commodity is marketed in the best interests of producers and consumers having proper regard to the stability and future prosperity of the industry.

The Minister went on to say—

It is essential, therefore, that the memberships of marketing boards should include persons with management, marketing and financial expertise of a high order, qualifications which most producers cannot be expected to possess.

It is interesting to hear members of the Opposition and of the National Party suggest that the marketing boards ought to be dominated by the producer. I would be the first to
acknowledge that the producer should be represented, and properly so, but does he need to dominate and control it?

Everybody is trying to do the primary producer a good turn by helping him sell his product at a price which will give him a reasonable and steady income. Tonight I have given an illustration which indicates that there are many people who are anxious to buy Australian products, but they are unavailable. I mentioned before that one can buy cheese produced by other countries but one has difficulty in finding the Australian product.

On 8th September there appeared in the *Sun News-Pictorial* an advertisement headed, "How the Kiwis say cheese". New Zealand distributes its cheeses through an Australian agency which advertises in a Melbourne newspaper. I have yet to see any agency advertise an Australian cheese on the same scale in a Melbourne paper. However, honorable members are informed that the dairying industry is in trouble. That is probably because it is making the wrong produce. I do not want to buy skim milk powder but I do want to buy cheese. Therefore, it may be time to get people who are involved in the marketing of primary products to look at what the market place wants instead of just producing what the industry thinks it wants. I am not the only one who is anxious to purchase Australian products. I even have the support of the Leader of the Opposition in this matter because he is a connoisseur of good food, as are many honorable members.

An interesting journal published by the Australian Department of Overseas Trade is titled *Overseas Trading*. In the issue dated 30th April, 1976, volume 28, number 8, on page 181, is an article headed "Lactos has reason to smile when Japanese say 'cheese'". The article states—

An Australian cheese-maker—after losing the major U.S. market through the presence of residual pesticides in its product—by swift, positive action overcame this problem and not only regained the market but expanded it and other export areas until for the current year it has had to refuse some export orders.

The article refers to a Tasmanian cheese manufacturer by the name of Lactos Pty. Ltd., of Burnie, Tasmania, and it is worth reading because it is an example of what can be done if somebody adopts the correct approach to marketing. The company tailored its product to suit the market and was successful. That may well be an example for many other people in this area.

All honorable members appreciate the need for immediate relief and assistance for our rural industries. I suggest that in an endeavour to achieve this, the answer in the long term may be to improve marketing techniques. I am not alone in suggesting this, and I am pleased to quote a man who is very much involved in an area of primary production, particularly in the dairying industry in this State. He is Mr. Bill Pyle who, I understand, is the President of the United Dairyfarmers Association of Victoria. Recently I had the pleasure of listening to him speak in my electorate. He told people in the metropolitan area of the problems in the dairying industry. One message that emerged loud and clear was the need for additional marketing expertise. He did not hesitate to acknowledge the need for improved marketing in the dairying industry. Other sections of primary industry need additional marketing expertise. The sooner that comes about, the better. This Bill might help to bring about the necessary improvement.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): I support the amendment which has been moved by the honorable member for Benalla. I wish to comment briefly on some of the remarks by the honorable member for Sandringham. The honorable member should have made his remarks during the debate
in the House last night. He is obviously interested in the dairying industry but he did not avail himself of the opportunity to speak then.

Tonight the House is debating a Bill to amend the Marketing of Primary Products Act. Although some of the provisions are supported by the National Party, one area is of major concern to members of my party and to members of the Victorian Farmers Union. Concern has also been expressed by the Graziers Association and many farmers throughout Victoria oppose the principles which are being established by the Government in this measure.

Mr. McCabe: Does the honorable member suggest that the graziers are against this Bill?

Mr. Hann: The graziers were concerned about the situation that the Government was moving away from the election by primary producers of their own representatives on marketing boards. In a letter dated 30th June, 1976, Mr. J. B. Barclay, secretary of the Graziers Association of Victoria, refers to the Bill.

Mr. McCabe: What is the date of the letter?

Mr. Hann: If the honorable member had been listening, instead of having a private conversation with his colleagues he would know that I have stated the date of the letter. I do not intend to repeat it. The letter states—

The proposal to reconstitute the existing boards and any future marketing boards appears to be sensible although I do have some reservations over the power given to the Minister to appoint the producer representatives.

The honorable member wanted the information from the Graziers Association and he now has it. Very little discussion ensued with the primary producer organizations prior to the Bill being introduced into Parliament. The poultry section of the Victorian Farmers Union has expressed concern that the Minister did not discuss the proposed legislation with them prior to its introduction. In a submission which was distributed to all members of Parliament, the Victorian Farmers Union stated—

The Poultry Section of the Victorian Farmers Union wishes to register the strongest possible protest over those sections of the Bill to amend the Marketing of Primary Products Act 1958, which refer to the appointment of producers to the Victorian Egg Marketing Board and the Minister of Agriculture's power to appoint a Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

The Poultry Section is particularly concerned that the Bill was introduced into State Parliament by the Minister, before he had consulted the producer organizations. In a letter to the Victorian Farmers Union Poultry Section on 17th October, 1973, the Minister of Agriculture advised that if legislation to reconstitute the Egg and Egg Pulp Marketing Board would be under consideration in the future, he would be pleased to seek the comments of the Victorian Farmers Union.

Their principal concern is that the Minister did not seek their comments.

It concerns primary producer organizations that a new principle is being established whereby the Minister has almost total power, in some instances, to appoint producer representatives on marketing boards. This is a movement away from the principles to which the Victorian Farmers Union and the National Party are dedicated, and to which, in the past, the Liberal Party Government, was dedicated. There may have been some confusion at the annual conference of the Victorian Farmers Union on the total impact of the Bill. The debate at the conference related to the principle that is being established of taking away the majority of growers or producers on the marketing boards. Following the motions passed at that conference, the Minister distributed a letter to all branches of the Victorian Farmers Union explaining the measure and his reasons for introducing it.
In reply to the Minister's letter, Mr. J. P. Heffernan, President of the Victorian Farmers Union, stated in the Victorian Farmer, August-September, 1976—

In his letter, Mr. Smith states that the commodities are relatively minor and the Bill should therefore be of little or no interest to producers of other commodities.

The Victorian Farmers Union opposition to this Bill is concentrated entirely on the principle which does not establish a grower majority on marketing boards. Therefore, whether the commodities are minor or major is beside the point. It is the principle which is at stake and therein lies the danger in this Bill.

The Minister goes on to say that because the chairman and deputy chairman "may be either producers or other members, producers need not lose their dominance on the board".

There is also no guarantee that they will have a majority on the board, and it is the lack of such guarantee to which the Victorian Farmers Union objects.

In another paragraph the Minister states that "board policies must be determined on a sound business basis". He implies that farmers are incapable of determining policies on a sound business basis.

Australians are recognized as amongst the most efficient farmers in the world and because in most commodity groups of this industry, they have had to face the realities of the international market-place, it is generally true to state that they understand the principles of business management as well as any other sector of the business community. There is no evidence to show that the best business brains from the ranks of farmers are in any way inferior to the best business brains found in other sectors of the nation.

We require a majority of farmers on marketing boards in order to determine and control the principles of operation of the board. The management marketing financial expertise to which Mr. Smith refers is certainly necessary and the minority of these people on the board is acceptable. Where such people are really needed are on the staff of the marketing board.

That is a particularly important phrase. The marketing board has the responsibility to employ people with expertise who will have the day-to-day responsibility of carrying out the administration of the board. This has also been successful with the Australian Wheat Board.

Mr. Heffernan further stated—

We generally agree with the rest of the Bill and at our recent State conference the delegates concentrated the criticism on that part which did not guarantee a grower majority on the board.

An example of a marketing board in which the growers have the total responsibility is the Milk Marketing Board in the United Kingdom. The board consists of eleven farmer representatives elected from throughout the United Kingdom. It is one of the most successful marketing boards, certainly in the United Kingdom and possibly in many parts of the world because of its responsibility in administering, selling and marketing milk in the United Kingdom.

The Milk Marketing Board is able to draw its business ability from the farming communities. At present in Australia the rural community is facing a severe recession, with problems of drought and, from time to time, adverse climatic conditions. Farmers are forced to put up with conditions which are never experienced in the business community. The farmer generally is, and has been in the past, in the unhappy position of not being able to set a price for his commodity.

Perhaps the greatest single challenge we face in the future is the enactment of legislation which concerns primary products. The National Party fully supports the proposition that there should be producer representatives on primary product marketing boards and that they should be elected by the producers. Members of the National Party believe producers should have majority control of such boards and that the chairman of each board ideally should be a producer.

Virtually in no situation can it be proven that any board which has a representative who is not a producer is more successful at marketing products than those boards on which there are producer representatives. This is important because the producer who is elected to the position
has his personal vested interest in the industry. He has a knowledge of the product and an involvement with and a responsibility to those persons who elected him to ensure that he is successful in the marketing of the product.

By comparison, the various bureaucratic boards that are established from time to time by statutory authorities are comprised of persons who have no vested financial interest, but who receive their salaries regardless. They cannot be voted out of their positions and they are not subject to the producers if they do not make a success of the operation of the board.

That is the type of issue we are speaking about in our opposition to the principles enshrined in the Bill before the House. It has been pointed out that the proposed legislation touches on only a relatively small number of marketing boards. That is fair enough, but the Bill establishes a principle which could at some later stage be expanded to include other marketing authorities. Members of the House debated this issue last night and I do not wish to go over old ground. It was stated that a recommendation has been made to the Victorian Government that a Victorian dairying industry authority should be established. The big danger in the proposed legislation is that if the Government establishes the principle of producer representatives being nominated by the Minister, a similar situation could easily occur with the new dairying industry authority. I believe Victorian dairy farmers would be totally opposed to that.

Members of the National Party are pleased to support a number of provisions of the Bill. We congratulate the Minister on the provision whereby the State Treasury will guarantee the finance of the marketing boards. This is extremely important, and it is an area in which the State has not ventured in the past. It is something that could be of advantage in the future not only to the areas referred to in the Bill but also to other Victorian commodities.

The various recommendations for changes in the Egg and Egg Pulp Marketing Board appear to be commendable and apparently have been recommended by the board because of changes in the types of products that it is marketing at present.

Members of the National Party are therefore pleased to support those provisions. We believe the Government has a responsibility. No doubt it is embarrassed by the fact that the proposed legislation was brought in without consultation with the primary producer organizations in Victoria. I am sure that one of these days the Government will adopt as a principle that negotiations should take place with primary producer bodies before legislation is introduced in the House. This is preferable to introducing a Bill without prior negotiation with primary producers and then trying to foist the provisions of the Bill on rural industries in Victoria.

I am happy to support the amendment moved so ably by the honorable member for Benalla. I hope the Government will see fit to take another look at the provisions of the Bill and at the dangerous principles enshrined in it. The need for this is evident if we look at the impact that socialization could have in the future. We have seen examples of what happened in Canberra during the three-year period when the Labor Government was in office. It brought in this type of legislation with disastrous effects and the rural communities are now suffering as a result of the Labor Government’s period in office.

The National Party supports the amendment and I hope other honorable members will also support it.

On the motion of Mr. AUSTIN (Ripon), the debate was adjourned. It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

Mr. Hann.
ADJOURNMENT.


Mr. Thompson (Minister of Education): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Jones (Melbourne): With regret I raise a matter for consideration by the Minister of Transport. I am concerned about suggestions that a task force from the Victorian Railways will recommend the closure of some 28 services in the rural areas of Victoria, particularly those affecting the transport of freight.

I should like some assurance from the Minister that these services will not be terminated before proper consultations have been held with the appropriate unions in the area to make sure that no loss of employment occurs. It is well known to honorable members that many country towns in Victoria have a disproportionately large number of railway employees in the work force.

There is a real risk that if the services are arbitrarily cut off, grave distress will be caused to people who have reached the later years of their careers without having an opportunity to move into alternative employment prospects.

I put the point to the Minister that if changes are to be made by way of termination of services, it is not a matter of simply saying “Farewell to the railways” and “Hello to private enterprise”. However, the important aspect is that the railway personnel and the railway organization should be used to provide these services. We can understand on the labour side that considerations of social equity as well as cost benefit might suggest a move from fixed rail services for freight to road freight services.

If that is so, surely those freight services can be operated by the Victorian Railways, and the people who have been employed purely in fixed rail services can be employed in driving and servicing trucks. This is a very important human problem, and it would be an appalling dereliction of duty if decisions were to be made arbitrarily without consideration of the needs of the people in country towns and without discussing the matter seriously with the trade unions.

I ask the Minister to give an undertaking that these services will not be terminated without discussions with trade unions and local municipal councils and that some action will be taken to ensure that the Victorian Railways and its personnel are brought into the road transport business to ensure that there is no loss of employment.

Mr. Billing (Springvale): I wish to raise with the Minister of Education a matter of extreme importance which concerns the total solar eclipse which is to occur on 23rd October. In a recent warning issued by the Commission of Public Health attention was drawn to the risk of permanent or partial blindness to persons who look at this phenomenon in the heavens. The Commission of Public Health recorded 80 cases of permanent or partial blindness following a partial eclipse in 1943; in April, 1959, there were 170 reported cases; and fortunately in June, 1974, the number of reported cases dropped to 10.

Mr. Edmonds: What is the Government going to do about it?

Mr. Billing: The Opposition party is always in the dark so it will not affect its members.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The Minister who is being asked to listen to the honorable member cannot hear what is being said while interjections continue.
Mr. BILLING: This matter is important, and in view of the health warning given by the Victorian Commission of Public Health, I ask the Minister of Education what steps are being taken to draw the attention of teachers and pupils in primary and secondary schools to the risk of permanent or partial blindness if the solar eclipse is viewed with the naked eye.

Mr. CULPIN (Glenroy): I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Education. It refers to an area of land in North Street, Glenroy, which some years ago was purchased by the Government for a special high school. An answer to a question on notice indicates that the area is leased to a Mr. Spano for grazing purposes. The Broadmeadows City Council is concerned about this area of land, and is awaiting a further report. Although this land has been leased for grazing, I have not seen it used for that purpose. A lot of wrecked cars and other similar material are on the land, and this is causing concern.

Some years ago the Broadmeadows Council asked the Government to inform it when it leased land in this area, so that it could request the use of it at least for a short term. It is regrettable that a fine area of land that was intended to be used for educational purposes is leased for grazing whereas it could be beneficially used, in the short term, for recreational purposes.

A lot of ground work has been done in the area of schools, as I am sure the Minister is aware. The council has co-operated with the Minister and I think similar courtesy should be extended to the council.

I ask the Minister to assess the prospects of leasing this land to the City of Broadmeadows for recreational purposes for the benefit of people, young and old. I speak as a councillor and also as a member of Parliament. The council is desirous of co-operating with the Education Department, as it has done in the past, and the department was ill-advised to lease this land to Mr. Spano for grazing. I believe the council should have been given the first opportunity of leasing the land. I ask the Minister to inquire into this matter, and in future to give the local council first consideration when land belonging to the Government is to be leased.

Mr. HUDSON (Werribee): I refer to the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Finances of the City of Sunshine, and I recommend to all members of this House that they should read it. I shall quote some of the words used by the Minister for Local Government in the Ministerial statement which he delivered last night. He said—

The report discloses a history—

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The Standing Orders provide—

No member shall allude to any debate in the other House of Parliament or to any measure pending therein except that whenever a member of this House believes himself to have been seriously misrepresented by statements made in the same session of the other House of Parliament.

I must rule the honorable member out of order.

Mr. HUDSON: I accept the ruling, just as I accept any other ruling made by the Speaker, and that is more than some other members do.

The SPEAKER: The honorable member is speaking to the adjournment motion. He should make no reference to other members.

Mr. HUDSON: People who read this report will see, as I have seen, that there has been gross mismanagement of the council as well as misdemeanours and misrepresentation.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): On a point of order, the honorable member for Werribee is clearly out of order in referring to a statement made by a Minister in another place or to a debate that occurred or to
papers or a report that were pre-
sented in another place. The honor­
able member is defying your ruling, 
Mr. Speaker, because he does not 
understand it, but nevertheless he is 
out of order.

Mr. LACY (Warrandyte): On the 
point of order, the report referred to 
by the honorable member for Werri­
bee, as I recall, was tabled in this 
House. It may also have been tabled 
in another place, but the report was 
tabled here, and for that reason the 
honorable member for Werribee is in 
order in referring to it as it applies 
to Government administration.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth 
Wheeler): Order! The report was 
presented in this place, but the hon­
orable member was ruled out of 
order for referring not to the report 
but to the statement made by the 
Minister. The honorable member's 
time has expired.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of 
the National Party): I bring to the 
attention of the Minister of Trans­
port a statement that he is reported 
to have made earlier tonight about 
the closing down of railway lines 
for passenger services throughout 
country Victoria. It is common 
knowledge in Queen’s Hall and 
amongst the press; everybody knows 
about it, but so far—and the Min­
ister is aware of it because I have 
mentioned it to him—no statements 
have been made.

Mr. STEPHEN (Ballarat South): 
On a point of order, may an hon­
orable member raise a matter of a 
statement which has supposedly 
been made, and does it refer to 
Government business?

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth 
Wheeler): I fail to see the purpose 
of the honorable member even rais­
ing a point of order. There is no 
point of order.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of 
the National Party): The disturbing 
factor is that a statement which has 
apparently been made by the Min­
ister has been embargoed, although 
it is common knowledge to many 
members of the House. It is a very 
serious matter if passenger railway 
lines in country Victoria have been 
closed down. However, honorable 
members representing country elect­
orates, party Leaders, and other in­
terested people have no knowledge 
of this matter, although “Snowy” 
on the trams has heard about it. It 
is embarrassing to receive inquiries 
from the media about a statement 
that has apparently been made and 
to have no knowledge of it.

Mr. FOGARTY (Sunshine): I wish 
to inquire from the Minister of Agri­
culture whether there has been a 
serious outbreak of an infectious 
disease known as laryngotracheitis 
in the poultry industry in country 
Victoria. If so, how prevalent is the 
disease; have representatives of the 
industry and officers of the Depart­
ment of Agriculture met to discuss 
it; and if so, what recommenda­
tions have been made and what is 
the involvement of the department 
in providing technical advice and 
financial assistance?

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I direct 
a matter to the attention of the Min­
ister for Conservation. The Soil 
Conservation Authority, which is 
carrying out extensive land reclama­
tion and other necessary works 
on both private and Crown lands 
in rural areas, last week had 
to dismiss some of its senior em­
ployees because of lack of funds. 
In the main, those dismissed are 
senior, long-serving or higher paid 
officers on the field staff. One such 
officer had been with the authority 
for nine years and two months, and 
unless he is reinstated, he will not 
receive long service leave. This is 
a serious financial situation for the 
person involved, and causes a lower­
ing of morale amongst officers of the 
authority.

Will the Government ensure that 
sufficient funds will be made avail­
able to the Soil Conservation 
Authority to enable it to continue 
the work in which it is now active
and to re-employ those people who have been dismissed in the past eight to ten days? If possible, funds should also be provided to assist the work of soil restoration and reclamation on private and Crown lands so that other personnel can be employed in the interests of this State.

Mr. COLLINS (Noble Park): I bring to the attention of the Minister of Consumer Affairs a matter concerning two of my constituents, Mr. and Mrs. Bourke of Noble Park. Late last year they purchased a 35-foot houseboat and attempted to secure a mooring on Lake Eildon. They did so for an annual rental of $10 a foot, a total of $350. The condition was that two years' rental had to be paid in advance, so they paid $700. After ten months they found they were unable to continue maintaining the houseboat because of family commitments, and were informed by the proprietor of the mooring pens that they would have to pay $1,000 commission if they wished to sell their boat with rights to the mooring pen.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission does not charge any fee for the maintenance of houseboats or mooring rights to the proprietors of establishments on Lake Eildon. My constituents were not able to sell their houseboat without paying a commission.

I should like the Minister of Consumer Affairs to take note of this matter and also to mention it to his colleague, the Minister of Water Supply, with a view to ascertaining what can be done to ensure that this practice is not continued. I should point out that the Bourke family received considerable help from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission obtained another mooring for the Bourke family and was able to have the commission reduced to $500. However, an amount of $400 rental paid in advance by the Bourke family is still outstanding.

There are currently 305 moorings at Lake Eildon. As the yearly rental has been raised from $10 a foot to a flat $600 the moorings will return the sum of $183,000 a year. If a commission of $1,000 is charged when a boat is sold, it would only need a reasonable number of boats to be sold each year to bring the total revenue up to something like $250,000 or $300,000.

The Minister of Consumer Affairs and the Minister of Water Supply should get together with the commission to work out some means of protecting the public who wish to enjoy recreation and use community facilities at Lake Eildon without suffering this rip-off.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir): In the absence of the Premier and Treasurer, I direct my remarks to the attention of the Minister of Labour and Industry and the Minister of Consumer Affairs. The Government has announced proposals to fix a minimum price for packaged beer, and an increase of 10 cents in the price of a dozen bottles of beer has been announced by Carlton and United Breweries Ltd.—it is probable that Courage beer will also rise in price. As it has been put that there is an employment crisis in the liquor industry, will the Government ascertain the position from the liquor trade union? Will the Government undertake to consult the Trades Hall Council to obtain its attitude on a proposal to set a minimum price for packaged beer? Will it investigate the situation of Victorian citizens who may purchase discounted beer in New South Wales or South Australia just across the borders of this State?

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): I wish to direct a matter to the Premier and Treasurer as the Minister of the Arts. In his absence, I ask the Minister of Education to take up the matter with the Premier. I am concerned about the actions of the Chief Secretary and the State Advisory Board on Publications in banning The Americans, baby from public dis-
play for sale in Victoria. The Parliamentary Library has two copies of this evil document. In fact, I borrowed a copy an hour ago and have it with me. It contains short stories some of which, in the opinion of some of my colleagues and myself, have literary merit. Some of them are just short stories. I have no doubt that members of the Government party would like to read them.

The publication has been effectively banned from sale in Victoria. It is one of 1,001 publications banned last year. But to put *The Americans, baby* in the same category as the others mentioned in the report makes nonsense of the legislation and of this Parliament. It is on sale in every other State—even Queensland.

Some of the stories have won prizes. The author is regarded as one of the major short story writers at present in Australia. His works are banned with a variety of work such as *Joys of Love* and *Sexy Swingers*. Modesty prevents me from mentioning the rest of them. There is a great number of these publications which cannot be compared with *The Americans, baby*. It is nonsense that this book should be banned from sale in Victoria.

Our system of banning publications under which the publisher—in this case a reputable publisher, Angus and Robertson—does not know a book is being discussed until after it is banned. There is no right of appeal or of putting evidence to the tribunal. I ask that the Premier, as Minister of the Arts, look at this matter to see whether this injustice can be corrected and the book released. I have no objection to the other 1,000 publications being in the position they are in.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I point out to the honorable member for Melbourne that I would have thought that the policy of the Government is well known in respect to any action relating to transport matters which affect people and service to the community. The policy is clearly laid down in respect to any service which may be altered or not altered—the views of the responsible people in the community will be taken into consideration. The Government is well aware of its responsibility.

I was not quite certain of the point made by the Leader of the National Party. It may have related to a press statement I issued and which will become public later today and will probably appear in the press tomorrow morning. The honorable member knows full well that the release for publication was to be late today. He spoke to me earlier and I told him that I would make a copy of the statement available to him. I do not know whether he still wants a copy.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I am not personally familiar with *The Americans, baby*, baby of the honorable member for Brunswick. I understand that the book has not been banned but that the State Advisory Board on Publications gave it a restricted rating which means that it is unsuitable for people under the age of eighteen, and that its display is restricted. I shall take up the question with the Premier and Treasurer, and Minister of the Arts.

The honorable member for Springvale referred to the eclipse of the sun on 23rd October. I understand that in Melbourne the eclipse will be total, compared with a 65 per cent eclipse in Brisbane. Damage to the eyes could be considerable if people view it in any way. I regard the matter as serious and will take it up with my colleague, the Minister of Health, to ascertain the best way of warning people, particularly children of school age, to ensure that no physical harm is done on that day.

The honorable member for Glenroy drew my attention to a block of land which was originally purchased for use as the site of a senior high school. From what the honorable
member says, the land has apparently been leased to a non-active grazier. I should be pleased if the Broadmeadows City Council put forward a proposition for either the leasing or the sale of the land, which it apparently wishes to use for recreational purposes.

The honorable member for Benalla raised a matter concerning the Minister for Conservation and I shall certainly draw that to the attention of the honorable gentleman.

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The honorable member for Sunshine has certainly taken an interest in poultry things and has concerned himself with the disease of laryngotracheitis in hens. I am not sure what information he has about the disease, but it is not an exotic disease such as the outbreak of avian influenza which occurred recently.

Laryngotracheitis, pullorum and leukosis are three diseases which occur from time to time in Victorian poultry flocks and I am quite confident that the officers of the Department of Agriculture will be able to advise those producers who have problems on methods of control and eradication.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): The honorable member for Noble Park mentioned a matter concerning a Mr. and Mrs. Bourke who had a house-boat at Lake Eildon and were required by the proprietor of the mooring area to pay a transfer fee. I will certainly, with my colleague the Minister of Water Supply, investigate the matter and ascertain what can be done to report the facts back to the honorable member.

The honorable member for Reservoir attempted to sheet home to me the responsibility for a decision for some future minimum price of beer which might be decided by the Liquor Control Commission. I am delighted that he has chosen me to represent the Premier on this matter and I will make every effort to ensure that the Liquor Control Commission provides opportunities for the concerned trade unions or the Trades Hall Council to make their views known before a minimum price is fixed. The whole point of sending this matter to the Liquor Control Commission for fixing is to give an opportunity to interested parties to make their views known.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S MOBILITY INSURANCE PTY. LTD.
(QUESTION NO. 553)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Treasurer—

1. Whether discussions were held by any Minister or senior public servant with Sir Charles Evans, chairman of St. Christopher's Mobility Insurance Pty. Ltd., during his recent visit to Australia?
2. Whether this company has begun trading in Victoria; if so, whether the requirements of the Comptroller of Stamps have been met in issuing a licence?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

1. No.
2. No.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION FORECASTS.
(QUESTION NO. 595)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

Whether he has forecasts prepared on the rate of—(a) unemployment; and (b) inflation in Victoria; if so—(i) by whom; (ii) what are these forecasts; and (iii) whether he will lay all the relevant documents on the table of the Library?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

(a) No.
(b) For Budget purposes Victoria has used the forecast adopted by the Commonwealth for its Budget.
STATE INSURANCE OFFICE.
(Question No. 596)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—
1. What revenue was raised by the State Insurance Office in each of the past five financial years from—(a) all sources; and (b) premiums only and what was the amount in each case expressed as a percentage variation over the previous year?

2. What amounts were spent by the office in each of the past five financial years for—(a) administrative costs; (b) hospital and medical costs; (c) legal costs; and (d) cash settlements, and what is the amount in each case expressed as—(i) a percentage of premium income; and (ii) a percentage variation over the previous year?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—
1. (a) and (b). Details in relation to revenue received by the State Insurance Office in each of the past five financial years are—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total income</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
<th>Premium</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>$40,768,582</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>$36,298,094</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>$40,487,861</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>$45,926,267</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>$50,271,781</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>$72,766,263</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>$72,766,263</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>$106,292,349</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>$116,040,928</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. (a), (b), (c) and (d). Details of expenditure are—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Administration costs</th>
<th>Percentage of premium income</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
<th>Hospital and medical costs</th>
<th>Percentage of premium income</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>$2,381,917</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,254,255</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>$2,656,068</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>$4,719,083</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>$2,875,478</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>$5,419,583</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>$3,377,974</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>$6,122,257</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>$5,329,215</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>$6,326,733</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRIMES COMPENSATION TRIBUNAL.
(Question No. 631)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—
1. On what dates the Crimes Compensation Tribunal will sit in Bendigo or other northern Victorian centres in the next twelve months?

2. Under what criteria or circumstances a person can lodge a claim with the tribunal and where a claim may be submitted?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—
1. The Crimes Compensation Tribunal will sit in Bendigo and other country centres when there are sufficient claims received to justify such sittings. At present there are not sufficient claims emanating from Bendigo and Northern Victoria, or any other country area, to warrant country sittings.

2. Any person who has suffered physical injury or nervous shock as a result of a criminal act which took place on or after 13th December, 1972, may have an entitlement to an award of money as compensation from the Crimes Compensation Tribunal. The dependants of a person who has died as a result of such criminal act may also have an entitlement to an award. Claims may be submitted to the Secretary, Crimes Compensation Tribunal, Chief Secretary's Office, Old Treasury Building, Spring Street, Melbourne, 3000. Telephone 651 1756.

VICTORIA POLICE FORCE.
(Question No. 679)

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—
1. What is the present—(a) actual; and (b) authorized strength of the Victoria Police Force?

2. What was the wastage in actual strength since 1st January, 1976?

3. What is the over-all increase in actual strength since 1st January, 1976?

4. What was the ratio of police strength to population in Victoria as at 1st September, 1976?
Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1. The actual and authorized strength of the Victoria Police Force as at 9th September, 1976, was 6,429, and 6,500, respectively. Provision has been made for an increase in authorized strength to 6,800.

2. There were 201 discharges from 1st January, 1976, to 9th September, 1976.

3. The increase in actual strength from 1st January, 1976, to 9th September, 1976, was 273.

4. The ratio of police strength to population in Victoria as at 1st September, 1976 was 1:589.

RANDOM BREATH TESTS.
(Question No. 681)

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

1. How many drivers of—(a) private motor vehicles; (b) taxis and hire cars; and (c) commercial vehicles have been tested by the new breath analysis squad under the random breath testing legislation since it was enacted this year?

2. How many of the drivers in each category were required to take a breathalyzer test?

3. How many drivers were proceeded against for having a blood alcohol level in excess of 0.05?

4. How many personnel are employed on random breath testing?

5. Who determines the location at which the testing units will operate, indicating whether the choice of location has any relationship to accident statistics in that particular area?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

1 and 2. The information requested is not available as statistics of this nature are not maintained.

However, as at 9th September, 1976, a total of 2,406 drivers had undertaken a preliminary breath test under the breath testing station legislation of whom 87 (3.61 per cent) were required to take a breathalyzer test.

3. In all 35 or 1.45 per cent of the 2,406 drivers who undertook the preliminary breath test.

4. At any one time, approximately ten to fourteen members of the Police Force are employed to operate a breath testing station.

5. The officer in charge, Traffic Operations Group, Police Traffic Department, or his deputy, determine the location at which a breath testing station will operate.

Traffic volumes and accident statistics are taken into consideration in determining the location.

WESTERNPORT REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY.
(Question No. 683)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Treasurer—

When it is proposed to make funds available for the building of the offices and headquarters of the Westernport Regional Planning Authority at Cranbourne?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

Funds for the offices and headquarters of the Westernport Regional Planning Authority at Cranbourne will be made available in the 1977-78 financial year when the design and planning stages have been completed and tenders for the construction of the building have been received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Legal costs</th>
<th>Percentage of premium income</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
<th>Cash settlements</th>
<th>Percentage of premium income</th>
<th>Percentage increase over previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>$2,512,260</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>10-1</td>
<td>$13,312,103</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>$2,766,594</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>24-0</td>
<td>$14,877,359</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>$3,430,585</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>24-0</td>
<td>$18,632,840</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>$4,024,478</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>17-3</td>
<td>$23,165,239</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>$4,945,201</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>22-9</td>
<td>$28,918,948</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CORIO WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL.
(Question No. 607)

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North) asked the Minister of Education—

When he will receive a deputation from the Corio West Primary School to discuss requirements of the school?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

At this stage I can see no advantage in meeting a deputation from the Corio West School Committee, however I have asked the Regional Director of Education, Mr. Fisher, to visit the school and discuss matters with members of the school committee.
PROPOSED HEALTH COMMISSION.
(Question No. 611)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health—

In respect of the proposed Health Commission—

1. What were the terms of reference of the committee set up to prepare legislation based on the Syme-Townsend report, when it was appointed?

2. Whether the committee's report has been provided to the Minister; if not, when it will be available and whether the report will be made publicly available?

3. When it is expected that legislation will be introduced?

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is—

1. The terms of reference of the planning committee were as follows—

   (a) To examine in detail the measures needed to carry out the principal recommendation of the committee of inquiry;

   (b) In particular, to consider the organizational and legislative changes needed to give effect to the recommendation and to form views as to how these changes can best be co-ordinated;

   (c) To develop timetable for the carrying out of the necessary measures;

   (d) To consider the relationship of the proposed Health Commission to the Public Service Board and the positions created by it;

   (e) To consider whether the rights of any members of the staff of the Ministry of Health in relation to pensions, superannuation and long service leave entitlements will be adversely affected by the formation of the Health Commission and, if so, what action should be taken in those cases;

   (f) To examine the effect of the recommendations on the question of wage determinations at present made by the Public Service Board or by tribunals;

   (g) To consider what staff or other changes would be needed to enable planning and works to be carried out otherwise than through the Public Works Department;

   (h) To consider what relations should exist between the Health Commission and the Treasury;

   (i) To detail the qualifications required for the Chairman and other members of the Health Commission and to form views as to the means necessary to obtain suitable persons for these positions; and

   (j) To make recommendations to the Minister from time to time in regard to the foregoing matters.

2. Yes. It is not proposed to make the report publicly available. It is being considered in relation to legislation now being prepared for the consideration of the Parliament.

3. It is expected that legislation will be introduced into the current session of Parliament.

PENSIONER REBATES FOR THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.
(Question No. 692)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

Whether the Government has any plans for a rebate to pensioners for third party insurance of their motor vehicles?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

The feasibility of granting concessions to pensioners in respect of the payment of part of the constituent elements of third party insurance premiums is currently under examination. The matter will be decided in conjunction with the examination, in due course, of the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into Motor Vehicle Accident Compensation.

"THE AMERICANS, BABY."
(Question No. 733)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Special Education, for the Chief Secretary—

In respect of the report of the State Advisory Board on publications, whether the Minister will review the decision made by his predecessor on the advice of the board concerning The Americans, baby published by Angus and Robertson with a view to removing restrictions placed on its sale?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer supplied by the Chief Secretary is—

No.
PRIVATE BUS SERVICE SUBSIDIES.
(Assembly No. 749)
Mr. A. T. EVANS (Gippsland East) asked the Minister of Transport—
1. What total amount has been paid to the operators of private bus services since the subsidies for these services were introduced?
2. What proportion of the amount has been paid to the proprietors of bus services based in the metropolitan area?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—
1. The total amount paid to private bus operators in subsidies from the commencement of the scheme in 1974 to the end of August this year was $6,039,549.
2. Metropolitan operators of private bus services have received $5,150,660 in subsidies under the scheme.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL.
(Assembly No. 759)
Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—
On how many occasions the Consumer Affairs Council met during the financial year 1975-76 and how many meetings were attended by each member?

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The answer is—
During the financial year 1975-76 the Consumer Affairs Council met thirteen times.
The number of meetings attended by members were—
Brigadier J. D. Purcell 11
Professor M. Brunt 8
Mrs. J. O. Downing 8
Mrs. H. J. Mein 10
Mrs. D. G. Hobson 12
Mrs. J. T. Patrick 7 (resigned)
Dr. K. T. H. Farrer 3
(appointed 10th February, 1976)
Mr. H. R. Hobson 12
Mr. E. M. MacGregor 2 (resigned)
Mr. A. W. Muddyman 10
Mr. J. L. Waters 11

SWIFTS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL.
(Assembly No. 768)
Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—
What additional facilities will be available at the proposed Swifts Creek High School other than those currently provided at the Swifts Creek Higher Elementary School?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—
Departmental officers visited Swifts Creek six weeks ago and it was decided to form a local committee which will furnish a report to the department on the facilities they think should be provided with the establishment of Swifts Creek as a high school. When the report is received the matter will be given full consideration.

OMEIO SECONDARY EDUCATION FACILITIES.
(Assembly No. 769)
Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray) asked the Minister of Education—
What secondary education facilities are to be made available to students in Omeo following the decision of the Education Department to close the higher elementary school?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—
No decision has been reached on the closing of Omeo Higher Elementary School at this stage. This matter will be fully examined when final details on the establishment of facilities at Swifts Creek are determined.

FUNDS FOR RAILWAYS.
(Assembly No. 773)
Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Treasurer—
Further to the answer to question No. 43 asked on 7th September, 1976, whether any sums are being currently remitted overseas by way of interest payment on capital funds for railway construction and/or maintenance; if so, what sums were remitted in the years 1974-75, and 1975-76, and at what interest rate?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—
As indicated in the answer previously given it is not possible to identify present overseas debt with specific expenditures.

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS BRANCH.
(Assembly No. 791)
Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Agriculture—
1. What fields of agricultural economics are currently being reviewed by the Agricultural Economics Branch?
2. What projects are planned to be commenced during the current financial year?
3. What projects have been curtailed or postponed because of insufficient funds in the current financial year?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

1. Agricultural economists are engaged in much day-to-day work as well as a number of research projects. The following is a list of the projects which have been completed this financial year or are still in progress—

   (1) Use of credit for farm growth (completed).
   (2) Benefit/cost analysis of research stations in Sunraysia/Riverland (completed).
   (3) Analysis of the supply of pigmeats (completed).
   (4) Liquid milk transport systems in Victoria.
   (5) Mechanical harvesting of peaches (completed).
   (6) Retail meat marketing margins.
   (7) Meat marketing systems.
   (8) Dairy enterprise management—a case study.
   (9) Benefit/cost analysis of ragwort control.
   (10) The beef industry in North-Eastern Victoria.
   (11) Continued collection of information from monitor farms in Ballarat, Hamilton.
   (12) The welfare situation on dairy farms.
   (13) Productivity on dairy farms.
   (14) Land management in Albury-Wodonga.
   (15) Herd improvement services in West Gippsland.
   (16) The Lake Bolac report on relative profitability of cropping and grazing.
   (17) The importance of agriculture in the Warrnambool district economy.
   (18) Income instability in the Victorian potato industry (completed).
   (19) Marketing proposals for the dairy industry.
   (20) Consumer attitudes and preferences regarding pigmeats (completed).
   (21) Seminars for farmers on “Government and the Farmer’s Dollar”.
   (22) Demand analysis for apples.
   (23) Cash budget sheets for farm management planning.
   (24) Revisions of the Department of Agriculture’s record books.
   (25) Review of the beef industry situation and outlook.
   (26) Income tax and book-keeping for farmers.
   (27) Probate planning for farmers.
   (28) Spot-data (weekly publication).
   (29) Extension courses on the principles and practice of farm business management.
   (30) Organization of the Royal Agricultural Society's farm management competition.
   (31) The Industries Assistance Commission inquiry into the potato industry.
   (32) Publication of a handbook as a guide to fencing.
   (33) Advice to hobby farmers through extension programmes.
   (34) A pro forma for property buyers.
   (35) Discussion days for farmers on dairy farm management in current conditions (completed).
   (36) Seminars and lectures on borrowing money for farming.
   (37) Publication of current contract rates as an aid to management of farms.
   (38) The economics of trellis drying of dried vine fruits.
   (39) Assisting in the formation of marketing co-operatives and machinery syndicates in the Swan Hill area.
   (40) Evaluation of research priorities for the Horsham agronomy research centre.
   (41) An extension programme for tobacco growers concerning financial management.

2. The following projects are planned to be commenced in this financial year—

   (1) An analysis of supply response in the Victorian onion industry.
   (2) A study of the effects of agricultural change on rural populations.
   (3) Taxation and rural income fluctuations.
   (4) Evaluation of the economic potential for farm forestry.
   (5) A survey of wheat farmers in the North-Central region.
   (6) A review of the current wheat stabilization arrangements.
   (7) Commencement of operation of the Livestock Marketing Information Service.
   (8) An extension programme concerning use of wool futures.
   (9) The effects of local government rates on farmers; particularly those on the urban fringe.
   (10) Publication of a new edition of Agrifacts — a handbook of technical and financial information as an aid to farm management.

3. No major projects have been curtailed or postponed because of insufficient funds in this current financial year.
Questions [ASSEMBLY.] on Notice.

KERANG AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FARM.
(Question No. 792)

Mr. GINIFER (Keilor) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

1. What research projects are currently being carried out at the Kerang Agricultural Research Farm?
2. What research projects are planned to be commenced during the current financial year?
3. What research projects have been curtailed or postponed because of insufficient funds in the current financial year?

Mr. I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture): The answer is—

1. The Kerang Agricultural Research Farm is a community-owned farm on which investigations and demonstrations are carried out by the Department of Agriculture and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Research projects currently being undertaken by the Department of Agriculture cover salt land reclamation, use of saline water for irrigation, soil structure improvement, and irrigated crop studies with sunflowers.

Demonstrations on the farm include land-forming, lucerne culture, pasture types, drainage water re-use, and types of fences.

2. None. During the current financial year the Department of Agriculture will continue work with investigations and demonstrations previously outlined.

3. No research projects have been curtailed or postponed because of insufficient funds in the current financial year. In June 1976 the Government made a grant of $6,000 to the Kerang Agricultural Research Farm to assist in the maintenance and operations for deaf pupils.

ST. ALBANS SCHOOL FOR DEAF PUPILS.
(Question No. 844)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education—

Whether the St. Albans special school commenced operations in February 1976; if so, how many pupils residing within the boundaries of the electoral district of Coburg enrolled in the classes provided at the school for deaf pupils?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

(a) Yes.
(b) None.

COBURG SPECIAL SERVICES AND GUIDANCE CENTRE.
(Question No. 845)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Special Education—

1. How many psychology and guidance officers are employed at the Coburg Special Services and Guidance Centre?
2. Where the centre is located?
3. Which areas are serviced by the officers from this centre?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The answer is—

1. The staff of the Coburg Counselling, Guidance and Clinical Services Centre consists of—
six guidance officers
one psychology officer
one teacher social worker
three social workers
two speech therapists
one welfare officer
three interpreters—Greek
Turkish
Italian

2. 81 Bell Street, Coburg, 3058.

3. The centre serves the two Education Department inspectorial districts of Coburg and Broadmeadows, which comprise—
40 primary schools
11 secondary schools
7 technical schools
2 special schools
19 registered schools.

MIGRANT EDUCATION AT FACTORIES.
(Question No. 874)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Education—

Which factories have agreed to permit English language classes to be operated by the Migrant Education Branch during working hours and how many workers are involved?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The answer is—

The Migrant Education Branch is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Special Education.

One hundred and four factories have conducted 209 English language courses. A total of 2,476 employees (1,879 men and 597 women) took part in these courses. Approximately 98 per cent of the factories conducted their courses during working hours.

Currently nine factories are conducting courses in English language for their migrant employees and a further ten factories are programmed to hold similar courses.
Questions [16 September, 1976.] without Notice. 2491

DRAINAGE OF LAND ACT 1975.
(Question No. 877)

Mr. HANN (Rodney) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Water Supply—

When the Drainage of Land Act 1975 will be proclaimed and what is the reason for the long delay in this action?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister for Conservation): The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is—

It is anticipated that the Drainage of Land Act 1975 will be proclaimed within the next two months. The matter has been delayed by reason of difficulties in obtaining a suitable appointment for the position as Chairman of the Drainage Tribunal, and also by the necessity to provide staff within the Ministry of Water Resources and Water Supply to service the Tribunal and to administer the additional functions which the Act imposes upon the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

Legislative Assembly
Thursday, September 16, 1976.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) took the chair at 11.4 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

BEER PRICES.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): Is the Premier aware of the warning which was sounded by the Trade Practices Commission that the action of this Government in fixing a minimum price for beer could escalate into other areas? If so, what action does the Premier propose taking in that regard?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I assure the honorable member that the action, which has been recommended after months of inquiry by a board of inquiry, will not "escalate" in the way suggested. This industry must be regarded as being in a special position under Acts of Parliament and the Government must take notice of an expert board of inquiry which investigated the whole field over a period of months. That does not presage any escalation into other fields.

INQUIRY INTO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Mr. A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North): Can the Minister of Education state when it is expected that the inquiry into post-secondary education will commence?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): Members of the inquiry have already had an initial meeting and are currently meeting in Melbourne. It is expected that they will provide the first report at the end of twelve to fifteen months; in other words, the report can be expected towards the end of 1977.

SUNSHINE CITY COUNCIL.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): I ask the Premier: In view of the serious findings of the committee of inquiry into the affairs of the Sunshine City Council, is it the intention of the Government to dismiss the council and appoint an administrator?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The Government has not yet fully considered this report, although the Minister for Local Government made a statement in another place when the report was tabled. Under the Local Government Act, as it stands at present, it is not open to the Minister to dismiss a council and to appoint an administrator unless a council is without a quorum—in other words, unless it is deprived in some way of the necessary quorum of councillors to carry on business, as happened recently with the City of Kellor.

That must be contrasted with the situation under the Local Government Act in New South Wales where the Minister, if he sees fit, for all sorts of reasons may suspend or dis-
miss a council and appoint an administrator for quite a period. That has happened many times in New South Wales. The Government must consider this matter. The power does not exist at present and in due course a decision will be made on whether it is advisable in Victoria to have a similar power under the Local Government Act.

LIQUOR EXCISE DUTY.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): In view of the Premier's grave concern about the problems confronting the hotel industry, has the honorable gentleman in recent times made any, and if so what, recommendations to the Federal Government that in view of the difficulties in the hotel industry the Federal Government should consider reducing its excise charges? If so, can the Premier inform the House of the substance of those recommendations and will he lay on the table of the Library the file containing any relevant correspondence and memoranda?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): Any concern that this Government has about the Liquor Control Act is not confined to hotels; the whole industry must be considered. The Government has made no recommendations or submissions of the type referred to in the question. Perhaps I should remind the honorable member that only last year the former Federal Labor Government made several substantial increases in excise duty.

TATTERSALL'S TICKETS.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla): I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Has the Government made arrangements for the sale of Tattersall's tickets through vending machines and, if so, who will have the opportunity of being agents and will the agencies be arranged on licensed premises?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): This matter is not recent; it is of long-standing, in that it has been a matter of Tattersall's obtaining the necessary machines. Really, it is in the hands of Tattersall's to licence the outlets, subject to approval by the Government. So far as I am aware, and I shall have to check this, no such application has been made yet. However, I will take note of what the honorable member has said, and when an application is made I will give him some further information.

SOLAR ECLIPSE.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn): I address my question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and it concerns the total eclipse of the sun which will occur on Saturday, 23rd October. Is the Minister aware of the intention of certain manufacturers to flood the Melbourne market with a cheap sun filter through which, it is claimed, it will be safe to observe the eclipse? Is the honorable gentleman further aware of the considerable doubt that has been thrown by authorities on the safety of any such device and the real eye damage which may be caused to anyone attempting to use these filters? Will the Minister investigate the possibility of preventing this device from coming onto the market in Victoria?

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): The only way the Ministry of Consumer Affairs could prevent it from coming on to the market at the moment would be to prevent its advertising by prosecuting the people concerned. Certainly the advertising of anything which has not been properly tested and found to be adequately safe for the people is irresponsible and dangerous to the community.

I will certainly consult the Minister of Health, who is responsible for the actual testing of such things, to see whether the filters are in fact effective, and if they are not, and if the advertising suggests that they are, the department will contemplate prosecuting the offender, if that is the right word to use. In any event, it
would be a recommendation to members of the public not to use them.

I will arrange for a suitable statement to be made by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs warning the public against using them simply because there is a risk that they may not be used effectively and eye damage could result. In any event, I will take that action.

**NEPEAN SPECIAL SCHOOL.**

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): Can the Minister of Special Education confirm that the site for the new building of the Nepean Special School will be in Hadlee Street, Seaford and, if not, can he indicate what other sites are being considered or have been considered?

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The honorable member for Frankston raised this matter with me a few days ago and I was happy to confirm to him, as I confirm to the honorable member for Carrum and to the Parliament, that the Hadlee Street site reserved for the Nepean Special School will be the site which will be used for the construction of the new school. It goes without saying that when the planning was being undertaken for the new Glen Waverley School for Physically Handicapped, it became apparent that the size of the Nepean Special School would be reduced by between one-third and one-half because of the absorption of children from the south-eastern metropolitan area into the Glen Waverley facility in Springvale.

Because of the changed role of the Nepean centre, which will now cater only for the Mornington Peninsula and not the south-eastern metropolitan area, I asked officers of my department to examine other suitable sites which might have been more convenient and central to the Mornington Peninsula area to accommodate the reduced size of the school. However, it is felt at present that the site is satisfactory and the most convenient which the department has available, and it is intended to proceed to develop the school on that site.

**BRITISH MIGRANT QUOTA.**

Mr. SKEGGS (Ivanhoe): Has the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs had any discussions with the Commonwealth Government regarding the percentage of British migrants who are coming to Australia within the 70,000 quota?

Mr. JONA (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs): Under the new federalism policy the Federal Government has consulted myself and the Victorian Government frequently about its immigration programme, as it has about programmes in all other spheres in which the State and the Commonwealth both have responsibilities.

I mention that it is not a target of 70,000, but a programme of 70,000 for the current year. The Commonwealth Minister and the Commonwealth department at officer level, have had frequent consultations, discussions and meetings with myself and officers of the State Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on the ability of Victoria to absorb the migrants under this programme.

I emphasize that it is not a target or a quota of 70,000 for Victoria. It will be a decidedly programmed exercise, of which it is estimated some 20,000 of the 70,000 will come from the United Kingdom. Of the 20,000 from the United Kingdom it is estimated that approximately 12,500 will be offered assisted passages subject to approval both under the family reunion scheme—which, I emphasize, will be decided on compassionate grounds—or under the approved classification provisions.

The honorable member asked whether I had had any discussion on this matter in recent weeks. I have had discussions with the State migration officer, Mr. John Felton, from England who recently visited
Australia in connection with the United Kingdom scheme, and Mr. Ed. Holt, who is the deputy chief migration officer for Australia in the United Kingdom, who will be working specifically in the area of British migration to Australia.

LEARNER-DRIVER PERMITS

Mr. JASPER (Murray Valley): Is the Premier aware of a statement attributed to the New South Wales Minister for Transport, Mr. Cox, in which he said that Victoria's refusal to recognize New South Wales learner permits was a radical departure from reciprocal recognition of drivers' licences and vehicle registrations? On 4th May, during the autumn sittings of Parliament, the Premier said that investigations into this matter were in train. I ask the Premier what actions have been taken in this regard.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! Would not that question be more correctly directed to the Minister of Transport?

Mr. WILKES: No, to the Chief Secretary.

Mr. JASPER: I directed the question on 4th May to the Premier and he responded to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! It should be channelled to the Chief Secretary. The Minister representing the Chief Secretary in this place is the Minister to whom it should be addressed.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): I will take the matter up with the Chief Secretary for the honorable member.

LIQUOR INDUSTRY.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I ask the Premier: In view of the Government's expressed concern about the economic plight of the liquor industry, does the Government contemplate giving the Liquor Control Commission power to fix the prices of commodities such as wine, and spirits, meals and accommodation and perhaps cigarettes?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The report of the board of inquiry, which has been tabled in Parliament, related solely to packaged beer. Any action that has been indicated relates solely to packaged beer.

SUNSHINE CITY COUNCIL.

Mr. FRANCIS (Caulfield): I direct a question to the Premier and Treasurer. In view of the many breaches of the law and the misappropriation of public moneys disclosed by the report of the Board of Inquiry into the Finances of the City of Sunshine, is the Government considering taking legal action against the councillors or officers concerned?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I believe I have already answered a similar, though not quite the same, question. However, the answer is that the Government—

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I like the questions to be in order. I am not convinced that this question is not almost exactly the same as a previous question, or that it could not be interpreted in the same way as the question asked by the Leader of the National Party.

Mr. FRANCIS (Caulfield): With respect, my question is directed to the specific consideration of taking legal action, such as prosecution, against the councillors concerned.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): To clear the air a little, as I understood the Leader of the National Party, he asked whether it was proposed to take the power in certain circumstances to dismiss a council and to appoint an administrator. This question is different; the honorable member for Caulfield has asked whether, in view of the report, any prosecutions will be made against councillors or officers. The answer
is still the same; the report must be considered in some detail, and at present I cannot inform the honorable member what action will be taken.

**CLOSURE OF COUNTRY RAIL SERVICES.**

**Mr. HANN** (Rodney): I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the serious repercussions on the livelihoods of people employed in the Victorian Railways and on those living in the districts who make use of the railways, particularly of freight services, and of the Minister's announcement yesterday that many of these services would be closed down without discussing the matter with the local people, will the honorable gentleman make a Ministerial statement to the Parliament giving full details of the reasons why these services are to be closed down?

**Mr. RAFFERTY** (Minister of Transport): The answer is, firstly, that I do not propose to make a Ministerial statement; and, secondly, that the honorable member is completely wrong in saying that I stated that the local people would not be consulted. The press release—a copy of which has been sent to the honorable member's Leader—clearly sets out a contrary opinion. I made it abundantly clear that the local authorities would be consulted and that no service would be changed unless it were replaced by a service equal to or better than the present one. That is the situation, and the Government has indicated that position on many occasions.

Similarly, the Government has indicated that it is part of its policy always to take fully into consideration the circumstances which might arise if the service change affected the availability of jobs in the community, and full consideration will be given to all of those matters before any alteration is made in the services to any area. The whole project is aimed at providing improved services to the country areas. That was made abundantly clear in the press release, a copy of which, I repeat, has been sent to the Leader of the National Party.

**NEPEAN SPECIAL SCHOOL.**

**Mr. FORDHAM** (Footscray): I ask the Minister of Special Education whether, prior to the involvement of the Spastic Children's Society in the proposed Nepean Centre for the Physically Handicapped, he and/or officials of his department approached the Yooralla Hospital School for Crippled Children to see whether it would be prepared to participate in the development of facilities at the centre.

**Mr. SCANLAN** (Minister of Special Education): That matter was largely answered in the recent debate on the Nepean centre, when I quoted from a letter that had been received by the Government from the Director of the Handicapped Children's Centre, Royal Children's Hospital. Of course there were discussions with representatives of the Yooralla Hospital School for Crippled Children.

**NEW BUSES FOR DONCASTER.**

**Mr. WILLIAMS** (Doncaster): Has the Minister of Transport any information about the allocation of the new Volvo buses to the Doncaster depot?

**Mr. RAFFERTY** (Minister of Transport): The answer is that no specific information on this matter has been made available. As I recall, at present there are a number of fairly new buses, as well as some of the older buses, on the Doncaster line. From November this year 50 new buses will be arriving, and as they become available they will be allocated to the areas in which they will give the greatest benefit to the community. As further buses come forward later from other orders, some of the older buses on many lines will be taken off and the new buses will replace them. There is no specific plan for the line mentioned by the honorable member.
LIQUOR EXCISE DUTY.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): Is the Treasurer prepared to reduce the 8 per cent excise applying to the sale of packaged beer which I understand constitutes approximately 6 cents a bottle, in view of his concern over the viability of the liquor industry?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The honorable member's arithmetic is astray. He is referring to a licence fee which is charged each year to all people who sell liquor, and it is based on the turnover for the previous year. As the Budget indicates, the Government has resisted any temptation to increase the licence fee.

Mr. WILKES: The Government did not reduce it, either.

Mr. HAMER: No, it did not.

Mr. A. T. EVANS: It is a fraction of the excise duty.

Mr. HAMER: I am grateful for the assistance of the honorable member. I was about to point out that it is only a tiny part of the total Government charges.

Mr. WILKES: It represents 6 cents a bottle.

Mr. HAMER: It does not. I shall not go into an arithmetical argument in answer to the question, but it is not 6 cents. By far the largest part of what is taken by Government on the sale of any sort of liquor is the Federal excise duty.

SOCcer.

Mr. COLLINS (Noble Park): In reference to the increase in income tax that the Government is collecting from soccer pools, can the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation advise whether any portion of that income is allocated to the development of soccer in this State, particularly at State league level?

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): The funds received by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation come principally from the Totalizator Agency Board—4 per cent from the quadrella and 2 per cent from the daily double.

The department also receives 20 per cent of the gross income in soccer pools. It has also received grants from the Federal Government from time to time for a variety of projects. Altogether, these sources provide the department with a certain revenue; it has certain expenditures and part of those expenditures are assigned to parent bodies which control various sports, one of which is the Victorian Soccer Federation.

Last year the Government gave $25,000 to the federation for assistance with training, coaching, administration, provision of equipment and a variety of things associated with soccer. I believe the Government's policy decision to put aside funds from soccer pool revenue to provide Melbourne with an indoor stadium in which can be played international sport is correct. The funds are still being accumulated, and Melbourne will one day have that international stadium. Although the Victorian Soccer Federation receives $25,000, all parent bodies are looked at, and the one bears no relation to the other.

HEALTH REPORTS.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): I ask the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health, whether he is aware that the latest reports available to this Parliament from the Mental Health Authority, the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the Commission of Public Health relate to the calendar year 1974, and not to the financial year?

If the Minister is aware of this, can he inform the House what action has been taken by the Government to procure the later reports and have them tabled in this House so that honorable members will know what money is being spent and how it is being spent on hospital and mental health activities.
Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I am aware that the reports are in the course of preparation and I will take whatever steps are necessary to expedite their completion and tabling in this House.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

Mr. COX (Mitcham): Following on the answer by the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to the question asked by the honorable member for Ivanhoe regarding British migrants, can the honorable gentleman indicate whether he has had any reports of unions in Victoria taking discriminatory action against migrant members?

Mr. JONA (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs): I have not received any reports similar to those which emanated from Queensland concerning the Storemen and Packers Union in that State.

Mr. EDMUNDS: That must have been prepared by the honorable gentleman’s secretary.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member for Ascot Vale is continually interjecting. I take exception to it. He should realize that he is a leading member of his party.

Mr. JONA: The Victorian Government subscribes fully to the provisions of the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act in respect to any allegations and discriminatory statements of a highly racist nature such as those by the Secretary of the Storemen and Packers Union in Queensland. I hope the Federal Secretary of the Storemen and Packers Union, Mr. Landeryou, will take the necessary disciplinary action against the Queensland State secretary to ensure that such an occurrence does not arise again and certainly not in this State.

FOSTER HIGH SCHOOL.

Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): I ask the Minister of Education, following the reference in the Budget to ten assembly halls being constructed this year: Is Foster High School to be one of the recipients, in view of the long delay in this project?

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): Foster High School is on the list. I should not like to guarantee at this stage that the hall will be built this year. One of the major problems in pursuing the assembly hall construction programme has been inflation. The cost of an assembly hall, which hovered around the $100,000 mark for many years, is now in excess of $300,000 and this has substantially reduced the number of halls that can be completed in any one year.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL.

Mr. DOUBE (Albert Park): I ask the Premier whether it is a fact that the State Government’s Equal Opportunity Advisory Council is holding a special meeting on Monday for the purpose of considering a reply from the Premier to certain recommendations which it made at its last meeting? If so, will he make those recommendations and also his reply available to all members of Parliament?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I will consider the matter. I will have to look at the recommendations. At the moment I know of no reason why they should not be made public.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the County Court (Amendment) Bill.
LIQUOR INDUSTRY.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I move—

That there be laid before this House a copy of the report by the State Parliamentary Labor Party committee of inquiry into aspects of the liquor industry in Victoria.

I propose that this report be laid on the table despite the Government's objections because of the failure of the Government to do precisely what the committee did during the eleven weeks in which it inquired into the problems of the liquor industry. The Government contends that this report should not be tabled because it had had an inquiry conducted. But the Government inquiry was extremely narrow and confined to one aspect of the industry; that was the effect of the sale of cheap packaged beer on the industry. Mr. Brokenshire was asked to inquire into that aspect only.

After the Government fiddled around and got nowhere from November last year to April this year, the Labor Party decided that it was high time a responsible Parliamentary party looked at certain aspects of the liquor industry. To contrast the nature of the two inquiries, I direct attention to the terms of reference under which the Labor Party committee operated. They were—

1. The effect of the marketing of cut-price packaged beer on the employment and economics in the liquor industry.

2. The desirability of the public having access to beer at varying grades of alcoholic content.

The Government should have been interested in that term of reference if only for the reason it imposes its legislation relating to drinking and driving.

3. The desirability of amending the present levels of excise and other Government fees and charges on the liquor industry.

Today the Treasurer was asked whether he had made any approach to the Federal Government about the crippling excise duty which is charged on packaged beer, but the honorable gentleman replied that he had made no such representation.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! There are certain standards which must be adhered to in this place. One thing which honorable members must do is to make obeisance to the Chair when they enter and leave the Chamber. Repeatedly, this is not done by honorable members. They must recognize that there are rules to be observed. It is not permissible for honorable members to sit in the aisles. I suggest that honorable members read their Standing Orders and adhere to them.

Mr. WILKES: May I interrupt my submissions on the motion, Mr. Speaker, to say that I fully agree with what you have just said. It is germane to a part of my argument which I will put later.

If for no other reason, the Government should be concerned with the findings of the Labor Party committee to know what they are in respect to the community having access to beers with varying alcoholic contents. It may have been of some material assistance to the Government—it would certainly be of assistance to the industry—if beer with an alcoholic content different from that of the average beer sold in Melbourne today were to be produced.

4. The need to review the present number of licences issued.

Honorable members will understand how wide this inquiry was by comparison with the narrow inquiry—or appeal from Caesar to Caesar—set up by the Government. The Government was under pressure from the hotel industry to do something quickly and it paid no regard to the main problems of the industry. Had this free enterprise Government been prepared to examine the contents of the Labor Party report it may not have had to take the unprecedented action it proposes of instructing the Liquor
Control Commission to fix a minimum price for packaged beer, in a way yet to be determined by legislation.

Mr. MACLELLAN: Do you want this document to be privileged?

Mr. WILKES: I want this document to be tabled and printed; it is not a privileged document. It has been circulated to all members of the Liberal Party. It has been circulated to all members of the National Party. It has been freely circulated to the press and to any responsible body which is interested in the report, and if some of the backward backbenchers on the Government side interested themselves in the report they would have an opportunity of voting for it to be tabled and printed and it may be that they would even learn something about the problems of the liquor industry in this State.

The next term of reference was—

5. The social implications of the Liquor Control Commission in regard to the establishment of licensed outlets in outer suburban areas.

Everybody knows that the Liquor Control Commission has been acting at the direction of the Government. What the Liquor Control Commission has done about issuing licences to "beer barns" in the outer metropoli
tan areas and on the periphery of Melbourne has been a direct consequence of the Government's policy. It is hypocritical for the Government to say that it is concerned about the liquor industry, because if it were concerned it would have instructed the Liquor Control Commission to alter its policy long before now and to cease issuing licences for the building of huge establishments which are better known as "beer barns", where people have to drive to drink. Young people have to drive to them for entertainment and for drink and then drive home again—of course, the Government accommodates them when they come out of the hotels with a puff bag. I reiterate, those problems are due to the policies of this Government, which is too stupid and too unreasonable to allow this report to be considered on its face value. It is not a political document; it is a fair appraisal of the problems of the liquor industry and it offers some solutions.

The final term of reference read—

6. The need to improve and amend present provisions in the Liquor Control Act.

Everybody knows that those provisions need examination and amendment. After all, Mr. Brokenshire has been looking into the provisions of the Liquor Act, even though he has examined only one aspect, whether people should be entitled to use the free market, the free enterprise system, to sell packaged beer in Victoria. If the Government was not satisfied with that, all it had to do was examine the reasons for the situation, but it was the policy of the Government not to recognize the folly of the Liquor Control Commission, even though that was pointed out in this Chamber two years ago. The Government was then told that the Liquor Control Commission should not have been allowing licences to be transferred from one licensed premises to another in an alternative location. Chain stores are selling liquor on the "loss leader" principle today because of the folly of this Government, not for any other reason. The Liberal Government has allowed the Liquor Control Commission to transfer those licences and has its own stupidity to blame for its failure to understand the problems of the industry.

The easiest way this Government has seen to get out of the current mess is to impose a restriction on the consumer; not to impose any restrictions on the retailer or the wholesaler or the supplier. The consumer is now being asked to pay for the folly of this Government. It seems obvious that the best way in which the Government could have extricated itself from this mess would have been to take cognizance of the report of the Labor Party into these problems.
I had the privilege of serving as chairman of the committee. Also on the committee were the honorable member for Footscray, who is an accountant and was able to appraise the economics of the industry, and the honorable member for Knox, who is an actuary and who gave the committee the benefit of his experience. The Honorable R. J. Eddy and the Honorable D. G. Elliot were also on the committee. Mr. Elliot has had a long experience in and association with the liquor industry. He has had more experience in that field than has Mr. Brokenshire. Other members were the Honorable A. W. Knight, the Honorable W. A. Landeryou, who also has had experience in the liquor industry, the honorable member for Reservoir, who has had broad experience in industrial matters, and finally, the honorable member for Williamstown who has had experience in licensed clubs in Victoria.

Members of the Government party talk a lot of poppycock about 40,000 jobs being in jeopardy, but they do not realize that fewer than one-third of those employees work in the hotel industry. Yesterday the honorable members for Reservoir and I ascertained from the union that no appreciable rise in unemployment has occurred in that section of the industry, although some casual employees may not have been replaced. One could not rely on a better source of information than the union. The Chief Secretary speaks about private enterprise and protection of industry and protection of jobs when he should be considering the consumer.

The Labor Party committee had the benefit of listening to the Retail Liquor Merchants Association of Victoria; the Australian Hotels Association, Victorian Branch; the Licensed Clubs Association of Victoria; Courage Breweries Ltd; the Fair Price Liquor Merchants Association; Robert Robinson and Associates; the Independent Hoteliers Association; the Licensed Freeholders Association of Victoria; the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union, Victoria Branch; and the Hotel Brokers Association. It had the benefit of the experience of these experts, as did Mr. Brokenshire, and in many cases the evidence that was put before the Labor Party committee was not dissimilar to that placed before Mr. Brokenshire, who constituted a one-man inquiry into the problems associated with the Act as implemented by the commission.

Mr. Skeggs: Did you interview the Wholesale Spirit Merchants of Victoria?

Mr. Wilkes: We had lunch with those gentleman yesterday. We placed advertisements in each of the daily papers inviting people to give evidence and there was nothing improper about the way in which we carried out our inquiry. The honorable member for Ivanhoe and the honorable gentlemen on the Government front bench are concerned about democracy when it affects them. They do not believe the Opposition or any other party has an important role to play in the Parliament, other than perhaps to shake hands with Mrs. Thatcher. The Opposition has as important a role to play as has the Executive Government. When the Executive Government fails the consumers or the public of Victoria, it is the clear responsibility of the Labor Party, the official Opposition in this Parliament, and/or the National Party, to take action. Members of the Opposition regard the failures and muddling of this Government to be a matter of public importance.

I shall refer briefly to the findings of the Labor Party inquiry. It will be evident that this report should have been tabled and circulated for members of the Government party to take advantage of the experience and the knowledge contained in the findings before they voted in their party room on the report and recommendations of the Chief Secretary. If those members had had the benefit of examining this report they may have
The committee found that the present retail marketing of cut-price packaged beer was beginning to have an effect on sections of the industry.

Mr. Skeggs: You are giving us your report now.

Mr. Wilkes: I am prepared to give the honorable member a copy of it as he is showing so much interest. It is a pity that he does not put his vote where his voice is.

After listening to the voluminous evidence that was placed before it, the committee decided that cut-price packaged beer was beginning to have a serious effect on sections of the industry and that, if left unchecked, the situation would considerably worsen. I do not doubt that the Government came to that conclusion without the assistance of Mr. Brokenshire. Members of the Opposition did not make any pretence about that. They freely published what was found.

The committee stated further that it believed the previous ruling price was too high—$8.88 for one dozen bottles of beer. The committee could not concede under any circumstances, from the comments put before it, that a product which cost $6.01 plus 40 cents on a pallet at a retail outlet should be sold for $8.88. The evidence suggested that the price of $8.88 was not fixed by the Liquor Control Commission but was agreed to by the retailers. It was part of a cost structure created by the big beer barns that were providing facilities, including entertainment from overseas and interstate, at enormous cost, and the average person who just wanted a bottle of beer did not want that entertainment. The hotels were providing those facilities because of the stupidity of this Government's policy.

If the Government had implemented the policy that was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition two years ago and introduced tavern licences in Victoria similar to those which operate in Western Australia where, of the 186 licences issued last year two-thirds were tavern licences, a different situation would apply. However, the Government allowed private enterprise to run wild and build what it liked. In effect it said, "The Liquor Control Commission may tell you to put in 23 toilets or a certain number of rooms but build what you like, so many motel units, or a parking area for 2,000 cars. The Government is not concerned about the economics of how you pay for it unless you go broke, and if you do, come back to us and we shall tell the consumers what they must pay for the product. We shall force the consumer to pay for it. We shall fix the price." The rapacious developers who wanted to invest their money in that way had an assurance from the Government, and they knew they could twist the arm of the Government at any time.

Mr. Thompson (Minister of Education): On a point of order, I suggest that the issue to be debated is whether a party report, for the first time, should be tabled in the House and printed. The House is not debating the broad subject of control of the liquor industry or the question of fixing minimum prices for packaged beer.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The motion before the Chair is—

That there be laid before this House a copy of the report by the State Parliamentary Labor Party committee of inquiry into aspects of the liquor industry in Victoria.

It appears on the Notice Paper in the name of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is attempting to prove to the House that this report should be laid on the table of the House and should be printed.

I cannot uphold the point of order but I do not want the debate to develop into an argument about the cost structure in fixing a minimum
or a maximum price if that happens to be relevant to the price of liquor. As I said, I cannot uphold the point of order, but there are limits beyond which the honorable member should not go.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I have said what I wanted to say about people in the industry who believe they can twist the arm of the Government whenever they want to get a fixed price for their product.

The committee suggested that the previous ruling prices were too high and did not support the proposal that the Government or a Government authority should establish a minimum price for the sale of packaged beer, adopting the reasons I previously outlined. That is why the Government did not welcome the report, which further suggested and recommended that the price should be freely set by the market.

If I was a member of a free-enterprise Government—Heaven forbid—at least I hope I would stick to its principles. I would not be prepared to abrogate my principles because of any pressure group in the community. I would be prepared to stick to my principles, but at the first opportunity this Government has abrogated its principles and philosophy. That has been pointed out not only by me but also by leading articles in the Herald and the Age, which has been most persistent in informing the Premier how he has abrogated the philosophy of liberalism in this State.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): On a point of order, I respect the ruling you gave a few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, but it seems to me that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is taking advantage of your ruling and is now debating the issue. Mr. Speaker, you explained the purpose of the motion quite clearly to the House and I suggest that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is now going beyond your ruling and ought to be brought back to the subject-matter of the motion.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! I can do no more than reiterate the statement I made a few moments ago. I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition not to debate the contents of the report because they are not covered by the motion before the Chair, which is whether the report should be tabled and printed. The contents of the report are not to be debated, and I ask the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to keep strictly within the bounds of that ruling.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote): Keeping strictly to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and in deference to the Minister of Transport, I shall conclude by quoting the recommendations of the committee and shall not elaborate on those recommendations. I know that the recommendations are painful to the members of the Government party, who, if they had taken the trouble to read them, would be hurt. The report stated—

The committee further believes that the price should be freely set by the market, but to be equitable and effective this would require the exclusion of unfair competition. That should appeal to the Government. I have already explained where the unfair competition comes in through supermarkets and other retail outlets. The report continued—

Account must be taken of present investment and employment in the industry. Strenuous efforts will need to be made to ensure that monopolies are not able to manipulate the market. Retail sales should only be undertaken by those licensed to sell under the retail trade.

The committee considered the desirability of the public having access to beer at varying grades of alcoholic content and recommended—

On the evidence available the committee was unable to make a recommendation on this matter, but believes it should be the subject of further investigation and consideration by the Liquor Control Commission. In making such an investigation the commission should give consideration to recommending the possible reduction of Government charges on beer of a lower alcoholic content, as a possible means of encouraging greater public interest in such beer.
Amending the present levels of excise and other Government fees and charges on the liquor industry should be a simple exercise, but the Premier pointed out this morning during question time what the Government's intention was in that direction. The committee also said—

The committee further recommends that the Liquor Control Commission in conjunction with representatives of the industry, local government and the Valuer General's Office consider a more uniform and equitable method for the municipal rating of hotels. If this lazy and incompetent Government had taken the trouble to examine the problems of the industry, as the Opposition's committee did, it would be aware of the anomalous situation which exists in the rating of hotels. The Government has a clear duty to do that. The report continues—

The committee recommends that the Liquor Control Commission should review the present imbalance of hotel licences in certain areas of the State and, in particular, should provide incentives to encourage the transfer of licences from the inner to outer suburban areas of Melbourne. Accordingly, the Opposition believes the commission ought to impose a moratorium for twelve months on the granting of new licences until it sorts out the mess. That is fair comment and that action should be taken. The report further states—

The committee believes that the development of very large hotels in outer suburban areas is socially undesirable, and recommends that the Liquor Control Commission should prohibit any further development of this sort, and instead encourage the establishment of smaller and more localized hotels and taverns.

On the need to improve and amend provisions of the Liquor Control Act, the report says—

The committee recommends that hotels be granted far greater flexibility, in regard to hours which they are allowed to trade. At present hotels have to open at 10 a.m. but no one goes into them at that time. Why should hotels bear the extra expense of that costly operation when it could be overcome by a flexible hours proposition which has the approval of the unions—there is no problem from that quarter. As a member of the Parliamentary Labor Party committee of inquiry I am prepared to give evidence, as are the other members of the committee, to the Government party committee in an endeavour to help it make its findings in that direction. Members of the Opposition are not stupid enough to believe the Government committee knows everything about all the problems in the industry and are prepared to help that committee. The Labor Party report stated also—

The committee further recommends that the present discrimination against retail bottled liquor licence holders be removed and they be allowed to undertake evening trading in common with the bulk of other retail traders.

The committee believed those traders should be able to compete. After all, what is wrong with free competition? That is a proposition which should touch the heart of the Deputy Premier. Finally, the committee said—

The committee also recommends in the interest of public health that the Liquor Control Commission should endeavour to ensure that devices for ascertaining blood alcohol levels be available to the general public and, in particular, be provided in premises licensed for the consumption of liquor.

For those reasons, and those reasons alone, and in the interests of solving the problems in the hotel industry, the Government should make a tangible attempt to achieve this by adopting the recommendations of the Parliamentary Labor Party committee of inquiry. However I suggest that this inept Government is not conscious of these problems. I commend the motion that the report be tabled and printed.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Is the motion seconded?

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I intend to tackle this question on a limited basis. The real
basis of the motion is whether this House for the first time should adopt the procedure of printing reports of a political party. That is the sole issue. There will be on other occasions a debate on the general issue of the liquor report and any action to be taken by the Government.

With the assistance of officers of the House I have undertaken some research into this field. I cannot find a case where Parliament has taken the action of tabling and printing a party report. Admittedly it is within the competence of the House to decide this question.

On this occasion it may suit the Opposition to have a party report printed, but once this precedent is established it would be competent for the House, by a majority vote, to have any report of any party within the House printed.

Mr. HOLDING: That is not correct.

Mr. THOMPSON: The Leader of the Opposition will probably say that it does not go as far as that; it could be done only with the permission, approval and encouragement of the particular party which had produced the report. But I suggest that once the House has determined by majority vote that a report should be printed—

Mr. FORDHAM: Tabled.

Mr. THOMPSON: Tabled and printed—it is competent at any stage then to request and determine that a party report should be both tabled and printed. That is a grave danger, I believe, to the future working of Parliament and, in the long term, it would not be in the interests of any party, although the printing of this report may be in the short-term interests of the Opposition—I do not know. Each party within the House has a considerable number of committees. Our party has 33. If a report from one party relating to a specific subject is then printed, a case is immediately established for every party report to be printed in the interests of the propaganda machine of the party concerned, and there would be no end to it. With 33 party committees producing reports for each party there would be 99 reports to be printed. If the Government started printing its own party reports, the other parties would want the reports of their party committees printed.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Not all of them.

Mr. THOMPSON: That is a good interjection by the Leader of the National Party. It would be competent for the House to determine whether any report should be tabled and printed at any time, and that is clearly undesirable.

There would be the other area where it was felt desirable, in the interests of a political party’s propaganda machine, that the report should be published. If, for example, a Government party sub-committee wants its report published, and the Government feels it is a good report and would like to have it published, and it is printed and distributed throughout the State, obviously the sub-committees of the National Party and the Labor Party will want similar treatment and there will be no end to it. The Government would be embarking upon a form of printing which would merely increase Parliamentary expenditure. It is more the principle involved than the money to which objection can be taken.

By an affirmative vote on this motion the Government would be embarking on a most unusual course. It is clear from the practice of this Parliament, and other Parliaments as far as I have been able to ascertain, that only official documents emanating from Government authorities are tabled and printed. Campion’s Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons, at page 93, states—

Papers presented by Act.

Papers presented by Act (“Act” Papers) comprise all the reports, returns, regulations, etc., which a great mass of recent legislation requires to be laid before Parliament. Like Command Papers, these are
presented to both Houses simultaneously, unless the Act restricts the laying of the Paper to the Commons.

Other authorities for the presentation of Papers.

(1) Pursuant to a Standing Order, e.g., the Attorney-General's Report on Private Bills.

(2) Pursuant to a Resolution of the House—
   the subject-matter of the motion is in this category—
   e.g., Treasury Minutes on Surpluses and Deficits in the Navy and Army Estimates.

(3) Pursuant to the Report of a Select Committee, e.g., the Register of Expiring Laws.

(4) Pursuant to a Measure (see p. 167), e.g., a scheme under the Union of Benefices Measure, 1923.

In his book entitled Procedure of the House of Commons Redlich makes it clear that the documents which are initially printed by the House are official papers emanating from Government departments and statutory authorities. In particular, he says on pages 43 and 44—

The great class of papers first mentioned above, that which includes all which are published in compliance with a simple order of the House, is distinguished by the inscription on the title page of each such publication, "Printed by order of the House of Commons." This class has two main subdivisions. The first comprises such papers as contain reports from Government officials, produced in compliance with a direct order of the House: it includes the detailed financial statistics which accompany the estimates, all returns from the Treasury or the Post Office or from the Revenue departments, and statements as to commerce and navigation. The second division comprises such papers as give the information collected by the House itself through its immediate organs, its committees of investigation. All reports of select committees with the addition of transcripts of the evidence taken by them and copies of any written documents laid before the committees are printed by order of the House.

It is fairly clear from precedent, traditional in the British Parliamentary system, that it has not been the custom for the House to table and print the reports of party sub-committees. If this undesirable practice is once embarked upon, the House will become the propaganda agency for the various parties within the House, and that is a role which has never been contemplated by this Parliament or by any other, so far as I can ascertain.

In this instance the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition did me the courtesy of stating that it was their intention to move that the House direct that the report should be tabled. When I inquired concerning the real reason why they wanted it tabled, they told me that there had been considerable interest in this particular report and they were tired of running off additional copies. That seemed a reasonable complaint so the Government offered to provide services for roneoing additional copies as required, within some reasonable limits. It appeared to me that this would meet their objective.

I strongly caution the House in embarking upon what I believe would be a most undesirable practice. It would result not only in a danger to individual parties in having reports tabled and printed which they did not want tabled and printed, but would also result in a request for a multiplicity of reports to be printed by one sub-committee of a political party after another. This is most clearly an undesirable state of affairs. The Government intends to vote against the motion.

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition): I find the remarks of the Deputy Premier both disappointing and misleading. Parliamentary custom and usage can act as some guide, but I am always fascinated when distinguished political leaders—and one was present on the floor of the House last night—visit the Parliament of Victoria and talk about the need to make our institutions work effectively; they receive loud choruses of "Hear, hear!" from members in all parts of the House. However, when a bona fide attempt is
made to improve the level of the services within this House the Government displays a negative and destructive attitude.

What is the basis of this proposal? I shall deal with the arguments put forward by the Deputy Premier. He said that if this principle were adopted it would create a precedent. I agree with that; there is no argument about it, but what is the precedent that it would create? Where a group of Parliamentarians—in most cases they would be members of one party, but a number of Parliamentarians may be prepared to work together across traditional party boundaries—decide to give of their time and energies and use the resources of their office and their position in this House to embark upon an inquiry on a matter of public interest and concern and produce recommendations as a result of that work, then the precedent created would not be undesirable but thoroughly desirable, because it would allow that group of Parliamentarians to table the document in Parliament. All that means is that the document would be made available in the Papers Room to any person who wanted it. What is wrong with that?

Mr. LACY: It is open to abuse.

Mr. HOLDING: I shall deal with the possibility of abuse, because the argument that is trotted out is politically unreal. As I said, the precedent that would be created is that the Parliamentarians—in this case a group of Labor Parliamentarians—would bring their report into the House and say, "We want it tabled".

The political reality of this situation is that any Government—and it would be a Government, because it would have the majority of votes in the House—that sought to use its majority to involve itself in the internal affairs of the minority parties in the House would find that that attempt would not be complied with. Assuming that the Labor Party were the Government and had produced a party report, do Government supporters seriously believe that if the Labor Party used its political majority to say to the Minister of Transport who was heading a Liberal Party committee on transport, "We are putting through a motion that requires you to produce all your party minutes, correspondence and reports," the honorable gentleman would comply with that request? Of course, political reality is that he would not do so, and he would be quite correct because to comply would be to yield to an abuse of the processes of the majority to oppress the minority.

The political reality which the Deputy Premier has not faced is that there can be no enforcement of any decision in this House unless it is backed up by a sanction. Would the Government be prepared to lock up the Leader or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because he refused to make certain documents available? Of course it would not. This matter should be dealt with as a political reality. All political parties in this House have working committees on a whole range of matters. It would be in the interests of the House, if those political parties and the members who comprise the committees so chose, to make the document readily available through the agency of the Papers Room rather than having copies handed out by various officers. That ought to be an option that is open to them, and it would make for better working of the Parliament.

I understand that the National Party has initiated an internal party inquiry into local government finance. That is a very important matter, and I do not know what result the National Party will come up with, but it would be of interest to all parties and all members. If members of the National Party decide, when they produce their report—if they produce a report—that they want to make it available to all honorable members,
the simple way of doing it will be through the Papers Room. The motion proposes—

That there be laid before this House a copy of the report by the State Parliamentary Labor Party committee of inquiry into aspects of the liquor industry in Victoria.

There is nothing revolutionary about that, and if the motion is passed the document will go into the Papers Room and any honorable member or any member of the public who wants to read it may come and ask for a copy. If the demand exceeds the supply, presumably the Papers Room will duplicate more copies. That does not create any danger of precedent, and it is nonsense to suggest that it does.

Mr. Maclellan: Does it give the document privilege?

Mr. Holding: I suppose on one view it would do so.

Mr. Maclellan: It could be dangerous in that way.

Mr. Holding: I should be fascinated to follow the argument that that would make it a matter of privilege.

Mr. Maclellan: It is like making a speech without having to say it in the House; one would simply publish it.

Mr. Holding: The answer is that one either presumes regularity of conduct by honorable members or one does not. Of course, there could be dangers in the situation if a group of members produced a thoroughly scurrilous and libellous document and brought it forward to be tabled. A document like that would not receive the approval of the House.

The real sanction here is that the House looks at the document. It does not have to agree with it, but if it is a bona fide document which represents a serious effort of work, a serious examination of evidence and a statement of conclusions drawn from that evidence, it ought to be tabled and made available.

Mr. Maclellan: Do you think it should go to the Printing Committee first?

Mr. Holding: That is a completely different issue. I am not alarmed at the spurious argument that somehow or other we are going to bankrupt the State. The Deputy Premier stated, during a very disappointing speech, that if we did this we would be up for thousands of dollars in printing costs. It is very important that documents like this, from whichever source they emanate, ought to be available for honorable members to peruse and consider. Nobody is compelled to agree with them, but at least if honorable members opposite want to criticize the decisions that have been made by a Parliamentary Labor Party committee, let them have that document in an open, formal way, and they can do so.

Mr. Jona: What is the difference between getting it from the Papers Room and getting it from the Chief Secretary's office?

Mr. Holding: I do not know whether the document could be obtained from the Chief Secretary's office.

Mr. Rafferty: Could Government party members have a copy of the report?

Mr. Holding: The Opposition will not be churlish about it; if Government party members want a copy they can have it. The Labor Party set up a committee of inquiry which has produced a report. If there is a substantial demand from members of the public and from members of the Government party the report should be available through the Papers Room. If anyone wishes to see the report he can do so. I do not know of any real threat to the operation of Parliament if the report is tabled. The Opposition is not trying to create a dangerous precedent. It is merely providing one further avenue by which members of the House can do
a job of work and can put into the general import of the House a series of views upon matters of important social concern to the community.

The Government's argument really has nothing to do with printing costs. I am not familiar with all of the reports that emanate from other parties in this place, but if all the political parties could produce two or three dozen reports a year of that calibre on issues of social concern, the total printing bill, given the general resources of Parliament, would be minimal. I do not regard printing costs as a serious argument.

The Deputy Premier also does not regard the argument as serious. That being so, the political reality is that no Government, whether Labor, Liberal or National Party in any Parliament in the Commonwealth, can use its political majority to force the disclosure of information or material by other parties in the House. In the final analysis, that action would not succeed unless the Government were prepared to impose sanctions, which is completely outside the framework of our Parliamentary institution.

There is no question of the abuse of the rights of minority political groups; nor is there, in the precedent that is being created, any way that that could be argued because the party and the group of members who have produced the report have brought it forward and have met the costs involved.

I do not know what members on the Government side are concerned about. The problem simply is that the Government is somewhat embarrassed by the silly position it has taken on the issue of cut-price beer. Having got itself into this position, the Government is saying virtually that it is not going to let a report which contains a matter of judgments be tabled.

Mr. THOMPSON: We have offered to roneo more copies.

Mr. HOLDING: The real point is that if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants to take up the time of the House on a suitable occasion he can read the report fully and it will then appear in Hansard. The resources of the House will be used effectively if the motion is passed and the document is then available from the Papers Room to anyone who wishes to see it. The position is as simple as that.

Will that cause the walls of this august Chamber to shake to its foundations? Will it really create a precedent of grave danger to the minority political parties in this House? No one can ever accuse me of not being a spokesman on preserving the rights of political minority parties. Nobody could seriously believe that the Deputy Premier is concerned about the cost to the Parliament of printing the document?

Mr. THOMPSON: It is a matter of principle.

Mr. HOLDING: It is no longer a matter of cost! The Deputy Premier is down to the question of principle. The general functioning of this Parliament institution can only improve if honorable members at their expense and in their time wish to involve themselves in a detailed consideration of any one of the range of problems which exist in the community. They can bring forward a report by which they will be judged. If the report carries their names and is available to the House if they so choose, what is wrong with that?

Such a course of action provides a real inducement to honorable members possibly to work much harder and to involve themselves in important issues. Whether one agrees with the contents of the report or with any other report, it stands to the general credit of Parliament that honorable members, irrespective of which party they belong to, are prepared to spend their time and energy in interviewing people who are involved at various levels in our community.
An impressive number of people gave evidence to the committee before it produced its report. It is a substantive document whether one agrees or disagrees with its contents. At least it represents a genuine attempt at doing a job of work. The report is not merely on behalf of the Labor Party but on behalf of the people of the State. The document could provide the basis of an informed rational debate on all of the issues covered.

Mr. KENNEDY: If it is so important, why was it not circulated to all members of Parliament?

Mr. HOLDING: The problem with the honorable member is that at the best of times he is demented but in some of his more lucid moments he is merely stupid. Perhaps the honorable member has never heard of the report on poverty by a committee of his own party.

The problem for members of the Government party is that they are embarrassed on this issue. If the report did not deal with such a controversial issue and if the Government were not deeply embarrassed by its own political position, there would be no argument.

The Deputy Premier has advanced an argument on costs but now he says they are no longer the real issue. The honorable gentleman rejects the proposition that the Government will use its political majority to oppress the minority political parties. He knows that the Government would never do that. Now the honorable gentleman is back to an extremely narrow principle, that the Government has made such a mess of the liquor industry that the last thing it wants is for this report to be tabled and be made available.

Part of the problem is that a reporter may approach the Premier and say, "Why have not the Liberals carried out this sort of inquiry?" The Premier would answer that Mr. Brokenshire has produced a report. He would say that it is not the Government that is carrying out this function; it is Mr. Brokenshire and the members of the Liquor Control Commission who will fix the price of beer; that they know all about the matter and that the Government has nothing to do with these committees.

Mr. THOMPSON: The Government has truck loads of reports.

Mr. HOLDING: The reports cannot be of a high calibre if the Government does not want to make them available but wants to hide them. What the Deputy Premier does with the Government's truck loads of reports is very much a matter for the Government.

Mr. THOMPSON: That is a good point.

Mr. HOLDING: If the Minister wants to bring a truck load of reports into Parliament and move that they be tabled and placed in the Papers Room, we will support that. There is no problem there. I have no doubt that some reports may not be of a high calibre, but we would support the action with charity and understanding. We would make allowances and our approach would be that nothing but good could come from a report to this Parliament from the members who composed it especially on matters of grave social concern. That is the principle. The Government's attitude is regrettable.

The Labor Party is creating not a dangerous precedent but one which will make Parliament work more effectively, win higher respect for members of Parliament in the community, improve the general levels of government and the standard of debate in this place. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): The debate does not concern the merits of the Labor Party's report. It has nothing to do with cut-price beer or the inquiry of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It concerns the procedures of the House.
The Deputy Premier remarked that there is no precedent. To the best of my knowledge, that is true. The Labor Party has not put forward a previous example. For some reason, best known to members of the Opposition, they have chosen this day—I might be uncharitable in saying this—for the introduction of a most contentious matter of public interest which will be debated at length.

Parliament is fortunate in having a Standing Orders Committee, on which I, with the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Government party, serve. Surely if one wants to change the procedure regarding reports, the Standing Orders Committee should be consulted. That is what has been done in the past. Recently the Standing Orders as to hours and days of meeting were amended. Honorable members were unanimous on that decision. At no stage has the Opposition suggested that the matter under debate should be referred to that committee.

Mr. Holding: We are within the forms of the House.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: I do not suggest that members of the Opposition meant this and I have sympathy for what they are trying to do, but to take an extreme case, if the motion is passed the effect may be that the Government will require every party report to be tabled. That would be ridiculous. I do not suggest that the Government would do this, but it could happen.

There have been some interesting party reports from the Opposition, the Government and the National Party. Some have been good, some bad and some embarrassing. Mr. Julian Doyle, a former member for Gisborne, created a lot of interest for three or four years as a result of a private report of the Government party. This caused certain divisions inside the Government ranks at the time. It was their business and they decided, for their own good reasons, that the quicker the report was buried the better. It was well and truly buried.

I presume that a sensible interpretation of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition is that reports will be tabled only if the party who prepares the report asks for it to be tabled.

Mr. Wilkes: That is what is happening now. That is the precedent.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: If this motion is passed the report to which the Opposition is referring will have to be tabled and printed.

Mr. Wilkes: I do not mind if it is not called the Wilkes report when it goes to the Papers Room.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: If it is not printed it will not go to the Papers Room because there will be only one copy.

Another question, which was brought to notice by interjection rather than in debate, is that of privilege. In other words, one can say anything one chooses about anybody and get away with it. I am not suggesting for one moment that the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would descend to that level.

Mr. Holding: The report has still got to be tabled in the House.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: I never cease reminding the Government that one never knows when a Liberal, Labor or National Party Government will be in office.

Mr. Holding: This is an argument against the tabling of reports.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: One does not know who will be in government and how they will use legislation. The same applies to the Bill that honorable members were debating last night. No one knows which party will be in power or what the
composition of that party will be at a certain time. There is nothing special about that Bill; I do not know why the Opposition should choose it.

The Leader of the Opposition has over-simplified the position. He has given no thought to the consequences.

Mr. HOLDING: I have given thought to them. Three other inquiries are running at the moment.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Of course the Opposition has other inquiries. If it did not have committees of inquiry it would not be doing its job.

Mr. HOLDING: Has your party?

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Of course. We have committee meetings every week. Every party worth its salt conducts an inquiry on almost every Bill that goes through the House. Some inquiries last for a week, some a month, some six months and some go into the never-never. There is a series of committees—some short term and some long term.

This matter should rightly have been referred to the Standing Orders Committee for action, but these documents were not formally tabled and therefore did not receive privilege. Facilities could be supplied so that a certain number of copies of the report could be printed or roneoed. That offer has been made. The Government is prepared to make facilities available so that 1,000 copies can be printed, and instead of going to the Papers Room the report could go to the Opposition office and also to members of Parliament or the public. It is a case of how it is done.

The purpose of the motion is to pursue the policy of members of the Opposition on cut-price beer. They might well have good arguments but they can put them in detail later. This is not the way to handle the matter. The proper course of action would have been to refer the matter to the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): I am disappointed at the approach of the Leader of the National Party. He has mislead the House about the motives of the Opposition in moving this motion. Notice of the motion was given not yesterday or the day before, but last week. Notice was given before the Government announced the date on which the report it had inspired would be tabled. The decision was taken by the Opposition, as a matter of principle, some time ago. The matter could have been discussed last Thursday if the business of the House had been rearranged. It is the principle that we of the Opposition want to see established. That was made clear by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and by the Leader of the Opposition. We do not at this time want to argue the merits or demerits of our report or policy as against the attitudes and policies of the Government on what is, as all honorable members will agree, an important issue.

We do say that the Opposition should have the right to put before the Parliament—in the way the motion suggests—a report of this nature. Essentially, the Deputy Premier dealt with what would be the next motion before the House if this motion were accepted—that is that the report should be printed. Under Standing Orders, for good reasons, the motion for laying a document on the table and the motion for having it printed are separate. In many cases, reports of committees or statutory authorities are tabled and a decision is not taken to have them printed.

I would disagree with it, but I can understand the attitude of the Government that it should not use public funds to print reports submitted by parties. I remind the Deputy Premier that this motion suggests that the report be tabled, not that it be printed. If it were agreed to, duplicated copies would be available for interested
honorable members and for the public. We should concentrate on that principle. It is a pity that the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the National Party did not address themselves to it.

The Deputy Premier said that this had never been done before. I realize that we have a conservative Government and a conservative Deputy Premier, but that is not a sufficiently good reason to oppose the motion. I ask honorable members to consider whether we should re-examine our attitudes to matters of this kind. Over recent years, new approaches have been adopted to Parliamentary procedures. I believe that has benefited the Parliament. The principle to which I have alluded, if adopted, would lead to the better functioning of Parliament.

No amendment to Standing Orders would be required. Under chapter 16 it is competent for the Legislative Assembly to agree to the tabling of this report. The principles of open government are in themselves sufficient for honorable members to encourage political parties to table reports of public interest. It is not disputed that the subject-matter of the report is of considerable public interest.

In a real way, the report would allow people to know how the Opposition had arrived at its policy on an important public issue. It is desirable that reports of this type be available to honorable members and the public, and for the purposes of historical records, through the Papers Room. If the motion were accepted, that would be the position.

The essential principle is whether that is good. I pose the contrary question: Is that bad? No one has suggested that it would be bad. No expense would be incurred by the Government or the public. There would merely be additional information available to honorable members and the public on how Government and the Parliament itself operates.

In these circumstances, the Government should reconsider its stance on the issue. I hope that between now and the next day of meeting the Government will do that. The particular committee has worked hard and well, but that should not be the criterion. The criterion should be whether a report should be tabled when it is offered. If it were it would then be open to honorable members to attack the substance of the report. Members of the Liberal Party and of the National Party could suggest that the Labor Party had been incompetent in the way in which it had formed some aspects of its policy. It would be good to open debate of that type.

I repeat that this is not a question of printing the report; the principle involved is whether the report should be available to honorable members and the public.

Mr. RAMSAY (Balwyn): The Deputy Premier put the case against accepting this motion quite clearly. To agree to it would create a precedent. At the request of any political party, any document which it wanted tabled would have to be accepted. The motion asks the Parliament to accept this document so that it will be available in the Papers Room as though it was the equivalent of a report from the Government or a public authority.

The Opposition is overlooking the simple fact that there are two sources from which documents are available to honorable members. The type of documents which should be available through the Papers Room—as has always been the case—are Bills, second-reading notes, and other publications of the Government and the Parliament. This is the correct usage for Parliament. If the Opposition has prepared a document which it believes is important and which it wishes to be brought to the notice of other honorable members, it should make it available through the Library.
Mr. Wilkes: The document has been available in the Library for two months.

Mr. Ramsay: I understand that no copy of it is available in the Library, but that the Library expects to receive it this afternoon. If anyone wants to peruse its contents, it will be available today. The information I have received from the Library seems to be different from that which has been put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There is no need to create a precedent. The Deputy Premier is correct in saying that the Papers Room should continue to be the source of official documents only.

Mr. Cain (Bundoora): I am mildly surprised and very disappointed that the Government should resist this attempt to enable honorable members to be better informed about an important issue. There have been two inquiries on the subject of the report which is of vital concern to many honorable members and to the community. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has shown how great is the concern of the public on this matter.

But the matter goes beyond that issue. We are told that a legislative measure will be introduced in another place to ensure that the Liquor Control Commission has power to fix prices. When one starts discussing fixed minimum prices, larger issues are raised; one is confronted with issues such as the restrictive trade legislation which was introduced in the last session of the Commonwealth Parliament. The exercise by a State of power to control prices is an extremely important issue. Even though the fixed price of beer may be a parochial matter, it raises wider issues such as State–Commonwealth powers, general price fixing and constitutional matters.

Mr. Rafferty (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order. The honorable member is departing widely from the purport of the motion, which you accurately described earlier. He is now debating fixed prices, constitutional powers of the Commonwealth and State and Federal powers. Those matters appear to me to be far wider than the issue presently before the House.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): The honorable member for Bundoora is well versed in the law and I am sure he realizes how easy it is to go beyond the ambit of the present discussion. I ask him to return to the issue being discussed.

Mr. Cain (Bundoora): I was merely pointing out the reasons why this issue is so important and why the reluctance of the Government to have the report tabled in the House is so vital.

As I understand the argument of the Deputy Premier, it is that the creation of a precedent would be undesirable. Precedents are not to be slavishly followed; they are simply representative of the accumulated wisdom of the past. It is absurd for the Government to say that because something has not been done before it should never be done in the future, and that is what the Deputy Premier has said. Times have changed and the methods of this Parliament have changed and it is time this House kept pace with those changing times and methods.

The second argument was that such a precedent would open the floodgates; if it were done now it would have to be done for all sorts of other things. That is always the argument of those who resist change. It is never the right time to introduce something innovative and different. If that principle were followed nothing new would ever be embarked upon. Those are the reasons the Deputy Premier suggests for opposing this motion.

The motion simply asks that a report be given to members of this Parliament to allow them to be bet-
ter informed about an issue upon which they will have to vote, but the Government finds that undesirable. This is an issue of great consequence and honorable members need all the help they can get. Too often members in this House speak from the top of their heads, without sufficient information. The price of beer itself does not interest me; I am concerned about the wider issues and wish to be better informed about the price of beer. I should therefore like the opportunity of having the benefit of both reports.

I do not know why the Government should resist this motion, but it should consider members like myself who are not concerned about the price of just beer but are concerned about the wider issues. I do know something about those but, I should like to know much more about the price of beer. It is obvious from the comments of members on the Government side of the House that they, too, need to know something more about the issue and would greatly benefit from the accumulated wisdom of the two reports.

I ask honorable members to consider the points I have raised and to give the House the benefit of having both reports laid before the Parliament.

The House divided on the motion (Sir Kenneth Wheeler in the chair)—

Ayes .... 20
Noes .... 45

Majority against the motion .... 25

AYES.

Mr. Amos .... Mr. Lind
Mr. Cain .... Mr. Mutton
Mr. Cathie .... Mr. Roper
Mr. Culpin .... Mr. Simmonds
Mr. Doube .... Mr. Stirling
Mr. Fogarty .... Mr. Wilkes
Mr. Fordham .... Mr. Wilton
Mr. Ginifer
Mr. Holding
Mr. Jones .... Mr. Crabb
Mr. Kirkwood .... Mr. Simpson

NOES.

Mr. McInnes .... Mr. McKeelan
Mr. McKellar .... Mr. Mackinnon
Mr. McLaren .... Mr. Maclelan
Mrs. Patrick .... Mr. Plowman
Mr. Rafferty .... Mr. Ramsay
Mr. Reece .... Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ross-Edwards .... Mr. Scanlan
Mr. Skeggs .... Mr. Smith
Mr. South Barwon
Mr. Stephen .... Mr. Thompson
Mr. Vale .... Mr. Weideman
Mr. Whiting .... Tellers:

Mr. Cox
Mr. Kennett

PAIRS.

Mr. Edmunds .... Mr. Hayes
Mr. Trezise .... Mr. Templeton

The sitting was suspended at 1.7 p.m. until 2.8 p.m.

OMBUDSMAN (MUNICIPALITIES) BILL.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Its purpose is to widen the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to enable him to conduct investigations into the administrative actions of officers and employees of local government bodies.

In my policy speech in March of this year, I gave an undertaking to extend the scope of the Ombudsman in this way.

Under the Ombudsman Act 1973, the Ombudsman has jurisdiction to investigate the administrative actions of State Government departments and statutory bodies. However, following the large number of complaints received by the Ombudsman from members of the public about decisions by local government officers, the Government decided that there was need for an independent authority to investigate these complaints.
I am sure honorable members will agree that the setting up of the institution of an Ombudsman in Victoria has been a success. Much of this success has been due to the diligence and competence of the incumbent and his staff. Many complaints have proved to be unjustified, but others have been justified and corrective action has been taken as a result. In many cases, the complainant has been largely satisfied by an independent person examining his complaint, even if it is subsequently dismissed as being unjustified.

This Bill is in no way an adverse reflection upon officers employed by municipalities. In fact, the Government, and I am sure all honorable members in this House, have the highest regard for officers employed in local government service. But as mentioned when the original Bill was introduced in 1973, wherever there is an exercise of power, inevitably some abuses will occur. More probably, a genuine mistake can lead to unreasonable or incorrect decisions or omissions.

In keeping with the policy adopted in the preparation of the principal legislation, it is not intended that the Ombudsman should come between the elected and the electors. Accordingly, there is no provision in this Bill to give the Ombudsman the power to inquire into the acts of councils and councillors.

The Government has examined the matter closely, and having regard to the ever-increasing demands placed upon administrative officers at all government levels, it believes individuals who feel aggrieved by the actions of officers employed in local government service should have access to the services of the Ombudsman.

The Bill also contains an amendment to protect the Ombudsman from action for alleged personal negligence by himself and his staff. Judges and magistrates are not liable for acts of negligence and the Government believes that the Ombudsman should be in the same position. I commend this Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 30.

RACING (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Racing Act 1975, which was passed by Parliament last spring sessional period, provided for the transfer of trotting from the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds to Moonee Valley racecourse.

At the time it was thought there would be no further need for the Trotting Control Board to conduct race meetings at the showgrounds. Accordingly, no amendment was proposed to section 32 (1) of the Racing Act 1958, which authorizes the issue to the Trotting Control Board of an annual licence to conduct meetings at any one ground in the metropolitan area.

However, the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal, after considering appeals against the issue of a permit for the use of Moonee Valley racecourse for trotting meetings, ruled that the Trotting Control Board could not use that racecourse more than 43 times a year, and could not race there on the same day as the Moonee Valley Racing Club holds a meeting.

One of the objectives of the transfer of trotting to Moonee Valley was to avoid the lay-off caused by the Royal Show and to enable the Trotting Control Board to conduct at least one meeting every week of the year in the metropolitan area. Therefore, the Government has accepted a recommendation from the Trotting Control Board that the board be allowed to continue to use the showgrounds track as well as the Moonee Valley racecourse. The Royal Agricultural Society has agreed to this proposal under which the board will pay the society $65,000 to conduct trotting
meetings at the showgrounds during the 1976-77 racing year, together with $25,000 rental for the board’s accommodation, making a total payment by the board to the society of $90,000.

I shall now explain the clauses of the Bill. Clause 1 provides for the Bill to come into operation upon receiving the Royal assent.

Clause 2 substitutes a new section 32 (1) of the Racing Act 1958. Proposed new sub-section (1) allows the Minister to issue to the Trotting Control Board an annual licence specifying the number of meetings which the board may conduct during the following racing year. Proposed new sub-section (1A) limits to 67 trotting meetings and six charity meetings the number of meetings which may be specified in the licence. These numbers are the same as provided in the present section 32 (1).

Proposed sub-section (1B) is the important change. It allows the Minister to specify more than one ground in the licence and the number of meetings which may be conducted at each ground. I propose to issue the board with a licence to conduct 30 Saturday and 7 mid-week meetings at Moonee Valley and 16 Saturday meetings at the showgrounds during 1976-77.

There is, of course, nothing in the Bill which makes it necessary for me to disclose details of that proposal, but I thought honorable members would be interested in those dates.

Proposed sub-section (1C) empowers the Minister to transfer meetings between grounds specified in the licence where he considers circumstances warrant it.

Clause 3 relates to the portion of stamp duty paid by bookmakers on their turnover which is remitted to the race clubs.

The Racing (Totalizator Commissions) Act 1972 increased these portions to one-sixth of the stamp duty paid in respect of metropolitan race meetings and one-fifth in respect of meetings conducted by the Trotting Control Board, country racing and trotting clubs and greyhound racing clubs.

The effect of clause 3 is simply to make it clear that the Metropolitan Trotting Fund will receive one-fifth of the stamp duty on bookmakers’ bets made on trotting races in the metropolitan area irrespective of where the trotting meeting is held.

Clause 4 deals with a number of matters consequential to the main purpose of the Bill. Sub-clause (1) is a transitional measure which provides for the licence which was issued to the Trotting Control Board for the racing year which commenced on 1st August, 1976, to be voided on the commencement of this amending Bill and for the Minister to issue a new licence. Sub-clause (2) states that the total number of meetings specified in the two licences referred to in sub-clause (1) may not exceed the limit imposed by section 32 (1A).

Sub-clause (3) affects bookmakers who hold certificates of registration to field only at the showgrounds. As the law now stands they would have to pay 50 per cent of the stamp duty payable for a whole year to operate at the first trotting meeting at Moonee Valley. The current certificates expire on 31st October and the Government considers that this charge would be inequitable for only one meeting. This sub-clause therefore provides that bookmakers who hold a certificate for the showgrounds may operate on the trotting meeting to be held at Moonee Valley on 30th October without paying additional stamp duty.

Clause 5 effects an amendment to the Stamps Act which has become necessary with the use of Moonee Valley racecourse for trotting purposes.

Under the Stamps Act at present the duty payable on a bookmaker’s certificate of registration is determined by the racecourse at which the bookmaker intends fielding rather
than by the type of meeting, and the certificate specifies the racecourse for which it is issued. One anomalous result of this is that a bookmaker who now holds a certificate of registration for Moonee Valley could field on both horse racing and trotting meetings at that racecourse without being liable to pay additional stamp duty, but one who operates only at the showgrounds would need to obtain another certificate, and pay the appropriate amount of stamp duty, if he wishes to field at trotting meetings at Moonee Valley.

Clause 5 provides for the issue of two certificates in respect of Moonee Valley, one for horse racing and one for trotting, thus placing all bookmakers on an equal footing. The clause also makes the stamp duty on certificates of registration for trotting races at both venues $60 for the grandstand and $20 for other parts of the grounds, and for horse racing in the metropolitan area $100 for the grandstand enclosure and $40 for any other part of the course. The amount of duty for parts of Moonee Valley other than the grandstand enclosure has been increased from $20 to $40 to bring it into line with that of the other metropolitan racecourses, but this will be the only increase in stamp duty resulting from this Bill.

On the motion of Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, September 22.

LIQUOR CONTROL (EXHIBITION BUILDINGS) BILL.

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Liquor Control Act 1968 by creating a new licence under which liquor may be sold and disposed of at a fair, festival, exhibition or amusement held at the Exhibition Buildings.

The particular circumstances in which this matter arises are that Expovin International Pty. Ltd., a promotional company, proposes to hold an international exhibition and convention at the Exhibition Buildings in October, 1976, for the purpose of promoting the appreciation and consumption of wines. At the exhibition, to be called Expovin '76, it is proposed that each person over the age of eighteen years attending the exhibition will be handed ten coupons when paying the admission fee of $1.50, each coupon permitting within the building a taste of wine of not more than one ounce to those persons.

If the disposal of wine at the exhibition is to be permitted it is necessary that this legislation be enacted in so far as this company is not the holder of any licence granted pursuant to the Liquor Control Act 1968, nor are any of the licences which may be granted pursuant to that Act suitable to this company or to the circumstances of the exhibition.

To provide for this situation and in the light of the prohibitions contained in the Liquor Control Act against any person selling or disposing of liquor without a licence or permit, it is necessary to make an enabling amendment to the Act.

Rather than provide specifically for Expovin '76 in particular it is thought to be appropriate to enact legislation which would be applicable generally to any fair, festival, exhibition or amusement held at the Exhibition Buildings and at which liquor would be disposed of or sold. In this way, a type of liquor licence is established which a promoter may apply for and the commission may grant in respect of any such function held there.

An exhibition licence granted pursuant to this Bill will authorize the licensee to sell and dispose of liquor at the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne for consumption at such times and during such period at a fair, festival, exhibition or amusement and subject to such terms and conditions as the commission thinks fit. Such a licence will not be granted for a
period of more than eight days. However, under the Bill liquor may be sold or disposed of on a Sunday only where such sale or disposal is for consumption with or ancillary to a bona fide meal.

The fee payable for the issue of the exhibition licence is to be fixed at $100.

Under the Bill the granting of an exhibition licence will not prevent the commission from granting any other type of licence in respect of the sale and disposal of liquor at the Exhibition Buildings.

The remaining clauses have the effect of bringing the exhibition licence within the same provisions relating to the method of application for the licence as apply under the Act to a vigneron's licence, a booth licence, a brewer's licence and the like.

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

Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education) I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next.

Honorable members will appreciate that there is some urgency with this Bill. Expovin '76 is to be held from 4th to 10th October. This means, therefore, that there will be only two sitting days before the exhibition opens on Monday week. Honorable members will appreciate that the House will not be sitting next Thursday, which is Show Day, a public holiday, and that by agreement between the parties, the following week is not a Parliamentary sitting week.

I direct my remarks also to the Deputy Leader of the National Party. I raised this question of time on the debate on the adjournment of a Bill yesterday, and earlier I asked the spokesman for the Opposition at the table whether the Deputy Leader would be here, because during the discussion yesterday the Deputy Leader said that he had discussed this matter with the Deputy Premier and that there was still plenty of time.

On the understanding, therefore, that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is quite conversant with the position and as I have now ensured that the National Party also is conversant with and appreciative of the dilemma, I request that the debate be adjourned until next Tuesday. I propose also that the Bill be transmitted to the Legislative Council as quickly as possible.

Mr. FORDHAM (Footscray): The Opposition appreciates the dilemma in which the Government has put itself. Everybody knew some months ago that Expovin '76 was to be held, and it is a pity that the Bill was not introduced on the first day of the sessional period instead of being left until Thursday of the second week.

However, the Opposition is willing to co-operate with the Government and will agree to the adjournment of the debate until Tuesday next. I assume that the Minister will make available any members of staff necessary and ensure that any members of Parliament who are interested in seeing the exhibition will be looked after in the appropriate way.

Mr. SCANLAN: I shall be happy to do that.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, September 21.

TRANSPORT WORKS AND SERVICES BILL.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill authorizes the expenditure of $84.28 million for transport services from the Works and Services Account for the period from 15th August, 1976, until it is cancelled by a further Works and Services Act in 1977, and provides for expenditures until December, 1977. The Bill relates to the allocation of funds from both State and Commonwealth sources—previous Bills have related only to the allocation of funds from State sources. Honorable members are familiar with
the form of the Works and Services Bill and explanatory notes are attached to the Bill.

I wish to draw the attention of honorable members to a number of major matters associated with the expenditures authorized by this measure. Substantial amounts are included in the Bill for the continuation of projects commenced in previous years to upgrade urban transport services. An amount of $23 million is provided for new suburban trains; a further ten new trains will be delivered this year.

Honorable members will be aware that the Commonwealth Government has decided not to support the commencement of any new urban public transport improvement projects in 1976-77 and has not provided funds for the continuation of the vehicle replacement programme. The Commonwealth Government has provided $8.8 million for other approved projects commenced in previous years under the urban public transport agreement.

The replacement of old suburban electric trains is an essential element in the Victorian Government’s programme to improve public transport services. The present delivery rate of ten new trains a year must be continued. Application has been made to the Commonwealth Government for approval to transfer $4.647 million from other approved projects to help meet the railways’ contractual obligations of $14 million for the replacement of old trains in the current financial year.

Provision is made in the Bill for completion of new stations at Kanayook and Yarraman, and stations will be reconstructed at Bayswater, Glen Iris, Fern Tree Gully, Heathmont, Tooronga, Bentleigh, McKinnon, Hughesdale and Ashburton.

Provision is also made for the installation of further automatic power signalling on the Mordialloc to Frankston line and for the construction of new signal box control centres in the metropolitan area to amalgamate existing signal boxes and to provide modern automated control equipment.

Funds have been provided for completion of the construction of additional tracks between South Kensington and Footscray, and Sunshine and Deer Park West. Funds have also been provided for continuation of the construction of additional tracks between Caulfield and Mordialloc, Macleod and Greensborough, Ringwood and Bayswater and Ringwood and Croydon to enable more express running of trains and to reduce travel times in peak periods for rail patrons on these lines.

The Government’s efforts to improve transport facilities are not restricted to the metropolitan area. I turn now to some of the provisions in the Bill for works outside the metropolitan area.

The Bill makes provision for the purchase of additional locomotives, the development of further regional freight centres and for continuation of the wagon replacement programme to assist the railways to provide a better freight service to meet the needs of country communities.

Ten new locomotives have been delivered during the past twelve months and a further ten 3,300-horsepower locomotives are due for delivery commencing in February, 1977. Funds have been provided for completion of construction of the new diesel locomotive maintenance depots at Geelong and Ballarat later this year.

An amount of $10.5 million has been provided for the continuation of the wagon replacement programme to enable further new bogie wagons to be built at the railways workshops at Ballarat, Bendigo and Newport.

Provision has also been made for work to commence on the duplication of the remaining single track section of the Melbourne to Geelong line between Little River and Corio and for commencement of the electrification of the line from Altona
The programme of bridge reconstruction and track relaying will continue at approximately the same rate as last year. However, the provisions in the Bill are lower because of the changes in railway accounting procedures made this year to transfer to working expenses the maintenance costs included in this work. Mechanized gangs engaged in track relaying are operating on the Korong Vale and Murrayville lines.

The Bill also makes provision for advances for road transport services. The Government recognizes the importance of the private bus sector of public transport throughout the State and has extended its scheme of financial assistance to June, 1977. Provision is made in this measure for loans for the purchase of new buses to help maintain and improve vehicle standards.

The Bill provides the necessary financial authority to get ahead with many projects for improved transport facilities throughout the State. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. JONES (Melbourne), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, September 30.

WATERWORKS TRUSTS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (FINANCIAL YEAR) BILL.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the motion for the second reading of this Bill was read.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): I have examined this Bill, and am of the opinion that it is a private Bill.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): By leave, I move—

That all the Private Bill Standing Orders be dispensed with, and that this Bill be treated as a public Bill.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I address the House briefly on this matter. During the last session, when the House was dealing with a Bill relating to alterations to the Carlton football ground, I pointed out that the way in which the House has framed its Standing Orders in regard to private members' Bills is absolutely archaic.

It is ludicrous that the House should have to go through the paraphernalia of you, Mr. Speaker, giving a ruling and so on. The Standing Orders have not been altered since 1885 in this regard and it is therefore about time they were looked at.

Instead of having to go through this procedure, I should hope that you, Mr. Speaker, or the Standing Orders Committee, might look at the provisions to ascertain whether they could be brought up to the twentieth century, so that members do not have to go through this procedure. The distinction between private and public Bills in practice is absolutely ignored by this House, and it ought to be dealt with in some different way.

The motion was agreed to.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of Mr. Borthwick (Minister for Conservation) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): This small measure changes the financial year of the Waterworks Trusts Association of Victoria to the calendar year. I understand that the association constitutes the representatives of some 190 waterworks trusts in Victoria which operate as separate legal entities. The request for the change is supported by the trusts.

I have received a letter from the association's secretary, Mr. Fagen, requesting all political parties to support the Bill. Apparently, the Waterworks Trusts Association of Victoria and the Provincial Sewerage Authorities Association of Victoria have agreed to amalgamate and to hold their annual conference on the same day, at the same location and for a
number of reasons it has been decided to hold those sessions in May, 1977.

For the purpose of holding those annual conferences, it will now be necessary to present an audited statement and the amendments proposed by the Bill will simply allow this to take place. Accordingly, the Labor Party supports the Bill.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): This is a relatively small Bill which, as has been pointed out, changes the financial year of the Waterworks Trusts Association of Victoria from the fiscal year ending on 30th June to a calendar year. The National Party is pleased to support the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

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

PROVINCIAL SEWERAGE AUTHORITIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (FINANCIAL YEAR) BILL.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the motion for the second reading of this Bill was read.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): I have examined this Bill, and am of the opinion that it is a private Bill.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister for Fuel and Power): By leave, I move—

That all the Private Bill Standing Orders be dispensed with, and that this Bill be treated as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of Mr. Borthwick (Minister for Conservation) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): The Opposition supports the Bill, which has the approval of all parties. There are a few points about the position of party secretary which are worth putting on the record. Party secretaries are hard-working and dedicated to ensuring the smooth-running of Parliament.

Mr. EDMUNDS: I would expect all party secretaries to do their job. It is a very responsible position and the Government should accept that and provide, through the resources of Parliament, some assistance with staff, particularly since correspondence is now typed, for the handling of that side of the secretary’s job.

I believe retrospectivity should apply from the commencement of this Parliamentary session. At long last

Apparently the closing of the financial year for the preparation of the accounts has presented some problems to the association, so the Government has agreed to change the financial year from 30th June to the calendar year to facilitate the presentation of the accounts. The Opposition offers no objection to the Bill.

Mr. HANN (Rodney): The National Party also supports this small measure before the House. As has been pointed out, it is identical with the Bill previously dealt with by the House and will enable the association to change its financial year to a calendar year. The National Party supports the measure.

The motion was agreed to.

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

PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 8) on the motion of Mr. Hamer (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS: It is an important job.

Mr. EDMUNDS: I would expect all party secretaries to do their job. It is a very responsible position and the Government should accept that and provide, through the resources of Parliament, some assistance with staff, particularly since correspondence is now typed, for the handling of that side of the secretary’s job.

I believe retrospectivity should apply from the commencement of this Parliamentary session. At long last
the Bill recognizes official positions such as secretary of the party. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): The National Party supports the Bill and thanks the Premier for introducing it. Party secretaries have been forgotten for many years and few people realize the burden they carry. The position of party secretary is an onerous one for 52 weeks a year, for which these officers receive token recompense. This measure brings them into line with other Parliamentary officers.

I was interested in the suggestion of retrospectivity. I do not know what the honorable member for Ascot Vale has in mind.

Mr. EDMUNDS: The beginning of this Parliamentary session.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS: Parliamentary salaries and allowances always attract a lot of interest in the press. It is never the right time to increase them. However, every man is entitled to reasonable recompense for what he does. The National Party has pleasure in supporting the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

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

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 9) on the motion of Mr. Hayes (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): The Opposition does not oppose this measure. It is the usual measure which is introduced annually to take up the backlog of inflation concerning the maximum amount advanced through the co-operative housing societies' lending programme. Inflation has probably affected no other area to a greater extent than housing. The rapid increase in cost has made it difficult, for young people particularly, to obtain a home or to obtain enough money on first mortgage to purchase a home.

I have just attended the launching of a book entitled, A Mansion or no House. That is an apt title, because some people are demanding Rolls Royce accommodation when the bulk of the community does not have the deposit for Mini Minor-type accommodation.

Naturally a Bill such as this has the support of all parties. The only difficulty is that the co-operative housing societies receive large sums of money but there has not been any significant growth in that amount over the past few years to ensure that lending powers keep up with demand. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr. McINNIES (Gippsland South): The National Party supports the Bill which is designed to cope with the ever-present inflation, which, as the Premier mentioned recently is running at 13 per cent. The operations of the co-operative housing societies have been widely appreciated throughout the country and there is an ever-increasing demand for funds. As soon as allocations are available the housing societies advise that they can handle ten times that amount. It is obvious that this will be an important source of finance for a long time to come.

The motion was agreed to.

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

HOME FINANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from September 9) on the motion of Mr. Hayes (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): This Bill follows the same vein as a previous Bill because it increases the valuation limit on land and dwelling from $30,000 to $37,00 in the Home Finance Act. A similar Bill is introduced annually which only keeps up current valuation trends. The Opposition does not oppose the measure.
Mr. McINNES (Gippsland South): Likewise, the National Party does not oppose the Bill, which makes allowance for inflation. The Home Finance Act is administered by the Registrar of Housing. There has been some criticism from the housing societies which believe this Bill should not be enacted. However, it simply copes with inflation.

The motion was agreed to.

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

STANDING ORDERS.
REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

The Order of the Day for the consideration of the report from the Standing Orders Committee was read.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): I move—

That the report be adopted and the following amendments be made to Standing Orders:

1. Standing Order 59, omit "thirty minutes" and insert "twenty minutes".

2. Standing Order 103, omit this Standing Order and insert the following—

"103. A reply shall be allowed to a member who has moved a substantive motion or the second reading or third reading of a Bill, but not to a member who has moved an amendment or an instruction to a committee.

Such reply shall be confined to matters raised during the debate and shall close the debate on the original question.

No such reply shall exceed twenty minutes in the case of a substantive motion or in any other case fifteen minutes."

3. Standing Order 104—

(a) omit "forty-five minutes" and insert "thirty minutes";

(b) omit "except in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, or on a direct motion of want of confidence, when a member shall be at liberty to speak for one hour";

(c) omit "thirty minutes" (wherever occurring) and insert "twenty minutes";

(d) omit second proviso and insert—

"Provided also that this rule shall not apply to a member moving the second reading of a Bill or a substantive and inde-
Standing Orders.

various clauses of a Bill could well be circulated for the benefit of honorable members without necessarily being included in the Minister's second-reading speech or in Hansard. Bills of many types, such as those which amend the Local Government Act, which are presented regularly involve a tremendous amount of detail, in many cases effecting minor changes. It would probably be far easier for Ministers, and far more interesting to the House, if the general principles of amending Bills were explained at the second-reading stage and the detailed examinations of minor clauses were recorded in documents which could be circulated to honorable members.

The final matter considered by the committee was the right of a Minister, in the case of a second-reading debate, or the mover of the motion in the case of a substantive motion, to have a general right of reply. A practice has developed in both Houses of this Parliament for the Minister to have this right at the beginning of the Committee stage of a Bill. That practice is of long standing. The Standing Orders Committee believes there should be an opportunity for a Minister or the mover of a substantive motion to reply to the general arguments raised during the debate on the motion.

In view of the fact that the objective of the Committee stage of a Bill is to allow for its consideration clause by clause rather than to allow for a debate on its general principles, the committee suggests that it is inappropriate for a Minister to have the right of reply during the Committee stage. The committee has recommended that the Minister or the mover of the motion should be given the opportunity to answer arguments developed during the debate and that, in the case of a Bill, that opportunity should be available at the conclusion of the second-reading debate. The committee suggests that the period available for the right of a reply be limited to fifteen minutes for a Bill and twenty minutes for a substantive motion, that comments should be confined to arguments raised during the debate, and that no new material be introduced.

In the case of Bills, the practice recommended would be similar to the practice it would replace, except that the reply would take place at a more appropriate stage. The Government believes this would be a constructive change, although making no essential difference to the general nature of debate in the Chamber.

There have been periods when the Standing Orders Committee had lengthy recesses but, in recent times, it has met regularly. I congratulate those responsible for that. Its reports have been impartial and on non-party lines. This report should result in a further improvement to the standard and nature of debate in this Chamber, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale): The Standing Orders Committee, which has produced the report now before the House, is an all-party committee comprising two Government party members, two Opposition members as well as you, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees. I subscribe to the suggestion that—at least during the nine years I have been a member of it—speeches in this House have been too long and that there have not been enough opportunities for back-bench members to be involved in debates. Often, the principal speaker covers the whole canvas of the subject and leaves nothing for anybody else to comment upon. This report is, of course, inclined to restrict the back-bencher to some extent, but at the same time it provides a greater opportunity for the ordinary member who wishes to make a contribution on a Bill. It has been said many times that one should be able to convey what one wants to say within ten minutes, and that one has nothing to say if one continues after ten minutes. If one carefully listens to the speeches in this Chamber—most of which are excellent—the truth of that maxim be-

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comes obvious. Under the present Standing Orders it is difficult for all members to be involved in a particular issue when the member leading for the party concerned takes a great deal of time.

One point I should like to criticize is that it is extremely difficult to amend the Standing Orders. Like many other rules governing the conduct of the Parliament, it is required that a committee shall examine the Standing Orders at the instigation of the Speaker. I accept that some individual must have the responsibility for initiating action, but I do not understand why the members for the time being do not have as much right as long-dead members to lay down rules which govern the day-to-day activities of a place such as this. In other words, it ought to be easier to change the Standing Orders as lifestyles change.

I have read that years ago in the House of Commons members would make speeches lasting five hours, drinking flagon after flagon of wine to sustain themselves during that period. That is not done in this place, so far as I am aware, although some honorable members do consume a fair amount of water! However, the difficulty is—particularly for the Opposition and, I dare say, for the National Party—that one spends an entire lifetime in the Parliament in Opposition and one's opportunities to do certain things are extremely limited. The Standing Orders provide that that shall be the case, and the Government is elected to govern.

I believe the Standing Orders Committee ought to have seriously considered the extension of the period for questions without notice. At present there is an imbalance in numbers; the Government has a large majority; the Opposition has 21 members, with an Independent member generally supporting it, making 22; and the National Party has 7 members. Question time is the most democratic procedure in any Parliament and I have watched with interest the procedure in the South Australian Parliament where there is a two-hour period for questions without notice. For persons who sit in the gallery of this House it is an undignified scene to see a dozen members here, there and in the corner, jumping up at the same time in an attempt to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker. Apart from that, of course, some members may even have heart attacks lifting themselves up with such regularity, because that is the only exercise they appear to get!

There is no reason why an open Government should not extend question time to enable Ministers to answer questions more fully; nor is there any reason why there should not be supplementary questions to allow Ministers to be probed on certain circumstances surrounding their areas of responsibility. It would liven things up a bit and would certainly show to all concerned whether a Minister understood his portfolio. The Minister would still have the right of not answering the question or of directing it along formal channels. I believe this is an important matter.

In a general sense it is better to restrict the length of speeches from 30 minutes to 20 minutes, as the report contemplates, in the interest of providing all members with an opportunity of saying something. For that reason the Opposition supports the all-party committee's report.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura): The National Party supports the adoption of the report and congratulates you, Mr. Speaker, on the number of changes made to the Standing Orders during your term as Speaker of this House. The springboard for many of the proposed changes was a visit by the Clerk of this House to the House of Commons and these changes bring with them a breath of fresh air and an opportunity to implement new ideas. The National Party believes that these measures will remove much of the repetition that occurs during debates in the Parliament and that the Parliament itself will benefit. One of the commendable attributes of this Parliament is that
members do not usually read their speeches, contrary to what occurs in a number of other Parliaments around the world.

The honorable member for Ascot Vale referred to the extension of question time and the introduction of supplementary questions. Having listened to the system of supplementary questioning in the House of Commons, I believe that system tends to deaden proceedings because it removes variety from the questions asked. The system does have its merits in that it allows an individual member to pursue a particular matter with a particular Minister if he has raised an extremely important point, but it would restrict the present practice of this Parliament. The present report of the committee stems from requests made by various members from all sides of the House over the past few years and I am certain the committee is open to suggestions.

The National Party supports the motion and believes it will improve the standard of debate in this House.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): I have a different attitude from that of my colleague, the honorable member for Ascot Vale. I have strong objections to the adoption of some of the proposed changes. The committee should have devoted its attention, not to the question of limiting the time members have available for debate, but to the question of the tactics the Government has employed in permitting Sessional Orders to be used in such a way that private members are deprived of almost any opportunity of bringing matters forward. At present the only time which is available to private members to bring matters forward on their own initiative is a brief period of an hour and a half on Thursday, provided that the House happens to sit on the Thursday. If the Government chooses to close the Parliament down on that day the private member has no opportunity.

Even in Address-in-Reply debates Sessional Orders provide extremely limited opportunities to private members. The debate on the Address-in-Reply is traditionally wide-ranging and gives private members, as distinct from Ministers, an opportunity of covering the whole area of Government administration and of bringing forward matters of importance on behalf of their constituents, and in some instances on behalf of the party to which they belong. These proposed amendments cut that period in half. I am opposed to that. The only opportunity private members have of speaking across the whole spectrum of Government administration and bringing forward matters on behalf of their electorates is during the debate on the Appropriation Bill. Although it is proposed to extend the time allowed to the Leader of the third party from 60 minutes to an unlimited period, the committee has decided to reduce the time available to honorable members to 30 minutes. There is no justification for that.

Under the Standing Orders the time allowed for raising grievances is four hours. Of course, that depends on a Grievance Day becoming available—they occur only on the rare occasions when the Government is prepared to allow the Standing Orders to run unaltered. Honorable members are now entitled to speak for 30 minutes on grievances but it is proposed to reduce that time to 20 minutes. It would have been more in the interests of democracy if the Standing Orders Committee had recommended that the total time for grievances should be extended to six hours or more.

Mr. WHITING: The time allowed for each member to speak should be twenty minutes.

Mr. WILTON: Why?

Mr. WHITING: More members would then be able to speak.

Mr. WILTON: What is the justification for reducing the time available to an honorable member from 30 minutes to 20 minutes? The honorable member may wish to raise several matters concerning his electorate.
It has always been accepted that Grievance Day is private members’ day, but in recent years at every opportunity the Government has avoided sitting on the day which should be Grievance Day because of the criticisms that are levelled at Government administration during that debate. When the Government is unable to avoid sitting, it alters the time allowed and in most cases honorable members are lucky to have two hours of the four hours that are permitted under the Standing Orders in which to raise grievances. I cannot understand why the back-bench members of the Government party allow their rights to be carved up in this way without voicing their protest. It seems to be just another action perpetrated by the Government to make State Parliaments irrelevant.

The report of the Standing Orders Committee has not been considered by the caucus of the Labor Party and I would not sacrifice my rights to the whims of this Government or anybody on either side of the House. If anything has contributed to the redundancy of this Parliament as a democratic institution it has been the inability of the Government to abide by the Sessional Orders and its endeavour at every opportunity to avoid sitting on Grievance Day. The strength of the democracy of any Parliament lies in protecting the right of private members, not those of the Executive Government. This Government, because of its inefficiencies and inability, cannot stand up to the criticism that is levelled at it by private members and endeavours to limit the time available to private members to speak. I am opposed to these further restrictions and will vote against them.

Mr. BIRRELL: You will be the only one.

Mr. WILTON: I do not care about that. I am prepared to stand up for my principles and I will not sacrifice them for anyone.

I support the comments made by the honorable member for Ascot Vale regarding question time. I hope the Standing Orders Committee will consider this matter because its own argument can be put forward in support of a proposal to extend the time during which questions may be asked, namely, the increase in the number of members of Parliament. If it is realistic to reduce the period of time in which members can debate the Appropriation Bill from 1 hour to 30 minutes, a reduction of 50 per cent, to enable more members to speak, it is justifiable that question time should be extended to at least 1 hour.

The committee believes that by reducing the time that a member may speak during the debate on the Appropriation Bill and during the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency’s Speech to 30 minutes, more members will be able to speak. I do not follow that logic. Why should the Parliament not sit longer? Why should the spring sittings not commence earlier and finish later? What would be wrong with starting the autumn sittings earlier and finishing them later? I should prefer that to the whittling away of time that is available to private members. Although I support the comments of my colleague on questions without notice I oppose the recommendations to reduce the times allowed to private members, particularly during the debate on the Address-in-Reply to the Governor’s Speech, the debate on the Appropriation Bill and Grievance Day debates. Already the opportunities that private members have to speak are extremely limited because of the Sessional Orders. Private members can speak only on Thursday until 1 p.m. on matters of grievance and this is extremely restrictive to the Opposition. This has castrated this Parliament and made it irrelevant as a democratic institution.

Mr. McLAREN (Bennettswood): I support the recommendations that have been made as a result of the report of the Standing Orders Committee. I join with other honorable members in saying I believe that over
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the past three or four years substantial changes have been made to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, for the better. The Government must constantly review the laws and rules under which the Parliament operates. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, as the chairman of the committee, and the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr. John Campbell, on the initiative he has taken. Not only the recommendations that he has brought back from his visit to Westminster but the possible additional alterations in the future will be for the betterment of this House.

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly are largely designed for the proper working of Parliament and, in addition, for the protection of the rights of individual private members. I applaud the previous speaker, the honorable member for Broadmeadows, who expressed his views as an individual. Whether one agrees with them or not, that is a right which we should preserve for every member of the House.

However, when it comes to the length of time of speeches, sometimes we are lost in irrelevance and we lose some of the efficient operation of this House, especially if members are not prepared, firstly, to prepare their speeches and secondly, to keep them within reasonable time limits. If ever the rights of private members are interfered with, it will be the responsibility of this Parliament to re-examine the position to ensure that those rights are protected.

Much discussion has taken place on the rights of private members in the House. When one studies them, one can see at question time and on the motion for the adjournment of a sitting matters can be raised by honorable members, but many matters raised during those periods could easily be taken up personally with the Ministers concerned. Honorable members should discipline themselves to ensure that the time available to private members is properly used. In the Address-in-Reply debate, the Budget debate and the grievance debate, and on Thursday mornings private members have the right to raise matters of General Business and that right should not be abused.

I endorse an interjection by an honorable member during the discussion that it is not the length of the speech but the quality that matters. The quality of speeches depends largely on the amount of preparation carried out by members before making a speech and in the presentation of their material to the House.

One matter which particularly affects me as Chairman of Committees relates to the proposed amendment to Standing Order No. 103. I have ruled on a number of occasions on the amount of discussion which takes place on clause 2 of a Bill in Committee, especially by the Minister who is handling the Bill under discussion. The amendment now proposed provides for a right of reply by a Minister at the conclusion of the second-reading debate. I draw the attention of the House to the point that this reply should be confined to matters raised during the debate as that speech would close the debate. No new matter should be introduced by the Minister at that stage otherwise utter chaos could occur under the proposed procedure. This will overcome a disability which has been experienced during the Committee stage when the Minister responsible for the Bill has taken an inordinate length of time dealing with matters raised some two or three weeks earlier during the general second-reading discussion. Often there is no relationship in the Minister's reply to what occurred some considerable time before.

It is proposed to restrict this right of reply to fifteen minutes and that will provide an adequate opportunity for the Minister to reply. On odd occasions, especially when a substantial Bill is under consideration, it could be necessary to extend the time. In my view, in all the circumstances the times proposed in amendment No. 2 are reasonable.
I refer to a question which has concerned you, Mr. Speaker, because you have made statements on the incorporation of material in *Hansard*. This is covered by clause 15 of the report. I suggest that further attention might be necessary on this point although the recommendation clearly sets out the intention that where material is provided this may be incorporated in *Hansard*. It is important to ensure that material presented by a Minister is available to honorable members, at least in the bound copies of the sessional papers, and the material provided to the House might be kept for that purpose.

Finally, the Standing Orders Committee has been active over the past few years. I believe further amendments are necessary to help in streamlining some of the procedures of the House. However, in line with what the honorable member for Broadmeadows stated, I believe that at all times we must ensure that the rights of private members are protected. In no sense should those rights be reduced. The amendments proposed do not affect those principles, notwithstanding the strong views expressed by the honorable member for Broadmeadows.

**Mr. STEPHEN** (Ballarat South): I address myself to amendment No. 2 which relates to Standing Order No. 103. It is pertinent to point out to honorable members that extra responsibility will be placed on the Chairman of Committees and the Temporary Chairmen of Committees by the adoption of this amendment. When the House is in Committee much more restriction than in the past will be placed on honorable members. The co-operation and understanding of all honorable members will be needed in implementing the proposal to which the House is about to agree. I make that point specifically because it has not been made before. I hope all honorable members enter into the true spirit of the proposed amendment and co-operate with the Chairman of Committees and the Temporary Chairmen of Committees.

**Mr. DOUBE** (Albert Park): I see no reason why this proposal should be supported.

**Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS**: Your Leader and Deputy Leader will be thrilled to bits about this, as they kept going back to the party room to obtain instructions.

**Mr. DOUBE**: The Leader of the National Party seems to be very excited. It seems to me that although the membership of the House has been recently enlarged, no pressures upon debating time have become evident and it is absolute rubbish to suggest otherwise. The House was enlarged during the previous session and there has been no evidence that there has been extra pressure upon debating time—if there is extra pressure, the House ought to meet more often.

I see in the proposal a cutting down of the time available to the back-bench members to express their viewpoints on behalf of their constituents. That is a dangerous move to make. It might well be that some of us take too long and are not as explicit as we should be, but any attempt to cut our time is really an attempt to cut the rights of the people who elected us, because at election after election members are returned to Parliament, whatever our own individual thoughts may be about each other. I believe the electorate would be absolutely opposed to the proposition as already there is far too little participation by the ordinary rank and file members in debates in this place.

**Mr. MACLELLAN**: Does the honorable member not think that shorter speeches might mean more speeches?

**Mr. DOUBE**: This could well be the case. There is much to be said for honorable members to abbreviate their speeches but there is also a considerable argument to be advanced for them to enlarge their speeches and to use words of quality.

**Mr. MACLELLAN**: But not for twenty minutes.
Mr. DOUBE: It is a matter of opinion. The honorable gentleman is one of those members who have not been here a great length of time. In the very short period he has been a member of Parliament he thinks there should be a change.

During the past 50 to 60 years the old format has stood up very well, and no good reason has been given to me why a member's debating time should be shortened. Why cannot the Parliament sit another day? Why cannot a member have the opportunity of putting his viewpoint? Theoretically it is more expedient to do things this way; it streamlines the whole process, and if the process is to be streamlined perhaps we should start removing many of the trappings around this place, because what use do they serve? Some of them are costly and some are time-consuming. It can be said that they are not necessary. The committee, by its suggestions, is disposing of the idea that a member should be able to talk at length. I do not believe we shall have better government by making the speeches of members shorter. I think the committee has not given this matter enough consideration.

I go back to the first point I made when I said that the number of members was recently increased. How many months ago did the committee make this decision? The House met in March.

Mr. Ross-EDWARDS: We have been meeting recently.

Mr. DOUBE: The Parliament has not been meeting. There is no evidence that since March the increase in the number of members has put more pressure on debating time. I might not win the argument, but the testy Minister of Labour and Industry is not convincing me. I think he is too inexperienced in Parliamentary matters to know what he is doing.

Mr. MACLELLAN: The old guard!

Mr. DOUBE: There is nothing wrong with being part of the old guard. If the honorable gentleman looks after himself he, too, will finish up there. I do not know about long speeches, but the honorable gentleman makes utterly inane and boring interjections.

Mr. REESE (Heatherton): I fully support the committee's report, the recommendations contained therein, and the suggestions now before the House. Times change, and procedures necessarily have to be looked at because of that fact. In this report, and in the recommendations now before the House, I believe there is a real desire to protect the rights of members. There is certainly a right to respect the views of every political party, and if honorable members analyse the suggested amendments they will see that they provide for basic equality between the parties. This is tremendously important.

From the point of view of back-bench members the report provides for certain limitations on the time available to them. I believe that if we cannot put the case of our constituents effectively in 30 minutes on issues that come before the House, there is something wrong with our preparation, our thoughts or our abilities.

I am afraid I cannot support the views of those members who feel this limitation is unjustified. I believe the suggestions of the all-party committee have been adopted with a view to streamlining the procedures to make this place work more effectively. I am quite sure that, given the goodwill of members, the suggestions will have that result.

I support the motion. I believe no reduction of the rights of individual members is entailed. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, as well as the Clerk of the House, on the work that you have instigated. You have given the committee guidance. I realize that there are still other areas which can be looked at to the benefit of this place in the years ahead.
Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I am troubled by some aspects of the report, although it obviously depends on how it will be carried out in practice. For example, I notice that although the time allowed for speeches is reduced, provisions allowing a simple majority by motion to grant an extension of time remain. If the normal situation applies it will be comparatively rare for anyone to need an extension of time. However, extensions of time do tend to be granted, almost as of right.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: Except that the Labor Party knocks them back, as it did the other day. It was not proud of that.

Mr. JONES: On the whole, extensions of time tend to be granted generously and not on a party basis.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: Except by your party.

Mr. JONES: If the tradition of generosity in granting extensions remains and the normal time of speeches is reduced it is likely that honorable members will need extensions more often.

Mr. MacEwan: An early reminder will help the member speaking.

Mr. JONES: It may well do so, but unfortunately before honorable members vote on this matter they need to have an assurance, which no one can give, on whether the spirit of the House will be to grant extensions if a member has a contribution of some significance to make—provided that it is not too excruciatingly boring to listen to. I am concerned that if we adopt this report the cure may be much more drastic than the disease. Comparatively few speeches extend beyond 45 minutes.

I have often thought that we might well follow the example of the Commonwealth Hansard which, after the name of the member speaking, gives the time at which each speech begins. By looking at the time when the next speaker begins one can calculate how long the speech took. A speech which may cover many column centimetres may go through with lightning speed—either subjectively or objectively, depending on the audience. Speeches which may be interminable in elapsed time may be comparatively short in the printed version. It would have been interesting if the committee could have given some statistical evidence about the length of speeches, and indicated whether it is the inordinate length of speeches which holds up the business of this Parliament.

The Minister of Public Works has made notable efforts in previous Parliaments to speed up his second-reading speeches. Ministers and party leaders will not be held back. It is the back-benchers who will bear the brunt of this. The trouble factor is that it may be another step in the process towards the trivialization of this institution. The consequences of increasing the number of members has not been to increase the opportunity of members to speak, but to contract that opportunity. That does not seem to me to make a great deal of sense. I notice that their lordships in another place have increased from 36 members to 40 and will increase to 44. Is it suggested that in the interests of speeding up that moribund institution, a limitation of time should be applied? I know that separate Standing Orders apply in the other House, but I understand that there is no suggestion that it needs to be contracted.

Mr. Ross-Edwards: They are reactionary over there.

Mr. JONES: The Leader of the National Party would be an expert on that matter. The fact that they have unlimited speaking time has nothing whatever to do with the actual time that they sit or the business which they transact in that time.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): They have different Standing Orders there.

Mr. JONES: It is important to be able to make the comparison. Private members ought to say, "Here is something that is alleged to be contributing to the speeding up of the
Parliamentary procedure; what is in it for us? What do we get out of it?" Honorable members on the back bench get very little out of it.

Before voting on this matter, honorable members should look very carefully at the implication that it may be yet another move to enable the Executive to streamroller its way through the Parliamentary institution and to reduce the significance of individual members.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of National Party): What disturbs me is that an all-party committee has been examining the Standing Orders; the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition—both outstanding men of high intellect and vital personality—have been attending meeting after meeting.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows): On a point of order, the question before the House is a motion moved by the Deputy Premier, and I cannot understand what the Leader of the National Party is debating. He is certainly not debating the question before the Chair. I suggest that he is out of order in taking the line of argument that he is presenting to the House.

The SPEAKER (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! At the time the honorable member rose to his feet to take the point of order, I doubt whether anybody could have anticipated what line was going to be taken by the Leader of the National Party. I certainly could not do so, and at this point there is no point of order.

Mr. ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party): The two outstanding statesmen that I referred to previously represented the Opposition on the Standing Orders Committee which drafted the proposed amendments, and I obtained the impression from my fellow members and Government supporters that they would be going back to the party members and keeping them informed so that the views they put forward would be, generally speaking, those of the Opposition. It is a sad state of affairs when committees sit and apparently have no communication with their members. I am distressed that the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are not present, but in their absence I thought that another member of the committee should make this point clear.

It is obvious that the spokesmen for the Opposition—who include some of its most senior members—know nothing about the matter; what has happened is all news to them. It is regrettable that the Victorian Opposition should come into the House unprepared, unbriefed, and knowing nothing about the matter.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): It is interesting that the speech of the Leader of the National Party was so brief when under these proposed new rules he would have unlimited time to raise almost any matter in this Parliament. He might have suggested that there was general agreement about these propositions, but he has clearly been disabused, because it is the back-benchers of this Parliament who will suffer under the proposed changes, not the Leaders of the major parties or persons speaking on their behalf—I include even the National Party—who will still have unlimited speaking time. This does not apply to members such as myself or the honorable members for Ascot Vale and Geelong North, or even the member for Ivanhoe. One can remember occasions on which he practically read out the electoral roll for his constituency, but he will no longer be able to do that, and that might be desirable.

There are occasions in Parliament, particularly during the debates on Appropriation Bills and motions for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the Governor’s Speech, when members may run through the gamut of matters that have been put before the House, usually by the Premier or the Governor, and they may require longer than 30 minutes.

Mr. STEPHEN: Matters can be raised by the Deputy Leader.
Mr. ROPER: The honorable member for Ballarat South may not necessarily agree exactly with the opinions of his Leader or Deputy Leader; he is a fairly constant speaker in the House—sometimes at extreme length.

The point I am making is that there are occasions such as the debates on the Appropriation Bill and the Address-in-Reply when members require additional time. To give an example, honorable members opposite may not like to hear someone speaking for more than 30 minutes about the health situation in Victoria, given the way they rise to speak on the adjournment motion, but under the rules proposed to be adopted today, Opposition spokesmen on particular issues will have only 30 minutes to talk about health, education, and similar important matters.

Because of the restrictions that are imposed on members in moving urgency and general business motions on Thursdays, that is usually the only time that individual members have to put a carefully worked out point of view. If honorable members moved through the Address-in-Reply debate or the Appropriation Bill debate with some speed, that would not apply, but your rulings, Mr. Speaker, have limited the opportunities of members of Parliament to move urgency motions and general business motions and actually have them debated.

Therefore, the only time honorable members have an opportunity to debate major areas of public policy in the State is during the debates on the Appropriation Bill and Address-in-Reply. The rights of the backbenchers—the ordinary members of this Parliament, as opposed to the Leaders and members of the Executive—are being restricted, and they are receiving nothing in return.

There is no suggestion, for instance, that question time should be extended. It is not always easy for you, Mr. Speaker, to allocate questions, although everyone gets a chance, because there is just not enough time, and that is one area where private members need additional time. They are not receiving that but are losing time in another direction. On the last two evenings that the House has met there has not been sufficient time to allow those who wished to speak in the adjournment debate to make their contributions and to ask the Government about its management. In both those areas—question time and the adjournment debate—which provide basic opportunities for private members on all sides of the House to ask questions of Ministers and to raise the matters of Government administration, it has been clearly shown that not enough time is allocated.

Mr. THOMPSON: You should have been here in John Cain's day to see how much time you got then.

Mr. ROPER: I happily take up the interjection. We are not in John Cain's time; we are in 1976 in a Parliament which has more members and where matters of public administration are more complicated than they were then, and where matters of Government activity are far broader than they were then. The State Government had far less to do in 1954 than it has in 1976. The role of members of Parliament is broader than it was then. The demands on their time, which have been recognized in other ways, are far greater now.

Private members on all sides of the House are losing conditions. In a number of ways, they will be restricted in what they can do and they are getting nothing in return. If private members are to be restricted in the length of time they may speak during debates—they do not always use that time but it is there if they want it—there ought to be an equal activity by members of the Standing Orders Committee to ensure that additional time is provided for questions without notice and on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting.

It is not a matter for the Leaders of the parties to determine; it is a matter for all honorable members.
At present restrictions are being placed on private members without any benefits being granted.

Mr. McClure (Bendigo): The windbag of the Opposition has spoken for about ten minutes.

The Speaker (Sir Kenneth Wheeler): Order! The honorable member for Bendigo should withdraw that statement.

Mr. McClure: I withdraw it. The honorable member for Brunswick has spoken at some length merely to inform the House that he is upset because he no longer will be able to speak for 30 minutes, 45 minutes or whatever the maximum might be.

Mr. Jones: He has something to say, which is more than you have.

Mr. McClure: I agree with the honorable member for Melbourne, but the honorable member for Brunswick says the same thing over and again. The honorable member could dispense with his material in one-fifth of the time it takes him to say it.

I am reminded of an employer who was interviewing applicants for a position. He decided that he would ask them to describe themselves in 30 words. The gentleman who got the job described himself as “concise”. That quality and not length should be the main consideration in contributions to debates in this House. I support the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

The motion was agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Ramsay (Balwyn): I wish to make a personal explanation. During this morning’s debate on the motion of the honorable member for Northcote concerning the Australian Labor Party report on the liquor industry in Victoria, I said that it would be a good idea if the report were placed in the Parliamentary Library. By way of interjection, it was stated that this had been done, which conflicted with information that I had received from the Library.

A letter which I received this afternoon from Miss McGovern, the Parliamentary Librarian, reads—

Immediately after you left the Library at 12.45 p.m. today, we checked the catalogue and found the Australian Labor Party report on the liquor industry had in fact been donated to the Parliament Library on 18th August, 1976. I greatly regret this misunderstanding as we had not realized that you required the report urgently in the House.

I regret if I misled the House concerning the matter. I am glad to advise honorable members that the report is available in the Library for their perusal.

ADJOURNMENT.

South Dynon Diesel Workshops—Dandenong and District Hospital—Workers Compensation—Home Help for Intellectually Handicapped—Vandalism at Chelsea—Portable Class-rooms—Country Freight Services—Noise Pollution at Essendon Airport.

Mr. Thompson (Minister of Education): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Simmonds (Reservoir): I refer to the Minister of Transport a matter concerning the administration of the railways. Is the Minister aware of the concern of workers employed at the South Dynon diesel workshops at the explosion that occurred there on Sunday, 29th August, and the subsequent need to take industrial action to implement bans and limitations on the performance of work in the area to ensure that the Mines Department carries out tests to ascertain the cause of the explosion?

I understand that the workshop was built on swampy land and it has been established that methane gas and swamp gas were involved in the explosion. The workers are concerned that, as the explosion occurred in one of the pits, a similar explosion could occur in one of the other pits.

It seems that some concern exists about the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market site which is...
on similar land and could be subject to the problems caused by natural gas, or methane gas, which has been described as swamp gas.

I ask the Minister to ascertain the reason for the delay in calling in the Mines Department to take the necessary steps before industrial action was taken and also to inform the House of the outcome of any inquiry that is held to ascertain the source of the explosion.

Mr. Lind (Dandenong): I direct a matter to the attention of the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health, concerning the provision of a new boiler house at the Dandenong and District Hospital. It is a sad and long story. When the hospital was first planned, it was considered that it would eventually become a 500 to 600-bed hospital.

In 1961-63, two briquette-fired hot water boilers, each of a capacity of 3 million British thermal units an hour were installed together with one steam generator of 1,000 lb. of steam an hour. From the outset the hot water boilers were unable to meet the hot water load of the hospital, which then accommodated only 97 beds. The boilers had to be extensively modified. They were so installed that they could not be cleaned. It is almost unbelievable that holes had to be cut in the roof of the boiler house to enable rods to be inserted in the vertical tubes of the boiler. That is how much attention was given to the original installation. There was head room of only 2 ft. 6 in. above the boiler before one reached the roof.

Mr. Jona: Which body was involved?

Mr. Lind: The Hospitals and Charities Commission. The first extensions to the hospital were made in 1967 and it was found that the 1,000 lb. of steam was insufficient for the hospital's needs, so a generator which could produce 3,000 lbs of steam was added nine years ago. The boilers have since been converted from briquettes to natural gas and the Hospitals and Charities Commission recommended that a 10,000-lb. generator be installed. The generator has been in operation since March, 1971, and it barely meets the load of the present hospital which contains 204 beds, and on some days the number of bed patients treated totals 230.

The south block is almost completed but no permission has been received from the Hospitals and Charities Commission to advertise tenders for a boiler house which will cost $1 million. It will be an extremely big job. So for the remainder of this year and during the next year it will not be possible to use the south block.

The matter is most urgent and I should be pleased if the Assistant Minister of Health would draw it to the attention of the Minister of Health.

Mr. Fogarty (Sunshine): I direct to the attention of the Minister of Labour and Industry a matter relating to workers compensation. Normally such questions are referred to the Chief Secretary, but the Minister of Labour and Industry has some jurisdiction over the Department of Labour and Industry's inspections relating to workers compensation.

I have received correspondence from the Federated Cold Storage and Meat Preserving Employees Union of Australasia which refers to a large insurance company, which for obvious reasons I will not name. It is claimed that a person was injured at work, witnesses were present, the person was taken to a doctor and compensation was delayed for a considerable time. The employer, with the knowledge that the accident was witnessed and that a doctor had verified that the injury was caused by an accident at work, paid an amount to the employee.

The insurance company now claims that its involvement in this case was prejudiced because the employer paid the employee. To wind up, I quote from a letter on the subject which reads, *inter alia*—

Should a situation such as that outlined above occur, where large medical and
hospital expenses were involved, a small company, with less substance than ourselves, could be placed in a very uncomfortable financial position, which to say the least, is grossly unfair in view of the heavy premiums which companies are forced to pay to cover their employees.

It is our opinion that such matters should be brought to the attention of your union, because if such instances are allowed to go unchallenged, the eventual result would be that your members would have to wait for lengthy periods before receiving the benefits to which they are entitled.

Workers compensation was designed to protect these men, not to place them in a position of financial stress.

Insurance companies constantly keep the employee waiting for a considerable time over the usual fortnight. I request that the Minister look into this matter with the possibility of introducing legislation to expedite payment to people who unfortunately suffer injury at work.

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick): I raise a matter with the Assistant Minister of Health, for the Minister of Health. It concerns a problem in the Bendigo area where there is now a special programme of home help for the physically disabled, of which the Minister would no doubt be aware. It is a pilot project and is complementary to the services now available for home help for the mentally retarded. The Minister and the honorable member for Bendigo might not be aware that an age restriction on this home-help service does not apply to the mentally retarded. The situation that has been put to me in some detail is that a person living in Bendigo with a handicapped son of about 24 years of age went to the Bendigo City Council and asked for home help but was told that there is a sixteen years age limit. The difficulty is that this person's requirement for home help is no different from that of someone who has a dependent person under sixteen years of age or a mentally retarded person older than sixteen years. The amount of care required and the problems that face the family are just the same for a person older than sixteen as for a person under sixteen years of age.

I should like the Minister to look at this matter. This is a pilot project. I realize that it would seem that if it is a pilot project it is best to make it as parallel as possible to the programme for the mentally retarded so that home help can be provided for the parents of the physically handicapped or for people who are looking after them, no matter what the age of the dependent person.

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum): I raise a matter with the Chief Secretary concerning the administration of the Police Department. Many people in Chelsea are concerned at the damage caused by vandals, particularly in smashing buildings, windows and damaging cars in the area. The number of public buildings affected include the L. F. Payne hall, Chelsea Infant Welfare Centre, new extensions to the Chelsea administrative offices, the Chelsea city hall and the Chelsea Community Centre. Obviously vandalism is costing thousands of dollars. The Chelsea police station is open until 11 p.m. but is staffed by only one officer. If any of the staff are sick, the police station is closed at 5 p.m. There is an urgent need for additional police staff in Chelsea. The police are doing an excellent job, but they need assistance in coping with vandalism.

The Chelsea City Council has sought a 24-hour watch at the station and I support the application by the council and also suggest that the Chief Secretary might consider making the Chelsea police station a training station. That would certainly make more staff available, and that additional staff could be employed with greater flexibility.

Mr. CAIN (Bundoora): I desire to bring a matter to the notice of the Minister of Education. It concerns recent fires in schools in the Eltham district and nearby areas. A number of portable class-rooms were destroyed by fire and in one instance a permanent class-room was destroyed. Last week the Diamond Valley News reported that local schools could expect some of their portable class-rooms to be moved to make up for the deficiency in the
Eltham area. I express concern because it was stated that the source of the report was the honorable member for Greensborough. I was concerned to know whether “local” means Bundoora.

I ask the Minister to indicate whether the department intends to remove portable class-rooms from the Bundoora electorate, and if so what notice will be given to the principals of the schools involved prior to the removal of those class-rooms.

Mr. JONES (Melbourne): I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Transport. I raised this matter on the motion for the adjournment last night. It is fair to say that the Minister did not really answer the two major points I was making about the curtailment of country rail services. The first point is that there may well be consultation concerning the cut-back of services, both freight and passenger, in country areas. I am concerned to establish whether the consultation will come first and the curtailment later or will the curtailment come first with the explanation later. The second point I wish to make strongly, which the Minister did not touch on, was whether alternative means of employment in road transport, both buses and trucks for freight, will be found for the Victorian Railways personnel and also Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Engineers personnel. I need hardly point out that in a number of country towns there is a proportionately higher number of railway personnel, both in the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Engineers and the Australian Railways Union, who are coming towards the end of their careers and who need some sort of job security.

Will the Minister ensure that the Victorian Railways is enabled to enlarge its franchise so that it can enter the road transport area, as it recently did in the pipeline business, under the Minister’s predecessor.

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie): In the absence of the Minister for Conservation, I direct my remarks to the Minister in charge of the House. Last week, I raised the matter during the adjournment debate regarding the lifting of the curfew on jet aircraft flying in and out of Essendon Airport and asked the Minister, through the Environment Protection Authority, to check on the noise levels of aircraft flying during the curfew hours from that airport?

I have received correspondence from the Federal Minister for Transport, Mr. Nixon, to the effect that he has decided to drop the whole project and the curfew that has been in operation for many years will continue. I know that both you and, I, Mr. Speaker will have personal satisfaction because this affects the constituents whom we represent.

However, he indicates that piston-driven aircraft make even more noise than jet aircraft. As he has decided not to interfere with the curfew on jets, he might take the same attitude to piston-driven aircraft. I ask the Minister to take action to have a test taken by the Environment Protection Authority on piston-driven aircraft, particularly the Bristol.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): I was not aware of the circumstances of which the honorable member for Reservoir spoke. I will make it my business to obtain some information about them.

The honorable member for Melbourne raised the question to which he referred last night. One reason I did not elaborate then, as he well knows, is that the information I had given to the media was embargoed until midnight, although it is obvious that somewhere along the line the embargo was broken and the honorable member obtained some information on which to base his question.

I emphasize that the Government is fully aware of its responsibility in this matter. The statement I made in relation to the future of services in country areas clearly spelt out that any possible change in the circumstances of employment would be fully taken into consideration and discussed. Even today, it was clearly
indicated that the unions would be consulted. The honorable member obviously knew that last night.

Mr. JONES: You did not tell Parliament.

Mr. RAFFERTY: If the honorable member will listen for once he might learn something. As early as today the railway authorities met with the unions to discuss some of the very matters raised by the honorable member for Melbourne.

His second point related to people in the area affected being notified before any change was made in a service. The Government’s policy on this, too, was clearly spelt out. There will be no change in any service until a service equal to, or better than, the existing service has been approved. Further, the views of responsible people in the community will be fully taken into consideration before a change is made in any service.

Mr. JONA (Assistant Minister of Health): I have noted the matter raised by the honorable member for Dandenong. There appears to be a confused and complex situation in the boiler room at the Dandenong and District Hospital. I will ensure that this matter is taken up by the commission urgently, as the honorable member requested.

The honorable member for Brunswick referred to anomalies in the pilot projects for home help for the physically disabled in Bendigo and for the mentally retarded. The anomalies related to age. It seems desirable that the conditions for the two schemes should be identical. I am not aware why an age restriction was imposed. I will have investigations made and let him know the result.

Mr. MACLELLAN (Minister of Labour and Industry): The honorable member for Sunshine raised a matter from the federated cold storage union regarding an injury to a worker. The injury was witnessed, and a doctor certified her for compensation to be paid by the employer. The insurance company which issued the workers compensation policy apparently complained that the continuing payments prejudiced its interests. I presume that it was arguing that its obligation to provide indemnity was prejudiced by the advance payments. I will raise this matter with the Chief Secretary who is responsible for workers compensation in this sense. If I have the opportunity I shall raise it with the working party on workers compensation when next it resumes. In any event, the Department of Labour and Industry will try to raise this subject during the inquiry into compensation in case this aspect has not been covered.

Mr. THOMPSON (Minister of Education): The honorable member for Bundoora spoke about the transfer of portable class-rooms in the electorate that he represents. I assure him that there will not be any specific raid on Bundoora. The department suffered the loss of a considerable number of class-rooms during the July-August period. Prior to that, it happily had reserves and was able to assist one or two independent schools. If it is necessary to move portable class-rooms—I hope it will not be—adequate warning will be given to any school concerned. We will try to ensure that no undue inconvenience is caused.

The honorable member for Niddrie raised the question of noise from piston-engined aircraft, as distinct from jet aircraft, around the Essendon aerodrome. He pointed out that Mr. Nixon, the Federal Minister for Transport, had written to him explaining that the curfew would remain on jet aircraft but would not apply to piston-engined aircraft. I shall be happy to raise this matter with the Minister for Conservation but the Government would be reluctant to take action which would limit the effectiveness of Essendon as a communication link between Melbourne and Victoria country centres.
Mr. SCANLAN (Minister of Special Education): The honorable member for Carrum raised a number of matters relating to vandalism in the area that he represents. I regret that there is vandalism in that district. However, as the honorable member has already pointed out, the police will do everything possible to prevent vandalism and to deter vandals. I will raise with the Chief Secretary the various matters to which he referred.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.22 p.m. until Tuesday, September 21.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

RAILWAYS REVENUE FROM FREIGHT.

(Question No. 565)

Mr. WOOD (Swan Hill) asked the Minister of Transport—

What—(a) total revenue was received; and (b) profit or loss was made by the Victorian Railways Board in the financial years 1973-74 to 1975-76, inclusive, from the carriage of wheat, oats, and barley, respectively?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

(a) Revenue—

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<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>1973-74</th>
<th>1974-75</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>9,363,566</td>
<td>13,979,181</td>
<td>13,680,594</td>
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<td>Oats</td>
<td>650,017</td>
<td>567,200</td>
<td>1,003,158</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>1,326,437</td>
<td>2,154,362</td>
<td>2,372,024</td>
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(b) The Victorian Railways recently introduced a new responsibility and management accounting system which is designed to provide, amongst other things, a proper allocation of costs against specific functions or activities.

Under the old system this kind of detailed information could not properly be separated from the over-all revenue figures. The new system will eventually produce the type of cost analysis sought by the honorable member but it will be some time before meaningful statistics are available.

LIQUID MILK CONTRACTS.

(Question No. 624)

Mr. HOLDING (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

1. Whether any Ministers of the Crown are holders of liquid milk contracts; if so—(a) which Ministers; and (b) whether any Ministers, either directly or indirectly, have an interest in the supply of liquid milk amounting to fifty or more gallons daily, and, in that event, which Ministers?

2. If he will ascertain and inform whether any comparable information is available in regard to all members of the Parliament who hold such interests?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

1. No.

2. No members of the Victorian Parliament are holders of liquid milk contracts.

LANDS DEPARTMENT REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.

(Question No. 629)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Lands—

Whether the Department of Crown Lands and Survey adopts regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. BORTHWICK (Minister of Lands): The answer is—

Two divisions of the department, namely the divisions of occupation and Crown land management, have adopted regional boundaries.

For land administration these boundaries of necessity follow parish boundaries rather than municipal boundaries.

The municipalities the municipal districts of which are wholly or mainly included in the Bendigo region are—

Cities of Bendigo, Castlemaine, Echuca and Maryborough; town of St. Arnaud; Borough of Eaglehawk; shires of Bet Bet, Charlton, Cohuna, East Loddon, Gisborne, Gordon, Huntly, Kara Kara, Korong, Kyneton, Maldon, Marong, Metcalfe, McIvor, Newham and Woodend, Newstead, Pyalong, Rochester, Romsey, Strathfieldsaye and Tullaroop.
PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT REGIONAL BOUNDARIES.
(Question No. 637)

Mr. JONES (Melbourne) asked the Premier—

Whether the Premier’s Department uses or has adopted regional boundaries; if so, what municipalities are included in the Bendigo region?

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

Yes.

Bendigo is included in the Loddon-Campaspe region. Other municipalities in the Loddon-Campaspe region are—

Bet Bet, Castlemaine, Charlton, Cohuna, East Loddon, Eaglehawk, Gisborne, Gordon, Huntly, Kara Kara, Korong, Kyneton, Maldon, Maryborough, Metcalfe, Marong, Mclvor, Newham and Woodend, Newstead, Pyalong, Rochester, Romsey, St. Arnaud, Strathfieldsaye, and Tullaroop.

RAILWAY DRIVERS AND GUARDS.
(Question No. 690)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. How many drivers and guards, respectively, have been trained by the Railway Department in the past twelve months?
2. What is the present strength of both these staffing positions and the required strength to maintain a maximum service?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. Eighty-five drivers were trained during the past twelve months; 145 employees passed the guard’s examination during the past twelve months and 97 of those accepted appointment as guard.

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<tr>
<td>Bell Street:</td>
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<td>16,836</td>
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<td>East of Nicholson Street</td>
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<td>26,240</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>15,617</td>
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TRAFFIC COUNTS IN COBURG ELECTORATE.
(Question No. 705)

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. When the Country Roads Board last conducted a traffic count of main roads in the electoral district of Coburg?
2. What was the result of such traffic counts?
3. What are the traffic count figures for these roads in each year since 1970?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. There are two roads in the electoral district of Coburg declared under the provisions of the Country Roads Act, namely Bell Street and the Hume Highway. The latest traffic count on Bell Street was held on 23rd March, 1976, and on the Hume Highway on 13th April, 1976.

2. The results of these traffic counts were—
   Bell Street, east of Sydney Road—18,853 vehicles between 7 a.m.—7 p.m.
   Bell Street, west of Sydney Road—16,007 vehicles between 7 a.m.—7 p.m.
   Hume Highway, north of Boundary Road—23,290 vehicles between 7 a.m.—7 p.m.

3. The results of traffic counts on these roads since 1970 are set out hereunder:

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<td>Country Roads Board Traffic Counts. Number of vehicles between 7 a.m.—7 p.m.</td>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bell Street, east of Sydney Road</td>
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<td>18,853</td>
<td>23,680</td>
<td>24,167</td>
<td>23,290</td>
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Questions [16 September, 1976.] on Notice. 2541

ABOUT ABOLITION OF RAILWAY CROSSINGS.

(Question No. 713)

Mr. SIMMONDS (Reservoir) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. In respect of the abolition of railway crossings, whether plans have been approved for the abolition of the level crossing at the Broadway and High Street intersection with the Reservoir railway line?

2. When it is proposed that funds will be allocated for these works, whether the views of local authorities have been received, and what action is being taken as a result of these views?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. The project has been approved in principle and a preliminary drawing prepared for planning purposes only.

2. It is not expected that funds will be available for this project before 1980. The views of the Preston City Council have been received by the Country Roads Board and are under consideration.

GLENROY AND OAK PARK RAILWAY STATIONS SUBWAY.

(Question No. 720)

Mr. CULPIN (Glenroy) asked the Minister of Transport—

Who constructed the subway between Glenroy and Oak Park railway stations, indicating—(a) who financed the project; (b) whether the project is completed; (c) who will be responsible for its maintenance; and (d) why no lights have been installed?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. The pedestrian subway between Glenroy and Oak Park railway stations was constructed by the Victorian Railways.

(a) This project was financed from the Transport Fund.

(b) and (d) The subway is completed except for the provision of lighting which is the responsibility of the City of Broadmeadows.

(c) The City of Broadmeadows is responsible for the future maintenance of the subway.

WALLAN BYPASS.

(Question No. 734)

Mr. SIMPSON (Niddrie) asked the Minister of Transport—

In respect of construction of the Wallan bypass—

1. What was the estimated and actual cost, respectively, of the bridge at Beveridge?

2. Whether, at the time of building the bridge, the Country Roads Board was experiencing financial difficulties; if so, how this affected contractors engaged on the Wallan by-pass?

3. How many contracts were terminated by the board during the course of construction of the by-pass?

4. Why construction time for the bridge covered the period from January, 1973, to January, 1976?

5. How many different contractors were involved in the project?

Mr. RAFFERTY (Minister of Transport): The answer is—

1. The 1972 estimated cost of the overpass structure which carries Melbourne bound traffic over the new freeway at the Wallan interchange just north of Beveridge was $265,000. This estimate was amended to $480,000 in September, 1974. The overpass was completed in August, 1975, at a total cost of approximately $520,000.

2. During the latter part of the 1974–75 financial year, the board did experience financial difficulties and as a result it became necessary for the board to make arrangements with some of the contractors constructing the Wallan–Broadford section of the Hume Freeway to accept deferred payments for work performed.

3, 4 and 5. A contract for the construction of the Wallan interchange bridge was first let on 9th November, 1972, but owing to the terminal illness of the principal, the board released him from the contract without penalty before work commenced.

The contract was re-advertised, and on 11th January, 1973, was let to a new contractor, who was at that time satisfactorily completing another bridge contract for the board. The contractor made very little progress with the Wallan interchange bridge and after six months the board determined the contract. Fresh tenders were invited and a third contract was let for the construction of the bridge on 31st October, 1973. This contractor also made very poor progress, and the board determined the contract on 5th July, 1974.

The board then decided to complete the work by direct labour. The construction of the bridge was completed in August, 1975.

QUARRYING AT ARTHURS SEAT.

(Question No. 737)

Mr. CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Mines—

1. Under what permit Pioneer Concrete Services Ltd. is operating at Arthurs Seat?

2. When objections were heard to the conditions laid down by the Westernport Regional Planning Authority and the Flinders Shire Council and whether the
Town Planning Appeals Tribunal has announced its decision; if so what is the decision; if not, why, and when a decision will be announced?

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

1. Victorian Quarries Ltd., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Pioneer Concrete Services Ltd. operates a quarry at Arthurs Seat.

The quarry is presently operating under the provisions of section 38 of the Extractive Industries Act 1966.

2. In July, 1975, the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal heard appeals in respect of the company's application to extend its operations at Arthurs Seat but adjourned the hearing to give the opportunity to reach agreement on the conditions in dispute.

Since the parties were not able to agree the tribunal has sought and considered written submissions on the appeals. A decision is expected shortly.

MR. I. SALEMI.
(Question No. 740)

Mr. ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Premier—

1. Whether he has received representations—(a) to support Mr. Salemi's stay in Australia; or (b) suggesting that the Commonwealth Government's decision be supported; if so, from whom.

2. Whether he has taken any action on the matter; if so, what action and with what result.

3. If he will lay on the table of the Library all files and memoranda relating to this matter.

Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer): The answer is—

1. Yes. Mr. J. L. Simmonds, M.P., asked that representations be made for Mr. Salemi's visa to be extended.

2. I replied to Mr. Simmonds pointing out that the question of visas was entirely one for the Federal Government which was already handling a request from Dr. H. H. Jenkins, M.H.R., about the matter.

3. Yes.

Legislative Council
Tuesday, September 21, 1976.

The President (the Hon. W. G. Fry) took the chair at 4.54 p.m. and read the prayer.