out of the Health Commission's public relations and information activities then every effort will be made to supply the information.

(Question No. 1052)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Health:

1. How many people are employed by the departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions under the Minister's control in each of the advertising, public relations, information and extension fields?

2. What is the annual budget for each of these activities in each of these departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health) —The answer is:

The time, effort and expense entailed in collating this complex information cannot be justified. If the Leader of the Opposition requires information on any specific item arising out of the Health Commission's public relations and information activities then every effort will be made to supply the information.

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Legislative Council

Tuesday, 23 October 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 4.48 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

KEILOR AND SUNSHINE CITY COUNCILS

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province) —I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government. Following the recent undertaking given by the Premier in another place concerning the restoration to the citizens of Sunshine of the right to elect that city's council, is the Minister now in a position to inform the House when it is proposed to have fresh elections for both Keilor and Sunshine?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government) —The answer is, "No".

FLOOD PRONE LAND

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) —I direct a question to the Minister for Local Government. In view of his answer to a question last week relating to flood levels and the requirements of the Uniform Building Regulations and the fact that the Government was giving consideration to ways of easing these regulations, can the Minister now advise what progress has been made? Has a decision been made on this subject? If so, what are the details of that decision? If not, when is a decision expected?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government) —I can assure the honorable member that progress has been made on this subject. As a consequence of my previous assurance to the House, the matter has been considered by Cabinet and, as a result, instructions have been given to Parliamentary Counsel to prepare amendments to the Local Government Act in order that the necessary amendments to the Uniform Building Regulation No. 1701E can be effected.

ECHUCA TECHNICAL SCHOOL

The Hon. J. W. S. RADFORD (Bendigo Province) —I direct a question to the Minister of Education. Has the Minister's special committee arrived at any conclusion with respect to the year 7 education at Echuca Technical School in relation to general areas of Echuca, Cobram, Kyabram and Nathalia?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education) —Yes. The special committee appointed to ensure equality of opportunity in technical education in the areas mentioned reported to me last week. I referred back certain matters arising from the report to the committee for further consideration so that they can be clarified for the benefit of children in the area. I am able to give an unequivocal assurance that the needs of the children in the entire area in question for technical education will be met. Most of the children who desire it will have those educational needs met by availability of technical education in technical schools. I do not propose to spell out the details at this moment as further meetings are scheduled with principals of technical schools in the area and later with par...
ents and other interested bodies who will form the committee which will meet with me on Friday of this week.

I have given full authority for the special committee to further develop proposals, the thrust of which I have already approved in the light of those discussions. Following the last of those discussions on Friday, the full programme to carry out the assurance I have given will be announced.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—I direct a question to the Minister of Water Supply. Further to the question I asked the Minister last week, can the honorable gentleman now inform the House whether he is prepared to lay on the table in the Library all files relating to the introduction of regulation HSN.1705 of the Board of Works which is designed to restrict the use of plastic pipes and clay pipes in certain municipalities?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Last week I said that I would consider this question. I have not yet arrived at a decision because I believe an important issue is involved and that is whether, as a Minister, I am required to table a file of a statutory authority. I wish to make further inquiries and will advise the House tomorrow.

DARTMOUTH DAM

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—Is the Minister of Water Supply able to advise the House of the result of tests carried out last week on the high level and low level outlets of Dartmouth dam? Is he able to confirm or deny rumours circulating in the upper Mitta district that a rather unusual and peculiar vibration was observed during the tests?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Tests at Dartmouth dam from the high level and low level gates were taken last week-end. From a very sketchy report which I have received, I understand that there was some vibration, and that further tests will be taken shortly. I believe that with adjustment these vibrations can be corrected.

POLICE TRAINING ACADEMY

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—Can the Attorney-General, who represents the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, advise the House of any response to representations made to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in relation to possible community access to the outstanding sports and athletics facilities at the Police Training Academy, Glen Waverley?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Yes. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has considered this question, and proposes to convene a conference of interested parties so that the possibility can be further discussed.

BROWN COAL IN OTWAY RANGES

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Gippsland Province)—Has the Minister for Conservation received any report or information following the test drilling for brown coal in the Otway Ranges? I understand that eight test bores have been carried out by the State Electricity Commission in the area between Chapple Vale and Gellibrand. If the Minister has no information, can he inform the House when the results of these tests will be known and whether he will make available the information when it is received?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Information on this matter should be gathered from the Department of Minerals and Energy. Having been asked the question, I undertake to have the answer provided by that department.

CHELTENHAM COURT HOUSE

The Hon. ROBERT LAWSON (Higginsbotham Province)—The Attorney-General will remember that last week, during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting, I raised the question of the closure of the Cheltenham court house. The honorable gentleman assured the House that the views of
the Moorabbin council would be taken into consideration before a decision was made to close the court house. Since then I have received a letter from the City of Moorabbin which states in part:

I have now to inform you that it has come to the notice of the Councillors of the City of Moorabbin that in early January 1980 the Cheltenham court house will be closed and business transferred to other court houses.

I ask the Attorney-General whether he will elucidate this matter as to whether the court house will be closed.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I repeat what I said last week, that the views of the council would certainly be sought before any such decision was made. I add to that that views of local members would also be sought because no court house would be closed without the views of honorable members being sought. I am unaware of where the information that the council referred to is coming from but it is not correct. A review of the facilities and the use by the courts in that area has been under way for some time, as the council knows. So far as I am aware, there is no intention of closing down that court house in 1980 or at any other time.

MILL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—Can the Minister of Education provide an assurance that the Mill Park Primary School will be constructed and ready for opening in the 1981 school year?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Last week I informed the honorable member that tenders had been called and it was expected that they would be let this financial quarter. I also informed the honorable member that it appeared that there was no prospect of the work being completed for the 1980 school year. I know of no reason why the school should not be completed well before the commencement of the 1981 school year, but I am unable to predict whether builders will complete their contracts in time, whether there will be industrial disputes or unusual weather conditions. All I can say is that it is anticipated that tenders will be let during the current quarter of the financial year.

OPINION POLLS

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—My question without notice, which is directed to the Leader of the House, relates to the reintroduction of daylight saving from next week-end, which is regarded as iniquitous by country people. Furthermore, I refer to the fact that 71 per cent of people in Victoria—this was in the Herald last week—are in favour of the reintroduction of capital punishment under certain circumstances.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! The honorable member may ask only one question.

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT—If the Government is not relying upon opinion polls, will it repeal daylight saving, and if it is relying upon opinion polls, will it reintroduce capital punishment?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—On the question of daylight saving, the Government believes the experiment has proved extremely worth while to the community overall, although it is fully recognized that there are some areas of disadvantage. Because of that latter recognition, the plea to further extend the period of daylight saving has been rejected but it will continue, as in the past.

In relation to the second question, the honorable member well knows that for members on the Government side of the House it is a question of conscience.

REGISTRATION OF PROPERTY

The Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Ballarat Province)—Is the Attorney-General aware of recent publicity regarding the inability of persons to have registered transfers of property previously belonging to the Presbyterian Church? If so, what steps does the Attorney-General intend to take to alleviate these problems?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Yes, I am aware of the publicity. I have received correspondence and submissions on the question
of the transfer of property of the Presbyterian Church as it was constituted before 22 June 1977. It is a two-fold problem. Firstly, there is the problem of transfer of property held by that church, and, secondly, the problem of certain church schools about which litigation has been commenced. I have endeavoured to bring the parties together to reach a solution to which everyone can agree. To date, that has not been successfully accomplished. It seems to me that the only solution that will work will be the introduction of legislation to resolve the property problem and, in effect, to hold in hiatus the church schools until the litigation has concluded. It is my intention to so recommend to the Government.

GIPPSLAND LAKES COASTAL PARK

The Hon. JOAN COXEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Will the Minister for Conservation table the advice he has received from the National Parks Advisory Council relating to the application by Beach Petroleum NL for drilling rights in the Gippsland Lakes coastal park?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Yes, I will table that advice in the Library where it will be dealt with in accordance with the rules for the tabling of documents from my department.

BALLOT-PAPERS

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province)—My question concerns the proposed alterations that have been announced with regard to electoral matters. Is the Minister for Local Government aware that some municipalities have made application to their association with regard to the drawing of lots for positions on ballot-papers? Has the Minister been informed of this and what is his opinion or the opinion of his department concerning these proposed changes?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I am aware of the proposal. My view is that it has sufficient merit to be included in the list of matters for inclusion in the next Local Government (Amendment) Bill and I will certainly be taking steps to see that the matter is carefully considered with that aim in view.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SUPERANNUATION BILL

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PAPERS

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


Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme—Amendments No. 90, Part 1a with maps (Three papers); and No. 125, with map (Two papers).


On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), it was ordered that the report of the State Insurance Office be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The various provisions of this Bill are unrelated; hence, I shall speak about them separately.

DISBANDMENT OF YALLOURN TOWN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The measures proposed in clause 3 of this Bill disband the Yallourn Town Advisory Council. The Yallourn Town Advisory Council was the vehicle by which a form of local government was introduced to the people of Yallourn. The State Electricity Commission has
the powers of a municipal council of a borough as if the Yallourn area were its municipal district and is the sole authority of all works in the Yallourn area. The advisory council, on the other hand, has been the official body which could speak for the residents on municipal matters.

In 1969, the commission announced the planned attrition of the Yallourn township. During the last decade therefore, the advisory council has concerned itself more particularly with the provisions being made by the commission for the resettlement of the town's residents and the relocation of various community facilities. In this task, the advisory council has shown particular sensitivity to the human problems involved and demonstrated its care and concern for the problems of individuals.

The demise of the township which is now well advanced obviates the need for the advisory council to continue. It is proposed in this Bill, therefore, that it be disbanded after 30 November 1979. By that time it is envisaged that only about 120 houses will remain occupied and the population will have fallen below 500.

Following the disbandment of the advisory council, the State Electricity Commission will continue to fulfil its municipal responsibilities and attend to such matters as road maintenance and the provision of water, sewerage and garbage disposal services. Community amenities such as infant welfare and library services will continue to be provided by the commission for as long as they are justifiably needed.

CHANGE OF NAME OF APPROVING AUTHORITY FOR ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

In section 51 (1A), the approving authorities for the approval of electrical appliances in other States before they are offered for sale or hire are listed. However, the names of two of these authorities have been changed. The Electricity Authority of New South Wales is now the Energy Authority of New South Wales and the State Electricity Commission of Western Australia is now known as the State Energy Commission of Western Australia. As a "tidying up" measure, clause 4 brings section 51 (1A) of the Act into line with these changes.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION STOCK: INCREASE IN LEVEL FOR PROBATE EXEMPTION

Clause 5 of the Bill increases the limit of the value of stock which can be dealt with by an executor of a deceased's estate without production of probate.

The present limit of $1200 was set in 1968 as a means of alleviating undue hardship and expense to a small estate, and by now increasing it to $5000 the intention in the original legislation is maintained.

The proposed increase to $5000 will bring the commission into line with State Savings Bank and Commonwealth Government loans.

CONTRACTS WITH OTHER PUBLIC BODIES

Section 102 (2) of the State Electricity Commission Act provides that, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, the commission may enter into an agreement or contract with any other body corporate or public body.

Many public bodies perform small services for the State Electricity Commission and the State Electricity Commission reciprocates. To obtain the approval of the Governor in Council in each case is unnecessary.

Clause 6 amends section 102 (2) so that only those contracts in excess of $250 000 need the sanction of the Governor in Council regardless of who the contracting parties are, a provision already applying to normal commercial contracts. The Government still could require nominated types of contracts to be approved by the Governor in Council under the proposed section 102 (2A).

PLANS OF SUBDIVISION: REMOVAL OF EASEMENTS FOR SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY

Plans of subdivision are referred to the commission by municipal councils, in accordance with provisions of the
Local Government Act, for the commission’s consent to their sealing having regard to its satisfaction as to the appropriation of easements for the supply of electricity and other supply matters. Easements appropriated in this manner are vested in the lot owners in the subdivision. When lines are removed these easements become redundant.

At present, the Registrar of Titles requires, in addition to the consent of the commission, the consent of all lot owners in the subdivision whose lots are affected by the easement, as well as the consent of the council which sealed the plan before extinguishing the easement.

The amendment as set out in clause 7 creates a new sub-section to give authority to the Registrar of Titles to extinguish the easement or part thereof on notification from the commission.

**UNIFORM PRACTICE MANUALS**

At the present time, the technical requirements in respect of minimum standards for equipment installed in electricity distribution supply systems; specification requirements for materials used therein; and minimum standards for earthing systems permitted by regulations are incorporated in such regulations as the Electricity Supply and Construction Regulations.

The current Electricity Supply and Construction Regulations 1968 contain frequent references to relevant Australian or British standard specifications. Due to alignment of Australian standards with international standards, published by the International Electrotechnical Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes in Australian standards are becoming more frequent and a reference to appropriate standards in the Code of Practice Manual published by the State Electricity Commission, changes...

**APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT FOR A SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY**

Since 1976, domestic electricity customers have not been required to complete an “Application and Agreement” form, which sets out the conditions under which electricity supply was made available to a resident, as the practice was redundant. The discontinuance of the agreement signed by incoming customers necessitates the amendment of the State Electricity Commission Act to provide prima facie evidence of the identity of the customer; a deeming of an undertaking on his or her part to pay for electricity consumed at the relevant scale of charges; and proof of service of notices upon him. Clause 9 of the Bill sets out the proposed amendment to incorporate these requirements and is based in part on the Gas Act 1969.

**REMOVAL OF REFERENCE TO TRAMWAYS AND OMNIBUSES**

Under the provisions of the State Electricity Commission (Tramways) Act 1975, Part VI. of the Act titled “Tramways and Omnibuses” was repealed. This was appropriate because the tramways services in Ballarat and Bendigo were abandoned in 1971 and 1972, respectively. At the time of the amending Act, however, not all references to tramways and omnibuses were removed and clause 10 rectifies the position.

**STANDBY (EMERGENCY) ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES IN TENANTED BUILDINGS**

It has been interpreted by some building proprietors that section 6(A) of the Electric Light and Power Act means that a building proprietor may not supply tenants with electricity during restrictions or emergencies unless covered by an Order in Council. This is not the intention of the Act and clause 12 is designed to overcome the problems that have arisen.
POWER TO CUT OFF SUPPLY

At present, section 42 (1) of the Electric Light and Power Act 1958 states that if an account for the supply of electricity is not paid the undertaker may cut off such supply and continue to keep the supply disconnected until the charge or sum is fully paid, but does not refer to other forms of indebtedness. In clause 13, section 42 (1) has been altered to include reference to the supply and service of electricity and related matters.

UNLAWFUL DISCONNECTION OF SUPPLY

There is no provision in the Electric Light and Power Act to enable prosecution before a stipendiary magistrate of a person who unlawfully disconnects the supply of electricity. This provision is being incorporated in the Act—clause 14, proposed sub-section (5)—to cover cases where supply is disconnected spitefully, mischievously or simply to inconvenience others.

HAZARDS RESULTING FROM REMOVAL OF WIRES FROM PREMISES

The creation of an offence under the Electric Light and Power Act is desired to facilitate legal action in the cases where house demolishers disconnect the service at the point of attachment resulting in live lines being in an accessible situation. Clause 14—proposed sub-section (6)—brings this into effect. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, October 30.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SUPERANNUATION BILL

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has been prepared to effect a number of small improvements to the Local Authorities Superannuation Scheme but I would like to make it plain to honorable members at the outset that it is not connected with the proposals for improved benefits which are at present the subject of negotiations between the Municipal Officers Association and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

The officers’ association obtained actuarial advice earlier this year and submitted some broadly based proposals to the Municipal Association. That association has obtained written actuarial advice and is currently determining its position in the matter. The process of ascertaining the maximum amounts of the contributions to which the various categories of employees and employers are prepared to commit themselves and the translation of these proposals into draft legislation necessarily takes a considerable time. However, I hope shortly to convene a conference of all concerned parties with a view to reaching a reasonable degree of consensus. If it is at all practicable to do so I will have draft legislation prepared for submission to the autumn sitting of Parliament to give effect to any proposals which may be adopted.

The material in the Bill now before the House could have been incorporated in future legislation but some of the people who will benefit from the changes have already been waiting for a considerable time. In any case it is desirable that any additional entitlements which have been decided upon should be available to contributors as soon as possible.

The Bill will amend the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958—

(a) to provide increased lump sum payments for certain limited benefits contributors and service benefits contributors;

(b) to confer on the board a wider power to grant disability benefits;

(c) to provide a deferred pension entitlement for persons who are dismissed or resign after having served for at least fifteen years and having attained the age of 50 years; and

(d) to provide for pension rights and benefits to be retained by employees despite short breaks in service.
Clause 2 concerns the payment of contributions when there is a break in the service of a permanent employee. All contributions are paid yearly in advance on 1 March by the employing authorities. Each authority then deducts the employee's contribution from his salary over the course of the year. When an employee transfers from one employer to another the board issues a certificate showing the proportion of his contributions payable by each employer and an adjustment is made between the two. If there has been a break in service the board will certify the amount of the contributions payable in respect of the break and the new employer is liable for this amount. The former employer may recover this amount from the new employer who may deduct the amount by periodic instalments from the salary of the employee.

Clause 3 will widen the board's discretion to grant a disability benefit to a permanent employee. At present an employee or his employer must make a written application and the board must approve the termination of the employment of the employee on the grounds of his disability before benefits can be granted under this division of the legislation. It is now proposed that an application may be made by or on behalf of a former employee and the board may approve the payment of a disability benefit if it is satisfied that on or before termination of his employment the employee was suffering from a disability as defined in the legislation. Any such application may be made before employment is terminanted or within six months of the termination of employment. The provisions on the subject will be deemed to have been enacted in this form.

The anomaly which it is proposed to cure by this amendment was brought under notice when a contributor was recently taken to hospital before the date on which he was due to retire. He had previously given notice of his resignation which had been accepted by his employers. An application for disability benefits was subsequently made on his behalf but could not be granted although he clearly qualified on medical grounds.

Clause 4 provides for pension rights to be retained by employees despite breaks in service in certain circumstances. Pensions are calculated on the basis of each completed year of service—not exceeding 30—during which an employee continued to be a permanent employee before reaching 65 years of age. In the case of persons who were permanent employees before 1 January 1976—when the pensions scheme commenced—it is now proposed that any break in service which occurred before 1 January 1976 and was not of more than six months’ duration shall be deemed not to have interrupted the continuity of the employee's service.

Clause 5 concerns the amount of the lump sum payments which may be made to certain limited benefits or service benefits contributors to the pensions scheme who retire because of a disability. These contributors are persons whose medical classifications render them ineligible to contribute for full benefits.

At present such contributors are entitled on retirement because of a disability to a lump sum payment of 8.75 per cent of the total salary paid from the date on which they became pension contributors to the date of retirement. The pensions scheme commenced on 1 January 1976 and the amendment now proposed will extend the period to include service prior to that date. This could be as far back as 1 March 1961, the commencing date of the board's internally administered scheme, in the case of service benefits contributors. Any employee who retired on or after 1 January 1976 will be eligible for the increased benefits.

Clause 6 provides for a special deferred retirement pension option for a pension contributor who resigns or is dismissed after not less than fifteen years' service and after having attained the age of 50 years but not the age of 60 years. The pension will be payable when the person reaches the age of 65 years, and will be based on his years of service, including prospective service.
to age 65, not exceeding 30, less the difference between 60 years and his age on resignation or dismissal. If, before reaching the age of 60 years, the person ceases to be employed because of a disability the benefit will be determined by the board on the advice of an actuary.

If the person dies before his pension becomes payable, he will be deemed to be a contributor and a pension will become payable to the spouse, if applicable. A spouse pension will not apply in respect of marriage after cessation of employment, unless the marriage took place five years before death.

When a person elects to take a deferred retirement pension, his benefits under his retirement and death benefits contract with the board will be as prescribed, but no payment under that contract will be made until the deferred pension becomes payable. In any such case, the person concerned may agree with the board to have his contract kept in force while benefits are not payable on such terms as to contributions, benefits and otherwise as may be agreed upon with the board.

Clause 7 is one of the provisions designed to permit persons to retain their rights under contracts with the board notwithstanding small breaks in service. If a person was a disability beneficiary at the time of the commencement of the pensions scheme, 1 January 1976, and was subsequently re-employed, the period for which he was a disability beneficiary will be deemed not to have interrupted the continuity of any period for which he was a permanent employee.

Clause 8 also deals with the effects of short breaks in service on the entitlements of permanent employees under contracts with the board. It inserts a new Division 6 in Part 1. of the principal Act entitled “Effect on Contracts of Interruption of Employment”. The main provisions are—

(a) if a permanent employee is re-employed after a break of not more than two months, any retirement and death benefit contract, disability benefit contract and pensions contract which he has with the board are deemed to have continued in force during the break, and the employee is required to pay the total contributions applicable to the period concerned;

(b) when a contract is deemed to have continued in force under the preceding provision and any benefits have been paid to the person concerned because of the cessation of employment, the amount of the benefits must be repaid to the board and any amount not repaid will be a charge on any benefits which subsequently become payable to that person;

(c) where a person who has ceased to be a permanent employee intends to seek re-employment as a permanent employee he may, within two months, elect to have any contracts with the board continued in force for up to six months, or longer if the board so determines. Any benefits paid to that person must be repaid to the board and he must continue to pay the contributions for which he and his employer were liable. Transitory provisions cover the case of a permanent employee who ceased to be a permanent employee after 1 July 1975 but was re-employed before 1 January 1980.

The two-month limit on a break in service will not apply and he may make an election to have his contracts continued in force within two months after 1 January 1980.

(d) If the period allowed under the legislation expires and the person concerned has not become a permanent employee again, there shall be payable to him the benefits to which he became entitled on cessation of employment together with interest and the actuarial reserve of contributions payable after his cessation of employment.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, October 30.
BUSINESS FRANCHISE
(PETROLEUM PRODUCTS) (LICENCE FEES) BILL

The debate (adjourned from October 16) on the motion of the Hon. D. G. Crozier (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU
(Doutta Galla Province)—This Bill seeks to amend an Act which was passed earlier this year. It is an extraordinary measure in the sense that the logic that has always been put forward by many people, including a number of members of the Government in this House and people who are involved in transport, is that we should increase the costs of using a motor vehicle but decrease the costs of owning that vehicle. That logic has much appeal in the community and on this side of the House.

This Bill seeks to impose an additional tax burden on an already heavily taxed section of our community. It arose from considerations following the blockade of interstate roads by long-distance road haulage operators in this State and in other States and from a promise to abolish the tax on road truck operators. This Bill is to correct an error or an oversight in the original Act.

I understand that the revenue which this State would have received in this fiscal year from road tax on the heavy duty interstate vehicles was of the order of approximately $10 million. This Bill is in line with Government policy, bearing in mind that when the Act was introduced we were told in this House and in another place that its purpose was to impose a levy of slightly more than 1 cent a litre on petroleum and that it was intended to recoup this money from all motorists, the user-to-pay principle being adopted, and that the Government would then be able at Budget time to grant a substantial reduction in registration fees for motor vehicles. Nothing of the sort has occurred at all.

I rely on the estimates of the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce which make allowance for marketing variations in the geographical size of Victoria, by including parts of New South Wales and excluding some parts of Victoria, because that is how the oil companies market their products. The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce estimates that total sales of motor spirit will be of the order of 4000 million litres and that sales of distillate will be of the order of 1000 million litres. Based on those figures, the return to this Government, if it stays on its present course, would be of the order of $60 million. If the Government's promise is to eventuate—and, like so many of its other promises, we have not seen it—that is, the promise with respect to motor registration fees, again using the calculation of the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce of a 10 per cent or 15 per cent reduction in existing registration fees, the State would still obtain additional revenue of $35 million.

I put it again this way: The tax from the sale of petroleum products in this State will return of the order of $60 million. Even allowing for the largest estimate in terms of Ministerial speculation and pre-election promises by the Premier—that is, the 15 per cent reduction in registration fees—to compensate for this windfall gain for the Government, the Government will still have a certainty of receiving $35 million.

So we have a measure which was supposed to be an equalization which arose from extra consideration being given to the cause of truck owners in this State who complained that the tax was discriminatory and therefore unfair. This House was told that that $10 million loss justified the introduction of the Act in the first instance; and now that law which originated from a proposal that arose from the negotiating table which settled the dispute between the truck drivers and the relevant Ministry is not only to be imposed on road users generally, but will be used as yet another form of revenue-raising by this Government. There is no other conclusion that one can reach from an examination of the facts. The reality is that the Government has used a Bill which had a fair degree of community sympathy.
The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I bet they would not have too much sympathy now if the community knew this was going to happen!

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—That is right. However, it really begs the question. If one trusts a Government which believes in indirect taxation to use another form of indirect taxation, then when that Government is faced with implementing the so-called new federalism it has to raise its funds somewhere. Here the Government has charged an already over-taxed section of the community, the motorist, an additional sum of at least $35 million, if not $50 million. That is to say nothing of stamp duties and other matters which have arisen since the announcement on this tax.

I also put to the House my concern and the concern of the industry and, in particular, the concern of those involved in the retailing of petrol in this State, especially those retailers in the twin towns along the River Murray border between New South Wales and Victoria. The Victorian re-sellers will be at a considerable financial disadvantage compared with those who are selling the same product on the New South Wales side of the Murray. It is an extraordinary situation where this Government’s interpretation of new federalism means that those involved in selling the same product in the same industry who just happen to be separated by the River Murray will be taxed out of business, as it were.

There are other areas which have been adequately canvassed in another place which I shall mention briefly. The necessity to amend this Act arose from the failure of the Government to recognize its own error in drafting the principal Act. That Act came about as a result of dealings following the Razorback Mountain dispute, as it is colloquially known, and it had a measure of public sympathy. The already over-taxed Victorian motorist is paying an extraordinarily high price for petrol, not only in terms of windfall profits for the oil companies, but now the Hamer Government is jumping in on the act, and that is what this Bill proposes to do. It does not take the community to the question that the Government first applied its mind to—that is, the question of solving the loss of revenue from the abolition of road tax and the exemptions granted to heavy duty vehicle operators. In fact it takes the community to a position where revenue of the order of $60 million will be raised by way of this additional tax which was supposed to replace a tax which would have raised only $10 million, yet still we have not heard from the Premier or his Treasurer when it is planned to introduce the reduction in fees for the registration of vehicles. It was suggested that it was necessary to wait for the Budget. More recently it has been suggested that the community will have to wait for some date in the New Year.

My party cannot accept that form of mismanagement. Opposition members find the Government guilty of misleading the people of this State into believing that it was endeavouring to rectify an anomaly. Not only has the Government not done that, but it has turned the tables on the people of Victoria, imposing a tax—in the words of the former Leader of the House, a painless tax, but it is not—a very inflationary tax and one that goes back on the undertakings given to the people of this State. I believe the public of Victoria would pay taxes for the right purposes if the Government took them into its confidence; but it is sheer hypocrisy to suggest that this Bill, which will raise revenue of the order of $60 million, is justified having regard to the history of this development and of road-making in this State.

I believe the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce has sounded a timely warning, that the industry as such is in a parlous condition not only because of the actions of this Government, the Federal Government and the oil industry, but also because of decisions by the present Government with respect to stamp duty and the like. The industry is entitled to greater consideration than that and so are the citizens of Victoria.

This Bill is brought before the House at a time when the inflation rate is running at a very high level and this Bill itself will raise that level.
The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—Members of the National Party understand that the amendments proposed to be made by this Bill to the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act will ensure the smooth working of the legislation that was passed through Parliament in the first sessional period of the new Parliament. The Bill will clear up some anomalies that have become apparent in the initial stages of the operation of the legislation and particularly will make certain that the tax falls equitably on those whom it is intended to tax, so that there will be no double taxation. It will also clear up some misunderstandings in the drafting of the section of the legislation regarding no taxation being imposed on fuel for off-road vehicles propelled by dieseline.

The National Party can understand the reasons for bringing in and passing these clarifications, and supports them, as it has in another place.

At the time that the legislation was introduced in the Parliament, members of the National Party clearly drew to the attention of the Parliament the various points which the Bill made. We drew to the attention of the Parliament and of the public the fact that 25 per cent of the funds or $10 million, whichever was the greater, would be given to the Country Roads Board. The intended use of that section of the revenue raised by the new legislation, as Mr Landeryou correctly pointed out, was to replace road tax which the Victorian Government, together with other State Governments in Australia, promised to abolish following the truck drivers' strike of March last year. The other 75 per cent of the funds raised will go to the Road Transport Fund.

When the original Bill came before Parliament, members of the National Party examined the provisions of the that it was under the direct control of the Minister for approved purposes, including such things as the installation of level crossing lights, grade separation work, some research into roads and also on matters such as the provision of subsidies for private bus operators. We were interested to find out what other purposes the Minister had in mind for the Road Transport Fund, because the legislation has been amended on a number of occasions to widen the areas into which the Minister can use money from that fund.

Prior to the introduction of the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Bill, the Road Transport Fund had a substantial income-earning capacity through the taxes and stamp duties paid on transfers of motor vehicles from one registration to another. That has been in operation, if my memory serves me correctly, since 1973. When the original Bill was introduced, we drew attention to the fact that we believed that the Minister's estimates of around $35 million to $40 million in total revenue in the first year of operation were extremely pessimistic. I recall having said in this very place that I expected that somewhere between $50 million and $60 million would be raised by the legislation in the first year, and the figures presented by Mr Landeryou bore that prophecy out only too fully.

It seems to me, putting it in rather bucolic terms, that the Government has introduced a new definition of the modern cow, which is the one that has two wheels, four wheels or more and can be milked with impunity, because it provides the Government with a huge additional source of revenue which is very easily accessible. This cow can be expected to let its milk down, in colloquial terms with great ease and without too much trouble. Unfortunately, if one tries to milk too much out of it, it will run dry, and if one does not feed it or give it encouragement, perhaps the numbers of motorists and of the cows in the herd will be reduced. There is a very clear indication of that possibility.

The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce has drawn up quite a detailed submission, copies of which I understand have been sent to all members, drawing clear attention to the way in which the Government is milking this modern cow. I guess it has taken the example of the "Big M" slogan and said, to "Milk it instead"!
The "Public Transport" section of the Budget speech indicated that the Government is still expecting $42 million as the estimated receipts from licence fees. Mr Landeryou clearly demonstrated that substantial additional funds will be raised. I noticed, and I commented on the fact, that the Road Transport Fund would be used to subsidize private bus operators. The Budget speech also indicated that $13·8 million of the funds raised by the motorists of Victoria will be used to subsidize passengers on private bus services. Mr Landeryou also drew attention to the fact that, as yet, this tax is not applicable in other States. I understand that Victoria is the only State that has so far introduced legislation of this type, and this adds to the inequities in charges that apply between motorists in Victoria and those in the adjacent States of South Australia and New South Wales. Again, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce drew attention to the very real anomalies that occur in this field, and the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act further enunciated those differences.

I wrote to the Minister some months ago to find out what he intended to do with the money which was going to the Road Transport Fund, but I have been unable to obtain that information. It is reasonable that, with an additional $40 million or $50 million coming into the coffers, the Government should shortly spell out exactly what it intends to do with it, not leave it in limbo land as some form of—I hesitate to say—slush fund for the Minister's convenience, no doubt to be used for purposes of which many people would approve, but nevertheless not spelt out.

I refer to the promise made by the Government in the debate when the original legislation was introduced, as Mr Landeryou mentioned, that registration fees would be reduced. That also has the effect, for what it is worth, of reducing the income to the Country Roads Board. I wonder whether 25 per cent of the Road Transport Fund, will compensate fully for the reduction in total revenue to the Country Roads Board fund which is taking place. This is a point which must be borne in mind and recognized.

There is a real need to spell out the Government's views and intentions in this matter. Until this is done, the Victorian people are entitled to look with a great deal of suspicion on this legislation.

I am well aware, as no doubt are you, Mr President, and other members of the House, of the opinions of the Municipal Association of Victoria and practically all, if not all, of the 211 municipal councils in Victoria, on where the additional funds raised through the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act should go, because they are raised from the motorist.

There is a crying need for additional works to be carried out on the roads in Victoria, both in the metropolitan area and in the countryside, and the whole of those funds should be devoted to that purpose. The National Party moved amendments along those lines, as honorable members will be aware, and they were supported in this House and in another place by the Labor Party. These are facts that should be noted and of which the Government should take heed, and a far more definite policy and answers should be given.

One last point that came to my mind recently in discussions with my local council was that I understand money is made available from time to time for the construction of bicycle tracks in the community to allow cyclists to get off the main roads. I thought that that should come from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, but that is not so; it comes from the Department of Transport and, no doubt, from the Road Transport Fund. Practically every day, I find out about new things that are being subsidized or financed by this tax on motorists. I do not believe it is reasonable that the Government should be so secretive in this matter. We need a very clear spelling out of the true purpose of this Bill and to learn how much money is coming in and exactly where it is going.

The Hon. D. M. Evans
The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province)—The background to the situation we are in now has been adequately covered by other members in the debate. As honorable members know, the old road tax was a system which had many inequities, and unfortunately the burden fell largely on the small operators. Many large operators avoided paying the tax by using section 92 of the Australian Constitution.

It tended to fall on the smaller operators and had an adverse effect on their viability in the industry. It was that which led to the confrontation on the roads, which in turn led to the Government's commitment to abolish that tax.

I do not think anyone would disagree with the concept of a user pays tax. The concept of a fuel tax which is based strictly on a motorist's usage is one which I completely support.

Large trucks which use the roads will use a proportionately large amount of fuel, and therefore they will be paying their just levy under the scheme. It was envisaged that this would be an Australia-wide move, but, as I understand it, New South Wales has not yet imposed such a tax. Queensland has done so, I understand, as has South Australia, and it is inevitable that it will happen in New South Wales for reasons other than revenue raising because of the problems of fuel supply there.

Much has been made of the windfall that the Victorian Government will obtain from this levy. We must look, first of all, at the concept of export parity prices for fuel. There has been much criticism of that policy. It was said that it was adopted as a means of cutting down the use of a scarce resource. Frankly, I do not believe that; the parity price system provides a windfall for the Commonwealth Government and the oil companies that supply under that scheme. Despite the convictions—and the no doubt genuinely held convictions of the Federal Government—I do not believe the system works. It is a particularly nonsensical arrangement in relation to liquefied petroleum gas, but I will not go into that.

Fuel costs have escalated enormously in the past twelve months—by something like 100 per cent. It is interesting that, even at current levels of $1.20 a gallon, Australian fuel costs are almost exactly half of those in England. The current cost in England is $2.20 a gallon.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Have you told your local Federal member about that?

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN—Yes, I have. The commitments that the State Government has made in relation to these funds are twofold: One is that $10 million or 25 per cent of the net collections, after the cost of collection, will go to the Country Roads Board. If Mr Landeryou's figures are correct, even if it is $60 million, that will be $15 million for the Country Roads Board.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Chickenfeed!

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN—If one reads the Treasurer's speech given in another place a couple of weeks ago, one sees that it indicated that pensioners in Victoria would receive a 50 per cent rebate on motor registration fees and that that would be funded from this levy. That is another amount that comes out. Another commitment was made that motor registration fees would be restructured generally. Mr Landeryou mentioned a figure of 15 per cent, which is one that has been mentioned in the newspapers, and there are other areas, such as registration fees for farm vehicles, that have been under discussion for some time and where reductions can quite appropriately be made.

Earlier this year I took a deputation from four rural shires dealing with this type of issue to the Minister of Transport. In general terms we discussed the concept of setting up a development impact fund which would receive money from this levy; that was a special area in which municipalities and other bodies which have large and rapid net growth could claim funds for projects.

The sorts of projects that come to mind include the impact of the Loy Yang project, the further development of Albury-Wodonga, the Alcoa project at Portland and the factors arising from the closure of railway lines and the effect that that has had on rural roads.
All those factors should have a special call upon the funds arising from provisions in the Bill. From the comments of the Minister, there will be such a fund.

**The Hon. D. M. Evans**—Let it be spelled out; let it be put to the Country Roads Board, which has responsibility for carrying out these works.

**The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain**—I expect that a Bill will be introduced shortly and a clear statement made of the intentions of the Government on motor registration fees. The matter can then be debated.

**The Hon. B. P. Dunn**—The passage of this Bill should be delayed until then.

**The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain**—There is no sense in that; the Bill provides an answer to mechanical and technical problems that have arisen over the collection of the levy and there is no reason, on those grounds, to hold up the Bill. Part of the funds collected from this source should be directed towards providing a fuel equalization scheme for country Victoria.

**The Hon. W. A. Landeryou**—If that theory is right, then logic certainly suggests that it should apply to all fuel usage, including users of fuel on farms.

**The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain**—There is something in what Mr Landeryou suggests.

**The Hon. W. A. Landeryou**—It is not in the Bill.

**The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain**—The Bill is designed to clean up and amend the legislation. How the money is spent is an administrative matter for the Government to decide. It will not require legislation, although the restructuring of the motor registration fees will require legislation and will be debated in the House.

My appreciation of what the country people are facing is that there is a differential of about 3 cents a litre to the disadvantage of country users of petrol. It is very easy to buy petrol at approximately 28.6 cents a litre in the metropolitan area—admittedly, there is competition in the market place—but the equivalent in country Victoria is 31.6 cents a litre. The Government should seriously consider providing a fuel equalization fund so that fuel may be bought by Mr Landeryou when he travels to Mildura or Hamilton or any other country town at the same cost as he pays for it in the city.

The Commonwealth Government tried to implement an equalization system but it was beaten by the oil companies, which have an ingenious system of accounting that enables them to beat Governments around the world—a system whereby they pass fuel from one subsidiary to another at loaded prices—and I am sceptical of any claims made by oil companies throughout the world on these issues. There is no doubt that the oil companies beat the Commonwealth Government on this issue.

The Victorian Government has the power, with the funds available from this measure, to provide an equalization system that will work. It is a matter which can be done administratively and I would hope that, once the actual income that is generated from this source can be quantified and once the costs are known of projects that have been discussed—the cost of the pensioner concession scheme, more road funds, the restructuring and the reduction of charges for motor registration fees—the Government can carefully consider providing an equalization scheme to operate in Victoria.

In general, the Bill is a clean-up measure which should not have been necessary. The corrective provisions should have been noticed when the original Bill was introduced but human nature being what it is, Governments being what they are and administrators being what they are, the House will always have the need for these types of amending Bills.

**The Hon. B. P. Dunn** (North Western Province)—The comments made by Mr Chamberlain are extraordinary. The Minister has said nothing about how the Government will spend this massive rip-off of $60 million from Victorian motorists. The Minister has made no comment whatsoever on what will be done with the money, yet honorable members are informed by a back-bench member of the Government
party how the Government will spend the $60 million, although I do not know whether the Minister can confirm this now.

Clearly, the people of Victoria are being deceived on the issue and it is time the Government clearly stated what it will do with the money and how it will spend the $60 million it is taking out of the pockets of Victorian motorists. Honorable members should not need to be told by a back-bench member of the Government party how the Government will manage that money; honorable members should be informed by a front-bench member of the Government.

The House has been told that there will be pensioner concessions and that there will be a restructuring of registration fees in Victoria. When? Where are the details? Honorable members are still waiting for the details. What is wrong with the Government that it cannot present a fair package and place the details before Parliament, rather than ask honorable members to pass the taxing measure first and wait to be presented at some time in the future— I do not know when—details of schemes such as Mr Chamberlain's scheme for an impact development fund. At this stage, the only evidence honorable members have of that fund being established is the comment of the Minister when referring to several deputations that were introduced to him. The people of Victoria must know the facts and where the money will be spent.

Mr Evans made it quite clear in his speech, as did Mr Landeryou, that if the Government is to continue with a taxing measure like this, which is a major road tax, the people of Victoria have the right to know how the money will be spent. Honorable members have been told that the money is to replace the original road maintenance tax charges, but the Bill increases the amount that the Government will receive by countless tens of millions of dollars in excess of what was raised from the previous tax. Yet, the Government will guarantee the Country Roads Board, using Mr Chamberlain’s words, a lousy $15 million.

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain—I did not say, “lousy”; you did.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—That $15 million will come from approximately $60 million.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—What is the $60 million? If you are to quote figures, you had better be correct.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I invite Mr Jenkins to produce figures to the contrary. That is a fair assessment of what the tax will bring in to the Victorian Government. A small proportion will go to the Country Roads Board and it really hurts me, when the standard of the roads in Victoria at present is low, that the Government is not prepared to pour more money into the road system. Victorian road users would be prepared to accept such a tax if the Government came clean and presented to the people and to Parliament the details of the disbursement of the funds.

Members of the National Party want a detailed statement on how the Government proposes to spend this amount; in particular, we want a far greater proportion of it directed to the Country Roads Board for several years, at least to pick up on the backlog. I am sure the Minister will agree with me when I emphasize the severe decline in the state of Victorian roads. The roads are literally breaking up and, unless all these funds can be injected into road works, many of the roads with which I am familiar in country areas will be so broken up that they will need to be rebuilt.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—The same applies in urban areas, why should it all go to the country?

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I am pleased that Mr Hamilton agrees with me. I agree that money needs to be spent on roads in the metropolitan area also. More than $15 million needs to be spent on roads overall. A far greater proportion should be spent on what this money
3538 Business F'chise (Petroleum Products) (Licence Fees) Bill

[COUNCIL]
is being raised for under the guise of road works; it should all be spent on roads.

Mr Hamilton is trotting out the usual rubbish about the National Party being involved in sectional policies only; he knows very well that that is a misstatement. The National Party does not deny that money should be spent on roads and transport needs of the city and it has strongly supported such expenditure. The National Party is prepared to support a tax like this, as it did when the Bill was passed in the other House, so long as it is spent on roads. The difficulty is that the Bill does not have a significant effect on the operation of the legislation. The debate on the measure provides an opportunity for honorable members to express points of view. The National Party supported the original Bill because roads need this sort of funding and the amounts raised should be used for that purpose.

It should also be realized that country people are disadvantaged. They have no alternative forms of transport. In most instances, their rail services have been closed. The only form of transport in the country is private motorized transport. Therefore, the roads are the life-blood of the country and are essential to its existence. Country people cannot merely say that they are not going to run or own motor vehicles; they have no alternative because rail transport, buses, and taxis are not available. People in the country must use private motor vehicles for transport and it is a heavy cost.

The National Party has no alternative other than to support the Bill, but there are many questions that the Government has not answered. The National Party wants from the Government a greater commitment to Victoria's roads and a more concise statement on how the money will be spent.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes . . . . . . 28
Noes . . . . . . 11

Majority for the motion 17

The Hon. B. P. Dunn

AYES
Mr Baxter Mr Howard
Mrs Baylor Mr Hunt
Mr Block Mr Jenkins
Mr Bubb Mr Long
Mr Campbell Mr Radford
Mr Chamberlain Mr Reid
Mr Crozier Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Dunn Mr Stacey
Mr Evans Mr Taylor
Mr Grant Mr Ward
Mr Guest Mr Wright
Mr Hamilton
Mr Hauser Tellers:
Mr Hayward Mr Knowles
Mr Houghton Mr Lawson

NOES
Mrs Cox edge Mr Sgro
Mr Eddy Mr Thomas
Mr Kennedy Mr Walker
Mr Kent Tellers:
Mr Landeryou Mr Butler
Mr Mackenzie Mr White

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

The sitting was suspended at 6.37 p.m. until 8.13 p.m.

WILDLIFE (SPRING TRAPS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from September 26) on the motion of the Hon. J. M. Walton (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. H. R. WARD (South Eastern Province)—It is my privilege to speak on this measure and, of course, to oppose it. I was interested to read the report of the Statute Law Revision Committee of all the big landholders who voted in peculiar ways and extended their comprehensive knowledge of the problems of the rural industry, particularly in relation to their vast landholdings and their contributions to the primary industry. I refer to such honorable members as Mr Skeggs, Mr Wilton, Mr Edmunds, Mr Galbally and even Mr Landeryou, the illustrious Leader of the Opposition in this House who made his contribution in the report.

I heard Mr Walton speak the other night when he introduced the Bill to the House. The honorable member quoted an article by Claude Forell which appeared in the Age in 1975. It dealt with a statement by Plato. I do not know what sort of rural industry he undertook
in his perambulations. Mr Walton mentioned vested interests, destructive urges, the lust for blood, and referred to do-gooders, public apathy and the bias of employed trappers. The honorable member's comments were basically emotional when taken in the context of his speech, and are all good for argument. There was ample tunnel vision, ample bias, ample criticism, lack of solution and a poor choice of facts. The speech was based mostly on fiction. It reminded me of a film that was shown on television recently—I think for the tenth time—called *Wake in Fright*. At the end of the film it was stated that the kangaroo shoot that had been included in the film had been undertaken by commercial and professional shooters. The animal kingdom itself is a world of predators. I have had the privilege of visiting some wildlife sanctuaries.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Not like some of the ones we have visited.

The Hon. H. R. WARD—Not the ones you might have visited in Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, but in other parts of the world—places of which Mr Landeryou has never heard. Nor would the honorable member have claimed to have visited these areas in which the animals, even in the area of freedom which they enjoy, certainly kill one another and live upon one another. That occurs in one of the great parks of the world.

The animal kingdom is extremely cruel; it is one of the cruelest that we can see in this world. What is the problem in country areas? It is all very well for our landed gentry who live in Balwyn, Sunshine or Pascoe Vale, to claim that they know so much about what happens in country areas, the needs and the problems.

The Hon. R. A. MacKenzie—Are you pretending that the National Party represents the country intelligently?

The Hon. H. R. WARD—I do not know. The honorable member who interjects represents a country area, but I am not sure that he takes an intelligent interest in it. One of the number of problems that faces people in country areas involves a great loss of primary production. Those people who are interested in spending a few hours on farms, and, in particular, in the Gippsland area and north-eastern Victoria, will find that the destruction caused by animals in the production and grazing areas is tragic and enormous.

Those people who sit among the do-gooders and who make various claims would have their eyes opened if they saw the destruction caused by foxes and wild dogs. This destruction is totally overlooked. One of the problems is the destruction of lambs, not only by foxes and crows, but also by wild dogs. This destruction is contributed to by our friends from city areas who allow dogs and feral cats to go into the bush and cause destruction. These do-gooders claim to care about the protection of domestic animals. That is the sort of problem we face. Exactly the same situation occurred in the great loss of crops caused by kangaroos, cockatoos and galahs—a few of them are here this evening—and the general destruction of wild life.

Mr Walton overlooked the cost to rural income and the general loss to the community. He referred to many comments by people who are knowingly biased and pressured by minorities and so on. He also mentioned the actions of well-intentioned Governments of the past, but I invite honorable members to consider the policy introduced by this Government. It is very clear and provides that the use of steel-jawed leghold traps be banned in cities, towns and boroughs. The use of these traps is also necessary in a banned area, approval is required from the Minister of Lands on application to the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board.

As I said, that statement was agreed to by the Minister of Lands and supported a statement by the Premier on 1 April.
Some eminent people have also agreed to the continued use of the steel-jawed leghold traps. These include Mr Wharton, Director of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, who indicated his approval in December 1978. There was also Dr Kurth, Acting Director, and Mr S. Cowling, Assistant Director, of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division, who supported the continued use of these traps—those gentlemen indicated their support as recently as 5 July 1979. In addition, the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board supported the continued use of steel-jawed leghold traps in this State.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Was Idi Amin in favour too?

The Hon. H. R. WARD—I do not know, but he seems to have forgotten Mr Landeryou who has continued to live in this country. I assure Mr Landeryou that the problem is one which should concern his friends in the Opposition.

Experiments have been carried out by Dr Coman at Bendigo and also by a Mr Stevens at the Keith Turnbull Research Institute at Frankston on how the trapping of animals can be carried out in the most humane way possible. They have experimented with various types of traps in an effort to determine the method which does the least amount of damage to the animal.

It has been pointed out that there are three main methods for catching wild dogs. The first is trapping. The second is by poisoning, a method which was not effective. The third method was shooting, but that is difficult, particularly in the case of feral dogs. A fourth technique which has never been tried in Australia is snaring. However, the only practical and proven method is trapping.

Mr Walton referred to certain reports which I suggest were rather biased. Of course, if one goes to certain areas where trapping has been carried out, one will find that a problem exists, but it has been pointed out by those people who are interested in the trapping of dogs that it is the best method. Those who have studied wild life, including bird life, within the State find that the problem caused by trapping animals is negligible compared with the losses suffered by the rural community. I do not know of any rural area in Victoria which supports the suggestions put forward by Mr Walton. Those suggestions are supported basically in the city areas from where people are prepared to take their feral cats and dogs into the bush and let them go without any thought for the animal or what should be done towards the preservation of our rural industries.

These are major problems and the experiments carried out must be continued in the interests of finding the best method for trapping these wild dogs and other types of animals which are a curse to rural industry.

One of the major problems has been the substantial loss of cattle. Documentation is available on the various species of vermin caught which have been involved in the destruction of cattle. The species caught in the two years up to June 1978 included 1593 feral dogs, 1601 foxes, 1682 wombats, 129 wild pigs and 423 feral cats. The report from the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board indicates that in excess of 5400 different species of undesirable vermin were captured by trapping.

There is no answer to resolving the argument on the method being used to trap these wild animals which are causing destruction in our rural areas. To accept in its entirety the suggestion advanced by Mr Walton would mean that no further research would be carried out into the methods employed to trap these wild animals. The present cost of trapping is high because about twenty dogmen are employed in the hills. More funds are required to be expended in this area. If this eventuated I am sure better methods of trapping would be found. The community would also be able to control the growth of undesirable vermin, particularly foxes, which are found in large numbers in the hill regions of Gippsland and north-eastern Victoria.

Honorable members cannot support the Bill introduced by Mr Walton. Every effort should continue to be made to control the wild animal pests. Research has been conducted and there
is a need for more, but this Bill would prevent further research from being carried out. Honorable members should be considering the level of public funds currently expended and the cost of research into other methods of trapping wild animals.

The use of steel-jawed leghold traps is harmful to animals and their use worries a number of people, but this method of trapping must be evaluated. Trapping may be considered by some people to be a form of cruelty and in some areas it may be, but the maintenance of the production of primary industries is required to support our standard of living and social welfare and to enable our community to grow.

As I have stated, this measure prohibits further and worth-while research which may be carried out in the interests of rural areas.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—This measure cannot be supported, but it certainly warrants serious consideration. I am informed that those responsible for putting it forward did so in all sincerity and with the firm belief that what they propose is right. The use of steel-jawed leghold traps, or the gin traps as they are sometimes called, was investigated and reported on by the Statute Law Revision Committee some twelve to eighteen months ago. I was a member of the committee which conducted the inquiry and was present at many of the discussions. To my mind the committee carried out a proper and thorough investigation of the problems associated with the use of the steel-jawed leghold trap. In its report, the committee favoured the banning of these traps. The decision was by a majority of six to five, so the Statute Law Revision Committee was evenly divided on the issue.

For the benefit of those honorable members who are interjecting, I repeat that it was evenly divided because one member who was not present when the report was adopted clearly indicated by statements made during the committee's investigations that he would most likely have voted against the banning of the steel-jawed leghold trap which would have made the decision six all. That, to my mind, is a close decision. It is worth looking at some of the comments made in the report of the Statute Law Revision Committee which was presented to Parliament.

For example, point No. 10 was:

It was acknowledged by witnesses that non-target animals can be caught in the trap. The commonly trapped non-target species include wombats, bush and mountain possums together with a smaller number of bandicoots and other forest-dwelling animals.

However, I move on to point No. 14 which was:

In this respect, the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board of the Victorian Department of Crown Lands and Survey advised the Committee that it uses the trap to control wild dogs as there is, in their opinion, no reliable alternative method available for this purpose. The board uses the trap mainly on Crown land in the north-eastern and Gippsland regions of the State.

The board contended that it is virtually the exclusive user of the trap for wild dogs, as to the best of its knowledge, very little trapping is carried out by landholders.

I refer to point No. 17:

The board advised the committee that it is doubtful whether any more than 500 to 1000 dog traps are set at any one time. In the past three years some 2220 wild dogs were caught and annual figures indicate that the number of wild dogs is increasing.

That was the view of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board expressed during the investigation by the committee. In addition, the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board, in presenting evidence to the committee, clearly indicated that there was no effective substitute for the steel-jawed leghold trap to catch wild dogs.

The board also indicated that it was closely watching research being carried out overseas for another form of trap, which would in fact kill the animal that was caught in the trap rather than catch it and hold it. As yet the experiments have not reached fruition. The trap is not effective and at this stage is only an experimental thing which perhaps might be looked at at a later stage. It suggested, as a serious and sensible body of people, that action on the matter of the banning of steel-jawed leghold traps, at least for wild dogs, should be left until such time as an effective alternative had been provided.
In his speech, Mr Walton commented on the number of other animals that are caught. It is accepted and acknowledged in the report from the Statute Law Revision Committee that non-target species are caught, but I frankly doubt the figures that Mr Walton presented in his speech. Accepting the fact that some non-target animals are caught, I cannot accept that the experienced people who set those traps catch a large number of non-target species. The man who is interested in catching wild dogs is not in the least interested in catching anything else.

The wild dog is perhaps one of the most cunning animals in the bush. About five or six years ago I had experience of one of those animals on my property. I found that, including my property and some adjacent Crown land, the dog ranged over about 3000 or 4000 acres. After it was seen in one place it was not seen in the same place for another week. It might then turn up two, three or four miles away. If one saw it, it would be visible for literally only three or four seconds and then it would be gone. It was an extremely cunning and experienced animal. It was caught in a steel-jawed leghold trap by a man who knew what he was doing. It took the man a week to catch the dog because it was a week before the animal would go anywhere near where the trap was set.

The expertise necessary to catch that sort of animal in those conditions would be unlikely to catch non-target species animals. The report of the Statute Law Revision Committee showed that 2200 wild dogs are caught every year in Victoria. The next point discussed was the damage which can be done by the feral dog. I mentioned that I had a dog amongst the sheep on my property. I have had sheep mauled by dogs.

Some unpretty things have been said about the steel-jawed leghold trap and what it can do. I suggest that people who are concerned about the effect of those traps should look at a flock of sheep attacked by wild dogs. I do not wish to shock honorable members but one can find pieces of skin six inches and more across with the wool attached that have been dragged from the sheep leaving great exposed patches. Many times the sheep is alive and the skin has been dragged off the animal in more than one place. Honorable members can imagine what it is like to have a large piece of skin dragged off. I have seen sheep with their ears chewed and pulled off, with half the scalp gone as well and with the rear leg almost chewed off. Nature is extremely cruel.

The Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board has clearly indicated that the steel-jawed leghold trap is the most effective way of dealing with the menace of the wild dog. I accept that the trap can be cruel, and nobody believes it is a pleasant toy, but the cruelty saved is far greater than the cruelty inflicted. This point must be mentioned and understood.

One could perhaps suggest that there should be an attempt to poison the wild dogs which are causing a problem. Certainly that is a reasonable suggestion. Again, they are extremely difficult to poison and there is the real chance of killing non-target species or doing more damage by the use of poison than by the use of the trap. When the trap is used and non-target species are caught, in many cases the animals can be freed without harm. Occasionally they are injured and must be destroyed.

Some people say that the feral dog should be shot. My experience of the dog I saw on my property was that unless one was something better than Annie Oakley, one could not shoot it because it was seen for only a few seconds. Unless one carried a gun already cocked, one would not have time to draw a bead on it. That is how quick the dogs are. I mean that. This point must be fully understood.

I now turn to the subject of rabbits. The House has heard of the rabbit trapper. Mr Walton brought what he described as a dog trap into the House.

The Hon. J. M. Walton—It was an ordinary rabbit trap.

The Hon. D. M. Evans—I wondered whether he knew what it was. The steel-jawed rabbit trap has been used for a long time for trapping vermin in...
Australia. Mr Ward attempted to sketch to the House the degree of damage that can be caused by rabbits in Australia. If one has not run a farm or does not understand farming, I suggest one cannot understand the damage and erosion which can be caused by the rabbit. It is totally impossible to allow it to continue unchecked and unabated in Australia, because Australia's farming industries would not survive the onslaught of the rabbit.

The matter that I brought before the House last week of soil erosion is seriously compounded by rabbits in Australia. I suggest that those honorable members who disagree with me should read F. M. Ratcliffe's book *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand* which sets out the effects of rabbits and so forth on erosion in central Australia. Not only do rabbits destroy farmlands but they also destroy the country itself. They should not be allowed to continue and, therefore, it is necessary that we, who incidentally introduced the rabbit to Australia, should take the necessary steps to control it. Traps are a part of that process.

It is also true to say that during the depression more than one person was raised on rabbits and rhubarb. Perhaps some of our most able citizens can put down to rabbits the fact that they did not starve any more than necessary during their youth. I am not being flippant about that. Many people lived on rabbits during the depression.

The aim in setting a rabbit trap is totally different from that in setting a dog trap. The aim in setting traps for a dog is to catch and destroy a dog which is a cruel and dangerous monster particularly amongst livestock. The aim with the rabbit trap, as I have already indicated, is to catch for food. Not many non-target species are caught because the trapper usually places the trap where the rabbit is likely to be. That is a sensible thing to do. The truly professional rabbit trapper is interested in, and normally catches, only rabbits. The trapper sets the traps on rabbit burrows, on the mounds that rabbits congregate on near holes in the fences and around rabbit tracks. The person who knows what he is about knows where to place the traps.

I have heard what has been said about non-target species being caught and, at this stage, I believe it is worth mentioning that one of the principal species caught is the feral cat, the dear little pussy cat everyone loves on his hearth. Pound for pound the feral cat is probably the most efficient killer known to nature and the killer with which our native fauna, particularly our bird life, are totally unfitted to compete.

I have said that nature is cruel. Mr Ward also commented on that. If one has a weak stomach, some of the things one sees in nature can make one ill. I have seen very cruel things for which the farmer had no responsibility. I have seen sheep with their eyes picked out and lambs, before they were properly born, with their tongues picked out by crows. The farmer had nothing to do
I have seen a lamb with half a tongue trying to drink from its mother. Nature is cruel. Foxes do similar things.

Many of the people who are sincerely working to ban steel traps and other things must understand that the animal does not have the same registration of pain as that of a human being. These people set human standards for it, and the matter becomes far more distressing. We have to face the facts of life, which can sometimes be distressing.

I have no doubt that most honorable members have had dinner tonight and that they ate some form of meat or fish. If honorable members ate lamb, a sheep had to have its throat cut to provide that meat. Mr Dunn said he ate poultry—hens also have their throats cut. I am trying to illustrate to the House that things happen in this State that not all of us are prepared to face up to, the use of animals and the use of traps to catch animals. If one outlaws gin traps one should outlaw other things that are done to animals at some time or another.

I have not tried to be flippant. Animal traps are cruel. It is necessary to face up to the real cruelty that occurs in nature and the community, and to accept that these things will continue. Research will continue until it is possible to alleviate cruelty as much as possible.

Without many methods of trapping wild animals, Australia would be overrun with vermin, much of which was introduced from England, including rabbits. There are many ways of getting rid of rabbits. One can poison them with 1080 poison. At one stage S.A.P., a phosphorous compound, was used. One can fumigate the burrows with cyanide gas or chloropicrin, the first world war poison gas. One can use carbon monoxide or kill them with myxomatosis or smoke them out. One can send ferrets down the burrows to catch them and kill them. Another method is to destroy the burrows by dragging a ripper—a heavy deep plough—through the burrows.

If we are not prepared to understand that these things must be done, we must be prepared to accept the denudation of our forests and our grasslands and destruction of our native plants and wildlife. A large proportion of Australia could be turned into a desert and productivity would then drop off rapidly.

As I said in the initial stages of my speech, I accept that the people who have introduced this Bill did so in good faith and with humanity and kindness. They are perhaps a little naive and idealistic and too early with this type of legislation. The simple fact is that we have to accept some things that go on in the community, and that includes the use of traps. If we do not, more of our Australian wildlife will be destroyed by feral cats, pieces of hide will be ripped from our sheep and the country will be overrun with pests.

I sincerely hope a better method of trapping wild dogs can be found. I would love to see the last rabbit go from Australia so that there would be no need to use rabbit traps. When we reach that stage, traps of this nature will not be needed, but until then it is necessary to accept some tough facts. It is necessary in this world to accept the rough with the smooth.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Mrs Coxsedge has been disorderly and I request her to refrain from interjecting in that way.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—Being a relatively new member of this House, I was appalled tonight to hear Mr Ward's speech and his callous disregard for the wildlife of this country. But, I suppose it is a reflection of the callous disregard for Australia's wildlife that
has been demonstrated by the Government. The Government's record in wildlife preservation is indeed sad. Since settlement, and particularly over the past 25 years, native wildlife has been destroyed in many areas. What upset me most is the blatant hypocrisy of the Government when it makes promises at election time about what it will do about wildlife and conservation.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—What it has done!

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—I will tell the honorable member what the Government has done. It is a different story when one looks at the figures of what is actually going on behind the scenes. For instance let us consider the indiscriminate killing of wildlife in the pursuit of protection of not only farm properties but Government properties. In the pine plantations and Forests Commission plantations 1080 poison is used, supposedly to get rid of rabbits that may eat the tops of the newly planted pine trees. The poison is not getting rid of rabbits; it is getting rid of wallabies and native rats that eat the tops of trees. This poison is indiscriminately distributed throughout the countryside. The Government's attitude is niggardly towards conservation. The slaughter of animals is going on because the Government will not provide enough Fisheries and Wildlife Division officers to investigate complaints made by farmers whose crops are being destroyed by cockatoo corellas, swans and so on. Farmers telephone the department and say that a couple of thousand swans are eating their crops. I have heard conversations in which farmers have been told to kill 200 of the swans. The department does not know whether 200 or 2000 are killed. There is no control. That is the Government's record of wildlife conservation.

Mr Ward said that members of the Opposition used emotion—of course we did. I would not like to be an unfeeling insensitive person like Mr Ward. My colleague Mr Walton introduced this Bill in the hope that the members of the Government and the National Party would support him and eradicate the cruelty that is taking place. The whole matter has been treated in a cavalier fashion. Our friends in the National Party did offer some serious and constructive arguments.

On 1 April 1979, in order to fool the Victorian public, the Premier, inter alia, stated:

6. The use of steel-jawed traps will be barred in all built-up areas in Victoria. The Lands Department will investigate other methods of controlling wild dogs (which prey on native wildlife and flocks and herds, often with great cruelty) with a view to the eventual total prohibition of these traps.

The welfare of animals is important in any humane and civilized society, and the Government hopes that these measures will assist in the care of our animals and the compassionate treatment of unwanted pets.

That is a different cry from what honorable members have heard tonight. No one denies that dingoes and rabbits do damage. I have a rural background. My parents lived on the land and I live in a rural community. Members of my immediate family live on the land. I am not totally unaware of the problems of farmers.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—Have you ever trapped rabbits?

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—Yes, when I was young and did not know better.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—Have you ever found anything in the trap other than rabbits?

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—No. It was said that the wedge-tailed eagle was killing lambs, so the wedge-tailed eagle was killed. Those birds were not protected. In 1970 the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization carried out a study on the feeding habits of the wedge-tailed eagle. It was learned that only 14 per cent of the eagle's diet was lambs. By studying death in new-born lambs, it was learned that a vast majority of that 14 per cent of lambs taken by eagles were dead. Only one case was reported of an eagle killing a live lamb. Another interesting point from that study is that 33 per cent of new born lambs died because of lack of protection.
The Hon. B. P. Dunn—That is ridiculous.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—I suggest Mr Dunn should tell the scientists who carried out the study. Obviously Mr Dunn does not listen to reports or follow them up.

This Bill was introduced in an endeavour to stop cruelty to animals. In Banockburn, where I live, the gentleman who lives next door to me set a rabbit trap on the fence to catch a crow. He did not catch the crow; he caught a white-faced heron. The children from next door brought the heron to me with its leg hanging by a small section of skin. We had to remove the leg and were able to keep the bird alive but its chances of staying alive when we let it go, after ten days, were slim. There is no way to determine what the steel-jawed trap will catch. They have been known to catch children.

In his second-reading speech, Mr Walton referred to an article which appeared in the Age on 31 July 1971 which stated that an independent witness accompanied trappers employed by the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board, and his figures are vastly different from Mr Ward’s figures. In fact, it is stated that:

In three months the traps caught two dingoes, nine foxes and six wild dogs, some of which had already escaped by chewing off their broken paw.

Also found, mostly dead or dying, were: Nine wild cats, 53 wombats, 105 goannas, 34 eagles, 34 lyrebirds, 16 wallabies, seven possums, seven pigeons, three joey-kangaroos, two hawks, three echidnas, one black snake, one blue-tongued lizard and one currawong.

When one works out the figures, 260 wildlife animals were destroyed and only 26, including feral cats, of the animals they were after. That is a ratio of one in ten.

The Hon. W. R. Baxter—It seems extraordinary to me that people in the field do not have that experience.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—The people in the field may not like to put in a report on how many wild animals they are catching, because it would seem that they were failing in their duty.

Honorable members have heard about the cruelty of the animal kingdom. Members on this side of the House are quite aware that animals prey on each other. However, we would like to believe that the human species is beyond that practice, that we do not prey on other animals and that we do not cause unnecessary cruelty to other animals.

The purpose of the Bill is to prevent unnecessary cruelty. Other alternatives for controlling vermin are available. I do not suggest that those alternatives are less expensive; they are probably more expensive. However, Mr Ward stated, despite the use of the traps, wild dingoes are increasing in number, Mr Ward mentioned snares but he did not elaborate on the point. Honorable members have heard of the various methods of destroying rabbits. There are other means. By allowing the use of steel-jawed leghold traps, the Government is taking the cheap way out.

I am sorry that the Bill has not been supported by the Government. Members of the Opposition strongly support the Bill. We believe it is a humane step forward in a civilized country and that there are other methods of controlling the problem. We deplore the destruction of innocent wildlife that is being caught in these traps along with animals the traps are meant to ensnare. What has been done to wildlife in this country is unforgiveable. A good example is the leadbeater possum, which is unique to Victoria. It was thought to be extinct from 1909 when no species were found. They were rediscovered, with much excitement, in 1961. But what happened? Already, of the 22 habitats of the leadbeater possum discovered, six have been destroyed with the full knowledge of the uniqueness and rarity of an animal that is found only in Victoria. That is the record of the Government. It is one of the reasons for the introduction of the
Wildlife (Spring Traps) Bill

The Hon. R. J. LONG (Gippsland Province)—It is well for honorable members to remember that a private member's Bill is being debated. It was introduced by Mr Walton and it seeks to insert a new section 56A into the Wildlife Act 1975. The proposed new section states:

No person shall use in the hunting or taking of wildlife any spring-operated leghold trap having steel jaws which close against one another when the mechanism of the trap is actuated by the weight of an animal upon the pressure plate thereof.

In the Wildlife Act 1975, an animal is defined as any animal of a vertebrate species other than mankind which is indigenous to the whole or part or parts of Australia, its territory, or its territorial waters. The Act also states that the definition does not apply to fish.

The only basic argument that Mr Walton advanced for the introduction of the Bill was one of cruelty.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—It is a fairly profound argument.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—I do not deny that. However, the rabbit is not indigenous to Australia and consequently, if the Labor Party is consistent, which I very much doubt, it will need to introduce another private member's Bill to deal with the steel-jawed leghold trap for the rabbit. If the Opposition is sincere in its plea of cruelty, which I very much doubt, further legislation will be required to deal with the rat trap and the mouse trap, because after all, to be caught in such traps must be a pretty cruel experience. Mr Walton need not tell me that rat traps kill only rats, because that is not true. If honorable members are worried about cruelty, what about the poor old fish that swallows a hook, gets it down its throat and into its stomach? Do not tell me that is not cruel! Next, honorable members will be debating legislation to outlaw fishing.

The Hon. W. R. Baxter—Only fishing with hooks.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—I will settle for Mr Baxter's suggestion.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—No progress will be made on these issues; one error does not justify another.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—is it any wonder that the Labor Party does not represent one part of the rural area of Victoria when that sort of rubbish is put to the House? The Labor Party is not even sincere. It is indulging in a political exercise that will not get it very far. It is very noticeable, as Mr Ward suggested, that pressure for this sort of legislation comes from the city.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—it is part of the recommendations of the Statute Law Revision Committee.

The Hon. R. J. LONG—I shall deal with that later. As Mr Evans rightly pointed out, honorable members should see a lamb or a calf that has been mauled by wild dogs or dingoes. If that is not cruelty, I do not know what is. There is not even a sense of pity for that animal. The Labor Party is not worried that abolition of the steel-jawed leghold trap might do something about encouraging an animal being savaged.

I notice that in the report of the Statute Law Revision Committee upon the use of the steel-jawed leghold trap, there is no suggestion that any farmer gave evidence, which of course is not surprising. Evidence was given by the Graziers Association of Victoria but not by individual farmers. Statements were made to the committee that other alternative methods for destruction of killer dogs were not successful, that the dogs were almost impossible to shoot and that while poisoned meat baits might reduce the population proportion of younger dogs which are not actually killing at the time, the killer animals are difficult to poison because they are more interested in live prey. Paragraph 22 at page 6 of the report states, *inter alia*:

Those witnesses to the Committee supporting the retention of the steel-jawed leghold trap to eradicate rabbits from properties in rural areas contended that, while poisoning and myxomatosis play a major part in the eradication of rabbits, the use of the trap could still be necessary.
The committee did not give one iota of attention, in my reading of the report, to how to deal with the problem of the wild dog or dingo or whatever animal it might be that ravages animals in East Gippsland. The committee was only concerned about the political exercise of abolishing the steel-jawed leghold trap.

The Hon. J. M. Walton—Your Government has a majority on that committee.

The Hon. R. J. Long—that is another matter, and I can disagree with my colleagues on that point also. A hue and cry ensued when the report was published. Farmers in East Gippsland were absolutely amazed because the report was typical of city-ites who do not understand the problems of the rural farmer. Until, as the the report suggests, further investigations are carried out into other methods—and as yet no worth-while result has been achieved—the needs of the farmer are ignored completely and the only aim is to abolish steel-jawed leghold traps. That is not nearly good enough.

I said earlier that the introduction of the Bill is a political exercise. The House should not support the Bill for the reasons I have given. Unless the Labor Party wants to introduce a Bill to abolish the trapping of rabbits, which I do not think is covered in the Bill, rats, mice and so on and also fishing, it is not fair dinkum. The House will never see legislation of that type initiated by members of the Labor Party.

The Hon. Joan Coxedge (Melbourne West Province)—I support the Bill to provide that steel-jawed leghold traps shall be outlawed. I remind honorable members that according to the United Nations declaration of the rights of animals, all animals are born with an equal claim on life and the same rights that exist for humans. This charter will become United Nations law in 1980. It casts a particularly jaundiced eye on scientists, hunters and film makers. Perhaps, after listening to some honorable members, the United Nations should have added to their list of cruel and very callous people members of the National Party, of the National Country Party, and of the Liberal Party.

Despite the protestations of rural people, it is probable that no instrument has ever been invented that causes as much suffering as the steel-jawed leghold trap used extensively throughout Australia to catch so-called pest animals. It was invented more than 300 years ago, along with the thumb-screw and the rack. The trap has remained unchanged and it is still in use in some countries, including, to its shame, Australia. Most honorable members who are city dwellers and probably many who are country dwellers and who have spoken on the debate have probably never heard the agonized screams of a wild creature that is caught in a trap.

I reiterate the points that have already been made by members on this side of the House. It is important for honorable members to realize that the steel-jawed leghold trap does not discriminate. All sorts of creatures are caught in its crushing painful grip, valuable ones and worthless ones, birds, predators and domestic pets. From information I have, contrary to the views expressed by honorable members on the other side of the House, these traps are not inspected more than once a week—twice at the very outside—which, in many cases, means that animals are very often left to die in agony. To my knowledge, no figures exist to prove that the indiscriminate destruction of animals gives an economic advantage to those who practise it. In other words, the damage that is done to the environment by killing useless animals is immeasurable. Indiscriminate spraying of so-called plant insects and pests also causes more problems than it solves. While I am basically concerned with the cruelty to animals, the advocates of the continued use of these fiendish weapons do not even seem to have an economic argument to support their case.

The steel-jawed leghold trap was banned in Britain in 1958 and the question one must ask is whether Australia is
such a backward country that it cannot follow Britain's example. There is no way of controlling the times when trappers must inspect their traps. Trapped animals suffer prolonged and excruciating agony, starvation, thirst, fear, attacks by other animals and exposure to either freezing-cold or hot-sun conditions.

During the summer months gangrene often sets into the wound, adding to the animal's suffering. Sometimes a captured animal will chew off its own limb so that it can escape from the vicious trap.

The Government committee in Britain described the steel tooth-edged leg-hold trap as a "diabolical instrument of torture". Such a trap is also banned in Norway, Finland, Austria and Germany. If pest animals have to be killed, it should be done as humanely and as quickly as possible. If Victorians are to describe themselves as civilized and cultured—whatever that word might mean—the use of the steel-jawed trap should be outlawed in Victoria. I commend the Bill to honorable members.

The Hon. J. W. S. RADFORD
(Bendigo Province)—I have much pleasure in following the footsteps of Mr Ward, Mr Evans and Mr Long in speaking during the debate on this Bill.

The Liberal Party has met the main objection to this Bill, that is, the use of the steel-jawed trap in urban areas. Nobody will deny that use of these traps is a danger not only to pets and animals but also to young children who are very inquisitive. However, the real purpose of the trap should be examined. The purpose of the trap is to catch wild animals such as feral cats, dogs, foxes and rabbits. The position of the wild dog was adequately covered by Mr Ward and Mr Evans.

Trapping in this country is a business and, despite what honorable members opposite say, many people derive either the whole or part of their income from trapping.

I was absolutely amazed to hear Mrs Coxsedge say that trappers inspected the traps only once a week. I have never heard such arrant nonsense. Some honorable member said that might be true if the traps were set in Collins Street or similar areas. However, trapping is a business and, as Mr Evans instanced, the traps are inspected regularly during the summer and winter months, so the trapper can get the rabbit to market in the best possible condition.

The position of the rabbit trapper is well known in Australian folklore and has coloured the history of this country. In many areas the trapper is of great assistance to the landholder, especially where rabbits are hard to eradicate. Generally the trappers consult with the landowner to find out whether stock are in the paddock. If that is the case, with the agreement of the landowner, they will trap a specific paddock after all the stock has been removed.

Despite what Mrs Coxsedge has said, it is not uncommon to see trappers going around the traps at night with their lanterns inspecting their lines three or four times to make sure that the traps are not lost and that foxes are not attacking the animals that have been trapped.

The trapper inspects his trap for a very good reason, that is, to ensure that other wild animals are not taking animals from the trap. The traps are also inspected because of the sheer economic fact that a trap, as Mr Walton said, has a certain economic value and trappers do not wish to lose their traps.

Trapping is a business proposition. There is a demand for rabbits in the market-place. If honorable members visit markets they will see fresh rabbits for sale. People want to eat rabbits. They are a delectable meal, as I am sure honorable members who have had the experience of good home cooking will be aware.

The rabbit's meat and skin are of value. Rabbits are an imported vermin that have caused widespread damage to this country. They have caused soil
erosion through the destruction of pastures and a shortage of water in paddocks by undermining the banks of dams and diversion banks.

People have been thrown from their horses when riding around the paddocks because the horse has put its hoof in a rabbit burrow and broken a leg. Perhaps the rider was injured when thrown from the horse. Cattle have damaged their legs because of rabbit burrows. There are many factors against the continued existence of the rabbit in Australia and the passing of this Bill will only perpetuate the problem.

I was amazed at the flippant and casual attitude of Mr Mackenzie towards the position of landholders who suddenly find their crops affected by an influx of wildlife when nature has got out of balance because of cockatoos and other bird life damaging and ripping up crops.

Not a word has been said by members of the Opposition about the people who have been affected and, in the drier parts of Australia, driven off their property by rabbit plagues. Not a word has been said about that, or the necessary steps that have been taken to eradicate the rabbit.

This magnificent Bill, under new section 56A, sets a penalty of $500 on anybody who sets a rabbit trap for the purpose of hunting or taking of wildlife.

What will happen to the young country lad at the week-end who goes out on his bicycle to trap rabbits? It is common practice for children in country towns and on country farms to go out trapping on the week-end to earn a few bob. Is it the objective of this Bill that the youngster who is going out to earn a bit of pocket money will incur the full penalty of $500?

Mr Walton has over-reacted. The honorable member has not given due regard to the economic facts of life. In conclusion, I urge honorable members to vote against this Bill.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I had no intention of entering into the steel trap debate but I believe, as a country person, that one must bring a little accuracy into the situation which has been grossly misrepresented by Mr Radford. After all, the honorable member is talking about an historical period in Australia when the trapping of rabbits was prevalent. I would have thought he was younger than one would judge from his remarks today, but whether he has been preserved for the role he is now playing for a generation or so, I do not know. There are reasons why one might think so. The honorable member would know quite well that rabbits were introduced into Australia by the ancestors of the present Minister of Public Works in Victoria to provide sport for the squattocracy of this country. The rabbits showed the persistence which typified the early British settlers who thought they were able to exploit this country by whatever means possible.

Once rabbits got a grip on this country—and they were particularly widespread—trapping became prevalent. Trapping in those days was practised by people whom Mr Radford has not observed but read about in country folklore, that is, the boys from the town and the country going out trapping rabbits and professional trappers going around their traps three times during the night with a lantern ensuring that rabbits were not taken out of the traps, because those trappers were particularly interested in the dough or perhaps the fast buck. That is the real reason behind supposed representatives of the rural community trying to deride the arguments put forward with great sincerity by my colleague, because members opposite are not prepared to have a serious look at the alternative means of the destruction of rabbits.

Mr Radford is old enough to remember when the area where he lives, particularly the south-west, was heavily infested with rabbits, even though rabbit trappers had been engaged continuously for many years, because the honorable member knows that the practical result of trapping in those areas was only to keep the rabbit popu-
lation at a level where rabbits were able to thrive. The honorable member knows that if any pest like that becomes too heavily populated, it tends to die out from time to time.

It is well known that regular trapping and the attitude of trappers was such that they kept the rabbit population at a healthy level. The thing which did more to eliminate the rabbit population, and probably helped Mr Radford accumulate more dough, in the singular sense, was the introduction of myxomatosis which penetrated those inaccessible rocky areas.

I am not trying to be offensive towards the honorable member, because, like all farmers, the honorable member would like to think that the soil which he farms and it may be so is highly fertile. However, not far from where the honorable member lives, much of the land is practically impossible to cultivate, yet rabbits thrive.

I wish to correct the unfortunate misrepresentation by Mr Radford about this way of life, which the honorable member believes still exists but which is something that belongs to Australian history and has no real part in the present or future.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—The Opposition's Bill is a most admirable and proper one. I want to express concern about the rather insensitive attitude that has been expressed by some members on this side of the House.

There has been unnecessary harassment of animals, not only near the city, but certainly out in the bush. Until our society is able to express a greater concern for animals, we can scarcely stand to have ourselves judged as being civilized or caring. If we are to be concerned even about children, who are unable to speak for themselves we must carry that concern into areas where animals have no voice. Since they have no voice, a caring community needs to provide some effective response so that cruelty for cruelty's sake is outlawed.

It is obvious that a number of points raised by members both on the corner bench and on this side of the House have a great deal of validity. When we see calves and lambs injured by feral cats and dogs, we are concerned for them, and it is obvious that, as a great part of this problem arises because of the uncontrolled breedings of cats and dogs within our built-up areas, we need to pay much more attention to effective control at that point.

I am pleased that the Government has given more responsibility to local authorities to provide encouragement to pet owners to desex their animals. One hopes that more municipalities will provide these facilities so that populations of cats and dogs fleeing from built-up areas into the farms and the bush will be controlled.

It is clear that it is necessary to have other means available to decimate and to wipe out these feral cats and dogs, in particular, which are doing so much damage. I cannot agree with Mr Mackenzie that the officers in our national parks are anything but conservationists. As the honorable member indicated, he is a relatively new member of this House, and I hope he will have the opportunity of visiting many of our national parks and seeing the work of our conservationists, work which is being supported by the Government. Most honorable members are aware that the conservationists in some of these parks are taking counts not only of the marsupial animals, the larger wombats and so on, but also of the butterflies and insects. There is concern about protecting and conserving the environment, and that response of the Government is to be applauded.

In his policy speech prior to the last election, the Premier indicated that there would be action to outlaw the use of steel-jawed traps within built-up areas and there will continue to be work to do on this problem.

I would like more time to prepare and move an amendment to this private member's Bill which is now before the House. In order to do that, I propose at this stage to move the adjournment of the debate.

On the motion of the Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province), the debate was adjourned.
The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Does the honorable member wish to reserve his right to speak again?

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—Yes, Mr President.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

ADJOURNMENT


The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I draw a matter to the attention of the Leader of the Government in this House. Towards the end of the debate which occurred last week in relation to the rail link between the Port Melbourne line and Webb Dock, it became apparent that there was some intention on the part of the Government to allow the matter to remain unresolved until a report is received from the State Development Committee.

I ask the honorable gentleman whether it would not be sensible to have the Minister for Planning withdraw his request to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works for an amendment to the planning scheme which is at present being processed, on the basis that surely it would be wise to await the deliberations of the State Development Committee on the whole matter before proceeding to process an amendment to the planning scheme. I ask the Leader of the Government whether the House will respond to that request, as I believe it to be a sensible approach to this matter.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister representing the Minister of Consumer Affairs. It may also have other ramifications. I believe the Victorian Government should conduct a full inquiry into all aspects of the various pine tree investment groups registered and operating in Australia. Many of these companies con people into investing their money in tree farming schemes.

It has come to my attention that a number of my constituents in the province of Melbourne West have been duped into handing their hard-earned cash to a dubious company called the Furneaux Forests Co-operative Society, whose head office, according to their letterhead, is at 149-149A Macquarie Street, Hobart, and whose address for correspondence is 47 Deakin Street, East Bentleigh. The company's telephone number is 57-2132 and its chairman is Mr E. Frenkel. The publicized object of the Furneaux Forests Co-operative Society is to plant and grow to maturity 1500 acres of radiata pine trees in the North East River area of Flinders Island.

Mr Paul Anthony Farrugia of 7 Shirley Street, St Albans, who was reaching retirement, was approached by his Australian Mutual Provident Society insurance agent, a Mr John Beauchamp, who later left the Australian Mutual Provident Society and was last heard of at Watsons' car yard at Greensborough. He used his position of trust to persuade Mr Farrugia to invest his money—

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I suggest that the honorable member get quickly to the question she wishes the Minister to consider.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—It seems to me that people are being ripped off by these dubious companies and the current situation is extremely unsatisfactory because ordinary members of the public cannot get information from the Consumer Affairs Bureau regarding the standing and repute of these types of companies. Other people in the electorate I represent have asked for information about whether they should invest their money in certain companies but cannot get an answer
from the Consumer Affairs Bureau. This has been taken up by a Footscray consumer affairs group which also cannot get the information.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The honorable member is not posing a question but is beginning to debate this matter. I ask her once again to pose a question and conclude.

The Hon. JOAN COXEDGE—I will conclude by saying this, Mr President: There is a great deal of material here which I should have liked to raise with honorable members, but I simply ask that the Minister representing the Minister of Consumer Affairs investigate this matter thoroughly.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I raise a question with the Minister for Conservation representing the Minister of Health. It concerns the position of dental clinics in the Geelong region. Under the dental health regional committee formula, Geelong should have about eight public dentists working in the area. At the moment, it has only one full-time dentist and one working part time out of the Geelong Hospital. In the Corio community health centre, a large complex which has been operating successfully for about seven years in a built-up central area, there are something like 48,000 registered patients. Provision already exists in that community centre for a dental clinic. I believe there are four rooms available and the basic plumbing to take the dental units has already been installed behind the walls. I understand that $10,000 worth of dental equipment has been purchased and is currently stored at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne.

I ask the Minister to take this matter up with the Minister of Health to see whether he can expedite the fitting-out of this dental clinic in the Corio community centre in order that two dentists can operate out of this area in the very near future.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—I wish to raise a matter with the Minister of Forests representing the Minister for Minerals and Energy. I refer to an article which appeared in the publication *Australian Newsletter* of September 1979. It is supposedly a responsible article. On the front of the publication is a photograph of the Premier. The article is as follows:

FILL 'ER UP! WITH WATER?

As far-fetched as it sounds, a little known mineral called zeolite, large deposits of which were recently found in Victoria, is being used in experiments which if successful, would allow cars to run on water.

The article continued:

Zeolite has the potential to release hydrogen from water in a continuous process when used in conjunction with solar energy.

I assume that if the sun shines on it, water breaks up into hydrogen and oxygen:

Tylden Quarries, where the new deposits are located, is offering the zeolite free to scientists. The experiments currently in process are at the University of Utah.

Usually I do not take much notice of articles of that type or of speculation like that, but when it appears in a responsible journal such as this, it is worthy of note. I should be interested to ascertain whether the Victorian Government is aware of this process and whether what is being canvassed in the article is a serious matter; if so, what is the outcome.

I should also like to know whether the Government has been examining the ramifications of the scheme, not only from the point of view of the economic advantages that could occur for Victoria but also from the conservation aspect. I ask the Minister to take it up with his counterpart in another place, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, to determine whether there is a substantial basis for the article, and, if so, I ask him whether he will take some effective action to make the most of the opportunities that appear to be being offered.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—I raise a matter with the Leader of the House as Minister of Education. Like my colleague in the Waverley Province, I am concerned that the good name of the Coomoora High School should be maintained and
that the work that the school has been doing, especially in the area of migrant care, is adequately supported.

Political capital should not be sought to be made on racial issues, and I ask the Minister whether he is aware that representations were made by the Coomoora High School to local members of Parliament and that an immediate response was made to the school’s satisfaction a week prior to the matter being raised in this House by my colleague. Further, is the Minister aware that a great deal of public criticism has been levelled at the treatment being given to Indo-Chinese children, and can he outline what has been the response of the Government to this problem?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—My request for urgent action is directed to the attention of the Minister representing the Minister of Consumer Affairs. I refer to a real estate racket being used against young home buyers by a Mulgrave real estate firm, Bartholomew Read and Co. Pty Ltd, of 905 Springvale Road, Mulgrave.

Early last year the firm induced a young couple, Mr and Mrs Albert Yong, now of 43 Jolimont Avenue, Mulgrave, to hand over $500 in advance to buy a house from the firm on the basis that it was “hard for young people to get a house”. In other words, the $500 was an inducement. The $500 was to be refunded from the agent’s commission when the sale of the house had been completed.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Have you talked with both parties, or only one?

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—I raise a point of order. I should like to ask whether Mr Kennedy has checked on this matter with both parties, and, if so, whether he has obtained a response from both parties, as there is already an indication that unfair and biased harassment of people in the genuine conduct of business is frequently made.

The President (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—There is no point of order, but I expect that in due course Mr Kennedy will give full documentation to the Minister.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I am indebted to you, Mr President, and I shall quote briefly from a letter dated 31 March, 1978, addressed to Mr and Mrs A. K. S. Yong, which states:

We advise that Bartholomew Read and Company will return the amount of $500 to you within seven days from the date of settlement.

The letter is signed by Ian Bartholomew of the real estate firm. Mr and Mrs Yong did not receive the money, so they took the matter up with the Registry of Estate Agents of 388 Bourke Street, Melbourne, from whom they received a letter dated 7 December 1978—it shows that they were pretty patient about their $500. The letter states:

With reference to your letter of 20th September, I have caused an investigation to be made and interviewed Mr I. Bartholomew, a Director of the agent corporation.

Whilst Mr Bartholomew admitted that a verbal agreement was entered into between yourselves and the agent corporation, in that within seven days after the subject transaction was completed, the agent corporation would refund to you the amount of $500, pursuant to the provisions of the Estate Agent Act it does not come within my jurisdiction to direct the corporation to forward to you the said sum of $500.

As I am led to believe that the corporation will finalize their outstanding account with you by the end of February, 1979, if the account is not finalized by that date it would be appreciated if you could again contact this office.

The people could obtain no satisfaction anywhere. It is a wonder that members of the firm I have mentioned do not wear masks!

The President (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I ask Mr Kennedy to pose his query and then resume his seat.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Has Mr Kennedy contacted the agents concerned?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I am contacting the Minister, which is the next best thing. Obviously the agent should refund the $500, and I will leave it to the good graces of the Minister to ensure that that is done, I ask what action the Government will take in this matter on behalf of these poor innocent people.
The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—The matter I wish to raise is directed to the attention of the Minister representing the Minister of Health, and it concerns the school dental clinics which are funded on a $1 for $1 basis by the Commonwealth and State Governments. School dental therapists using mobile school vans, and under supervision, visit various schools throughout the State inspecting the teeth of children. Last year 48 people graduated from the School of Dental Therapists and 48 nurses were appointed to work with them, but because of cutbacks in staff, no supervisors were appointed, and therefore the vans were stored away and the therapists worked in pairs. They did not work in the outer country areas.

This year 46 therapists will graduate from the school, but no supervisory dentists are being hired to work with them. The lecture staff members who formerly instructed at the college will be used as their supervisors, and I understand that no intake will occur this year.

My query is whether, since the Commonwealth has this year increased its subsidy to $23 million—an increase of 29 per cent on last year—the Health Commission and the Minister will thoroughly investigate whether this service can be provided in the Wimmera-Mallee area where it is most needed. Although areas like Sea Lake do not have a resident dentist, qualified dentists are available in the Wimmera-Mallee area and are prepared to work as supervising dentists.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Conservation. It relates to the Langwarrin military reserve, of which the Minister has some knowledge and which is an area of particular environmental significance. I hope the Minister will consider instituting action similar to that undertaken at the former Cranbourne military reserve, which is now the Cranbourne botanic annexe, an annexe of Melbourne Botanic Gardens. That action was taken to preserve not merely the area, but also its environs. I suggest that a planning advisory committee should be set up as was done in 1975 for the Cranbourne area. That committee was set up by the Secretary for Lands at the request of the Secretary for Planning, and the...
committee produced a report which was considered seriously and its recommendations were largely accepted.

At the moment, as the Minister is aware, the Langwarrin military reserve is owned by the Commonwealth Government, which has signified its willingness to treat or negotiate with the State Government for the transfer of the land. It may be some considerable time before a settlement is reached, and there is concern that in the meantime, if protective planning is not introduced, extensive and permanent destruction of the area and its environment may occur.

The Minister for Conservation is aware of the statement made at the centre for environmental studies, which reported on the matter, and I ask him to give urgent consideration to setting up a similar study to ensure the protection of the Langwarrin military reserve and its environment.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Education and ask him to consider it seriously.

The Footscray Technical College provides technical and further education for the community of the western suburbs, and indeed even students from other parts of metropolitan Melbourne.

The lack of tertiary education facilities in the western suburbs is deplorable—one institute carries the degree status and the Footscray Technical College is used for advanced education.

To improve the facilities at the Footscray Technical College, a series of meetings was held with the Education Department in 1977 in conjunction with the Public Works Department, and a figure of $14 million was set as the design figure for the Public Works Department.

In February 1978 the appropriate form MB/1 was submitted to Canberra defining the project at concept stage, listing it as one stage costing $14.5 million.

In June 1978, it was reported at a project meeting in relation to the form MB/1 submitted to Canberra that the Technical and Further Education Council, Canberra, had approved the concept of the project but required it to be submitted in three phases. It was stated at this meeting that the TAFE Council required the library resource centre and student services to be in phase 1; the Education Department required the middle level engineering facilities to be included in phase 1; and the meeting agreed administration should be included in phase 1.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I ask Mr Thomas to get to his question.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS—Just give me a minute, old timer.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! The honorable member is being disorderly and I ask him to withdraw those remarks.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS—I am sorry Mr President. In July 1978, a revised form was submitted to Canberra including the phasing of stages 2 and 3 which defined the contents of each phase and this was approved by the TAFE Council.

In August 1978, design development of phase 1 by the Public Works Department was commenced immediately. The design development was completed in March 1979.

In 1979, verbal instructions were received by the college from the Acting Director, Technical Education, to stop the project. The completion of this stage of the project has been the top priority of the regional council throughout the total planning process and reaffirmed this priority when the major TAFE building programme for Victoria from the State Council for Technical Education listed $4 million for a Melton project but omitted phases 2 and 3 for Footscray Technical College.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I ask Mr Thomas to either pose his question or sit down.

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS—I wish to say to the Minister of Education that this has been going on for a long time
and was stopped after the first phase. The second and third phases are still to come and yet $4 million has been found for something in Melton. The education system in Footscray is deplorable. Houses which are 120 years old have been acquired and 7500 pupils are being pushed into them like sardines.

I ask the Minister to investigate the matter urgently with a view to the project being commenced at an early date.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Mr Walker referred to me as representing the Minister for Planning. His question affected a planning scheme which may relate to Webb Dock. In so doing, the honorable member sought to hoist me on my own petard for arguments which I raised on a point of order relating to the introduction of Mr Walker's motion last week. Mr President, your ruling in part provided an answer to the honorable member. You ruled that the fact that the matter is before a committee cannot preclude consideration by this House. A fair corollary is that it cannot preclude consideration by the Government.

It is fair to say that the Government would normally be reluctant to make irrevocable decisions whilst a matter is before a Parliamentary committee. What the Minister for Planning has done is to invite the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to place on exhibition a planning scheme which in turn would enable the public to raise the objections which Mr Walker raised in this House last week. It will canvass public opinion and will enable views, pro and con or some variation, to be fully put.

I imagine that the Minister for Planning would at least wait for a reasonable period to enable the committee to present its report before a decision is made. However, if it appeared that the committee was going on indefinite leave the Minister could be forced to make a decision. The action taken by the Minister for Planning does not predicate a decision in the past. It places the matter on exhibition for public comment at this stage.

Mrs Coxsedge raised a matter of investment groups in the pine tree area. I should perhaps inform the House—I am sure I do not need to inform the honorable member who raised the issue—that the issue is in fact canvassed fully in the consumer affairs report before this House, listed as item 20, Orders of the Day, General Business, on which there will be full opportunity for debate either tomorrow or some time next week.

I am sorry that Mrs Coxsedge, under the forms of the House, did not have the full opportunity to develop the case she desired to present this evening. It would be more appropriate for the Minister to reply to Mrs Coxsedge after she has had the opportunity to develop her argument. I assure the honorable member that full opportunity will be given to canvass the matter when item 20 of General Business is discussed either tomorrow or at an early date.

Mr Saltmarsh raised the question of Coomoora High School in Springvale South. At that school, there is a dedicated principal who is president of the Australia-Indo Chinese Association. He has taken into his home a number of children whom he has fostered as Vietnamese refugees. He deserves the highest possible credit for his motivation, for the work he has done, and for the way he engenders support from others. I believe a member of his staff is secretary of that association. This principal has adopted three children. There is not a principal anywhere in Victoria who has done more for young Vietnamese refugees.

Naturally, holding the views and the commitment he does, he has to provide for young refugees in his school. He has sought to attract them away from other centres and provides them with preliminary training in English so that they can go into the mainstream of education perhaps earlier than otherwise would be the case. He has been committed to do this on the basis of a number of understandings, which included that he would make an extra effort, that his school would provide for those students without seeking extra staff and that he would assist in every
way to bring these students into the mainstream of education as soon as possible. He accepted those provisions and conditions willingly.

Mr Kennedy sought to give the impression that the Government was uncaring. The school staff has provided an additional migrant aid. I add that the State College of Victoria, Rusden, offered and made available student teachers who have studied in that field to assist in assimilating these young people into the school and Australian community.

I commend the principal of the school without naming him. I commend what is being done. I draw attention to the conditions which were placed upon the principal and which he has accepted fully. The person who has not accepted them fully is Mr Kennedy. I ask members of the House not to seek to make political capital out of issues such as this.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—You talk about assimilation so Mr Kennedy has to make issue of that because the Opposition does not accept the term assimilation. Integration is different.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—I accept that I used a wrong and out-of-date word. Integration may have been a better word, in the circumstances. The point I make is that this principal deserves commendation. He has not sought to make political capital for himself and I hope members representing that area will work with him rather than seek political capital out of issues such as this.

Tonight, for the second time in recent days, Mr Kennedy has raised the question of a real estate agent whom he infers is a crook. On four occasions during Mr Kennedy’s remarks I invited—

The Hon. E. H. Walker—On two occasions; the Minister exaggerates.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—On four occasions I invited Mr Kennedy to say whether or not he had consulted the agent. From his failure to respond, I presume he has not done so.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Does that condone the action?

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—I do not cast any opinion one way or the other. It would be improper for one to take a one-sided view of the facts. Mr Kennedy appears to have given the House the view of one party to a transaction without checking the view of the other party to the transaction.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—How do you know he did not do that?

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Because I asked him on four occasions.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—The fact that he did not answer does not prove anything.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Mr President, I wish to draw attention to the value and the limitations of Parliamentary privilege. Every member of this House supports the fact that honorable members in this Chamber should have the right to represent their electors without the fear of court action as a result of putting their views honestly as they see them. But I point out that that privilege carries a heavy responsibility. That responsibility includes double checking the facts with all those affected and not just with one side before statements are made in this House which may well impugn the reputation, the character and the business of another party. That is the responsibility we bear as a result of the privilege we have.

I certainly will refer the matter raised by Mr Kennedy to the Minister of Consumer Affairs, but I seriously suggest that before imputations are made against third parties they be double checked with those third parties and the evidence upon which the statements are made should be fully stated to the House.

Mr Thomas raised a matter which I believe related to Footscray Institute of Technology, although I am not sure whether it may have related to the Footscray Technical College. Could Mr Thomas indicate whether he was referring to the institute?

The Hon. H. A. Thomas—I thought you would know all about that.
The Hon. A. J. HUNT—I have been out to the western suburbs recently and I was at the Footscray Institute of Technology as recently as last Friday. Technical and Further Education colleges have done better than any other colleges, both maintenance wise and capital wise, in the current Budget, and they have a high priority indeed. Mr Thomas will be aware, I think, that the capital works programme is the responsibility of my colleague, the Assistant Minister of Education. I will see that Mr Thomas’s remarks are forwarded to the Assistant Minister of Education, Mr Lacy, and that he receives a reply in writing as soon as possible.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Mr Mackenzie brought up a matter of urgent Government administration, which I thought the adjournment debate was all about. That is what it used to be all about. It currently seems to be a matter of asking questions and raising queries. Mr Mackenzie referred to a dental clinic in the Geelong region and he asked me to take up with the Minister of Health the matter of staffing that clinic in respect of two dental chairs. I undertake to do what he asked in that respect.

Mr Wright brought up a similar matter in relation to dental therapists, and he drew attention to the fact that the Federal Government has made a greater amount available for the training and use of dental therapists in this financial year. I undertake to do what he asks, that is, I will see that the Government considers making more dental therapists available to the outer areas of the State of Victoria, in particular, I presume, in the North Western Province.

Mr Kent raised the matter of the Langwarrin military reserve. This reserve has some conservation values. As he rightly states, negotiations are under way with the Commonwealth for the purchase of the reserve. The Victorian Government does not always find it easy to negotiate with the Commonwealth in the purchase of land which it owns in this State. I draw attention to the problems associated with the acquisition of a site for the Broadmeadows hospital, and the problems associated with the acquisition of a site for the Victorian Institute of Marine Sciences in the Nepean Park. However, negotiations are under way. Irrespective of whether the Government succeeds in purchasing the area, it is in this State, and conservation values ought to be protected. The Government will do what it can to see that they are protected.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Mr Evans referred to the Australian Newsletter release. I am not aware of this release. I was rather interested when he said that the Premier stated, "Fill her up with water", but I did not hear anything about royalties that the Water Commission or the Board of Works might get from this water. However, I have read of numerous investigations that are taking place in respect of producing fuel from various processes. I believe the Government one day will come up with a process, but that is a long way off according to the reading I have undertaken. However, I will refer the matter to the Minister for Minerals and Energy and provide the honorable member with a reply.

Mr White referred to the announcement in today’s Age regarding the building of the Mitchell River dam. He said that, in this article, the Treasurer stated, if I remember correctly, that an amount of $600 000 would be made available to enable some roading, and some camp site work, to proceed. In the meantime, I am sure that an investigation regarding the economies that may be feasible on this dam will be carried out. I know that the Water Commission has recommended the name of a person to the Treasurer who it believes would be a fit person to carry out investigation, in cooperation with a person from the Treasury. I am not sure whether this person has been engaged at this stage, and whether an analysis will be released is up to the Treasurer to state.
However, in view of Mr White's request I will put this matter to the Treasury. I am not sure whether consideration will be given to alternative recharging methods or whether this will be undertaken. I believe recharging of aquifers is a process which is debatable. If there is a two-year drought, in my opinion the aquifers are not of much benefit. The Public Works Committee stated this in its report. The investigation of the dam and the dam site was made in an exhaustive inquiry by the Public Works Committee, which recommended the site that was selected.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Before putting the motion, I wish to make a few comments with regard to members' speeches on the motion for the adjournment of the House. It seems to me that many matters that are being raised are very detailed, requiring detailed answers, and they would be much more appropriately raised by means of questions on notice. Other matters being raised on the adjournment debate could more appropriately be raised in debates concerning proposed legislation or when reports are being considered by the Council during the course of the ordinary business of the House.

I think it would be appropriate if I also read again "Guidelines to Speeches on the Adjournment", so that honorable members are absolutely clear what will be allowed in the future and what will not be allowed. All members have received this notice which reads:

An honorable member speaking to the motion "That the House do now adjourn" at the conclusion of a sitting may—

(a) make a complaint;
(b) make a request; or
(c) pose a query.

In doing so he must—

(a) raise only matters which are within the administrative competence of the Victorian Government;
(b) confine his remarks to a single subject; and
(c) be brief.

He may not—

(a) develop his remarks into a set speech;
(b) reflect upon a statute;
(c) request the introduction of legislation; or
(d) raise a matter previously discussed in the same session.

The matter raised by an honorable member must relate to a recent occurrence. That is, be of an urgent nature. Any reply by the appropriate Minister should be as brief as possible.

Matters raised on the motion for the adjournment of the House cannot be the subject of a debate; the honorable member raises a matter and the Minister's reply disposes of the same.

I trust that honorable members will take those guidelines into account at the next sitting.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

BAW BAW ALPINE RESERVE

(Question No. 111)

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province) asked the Minister of Forests:

(a) When was the Baw Baw Alpine Reserve Committee of Management established and what is its charter?
(b) What is the name, occupation, organization (if applicable) and address of each member of the committee?
(c) What money has been allocated by the Government to the committee in each of the past five financial years?
(d) How frequently does the committee meet, and what was the date of its last meeting?

The Hon. F. J. GRANT (Minister of Forests)—The answer is:

(a) 17 May 1960.

To plan develop and manage the Baw Baw Alpine Reserve in accord with the provisions of Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958.

(b) The Hon. J. C. M. Balfour M.P., Member of Parliament, 151 Flinders Street, Melbourne (Chairman).

S. W. Calder, Forester, 601 Bourke Street Melbourne, (Forests Commission Victoria).

S. G. Ross, Engineer, 2 Treasury Place, Melbourne (Public Works Department).

Mr D. R. Patterson, Regional Conservation Officer, Suite 6 Whitehorse Plaza, Whitehorse Road, Box Hill (Soil Conservation Authority).

S. W. Calde, Forester, 601 Bourke Street Melbourne, (Forests Commission Victoria).

S. G. Ross, Engineer, 2 Treasury Place, Melbourne (Public Works Department).
Cr J. G. Hammond, Retired, Hill Enid via Moe (Shire of Narracan).
Cr G. L. Maynard, Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Officer, Shire Offices, Erica (Shire of Narracan).
Cr I. M. Stoll, Farmer, Main South Road Drouin (Shire of Buln Buln).
G. S. Surman, Municipal Engineer, P.O. Box, Box 126, Drouin (Shire of Buln Buln).
J. Binning, Printer, 116 Edgevale Road, Kew (Victorian Ski Association).
Dr J. Jenkin, Lecturer, 5 Dickens Street, Moonee Ponds (Victorian Ski Association).
D. A. Johnston, Builder, 55 Mersey Street, Box Hill (Victorian Ski Association).
G. Roberts, Retired, 2 Balmoral Crescent, Drouin.

(c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Loans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>16 667</td>
<td>33 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>208 667</td>
<td>33 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>21 667</td>
<td>43 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>22 594</td>
<td>40 326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) At approximately six to ten week intervals, 14 September 1979.
(e) Committee produces reports for its own purposes such as sub-committees' and Area Manager's reports. These cover areas such as planning, finance, management and specific development proposals.

Committee produces a newsletter, "The Plateau", at approximately six monthly intervals. This is circulated to interested persons and bodies.

The committee produces annual financial statements.

VEHICLES ON CROWN LAND
(Question No. 113)

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province) asked the Minister for Conservation:

Was an inter-departmental committee established to consider the use of motorised recreation vehicles on Crown land; if so—(i) when; (ii) what was the membership; (iii) what reports has the committee released; and (iv) is the committee still operating?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The answer is:

Yes.

(i) The committee was convened on 26 February, 1975.
(ii) The committee consisted of representatives of—
Soil Conservation Authority.
Department of Crown Lands and Survey.
Forests Commission.
Victoria Police.
State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.
Fisheries and Wildlife Division.
National Parks Service.
State Electricity Commission.

(iii) None—the committee was formed to advise the Minister on various policy matters.
(iv) No.

"PHYTOPHTHORA CINNAMOMI"
(Question No. 128)

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province) asked the Minister of Forests:

(a) Was a symposium held by the CSIRO in October 1978 at Canberra to review the problem of Phytophthora cinnamomi in Australia; if so—(i) who attended the symposium from the Victorian Forests Commission; (ii) what was the consensus opinion among the forest pathologists present as to whether Phytophthora is a wide-spread native organism or an introduced pathogen; and (iii) what were the professional opinions expressed at the symposium as to whether any of the present forest management practices exacerbate the spread of Phytophthora and the intensity of its actions?

(b) What kind of threat does Phytophthora pose to tropical and temperate forest ecosystems in Australia, and Victoria in particular?

(c) If the spread of Phytophthora is exacerbated by present forest practices, what scientific evidence has the Forests Commission that no irreversible changes will occur in the sustained yield from managed native forests in the long term (i.e. over 80 years)?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests)—The answer is:

(a) Yes. CSIRO Division of Forest Research convened a conference on Phytophthora and Forest Management in Australia, held in Canberra 18-20 October 1978.

(i) The conference was attended by Dr R. J. Grose, Mr B. D. Dexter, Mr M. L. A. Boucher, Dr G. C. Marks and Mr J. P. Wright of the Forests Commission Victoria.

(ii) The consensus of opinion was that Phytophthora cinnamomi is an introduced pathogen.
Disease expression attributable to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* may vary within and between forest ecosystems. In Victoria, present-day forest management is designed to, and is succeeding, in ameliorating the adverse effects of the pathogen.

(b) In Victoria, *Phytophthora cinnamomi* has the potential to cause changes in the diversity and abundance of susceptible species in the limited areas of highly sensitive forest ecosystems.

(c) Research so far indicates generally that irreversible changes have not taken place in the regeneration and growth of managed native forests in Victoria.

**CRIMES IN BROADMEADOWS**

(Question No. 144)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

(a) How many crimes in the City of Broadmeadows have been reported to the Criminal Investigation Branch and/or police at Fawkner, Broadmeadows, and Glenroy stations since 1 January 1979, indicating the number and nature of each crime?

(b) During what hours are each of those stations open and manned by police?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—As the answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is statistical, I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

*Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:*

(a) The following crimes were reported at the Fawkner, Broadmeadows and Glenroy Police Stations during the period 1st January, 1979 to 22nd September, 1979:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of crime</th>
<th>Number of cases reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious assault</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>1034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of motor vehicle</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud, false pretences, forgery, etc.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3921</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Police station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours during which stations are open and manned by Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fawkner and Glenroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fawkner and Glenroy stations remain open until 11 p.m. Monday to Thursday when manpower permits.

**MOUNT BULLER COMMITTEE**

(Question No. 149)

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province) asked the Minister of Forests:

(a) When was the Mount Buller Alpine Reserve Committee of Management established and what is its charter?

(b) What is the name, occupation, organization (if applicable) and address of each member of the committee?

(c) What money has been allocated by the Government to the committee in each of the past five financial years?

(d) How frequently does the committee meet, and what was the date of its last meeting?

(e) What reports, including annual reports, have been prepared by the committee?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests)—The answer is:

(a) 1 December 1948. To plan, develop and manage the Mount Buller Alpine Reserve in accord with the provisions of Section 50 of the Forests Act 1958.

(b) Dr R. J. Grose, Commissioner of Forests, 601 Bourke Street, Melbourne (Chairman) (Forests Commission Victoria).


Cr R. W. Bostock, Grazer, "Preston", Mansfield (Shire of Mansfield).


B. H. Chandler, Civil Engineer, C/- Country Roads Board, Bridge Road, Benalla (Country Roads Board).

Dr F. G. Craig, Forester, 601 Bourke Street, Melbourne (Deputy Chairman) (Forests Commission Victoria).

J. English, Architect, Public Works Department, Treasury Place, Melbourne (Public Works Department).
CRIMES IN SHIRE OF BULLA
(Question No. 152)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

How many crimes in the Shire of Bulla have been reported to the Criminal Investigation Branch and/or police at stations within the Shire of Bulla since 1 January 1979, indicating the number and nature of each crime?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—As the answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is statistical, I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in Hansard without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:

The following crimes were reported at Sunbury police station, the only police station in the Shire of Bulla, during the period 1 January 1979 to 22 September 1979, inclusive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of crime</th>
<th>Number of crimes reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious assault</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of motor vehicle</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlawfully on premises</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malicious damage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling stolen goods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene exposure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlawful possession</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 178

CRIMES IN GISBORNE
(Question No. 155)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

How many crimes in the Shire of Gisborne have been reported to the Criminal Investigation Branch and/or police at Wallan police station since 1 January 1979, indicating the number and nature of each crime?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—As the answer supplied by the Minister for Police and
Emergency Services is statistical, I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in Hansard without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:

No crimes committed in the Shire of Gisborne have been reported to the Wallan police station since January, 1979. Wallan is in the Shire of Kilmore.

During the period 1 January, 1979 to 22 September, 1979, inclusive, the following crimes committed in the Shire of Gisborne were reported to Gisborne police station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of crimes</th>
<th>Number of crimes reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious assault</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of motor vehicle</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malicious damage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilful damage</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene exposure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecent behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICES ACT**
(Question No. 157)

**The Hon. R. J. EDDY** (Thomastown Province) asked the Minister of Education, for the Premier:

Is the Anti-Discrimination Bureau investigating the Psychological Practices Act 1965 with a view to making recommendations for amendment so that it would no longer discriminate against ethnic, religious and voluntary counsellors who are not qualified psychologists?

**The Hon. A. J. HUNT** (Minister of Education)—The answer supplied by the Premier is:

No.

**POLICE STATIONS IN THOMASTOWN PROVINCE**
(Question No. 160)

**The Hon. R. J. EDDY** (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

(a) When is it proposed to commence construction of the new 24-hour police station on land owned by the Government at Lalor?

(b) As the Shire of Whittlesea has a population of some 60,000 people, will the Minister for Police and Emergency Services ensure that the police stations at Thomastown, Epping and Whittlesea are manned on a 24-hour basis?

(c) As Mill Park is expected to have a population of 25,000 people, are there any plans to have a police station for the estate; if so, when?

**The Hon. HADDON STOREY** (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is:

(a) The construction of a new 24-hour police station and divisional office at Lalor has been proposed in the Police Forward Look Works and Services Programme. However, it is not possible to indicate when funds will be available to commence construction of the station.

(b) The Police Department is currently studying the feasibility of increasing the personnel strength at Thomastown police station to provide a 24 hour service. There are no immediate plans to operate the Epping and Whittlesea stations on a 24 hour basis.

The Police Sub-Districts of Thomastown, Epping and Whittlesea currently receive a 24 hour service by means of a divisional van and the Crime Car Squad.

(c) A detailed study of policing requirements in the Heidelberg Police District is soon to be commenced and this will include an assessment of needs in Mill Park.

**BROADMEADOWS POLICE**
(Question No. 162)

**The Hon. R. J. EDDY** (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

When will the number of police stationed at Broadmeadows be increased?

**The Hon. HADDON STOREY** (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is:

The strength of the Broadmeadows Police Station was increased in March, 1979, with the appointment of six additional senior constables/constables. Two further positions of sergeant have been advertised recently in the Police Gazette. It is expected that both positions will be filled in the near future.

**THOMASTOWN PROVINCE SUBSIDIES**
(Question No. 166)

**The Hon. R. J. EDDY** (Thomastown Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

What subsidies have been approved by the Road Safety and Traffic Authority for improve-
ment of traffic conditions and road safety within the Thomastown Province?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is:

Subsidies provided for improvement of traffic conditions and road safety within the Thomastown Province are as follows:

   - Capital Works $180,000
   - Maintenance $204,000

   - Capital Works $435,000

   - Capital Works $18,000

   - Currently $111,000

POLICE HELICOPTER

(Question No. 188)

The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Western Province) asked the Attorney-General, for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

(a) When is it expected that the new police helicopter will be operational?

(b) When the helicopter is operational, what will be the strength of the Police Air Wing?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is:

(a) The police helicopter was formally handed over to the Police Force on 10 October 1979, on which date it became operational.

(b) The present authorized strength of the Police Air Wing is twelve members. Proposals to increase personnel of the Air Wing are currently under consideration.

FORESTS COMMISSION

(Question No. 206)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Forests:

What adjustments to staffing of the Forests Commission's operations in North Western Province have taken place in the past financial year, and what are planned for this financial year; indicating the position and locations affected, and the time of adjustment?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests)—The answer is statistical and I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:

The level of day labor employment in Forest Districts fluctuates according to the season. The maximum level of employment in the North Western Province during 1978–79 was 53 at the height of the fire season and the minimum was 37 in September 1978. For comparative purposes the levels at beginning and end of 1978–79 and the most recent figures available were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>June 1978</th>
<th>June 1979</th>
<th>October 1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimboola</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohuna</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Arnaud</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seasonal fluctuations only are expected for the remainder of 1979–80.

In respect of staff employed under the provisions of the Public Service Act the following variations have occurred:

Cohuna—1 Typist commenced 11.9.78.

Dimboola—1 Forester commenced 3.1.79.

Mildura—1 Forester commenced 3.1.79.

St Arnaud—1 Forest Overseer retired 10.1.79.

Mildura—1 Forest Overseer retired 3.7.79.

No further variations to staff levels are planned.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 23 October 1979

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 4.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

CONDOLENCES

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Honorable members are probably aware that the honorable member
for Carrum; Mr Cathie, will not be with us today, and perhaps not this week. I am sure all honorable members would wish me, on their behalf, to express our sincere condolences to Mr Cathie on his recent tragic loss.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MITCHELL RIVER DAM

Mr Wilkes (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of the Treasurer's Budget commitment to freeze the Mitchell River dam project pending a review of the economics of the project, can the Treasurer inform the House whether the Government has now decided to proceed with the project? If the Government has decided to do so, what studies have been carried out of the economic viability of the project since that last commitment was made, who carried out those particular studies, and what results were obtained?

Mr Thompson (Treasurer)—The decision announced at Budget time was that it would not be possible to go ahead with the dam this financial year—that is the construction of the dam proper—and that the opportunity would be taken to ensure that the dam would be constructed in the most economic way possible.

At present the work that is being carried out on the dam is the construction of the road, which I understand is of the order of 12 or 13 kilometres, into the dam construction site. Work will continue where possible on the road and the construction of the camp. The work to be carried out this year will cost of the order of $600,000.

Before construction of the actual dam commences, a further assessment will be made to ensure it is carried out in the most economic way possible.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD

Mr Ross-Edwards (Leader of the National Party)—I refer to the report of the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, which is before Cabinet. Can the Premier inform the House whether a decision has been made concerning the laying of additional charges against any person following this report?

Mr Hamer (Premier)—The answer is, "No". This matter is under consideration, but no final conclusions have been reached as yet.

SWINE VESICULAR DISEASE

Mr Burgin (Polwarth)—Following reports of disease on a pig farm in Tasmania and the slaughtering of some 300 head of stock, can the Minister of Agriculture advise what precautions the Department of Agriculture is taking to ensure the safety of livestock in Victoria and what controls are being placed on Tullamarine airport and other ports of entry for Tasmanians coming into this State?

Mr I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture)—I thank the honorable member for Polwarth for his question. In Tasmania, there is a suspected outbreak of swine vesicular disease which fortunately affects only pigs.

The Tasmanian Government has destroyed the pigs on the property involved and has quarantined the area around the farm. The Victorian Government has taken steps to hold any stocks of meat or parts of carcasses which come from Tasmania and would normally be distributed and sold on the mainland pending a virology confirmation test which is being done at the Animal Virus Research Institute at Pirbright, Surrey, England, the most notable virology laboratory in the world.

It is not possible at this stage for anyone to be positive of the identity of the disease although we are almost sure it is swine vesicular disease. If that is so, there should not be any need to harass travellers between the two States, except perhaps travellers coming out of the quarantine area. Elaborate provisions have been set up to screen their movements and their possessions.

People can take comfort in the fact that, under directions from the Agricultural Council, the animal health subcommittee has laid down very stringent
disease control and eradication methods in the event of an outbreak of such a disease in Australia. Those measures are automatically instituted in circumstances when it is necessary not only to identify the disease but also to control and eradicate it.

Honorable members may recall the outbreak of Avian influenza which occurred not so long ago at a couple of duck farms, when, to get rid of the disease, in one week-end 7000 blood samples were taken and two poultry farmers were buried. The department is geared for extreme measures where they are required. As I said, there is no threat to the livestock industry or to the population of Australia as a result of the outbreak in Tasmania. It has been particularly well-contained.

POLICE PROSECUTIONS

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—Is the Minister for Police and Emergency services aware of a report in the Age of 20 October 1979 based on a letter received from Commander Marchesi of the B11 squad—the Internal Investigations Bureau—in which it is alleged that special consideration is being given to members of the Police Force and the judiciary in police prosecutions? If so, will he state whether any special consideration is being given to the withdrawal or insertion of cautionary notices in lieu of prosecution against members of the Police Force, the judiciary, or to any other occupational group?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I read the report in the Age. I am not aware of any special consideration being given to any group of people and I am making inquiries into what might have caused that particular report.

BEECHWORTH TRAINING PRISON

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I refer to the proposed development of a remand section at the Beechworth Training Prison. Is the Minister for Community Welfare Services aware that the proposed development has been deferred and, as it will be of great assistance to north-eastern Victoria, when will the proposed remand section be built at the prison? If it is not going ahead, what other developments are taking place at the Beechworth Training Prison this financial year?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The House will be aware that the Beechworth prison was substantially damaged by fire in December 1977 when approximately 100 prisoners were accommodated at the prison. Plans were immediately drawn up by the Public Works Department for rebuilding the prison. Those plans were completed and work commenced to enable the new western wing of the prison to be completed by the end of last year. Only minor additions are required to be completed for it to be fully operative. In the meantime, the prison population is back to its pre-December 1977 level of approximately 105.

The original plans for the prison provided for a remand area to be attached to the prison, but for financial reasons and also with a view to expediting the completion of the prison accommodation, which was considered to be more urgent, the remand area has been deferred for the time being. Additional capital works will be carried out at the prison which will be associated mainly with the provision for visiting and other more urgent requirements having regard to the fact that persons on remand are being adequately accommodated. The short-term prisoners are being accommodated in the police gaols in the north-eastern area and the long-term remand prisoners are being accommodated at Pentridge. I have noted the concern of the honorable member about the remand section and certainly that is a matter which the department, subject to the availability of finance, will pursue as soon as possible.

ARGUS IMPORTS INTERNATIONAL PTY LTD

Mr McARTHUR (Ringwood)—Is the Minister of Consumer Affairs aware that consumers are still paying money to a firm known as Argus Imports International Pty Ltd which, it appears, is acting as an agent for another firm known as Smart Time Pty Ltd, a company in liquidation with considerable financial deficiencies?
Does the Minister of Consumer Affairs know whether the directors of Smart Time Pty Ltd are also directors of Argus Imports International Pty Ltd? Does the Minister know whether moneys paid to Argus Imports are not being used to provide goods ordered by the consumer but are being used by the directors for other purposes?

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The two companies mentioned, Smart Time Pty Ltd and Argus Imports International Pty Ltd have been the subject of numerous complaints to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and many aspects of the operation of those companies are unsatisfactory.

Last December I issued a warning to consumers that they would be unwise to enter into lay-by contracts issued by door-to-door salesmen. These two companies have been involved in such an activity. Moneys paid by way of deposit or progress payments on lay-by purchases are not being put to the purpose for which they were intended.

The matter is being investigated by the New South Wales Corporate Affairs Office and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has referred the matter to the Fraud Squad for further examination. I warn any consumers who are already making payments to Argus Imports International Pty Ltd that they would be wise to refrain from making further payments as the chances of getting their money back are remote.

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING ACT

Mr GAVIN (Coburg)—Is the Minister for Planning aware that the Town and Country Planning (Outdoor Advertising) Act No. 8716 passed by this House in May 1975 has not yet been proclaimed? Will the Minister take steps to ensure that the Act’s provisions are implemented so that positive action can be taken against some of the visual pollution that exists on our roads and highways?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—I suggest that the honorable member should put the question on notice.

MANTEO ART COLLECTION

Mr SKEEGGS (Ivanhoe)—Can the Premier advise the House on action taken, in consultation with the Minister of the Arts and the Treasurer, in response to my request in this House that ways and means be found to assist the National Gallery of Victoria to retain the Manton collection of paintings of the Heidelberg school?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I am glad to say that arrangements have now been completed which should ensure that the magnificent Manton art collection remains in Victoria and is added to the National Gallery’s collection.

The Treasurer has not been able to actually provide the purchase money this year, for reasons which have been sufficiently explained in the Treasurer’s Budget speech, but other arrangements have been made for the temporary financing of the purchase by the National Gallery to the tune of some $2 million. The Manton art collection is by far the finest collection of the Heidelberg school in Australia or probably anywhere in the world. The collection will certainly enhance the National Gallery’s standing, and give it a remarkable pre-eminence in this field.

I thank the honorable member for Ivanhoe for raising this matter. I am glad to say that these arrangements have now been satisfactorily concluded.

COMPANY TAKE-OVERS COMMITTEE

Mr GINIFER (Keilor)—In view of the influence of Ansett Transport Industries Ltd on transport and the media field in Victoria, and the recent attempts by the Murdoch organization to take over Channel 0, will the Premier give an undertaking to refer the Ansett organization’s problems to the Company Take-overs Committee?

If not, would he be prepared to abolish the Company Take-overs Committee rather than continue with this charade?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—That question should rightly be directed to the Minister who represents the Attorney-General, as a direction...
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of that kind must be given by the Attorney-General. The Minister of Transport may like to answer the question.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I shall discuss the matter with the Premier and give the honorable member an answer.

FLOOD LEVELS AT HORSHAM AND ECHUCA

Mr McGrath (Lowan)—I ask the Premier: Has the Victorian Government made a decision on measures to bring about a relaxation in the adopted flood levels in the City of Horsham and at Echuca? If that decision has been made, what is the position; if it has not been made, when will it be made?

Mr Hamer (Premier)—Since the honorable member brought a deputation to me on this matter from Horsham, and also having regard to previous representations from the honorable member for Rodney in connection with Echuca where similar problems have arisen, a lot of attention has been given to ways and means by which people could be safeguarded from building on land which was subject to flooding but at the same time would allow the development of existing subdivisions or enable people to go ahead provided they had sufficient warning that there could be a flood every 100 years or so that could inundate the houses. I believe a solution has been found, and the Minister for Local Government will give further details of this. It will involve an amendment to the Uniform Building Regulations and also, probably, an amendment to the Local Government Act. The Government is prepared to do that and has authorized the necessary amendments and it will go ahead with a scheme which I think will satisfy the people of Horsham, the council, and the residents of the City of Echuca.

Mr Ross-Edwards—And Shepparton?

Mr Hamer—Shepparton is in a somewhat similar situation.

PUBLIC APPEAL FOR SWAN HILL POLICEMAN

Mr Crellin (Sandringham)—I direct my question to the Treasurer, in that capacity as well as in his capacity as Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Further to a question I asked on 9 October in relation to the public appeal for the family of the late Detective Robert Lane, is the Minister aware of a report in today's Sun that no moneys raised under this appeal have yet been paid to the family? Could the honorable gentleman advise the House of the exact position of this money?

Mr Thompson (Treasurer)—Mrs Lane, the widow of Senior Constable Lane, is at present in Queensland. Contact has been made with her legal representatives asking what liabilities she has at present that could be met from the fund.

Mr Fordham—Just give her the money.

Mr Thompson—Do not get over-excited. Information was received from her legal firm, Maurice Blackburn and Co., and today a cheque has been delivered to that firm to cover those liabilities outlined, to the total sum of $26,000, and after consultation with the Solicitor-General, the Supreme Court will be requested to appoint trustees to administer the remainder of the fund to ensure that the interests of the widow and the children are fully protected.

KAMPUCHEAN ADOPTEES

Mrs Toner (Greensborough)—In view of the laudable proposal to bring Kampuchean adoptees to Victoria, I ask the Minister for Community Welfare Services what steps he intends to take to expedite procedures for the assessment of parents by the inter-country adoptive section of his department, which has indicated that it is considerably understaffed. Has he given serious consideration to the procedures of assessment which are adopted in South Australia and New South Wales and to the proposals put forward by the Committee of Rights for Adoptive Parents in order to cut through departmental red tape?

Mr Jona (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—If I recall correctly, there is a question on the Notice Paper the answer to which will be very much in line with the answer I would now
AID TO KAMPUCHEA

Mrs CHAMBERS (Ballarat South)—Following the earlier question relating to Kampuchea, can the Premier advise what arrangements the Government has made to date to meet the needs of the people in Kampuchea?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—Since the original donation of $10 000 towards the general appeal—which I am glad to say has now reached approximately $1 million—the Government has been seeking ways in which to supply the people in Kampuchea with goods in kind, to ensure that they go to the people who need them, which seems to the Government much better than providing amounts of money.

After consultation with the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Peacock, and after obtaining advice from the department for which he is responsible as to which goods were most in demand by the International Red Cross and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in Kampuchea, the Government has arranged, in equal shares with the Commonwealth, this coming week-end to send a plane-load of goods and supplies to Phnom Penh, consisting principally of three items, enriched skimmed milk powder, sugar and vegetable oil. The Government was informed that those are the three items in shortest supply.

The Commonwealth sent a plane-load of a similar character a few days ago and also sent two officers to Phnom Penh to try to ensure that the supplies, when they reach that city, do not fall into the wrong hands. I know Parliament would want to be sure of that and I believe the Government has done all it can to ensure that the supplies go to the right people, the starving women and children of Kampuchea for whom they are obviously primarily intended. If future plane-loads are being sent the Victorian Government is quite prepared to accept its financial share of the burden in goods produced in Victoria in an effort to help the people of Kampuchea.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—In view of the considerable and widespread public interest in the Ministerial review now being conducted into the future growth and organization of the Education Department, will the Assistant Minister of Education consider granting an extension of the time in which interested members of the public and educational institutions can make submissions to the Ministerial inquiry, given what was initially a short period for the making of such submissions, the growing public interest and the enormous significance of the future structure that will be determined?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—I am prepared to grant an additional fortnight in which submissions can be received.

LAND AT WURRUK

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—Following the answer to the question I asked on 10 October concerning Housing Commission land at Wurruk that is to be sold to the City of Sale, has the Minister of Housing received the formal valuation he was awaiting and, if so, is it a fact that a further valuation from an independent source has now been requested? If that is so, and in view of the imminent opening of the multi-million dollar steel rolling mill at Wurruk, is the Minister prepared to issue an engineering works order to enable at least the commencement of the road through the housing estate at Sale, which will be part of the ultimate liability of the Housing Commission?

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—Another valuation is being obtained from a private valuer. It is necessary because of the conflicting estimates that have been received from the Valuer-General. I believe it is proper that another valuation be obtained. That valuation should be completed by the end of this month and negotiations will
proceed. If there is any outstanding matter, such as that suggested by the honorable member, which might have to be solved in the interim, I will give it consideration.

VICTORIAN ECONOMY

Mr KENNETT (Burwood)—I direct my question to the Treasurer. It follows on the submission made in the House last week by the honorable member for Dandenong during his contribution to the Budget debate that there was no growth within the Victorian economy. Can the Minister correctly inform the House of the current situation regarding approvals for new factories and dwellings?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—In reply to the honorable member for Burwood, who takes a very keen and practical interest in the development of Victoria’s economy, the latest figures reveal a large increase in the value of new factory approvals. Some three years ago, the total value of approvals for the year was $66 million but in the financial year just concluded the total value has risen from $66 million to $147 million.

This is pleasing in itself, but it is also very pleasing because investors in new factories, as a general rule, do not build them unless there is a strong likelihood of those factories being used by employees in industry.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I apologize for interrupting the Treasurer, but I should have ruled the question out of order. The question related to a matter which was raised in the House by the honorable member for Dandenong and therefore the question is out of order.

HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—The Minister of Health will be aware that some considerable time ago this Parliament passed the Health Commission Act, part of which set up a Health Advisory Council. Is the honorable gentleman aware of considerable concern in the hospital and health fields over delays in setting up the council? If so, can the Minister inform the House when it is proposed to announce the full membership of the council, when it will effectively commence to function, and whether the chairman has already been appointed and, if so, whom?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The chairman has been appointed, Sir Lance Townsend.

Mr Ginifer—He has just gone to China.

Mr BORTHWICK—He has also just become president of the Austin Hospital—what else! I would hope within a month to make the final announcement on the membership of the council. Referring to the actual commencement of its activities, that would be very much in the hands of Sir Lance Townsend as to when he calls the members of the council together. I am also hoping for the appointment of two staff for which, I understand, provision has been made in this year’s Budget. I am waiting for the staff to be appointed to service the council.

PLANNING

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—Is the Minister for Planning aware that some metropolitan municipalities have expressed a desire to have an increased involvement in planning issues within their own municipal boundaries? If the Minister is aware of that concern, can the honorable gentleman indicate the views of the Government or express his own attitude to it?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—For some time, the Government has been consciously exploring ways and means of reducing the involvement of authorities in the issue of permits and other processes in planning. It is endeavouring to introduce a system which will eventually provide Victoria with a one-stop shop system for the issue of planning permits. As part of that review, the Government will be introducing legislation to provide major amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act which is seventeen years old and which, in my view, requires overhaul.
One of the major provisions in the Bill will be to provide local development schemes for councils in metropolitan Melbourne. The principle behind this move is to provide local councils with the opportunity to prepare and evolve their own planning schemes and to put their own touch on planning matters.

Honorable members interjecting.

Mr LIEBERMAN—The honorable member for Brunswick is a doctrinaire Socialist and therefore he objects to planning controls being within the concern of the third sphere of Government. The principle behind the local development scheme is that a council will be enabled to put its own touch to planning schemes. In these schemes, regional strategy for the whole of metropolitan Melbourne, which will be evolved by consultation between councils and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, will be incorporated. This will provide councils with additional say in what is going on in their own municipalities. That is fair enough and also it will simplify the planning process, will reduce delays and ultimately uncertainties in obtaining planning approvals.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I wish to make a personal explanation in respect of certain matters relating to the school building programme, which I raised during the debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting on Wednesday, 17 October, and which were reported in some editions of the Age on 18 October.

There are two aspects. Firstly, I said that the western metropolitan region had been discriminated against in respect of the allocation of building programme projects. That statement was based on the Ministerial statement presented the previous day by the Assistant Minister of Education and on documents released with that statement. Those documents showed that the western metropolitan region had six building projects, the south-eastern metropolitan region 22, and the eastern metropolitan region 14. On the basis of the figures in the papers presented with the Ministerial statement, my statement would have seemed reasonable.

However, I now have further information which was not included in the Ministerial statement, showing the basis of those allocations. That information shows the number of pupils per region and the expenditure per pupil in each region. As a result, I now know my statement to have been incorrect.

The second aspect related to an apparent discrepancy between the list of building projects in the western metropolitan region, which was provided with the Ministerial statement, and the list of priorities prepared by the western metropolitan regional priorities review committee. It is important at this stage that I quote again the statement of the Minister which I quoted in the House last Wednesday. In part, the Minister said:

I want to give emphasis to the fact that the School Building Programme this year is based entirely on the recommendations of these regional committees.

He also said:

Ministerial acceptance of their priorities, without variation, is as profound an indication as I can give of the Government's confidence in their work.

The list presented in the document entitled "Building Programme 1979-1980" provided for the western metropolitan region school building projects in the following order: Firstly, Primary School, Albanvale; secondly, High School, Williamstown; thirdly, Primary School, Kismet Park; fourthly, Primary School, Deer Park——

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I am sure that all honorable members are interested in the comments being made by the honorable member but I wonder whether this is an appropriate matter to be brought up under a personal explanation. I understood that a personal explanation ought to be short.
and perhaps to explain some misunderstanding. I should not have thought that argument as to the relevance or non-relevance of a whole host of statistics would be appropriate to this form of the House.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, I suggest that the honorable member for Werribee is in order. He had discussed this matter with the Assistant Minister of Education and with officers of the House, and he is frankly attempting to explain a mistake he made in the House last week in comments during debate. I believe it is quite in order to use the form of a personal explanation for this purpose. I understand that the honorable member has almost completed his comments, and, rather than going into a whole host of detailed statistics, as the Minister has described them—he is obviously anxious to do something else—the matter would be expedited if he could be given the extra minute.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honorable member for Werribee did check with me the text of what he wanted to say. He felt he had misled the House and he wanted to correct that and he is now making that correction. I urge him, as I urge all honorable members when making a personal explanation, to be brief and to the point.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I believe that, in this particular instance, it is necessary that I clarify these points. As indicated, I have nearly concluded. The remainder of that list was: Various library upgrades; High School, Ardeer.

The list provided by the regional priorities review committee was different. It listed in order: Ardeer High School, Kismet Park Primary School, Kings Park High School, Albanvale Primary School, Sunbury Heights Primary School, Deer Park Primary School, Wedge Park Primary School, and various school library upgrades.

On the information available to me and to members at the time, the statements I made seemed a reasonable deduction. However, I have discussed these extensively with the Assistant Minister of Education and he explained to me how the differences between the two lists arose. I accept his word that he did not personally intervene to change the priorities. However, the Ministerial statement itself did not explain how those differences arose.

To the extent that I misled the House and misrepresented the Assistant Minister, I apologize to the House and to the Assistant Minister.

PAPERS

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


RACING (FINANCIAL PROVISIONS) BILL

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation), pursuant to Standing Order No. 169 (b), moved for leave to bring in a Bill to make provision with respect to the commissions deducted from trifecta totalizators, the borrowing powers of the Totalizator Agency Board and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) announced that he had received messages from His Excellency the Governor recommending that appropriations be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of the following Bills:

Gift Duty (Amendment) Bill.

Industrial Relations Bill.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES BILL

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) announced the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation to be made from the Consolidated Fund for the purpose of the Public Works and Services Bill.
Mr AUSTIN (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.

NOTICE OF MOTION

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I refer to notice of motion, General Business, No. 1, in the name of the honorable member for Morwell, and draw the attention of honorable members to Standing Order No. 64, which reads:

No motion shall be made which is the same in substance as any question which during the same Session has been resolved in the affirmative or negative.

I also refer honorable members to the nineteenth edition of May, particularly at pages 368 to 371, the effect of which is that a motion may not be brought forward which is the same in substance as a question that has been decided during the current session.

The proceedings of the House on 20 September last are a matter of record in the Votes and Proceedings. A resolution of the House of 20 September in its relevant aspects called upon the Commonwealth Government to abolish its export parity pricing policy.

An amendment moved but negatived by the House, called upon the Victorian Government to establish a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas sold in this State until the Commonwealth Government provides for the Prices Justification Tribunal to determine the price of liquefied petroleum gas.

The motion intended to be moved today states in effect that, in view of the resolution of the House and the failure of the Victorian Government to convince the Commonwealth Government to abandon its pricing policy, the Victorian Government should now establish the maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas. The main thrust of the proposed motion cannot be distinguished from the thrust of the amendment which was negatived on 20 September. The procedural position is virtually analogous with that in the 1882 ruling referred to at page 370 of May.

For those reasons, I rule that the motion may not be brought forward because it infringes that ruling.

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—May I address you on a point of order on the matter, Mr Speaker? I understand the ruling to which you referred from the nineteenth edition of May, but could I establish whether I am in order in putting a contrary view before you now?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honorable member asked whether he could put a contrary view to that of my ruling.

Mr Amos—On procedure.

The SPEAKER—This matter has been ruled on after considerable investigation and research. I have ruled on the matter, and there the matter rests. However, if the honorable member wishes to put a point of view, I will hear him.

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—Thank you, Mr Speaker. My contention is that the motion which I intended to move today is substantially different from the one that I moved as an amendment on 20 September, for two reasons. The first is that the motion today now calls upon the State Government to introduce a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas, and the salient word there is "now". The motion uses the word "now" because of the failure of the State Government to reach agreement with the Commonwealth Government on the Prices Justification Tribunal establishing a price for liquefied petroleum gas sold in Australia. Therefore I maintain that, in view of the breakdown and the changed circumstances, the House is now entitled to consider whether it has to act unilaterally rather than by some provision, as the amendment that I moved on 20 September referred to.

As you will recall, Mr Speaker, the amendment I moved on that date was conditional upon agreement being reached, firstly, between the Premier
and the Prime Minister, and, secondly, on the Prime Minister referring the question of liquefied petroleum gas pricing to the Prices Justification Tribunal. I believe there is no established order of how long negotiations are to take, and that in the past month, from the time the original motion was accepted by the Parliament until now, many Victorians have been disadvantaged because of the failure of these negotiations. It was for that reason that I quite specifically included the word "now" in the motion, because I wanted to separate the situation that prevails today from the one that the House was entitled to accept on 20 September, which was that the House was then entitled to accept the word of the Premier when he said that he was negotiating with the Prime Minister on having the Prices Justification Tribunal determine the price of liquefied petroleum gas. Therefore I maintain that the motion which I am attempting to move today is in order.

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy) — On the point of order, I suggest that the motion proposed to be moved by the honorable member for Morwell is just a political gimmick and is out of order. If you, Mr Speaker, had not already ruled on the motion, I would have submitted that it was out of order.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) — Order! I simply indicate to the Minister that it is not fitting for the Chair to judge the politics of any motion put before it. The motion must be judged on its merits as related to the Standing Orders.

Mr BALFOUR — Yes, Sir, and I was going to refer you to Standing Order No. 64, which you have already quoted, and which states:

No motion shall be made which is the same in substance as any question which during the same Session has been resolved in the affirmative or negative, but any motion which has been withdrawn may be made again during the same session.

I was also going to refer, as you did, Mr Speaker, to page 368 of the nineteenth edition of *May*, and, more particularly, to pages 370 and 371.

Mr Wilkes — I am glad the Minister mentioned pages 370 and 371, because they are both relevant.

Mr BALFOUR — They are most relevant, but the whole question of matters already decided during the same session starts at page 368. The honorable member has absolutely no idea of what negotiations have occurred. He assumes that nothing has happened and is now endeavouring to suggest that, because he has incorporated the word "now" in his motion, it is different from the one which was defeated in the House on 20 September.

I submit to you, Mr Speaker, that the motion in substance is the same as the previous motion, and that, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 64 and the relevant pages of *May*, it should be ruled out of order.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) — On the point of order —

Mr B. J. Evans — We do not know what the point of order is.

Mr WILKES — The point of order is that the honorable member for Morwell was given the opportunity of explaining to the Speaker that his ruling should perhaps be reconsidered. That is the Standing Order, and the Speaker rightly gave the honorable member for Morwell the opportunity of making an explanation.

I point out to the honorable member for Gippsland East that on this occasion the Speaker made a ruling and was gracious enough to allow the House to discuss the ruling, although usually argument is presented before the ruling is made.

Let me point out the difficulty in procedure encountered by a member of the Opposition in moving a motion in the House. Members of the Opposition — and, indeed, of the National Party — are compelled to seek advice from the Clerks of the House, which is the normal procedure when a motion of this type has been raised. If an
honorable member seeks advice from the Clerks and if the advice is that the motion appears to be in order, the honorable member may proceed to move it. At least the honorable member obtains that advice and information first.

If the situation is going to be that, after obtaining that advice and preparing the motion, different advice is given to the Speaker, where will that leave members of the Opposition? All honorable members should have the same advice on whether the motion is in order. If it is not in order and if it has no likelihood of being accepted by the House, honorable members should be told, and so should you, Mr Speaker. If an honorable member proceeds with the motion, it is on the proposition that it is in order. I remind you, Mr Speaker, of the interpretation in the nineteenth edition of May, which the Minister quoted. The first paragraph states:

The final paragraph of page 370, which is continued on page 371, states, inter alia:

The ingenuity with which motions have been framed has sometimes succeeded in withdrawing them from the operation of the rule, as, for example, in the case of:

Also, in the session of 1845, no less than five distinct motions were made upon the subject of opening letters at the post-office under warrants from the Secretary of State. They all varied in form and matter, so far as to place them beyond the restrictions; but in purpose they were the same and the debates raised upon them embraced the same matters.

For that reason, as well as the reasons advanced by the honorable member for Morwell, there is a clear distinction between the motion the honorable member moved on 20 September 1979 and the motion he has moved today. That distinction was raised in the discussions that took place with the Clerks. The word, "now", was discussed. Honorable members will be placed in an uncertain position if that course is to be the basis of rulings on motions of this type. Therefore the motion is in order and should be proceeded with.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—Unequivocally, there is some superficial similarity between the wording in the notice of motion of which the honorable member for Morwell gave notice last week and the wording in the Votes and Proceedings of 20 September 1979. However, when one closely examines the details of both those motions, it is clear that they are in fact two distinct and different matters. I hope you, Mr Speaker, will give further consideration to your earlier comments.

The motions are distinct on two counts. Firstly, there is a different timescale. The context in which the first motion was put dealt with the Commonwealth Government and a subsequent amendment spoke of, "until the Commonwealth Government provides for the PJT". Members of the Opposition have been able to demonstrate in the motion that the Victorian Government has the authority, in our opinion—and we would want to put that in argument—to convince the Commonwealth Government to take a particular course of action. For that reason alone, the reality of the motion is quite different; the two motions are based on different relationships to the Commonwealth Government and the Prices Justification Tribunal.

Secondly, and more fundamentally, I invite an examination of the words "and until", in the amendment to the motion of 20 September and the word, "now", in the motion which honorable members are considering today.

The first words of the amendment of 20 September are, "and until the Commonwealth Government" does certain things, the Victorian Government takes a particular course of action—that is, to set a maximum price. That amendment had a limited time scale of its
own. It was a short-term measure, until the Commonwealth Government was able to be convinced of doing something and taking a particular course of action. Now, irrespective and quite separately, the Opposition calls on the Victorian Government to take the same course of action. The amendment of 20 September dealt with "until" the Commonwealth Government does something, the Victorian Government should fill in; the Opposition states that it is the responsibility of the Victorian Government to take this action.

The Opposition could be subject to criticism during debate on the motion for having a degree of inconsistency in its philosophical approach on the matter and how it should be dealt with. That is something which it must suffer and bear. The motion moved today is a distinct and different matter and, you, Mr Speaker, should reconsider the matter immediately. If you, Sir, require a few moments to ponder on the matters put forward to you, I can well understand your wish to do so. There is a superficial similarity between the two motions but in reality the context of the time-scale and the whole approach and thrust of the present motion is quite distinct.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I shall deal firstly with the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, because it is of some importance, that if members of the Opposition, of the National Party or of the Government want to propose a motion, they naturally consult the Clerks. If one carried the argument of the Leader of the Opposition to its conclusion, it would mean that the Chair was never able to rule a motion out of order on the ground that the Clerks had previously given some kind of advice that it appeared to be in order, because obviously, the Clerks would not have given that advice had they not thought it to be in order. The matter is for the Chair and if the House does not agree with the Chair, other means can be employed.

Mr Speaker, it is a matter which is very much in your hands and is very much the result of argument. In this case, argument is being presented to you at your invitation. It is utterly irrelevant that the motion, before it was put, was discussed in some way with the Clerks. It is still open to any honorable member who wishes to propose a matter to proceed by other means if the motion should not be permitted. I shall come to the substance of that.

I was intrigued by the ingenious argument of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He could hardly have believed it himself. If ever there was a motion which in substance, and those are the words, is the same as the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Morwell in the previous debate of 20 September and negatived by the House, this is it. There has been some small rearrangement of the words, but the substance is the same. The House is asked for the second time around to give its approval to the Victorian Government establishing a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas sold in Victoria.

That matter was the subject of debate on 20 September and it would be the substance of the debate again today. I might add also, that the whole of this motion depends on an assumption which, as the Minister says, is not only unfounded but can actually be demonstrated to be totally wrong.

Mr Amos—that is a political argument.

Mr HAMER—it is not a political argument; it is a fact. Only yesterday, I had discussions with the Federal Minister on this very subject and I understand that he is to take the whole matter of liquefied petroleum gas to the Federal Government next week, so there is absolutely no substance for the motion.

Even if there had been a rejection, which there has not been, it would still be out of order to debate a matter of which the substance is precisely the same as that debated by the House on 20 September.
Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—Mr Speaker, it appears that you are asked to decide what the words in Standing Order No. 64, “the same in substance”, really mean. I take up the argument of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The substance of the matter before Parliament on an earlier occasion as enunciated in the amendment was simply that the Victorian Government should establish a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas in the State until the Commonwealth Government provided for the Prices Justification Tribunal to determine the price.

The proposition clearly enunciated in that amendment was that a price should be determined until the Commonwealth Government took some action. In other words, when that condition has been fulfilled the maximum price will no longer be required because the condition will be satisfied in the future.

The motion now simply proposes that there ought to be a maximum price for liquefied petroleum gas and it enunciates the reasons, perhaps rhetorically, why it should be done. There are no conditions attached to the motion today. It is indefinite and open-ended. It simply says, “to establish a maximum price”, for all time. That argument is different in substance, if I can adopt the words of the Standing Order, from whether a maximum price is set for a limited time. There can be no argument. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is perfectly correct. The substance of the two arguments, whether a maximum price should pertain for a limited time until a specified condition is met or whether for an indefinite period regardless of condition, is different.

The Standing Order seeks to prevent Parliament from going over the same material. I submit that if this motion is enunciated today, the material will not be repetitive because honorable members will be arguing for the fixing of a maximum price indefinitely, whereas on the last occasion honorable members argued for fixing of a maximum price until a condition in the future had been fulfilled. They are two different matters which you, Mr Speaker, ought to acknowledge; they do not offend the provisions of Standing Order No. 64, which have a sound base.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—Following on the point made by the honorable member for Bundoora, I remind honorable members that when dealing with the motion on 20 September, the House was asked to consider amendments moved by the Minister for Minerals and Energy, which were in six parts. In those six parts, the House was expressing a view that certain action should take place that would involve the Commonwealth Government. On that occasion, the honorable member for Morwell moved an amendment after the House had adopted the amendments proposed by the Minister for Minerals and Energy. It could be argued that the House was then in a frame of mind to follow the line laid down by the Minister for Minerals and Energy.

The honorable member for Morwell is putting forward a submission in which, as has been pointed out by the honorable member for Bundoora, the House is being asked to express the view that the Government should independently make a decision on the price of liquefied petroleum gas marketed within Victoria. This is well within the province of the Government and is separate from any decision that the Commonwealth Government may or may not make.

Therefore, when the House is dealing with a motion similar to that moved by the honorable member for Morwell today, it is dealing with it in the context that it was a part, and a small part, of the larger over-all question which went beyond the bounds of Victoria and involved the Commonwealth Government. Honorable members are now being asked by the honorable member for Morwell to look at the question in isolation, and at Victoria as an independent State. It is therefore wrong to read Standing Order No. 64 in the narrowest terms.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The matter under discussion is not a point of order. The honorable member for Gippsland East raised the question by interjection. It is not a point of order but an address to the Chair. I wish to clarify one or
two points. Firstly, any advice the Clerks give to any member of the House is a matter between the Clerks and the honorable member concerned. It is a private matter. The Speaker is not privy to that advice; nor should he be.

Secondly, the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition in which he referred to the second paragraph on page 370 of May, deals with procedural motions and not substantive motions, which is the case in the motion in question.

It is my judgment that the motion as presented is substantially covering the same ground as the amendment considered on 20 September last. The Leader of the Opposition raised a further point and quoted the final paragraph of page 370 of May which continued on the following page, in which it is stated, *inter alia*:

The ingenuity with which motions have been framed has sometimes succeeded in withdrawing them from the operation of the rule, as, for example, in the case of:

I do not suggest to the honorable member how he should do it, but in my judgment the motion is framed in such a way that, according to Standing Order No. 64, it is in substance the same as the matter dealt with on 20 September.

Doubtless this motion can be framed in a different way and the honorable member will have the opportunity of endeavouring to reframe the motion so that it will have the acceptance of the Chair. But in the judgment of the Chair, the motion as presented is substantially the same as the matter dealt with in the amendment of 20 September. Therefore, I cannot call the matter on.

**APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL**

(Budget Debate)

The debate (adjourned from October 17) on the motion of Mr Thompson (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr MACLELLAN** (Minister of Transport)—In responding further on behalf of the Government in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, it seems appropriate that I should say something about transport, and in those circumstances also say something about matters which are currently under discussion.

Honorable members will be aware that, from time to time, current matters overtake continuing matters, and I suppose we cannot escape the fact that we have wage claims, limitations and discussions going on in an industrial relations sense, and that those are of fundamental importance to the Budget before the House. Clearly, if the figures given to me are correct, the most recent log of claims served by railway workers, which is described by them as an ambit claim, if it were agreed to—and it is not likely to be—would involve a payout of more than $700 million in wages. One could imagine the implications if one were to shift $700 million expenditure from other things to railway wages; there would have to be a cancellation of $700 million of current priorities.

I move from those sorts of monumental ambitions to the details of the Budget. I think the honorable member for Knox put it fairly neatly when he said, and I think his remarks have been supported by the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, that in fact the Budget provides—if one takes the fuel tax, the business franchise levied fees and other Budget provisions—that motorists of this State will be paying roughly $100 million more in State taxes of one sort or another. That $100 million income from taxes will flow both to transport and to the Treasury, and obviously it is one means for the Government to raise the $206 million which is used from State taxation to support the operations of public transport.

It will not have escaped honorable members that the amount of support for public transport this year has remained the same in respect of the railways, and almost remained the same in respect of the Tramways Board. In the case of the railways, the revenue is $159.8 million, which is exactly the same as last year; in relation to the Tramways Board it is $33 million, which is up from $32.7 million last year, so there is an increase of $300,000 there.
The major increase has been in the area of subsidy for services provided in the public transport area by the private buses. There, the amount allocated has increased from $9·8 million last year to $13·8 million this year, which is a 41 per cent increase.

If one analyses what the Government is doing with private buses, and the private bus industry as part of the public transport network in this State, one sees that it is now supporting the private bus industry to the extent of approximately 40 per cent of its operational cost—that is less than the Government supports the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Each dollar achieves more than it would if it were used to support a Tramways Board bus, and will certainly achieve more than if it went into the VicRail system, even into the suburban railway system.

From where has this money been obtained? Clearly, the money has been obtained from State taxation and State sources and from provision by the Treasury. In effect, the Government is setting an objective of making the railways operate more efficiently, of making the Tramways Board operate more efficiently and of using the available dollars for new expansion in those areas where the best value is obtained for the dollar. Some members of the Opposition would be aware that the Government has introduced extended and new services. Given the opportunity that it has had with this money, it has been able to support new services in areas which do not have any public transport.

One has to question sometimes the sort of logic and sense of inner suburban dwellers who want to live in the atmosphere of a rural village three miles from the General Post Office, and want that idyllic rural atmosphere with absolutely no change to the public transport facilities. Consequently, if the railway line is duplicated, as has been done beyond Collingwood, and express trains are introduced, we promptly "cop" complaints from people who say that the services available to the public in the inner suburbs are being reduced because the express trains are not now required to stop at the stations on the way. That is done with the objective of getting the people in the electorate of the honorable member for Greensborough to the city more quickly and efficiently, but at the same time the people in the electorate of the honorable member for Richmond complain that they have been deprived of services. If the Government suggests to the local municipalities that it might be a good idea if it rebuilt two of the ageing and hopeless railway stations in the Collingwood area, it is promptly accused of sneaksiness, of attempting to deprive people of the opportunities to use public transport.

In the case of the West Richmond station, which is a brick station and is not to be relocated, if the Government were to close that station and make it non-operational, then the people concerned would have to walk as far as 250 yards to board a tram to make the same journey on the tram. Yet their strong feeling is that what has always been must always go on in future years, and that improvements for others must not be achieved at their expense.

It is a simple concept for honorable members to know that there are areas in this State which are "transport poor" to the extent of having no public transport at all. There are other areas which are "transport rich" and which have a variety of public transport available to them. If one tries to measure that transport facility out to provide transport for those who have nothing and, at the same time, expects those who have alternative opportunities available to them to give up something, one promptly receives complaints and encounters difficulties.

Before I move from that figure of $159·8 million, which is the tax support given to the Victorian rail operations, I have to say that VicRail pays out in wages its entire revenue from freights and fares plus $60 million of taxpayers' money. That is a staggering figure. That is, its entire revenue from freights and fares, plus $60 million worth of taxpayers' money, is needed just to meet the wages bill. Everything else, of course, is paid for by the taxpayers.
Honorable members have recently been alarmed and disappointed, and indeed have carried their protests as far as the House, in respect of freight increases of 18 per cent and more and fare increases of 25 per cent, yet those increases in themselves will not recover for the railways the increased wages which will be paid in this financial year in respect of determinations already made by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. In fact, there will be a loss of a further $2 million in wages to be paid out this year under existing award decisions which have already been made. It is estimated that increased freight rates and fares will recover for the Government a little more than $17 million, and at the same time the Government will be paying out another $19 million-plus in wages.

That takes no account of the current industrial disputation where the unions are claiming for their members an increasing wage component. In other words, they are asking that their wages should be increased again. If they are increased again, there seem to be four options. The first option is to increase taxes or increase taxpayers' support to make that $159.8 million a greater figure. That would suggest, in Budget terms—as the Budget is presented to the House in a balanced situation—that the Government should cancel something else; it should cancel a hospital, it should cancel a school, or it should cancel some capital works in the railways. It does not really matter what cancelled project one thinks about, because the money does not grow on trees. If the Government is going to pay out on one hand, it will on the other hand have to either increase its collections or cancel some project which is under way.

If there is a windfall I should be very happy. I will be looking for the windfalls in transport. I am very optimistic if we can get some new tax, some new revenue, some new way of paying appropriate and decent wages under appropriate and decent awards for railway workers. But I am examining one idea in this speech which is increased tax support for the public transport system.

The other alternative, and it is be-devilled at least with some little self-defeativeness, is to increase further the freight rates and fares, although all honorable members know that increases in those repel passengers and repel the business in freight that is desperately needed to keep the system busy and active, and the roads clear for other people to use.

The other alternative is to employ fewer railway workers—that is, to reduce the over-all wages bill, and when somebody retires not to replace him. That proposition is hotly opposed by unions and is one which the Leader of the Opposition said is clearly unacceptable if one is thinking in terms of employment opportunities. The Government is not threatening anyone's jobs. They are all safe and secure in their jobs, but it is talking of reducing the number of employees progressively over the years, as has been the case over the past few years, and has been the strategy in New South Wales where the New South Wales Public Transport Commission has set its objective of reducing employment in that commission by more than 1000 in this year. That is by wastage and not replacing people who retire. In terms of employment opportunities, that is a difficult, unpleasant and unacceptable alternative. The fourth alternative is that the Government has to better use the resources that it has available.

It has been strongly put to me by VicRail that for various reasons a number of limitations, restrictions and operational rules have been imposed on it by unions and union groups down to the smallest group within the VicRail system, and that the over-all cost to the system could be as high as $50 million a year. When one talks about miserable wages, one talks about an opportunity of paying wages out of revenue from fares and freights, from taxpayers' support or from higher earnings resulting from increased efficiency.

This is an alternative which is the hardest and the most difficult to achieve and one which after all takes...
up most time. VicRail must use its human and physical resources more efficiently, not to build more wagons but to use those it has more efficiently and not to run more trains but to spread the load over the trains better. I have been working conscientiously to try to explain to the public, to this House, to the unions and to rail customers that there are economies which can be achieved by a better utilization of resources.

I can illustrate one problem which reveals a strange inconsistency in union attitude. VicRail has approximately 1000 wagons scattered around sidings throughout the railway system. They are too old to be used—I believe some are as old as 80 years. Some do not have axles in the normal sense, in that they have cotton wadding packed around—

Mr Ginifer—There are some of those wagons on the line between Yea and Alexandra, and the Government has closed the line.

Mr MACLELLAN—Exactly, but they are there to provide a base for superphosphate. The wagons are too old to be efficiently used but they cannot be moved to the scrapyard because the unions have placed a black ban on the movement of old wagons. There must be at least 1000 old wagons lurking around the system in every nook and cranny, just waiting to be scrapped, but the unions have refused to move them or to allow them to be converted. Some of the wagons are in such a condition that they should be burnt or scrapped. If Australia ever reaches the stage where it needs pig iron, there would be sufficient pig iron in wagons located throughout the VicRail system just waiting to be used.

What should happen is that these old wagons should be sold for scrap, to scrap dealers who are interested in taking them. The money that VicRail would obtain from the sale of old wagons could be reinvested in building new wagons through the railway workshops. In turn that would provide job opportunities for railway workmen who are currently underemployed but who are desperate for work. They come to me and say, "Minister, give us some jobs. Give us more work. Give us a job to do and we will do it."

The Ballarat and Bendigo workshops have responded magnificently to the challenge of trying to increase productivity to an acceptable level. The challenge has been put before the work force, and if it is accepted, they will be paid and obtain safe, secure jobs but the only way they can assure their future is for those workshops to be viable operations and to be an economic alternative to private enterprise. There is a need to keep costs down and for the workmen to take pride in the work they do.

The only method of obtaining the additional investment money that is needed is to hit the taxpayers for more money or to sell or scrap the old wagons and reinvest the money received in new wagons which could be better utilized and do the job more efficiently. Why should the 80-year old wagons be dragged around when they have long outlived their usefulness and represent only scrap? What is wanted are new wagons which can be used more efficiently.

The Government has thrown out the challenge to the unions. It has provided an amount of $1.5 million, half provided by the Grain Elevators Board, to move 400 wagons into the railway workshops where they can be modified. The work force is currently achieving a rate of conversion of seven wagons a day, and the Government hopes to have the modification of the 400 wagons completed by the commencement of the next grain harvest. The Government is modifying the old GY wagons and making them into GH or grain hopper wagons.

Honorable members might ask what is the difference between the two types of wagon. The casual observer would notice that instead of the wagon having a canvas top, manufactured in a canvas factory which may be employing up to 60 people who are busy at work manufacturing and repairing canvas covers, a metal top is installed. Instead of five men wearing masks taking 12 minutes to scrape the grain
off the floor of a flat-bottomed wagon, two men will operate four levers and clear a GH wagon in 12 seconds. This will lead to increased productivity and a better utilization of resources making the job more attractive and better for the people concerned. It will also provide a more efficient service for the farmers, rail customers, and an improvement in the amount of income received which, in turn, will enable VicRail to stop leaning so heavily on the taxpayers for financial support to prevent it from becoming an economic cripple.

That is the message the Government and VicRail must get across, slowly and persistently, to the union leaders and the work force, including the smallest section in the VicRail system, so that they can understand why moves should be made to do away with some of the current ridiculous work practices which limit the efficiency of VicRail. If this occurred an opportunity would exist to reinvest funds to produce better jobs and provide a better service for our customers.

I have dealt with the country-orientated situation of grain wagons and the fact that the Government is converting 400 old wagons, a move which it hopes to achieve by the end of the year, so that the wagons can be used at the commencement of the next harvest season.

I turn to the suburban system and refer to those railway workers—the engine drivers and guards—who are prevented from travelling along the same rail line twice consecutively. In other words, if a driver is driving a train from Frankston to Melbourne, after the train reaches Melbourne, he does not go back to Frankston but has to move, according to the roster, to another train line so that he can drive a train on a different line. I invite honorable members to think for a moment how such a provision affects the working of the railways. Why should a driver not double up and drive a train on the same line? In the old days there may have been safety problems and many other reasons for requiring that provision, but surely those reasons do not apply today.

I invite honorable members to think for a moment of what happens when the Frankston to Melbourne train is late. The train driver must be transferred to another line for his second journey and thereafter they must move to another line after each journey. If the Frankston to Melbourne train is late, one can be assured that the next train is late, so that when suburban members of this Parliament next complain about the lateness of trains, they should spend a moment thinking about the effect that the need to transfer from one line to another has on the lateness of trains.

The practice is followed time and time again throughout the system and it affects the efficiency of the people working in the system. What is needed is a change in the work practices which have applied for years—in many cases the provisions have long outlived their usefulness. It should be of paramount importance to ensure that secure jobs are provided and that investments are made to enable the system to operate more efficiently.

This is best illustrated by referring to the problems inherent in the rail system. I do not know of any other system in the world which still has a 120-mile limit that a driver can travel. This provision was fixed by an arbitration process which decreed that a train crew cannot travel more than 120 miles in a shift. When one was shovelling coal into a steam engine for 120 miles, I think one would have done a full day's work and in those days the rule might have been applicable—it was probably applied because steam trains were operating on our railway system. Now diesel trains operate on the railway system and if a train crew is limited to travelling 120 miles, it should be remembered that the journey does not take as long with a diesel train as it did with the old steam trains. Consequently, there must be a change in that direction to overcome a situation which has been imposed
upon the Government, on the unions and on VicRail by a decision of the Arbitration Commission. I emphasize that that is an award provision and that all the problems are not the fault of the workers. The workers are not the only ones to have imposed rules as rules have often resulted from decisions handed down by the Arbitration Commission. When built into the system, the rules often result in inefficiencies and increased costs through putting the service at risk. These rules increase the cost of the system so much that people find it more convenient to use other methods of transport.

If I can turn and look briefly, because this is not involved in the Budget, at the road-building programme, one finds a different funding system altogether. The programme is self-funding in a non-Budgetary sense, in that it does not rely on Budget allocations for the construction of roads, whereas in the public transport system there is a reliance on Government and taxpayers' support. The road-building programme of course is funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments and the amount is decided by the financial system which operates and therefore it goes happily along building efficient and better roads which will become more and more attractive as an alternative to the public transport system, and this is one of our fundamental problems. I am not suggesting that we should rip up the roads or neglect them, but we need to achieve a better balance between the method under which road funding is handled, and the method of funding of public transport, which in a traditional sense is a supportive method. Public transport funds should be provided by means other than those which currently exist.

Mr B. J. Evans—Why was this not brought out at the Bland inquiry?

Mr MACLELLAN—I do not know, but it has been brought out now by me. This is an appropriate time to do so because the Government has to demonstrate now that, whereas there has been an exchange of this type of information across the conference table and now across the Parliamentary table, if I can put it that way, the stage has been reached where honorable members are better informed of some of the problems and difficulties confronting the Government and therefore are much better informed about the way in which the Government is trying to direct itself in the future.

Honorable members will be aware that I mentioned the figure of $159·8 million as the amount of taxpayers' support for the VicRail system. There is also $33 million worth of taxpayers' support for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Those two amounts represent the greatest part of taxpayers' support for public transport. Additionally an amount of $13·8 million is provided for the private bus industry.

If we are to have a better transport system, we must examine our operations to ensure we have a better utilization of our resources, a utilization which is more efficient, not only in producing additional revenue, but also having the ability to produce investment funds which will enable VicRail to try to trade its way out of the financial morass by making it more efficient and therefore increasingly moving further away from the need for taxpayers' support and assistance.

I am looking at the efficiency of the people concerned and in doing so I am certainly not threatening jobs. However, what is the threat to a job if one installs an automatic ticket vending machine at a railway station which is currently unmanned? VicRail is not threatening a job; in fact, it may be earning additional revenue which may produce an ability to create jobs. Many people who are willing and wanting to pay their proper fares to travel on the trains are simply unable to do so.

Recently Vic-Rail has experienced a tremendous turnover in railway station staff. Who wants to be a station attendant? Their job is to welcome and farewell each train and to give information to the central control—that is
certainly a responsibility. But what is their apparent job to members of the public, the people who observe? They are unaware of the importance of the role of station attendants. What do they see the station attendants doing? The station attendants have a responsibility for cleaning stations and cleaning station toilets, although VicRail is attempting to make that a specialist job rather than employing station attendants on this work. However, that is not possible in country areas.

The task of the station attendant is to stand or sit in the ticket box at the suburban station and, during a normal shift, he might sell $3 worth of tickets. How can he be paid a decent wage when the total amount collected represents only a small proportion of his wage entitlement? How can VicRail provide a good job with reasonable working conditions and the prospect of a decent career involvement if the revenue it collects through that job is insufficient to pay a decent wage? The result is that the station assistant must while away the hours sitting at a ticket window in the hope that somebody may graciously come along and offer to buy a ticket when a machine could do precisely the same task with all the dignity that is required in that task. If this occurred, these people could be involved in more productive, rewarding and inspiring work.

They could perhaps be given responsibility beyond the responsibilities they bear as station assistants. Perhaps there could be people in the trains to guard the passengers against the disorder that occurs late at night or in the off-peak periods when many customers will not travel because they are frightened about what might happen on the trains. I do not doubt that very few members of this House or of the public are unaware of the circumstances which arise from time to time tragically in the community and which represent a tremendous change since the days when I was a child and could have travelled on a train. I question whether I would want my child of young years to travel alone on a train in the off-peak period.

What is the nature of this peak? A study which is being carried out on that suggests that if the financial and business group of the honorable member for Melbourne, that is the bankers and insurance people, could shift their work patterns by as little as twenty minutes, and if some schools could shift their starting times by as little as twenty minutes in another direction the peak of some of Victoria's trains could be slashed by as much as 40 per cent.

The Glen Waverley line has maintained its passengers more than any other and was the subject of a special upgrading effort to ascertain whether upgrading would maintain passenger support. About 40 per cent of the passengers in the peak period on that line are school children who are impacted on the workers going to the central business district and who are now taking up some of the positions vacated by the Government department workers who are availing themselves of flexi-time. Flexi-time, although it provides increasing opportunities for the expression of human values of wanting to take time off and make one's life less regimented by the clock, has resulted in white-collar workers moving to an earlier starting time and becoming crowded in with blue-collar workers who traditionally have worked earlier hours. Flexi-time has not been the panacea that may have been suggested in earlier days.

In the City of Knox or the electorate represented by the Minister of Health the situation is different. Flexi-time might be successful in the city when people are able to choose their working hours with some variety but when one is running a private bus that meets the train at Fern Tree Gully or at the terminus of the railway system, one finds that instead of all the public servants coming on one train, they are scattered over a number of trains. How can a private bus operator in such circumstances produce the matching facilities that are essential to complete the journey for so many people?
I open up some of the questions which are currently being discussed and currently being progressed. When this House has the same understanding as the unions and the membership of the various transport instrumentalities, remembering that there are about 22,500 railway workers in the system, and when we begin to appreciate that there is no blasphemy in moving somebody from some job for another, that there is every reason for retraining people for higher responsibility and different jobs and for transferring them to a different location in the system to serve the taxpayers who support the system with $159 million for the railways and $33 million for the tramways, the people who pay the fares will receive the service they deserve.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! The Minister’s time has expired.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—By a series of Liberal Government decisions Victoria’s health services have been thrust unnecessarily and disastrously into a time of crisis. The crisis is neither natural nor necessary but it has been induced by a series of decisions which have not only destroyed Medibank, but also have drastically altered the whole system of payment for health services.

The health care cost situation does not, despite what Canberra would have us believe, constitute a crisis. It is a complex long-term problem and is being turned into a crisis only by Government action.

Total health expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product has certainly risen in this decade, as it did in the one before, but rather than suffering panic we should look for causes within Victoria and Australia and examine what is occurring in the rest of the world. Causes are numerous, and amongst the greatest contributing factors have been a significant rise in hospital costs which I will discuss later, increased utilization by patients under direction of their doctors, technological developments and, I would say, unrestrained fees for service medicine.

To these must be added the absence of planning, what services should be provided and how they should be provided. In the absence of central or regional planning, empires have been allowed to develop, empires which are by now formidable structures and not easily penetrated, and less easily controlled even if penetration occurs.

In international terms Australia’s health expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product are about in the middle of those of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development nations. Our percentage of between 7.5 and 8 per cent compares with between 9 and 10 per cent in West Germany and Sweden, 8 to 8.5 per cent in the United States of America and the Netherlands, and 7 per cent in Canada and France. The United Kingdom spends only 5.5 per cent of its gross domestic product on health services and it is very much an exception.

These international comparisons do not suggest that everything is fine or that nothing should be done. What they do suggest is that our situation is not unique, or critical. In all areas of public expenditure, not just health, we should examine carefully what we are doing rather than stumble from one change to another.

Until recently the basic motivating force behind the Federal Fraser Government’s changes has been the view that the patient is the money-guzzling monster. By raising charges and throwing more and more of the financial responsibility on to individuals’ after-tax income, the Prime Minister has attempted to reduce costs. He has achieved little except one of the most complex and confusing and, I should emphasize, inefficient systems of paying for health care in the world. He has also produced a scheme which is ideal for the young, for the healthy, and for the wealthy but
disastrous for the old, the invalid, the chronically ill, the large family and the less well off.

Victorians again have to gamble with their health, as they did in the 1950s and 1960s, and in that situation the healthier and the wealthier one is, the less the gamble.

I seek leave to have incorporated in Hansard a table which shows how for many people it is considerably cheaper to be uninsured than insured. It appeared in the National Times for the week ended 2 June.

Leave was granted, and the table was as follows:

### A YEAR OF ROUTINE PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you'll pay if...</th>
<th>Insured for basic medical and hospital benefits</th>
<th>Uninsured</th>
<th>Insured for basic hospital no medical cover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule fees</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 standard G.P. consultations at $8.90</td>
<td>89.00</td>
<td>22.30</td>
<td>89.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible annual cost of insurance (paid weekly, family rate)</td>
<td>507.00</td>
<td>247.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Outlay</td>
<td>529.30</td>
<td>89.00</td>
<td>336.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A YEAR OF ROUTINE PROBLEMS PLUS SERIOUS ILLNESS WITH MAJOR SURGERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you'll pay if...</th>
<th>Insured for basic medical and hospital benefits</th>
<th>Uninsured choice in a public hospital</th>
<th>Insured for basic hospital no medical cover but you are ready to pay for your &quot;doctor of choice&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule fees</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 standard G.P. consultations</td>
<td>89.00</td>
<td>22.30</td>
<td>89.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast cancer, radical mastectomy</td>
<td>11.60</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>11.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred specialist consultation</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>17.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-ray</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>5.25 and accommodation in a public hospital</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiotherapy (5 attendances)</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full blood count</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood grouping</td>
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<td>4.40</td>
<td>17.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemical analysis</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation (specialist)</td>
<td>89.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistance at operation</td>
<td>192.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>192.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anaesthetic</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>58.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Histopathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full blood count</td>
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<td>4.40</td>
<td>17.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 days shared room public hospital accommodation</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
<td>850.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible annual cost of insurance (paid weekly family rate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Outlay</td>
<td>608.30</td>
<td>89.00</td>
<td>566.60</td>
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</table>
* Based on current average N.S.W. rates plus an additional $2 weekly on medical rates (rates dropped by about $2 when the now-withdrawn subsidy was introduced) and an additional 75 cents (giving Mr Hunt the benefit of the doubt he estimated 65 cents to 90 cents).

** Based on current average N.S.W. hospital rates plus 75 cents per week (see above).

† Basic medical insurance covers 75% of schedule fees. Those insured at this level pay 25% of the fee up to maximum of $10.

Most people will do better to drop their private insurance. People who insure pay less for each service than the uninsured, but high rates mean they generally pay more in total for health care.

Mr Roper—Two factors do not seem to be understood by the grazier from Nareen, namely, that patients have little control over major health costs, decisions about treatment, and cost being determined primarily by the medical profession and, secondly, that increased costs are related more than anything else to increased age—again a matter over which the average patient has little control.

This second cause was shown very clearly in a recent Social Security Bulletin (America) Volume 42 No. 1 of January this year in which it was demonstrated that the average health bill reached $1745 for those aged 65 years or older, $661 for those between 19 and 65, and $253 for those under 19. Unfortunately, no comparative statistics are available in Victoria but statistics for New South Wales, as contained in the document The Supply and Use of New South Wales Hospital and Nursing Home Beds, show acute bed usage by age and sex in New South Wales public and private hospitals, for stays up to 59 days, excluding psychiatric hospitals. In the group aged over 65 years there were 11 males and 9·6 females per thousand of population. This was a great contrast to the other figures which showed between the ages 0 and 4 years 3·1 males and 2·5 for females; for the ages 5 to 14 years, 1·1 for males and 0·9 for females; for the ages 15 to 44 years—there was a substantial difference for women because of child bearing years—1·7 males and 4·3 females; and for the ages 45 to 64 years, 4·2 males and 4·3 for females.

Bed usage for stays of over 59 days was even more. Females over 65 had a bed usage of 58·6 and the males 30·4, which was more than ten times that of any other age group. Nothing can be done about that and no purpose is served by blaming the patient for those bed stays. Certainly it can be said that there is a problem of lack of domiciliary and other services but the patient cannot be blamed for those costs.

Over recent months there has been a change from simply blaming the patients. It is now being suggested that it is the hospitals that are the monsters, the spendthrifts which are simply not controlled by equally spendthrift State Governments. So it is now the hospitals which are to be cut just as patients, after tax earnings have already been cut.

The Federal instrument is the cost sharing agreement and the excuse is the national inquiry. Certainly some hospitals can be better run, and some have wasteful practices. Major rationalization is required, and different kinds of rationalization from one State to another.

The statement of the Federal Minister for Health, Mr Hunt, of 24 May pointed to the real reason for the Commonwealth's new interest. The growing amount of Commonwealth expenditure on health services is absorbed by hospital services. This is a growing proportion as it drops out of the funding of other areas of health care. The Federal Minister for Health stated:

While reducing its level of direct subsidy towards the costs of medical care—except for pensioners and the disadvantaged—it is making a real attempt to control expenditure in the most costly of health spheres—hospital care.

The Minister did not mention that it is now only the hospital area which the Federal Liberals have not wheezled out of. They have destroyed Medibank, they have cut community health and school dental programmes, they have ended all assistance to States for tuberculosis, and so the list goes on.

I mentioned earlier that hospital costs have been an important contributing factor to increased health costs but only a comparatively small part of this increase can be put down to increases in
number of staff per patient and similar expansions. Far more important have been rises in salaries brought about particularly because of equal pay for women, and improving the salary rates of nurses. In addition, visiting medical officers are now paid for services once provided on an honorary or charity basis.

Unfortunately, Victorian statistics are not available but our experience has not been significantly different from that of New South Wales where between 1970–71 and 1976–77 salary payments increased in hospitals by 291.5 per cent compared with a CPI increase of 91.98 per cent. The salary of a student nurse rose from $1638 to $5798—254 per cent; of a registered nurse from $3006 to $8575—185 per cent; of a resident medical officer from $4804 to $11,940—149 per cent; and the salary of the average male adult wage in Victoria rose from $3207 to $7732—141 per cent.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! I realize that the honorable member is quoting extensively dates and statistics, but he appears to be reading a considerable portion of his speech which, he is aware, under the Standing Orders is not permitted.

Mr ROPER—I thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for your guidance. In Victoria this year some $25 million will be paid to visiting medical officers, either on a sessional or modified fee for service basis, for patients for whom there would have been no payment previously. Equally, we know that the increase in the nursing curriculum to 1600 hours will also add significant costs. Mr Fraser and Mr Hunt are not saying that any of these necessary reforms—equal pay, or a fair wage for nurses—should be removed. They are in effect saying that we now have to reduce the level of services provided. We are certainly fortunate that these first Draconian measures of the Commonwealth Government were set aside by subsequent decisions. The Minister of Health says "defeated". We are very glad that the New South Wales Minister of Health, Mr Stewart, carried out the work he did in defeating those measurers. It was a very important victory for the State because, in the Minister's own words, Victoria would have lost $38.5 million. Victoria would have had no option other than to drastically reduce services or substantially reduce the number of staff.

We should not be blaming patients or hospitals; we ought to be looking at the whole system, not the limited inquiry that is being conducted. Most certainly that is a bite off a substantial chunk, because of State pressures and not because of Commonwealth intentions.

The idea of a national inquiry to look into all aspects of health services was put forward by the Labor Party on 3 January 1978 when I proposed a national board of inquiry to look at all health costs—doctors, hospitals, private funds, domiciliary services. The list was long and included looking at alternative methods of providing services. It is very important, if we are looking at hospital services, that we look at domiciliary services and other methods of delivering services.

Instead, two years later we have a Commonwealth inquiry which still has restricted terms of reference. I wish to briefly examine some of the issues which need to be examined. Patient usage of hospitals must be amongst those. But we are confronted by a lack of data either about what has gone on in the past or what is now going on in our health services. Indeed, by destroying...
the Medibank data base and then abolishing the 40 per cent Commonwealth medical benefits the one nation-wide collection of useful statistics was destroyed.

We do not know what is going on in either public or private hospitals. I wish to quote an answer to a question asked by my Federal colleague, Senator Button, on 24 May this year, as recorded at page 2413 of Federal Hansard:

No complete coverage statistics are available of the incidence of surgical operations in Australia. That information is needed. It has started to be collected in New South Wales and Western Australia in particular, and to a lesser extent in Queensland, but that information is also needed in Victoria. I understand that steps are being taken to collect that information for public and private hospitals.

We need for instance far more effective utilization of our hospital resources, both through admissions control and control of the length of stay of patients. We need to ask, "Is the admission necessary? Is the procedure necessary? Could other services provide the treatment on a more cost-effective basis?" For instance, could domiciliary services be used as opposed to institutional services, or educational services as opposed to treatment after the condition has occurred or worsened.

It is interesting to look at some of the studies that have been done. The New South Wales Health Commission's sponsored study at the Mercy Hospital in Sydney suggested that length of stay can be reduced without a deleterious effect on the patient. The hospital is recognized as one of the most efficient in New South Wales, and also by Australian standards. Peer review, clinical meetings, medical audits and second opinion before surgery are some methods which must be examined.

We also need to look at the question of the prevalence of discretionary surgery. For instance, in New South Wales 20 per cent of the 0–15 years age group have had their tonsils removed compared with 4 per cent in Uppsala in Sweden. Australia has doubled the rate of appendectomies when compared with Britain and Canada.

We need to examine efficiency, particularly methods of rewarding efficiency.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! The honorable member is reading his speech when he knows that is out of order.

Mr ROPER—There is little material reward for being more efficient within the present system of hospital accounting. Amongst the general factors affecting hospital efficiency which need to be improved are current incentives for hospital efficiency. We need to look at the fact that the hospital budget is determined, to a large degree, by its budget for the previous year. This system has inherent penalties and rewards. Should a hospital end the year with a surplus, it is likely to find that it receives less the next year or, alternatively, if it expends less than the set budget its penalty may be a reduced allocation in subsequent years. By interjection, the Minister of Health says that it is a bit like Government departments. The Opposition believes that needs to be also carefully examined. In a situation where the hospital exceeds its budget it might be rewarded by receiving improved allocations.

There is a lack of adequate accountability of expenditure by those who incur it within the hospital system. Departmental responsibility for budgeting is non-existent in many hospitals. The present financial system does not facilitate that. The medical work force has little or no responsibility for the costs they generate. That can be seen particularly in the diagnostic services area. The training system is also against giving doctors a sense of cost control before they go into private practice. I suspect that honorable members have seen examples of this.

Because of rigidity in the budgetary system, it is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to transfer amounts to other headings.

Comparative reporting systems are being built up in Australian States and are going to be useful through Hospower in Victoria. They need to be developed more, looking at more aspects
of individual hospitals. If we know more about hospitals we will make better judgments.

Further, our hospital spending is not helped by the complexity of State and Federal funding. The dual funding system previously enabled both parties to abdicate their responsibility for greater control over expenditure of public moneys. That occurs frequently. There should be a relationship between the funding mechanism of different aspects of hospitals, nursing homes, community health centres and the like so that, when Senator Margaret Guilfoyle unveils a plaque for the nursing home wing at a country hospital, it is not left to the State Government to bear the full cost of running that hospital because the Federal Minister for Health says that it is not part of his cost-sharing responsibility. I do not suggest that Senator Guilfoyle or any other Minister—Labor or Liberal—should not unveil plaques, but when that occurs in a nursing home or a service for the handicapped the State has a right to expect that the Commonwealth will then contribute towards the running costs of the institution.

The Minister of Health rightly remarked that the ongoing cost is the larger amount. There are other problems. If a hospital maintains a more efficient use of beds this will possibly result in lower occupancy and in the closure of beds resulting in unemployment and other threats to those working in the hospital. To date cost-cutting measures used have tended to penalize those that have been lean in the past and penalize least those that had a previous amount of fat. We need to educate those managing health services in the more efficient use of resources.

We can tend to be too conservative in public administration and especially in such old professions as nursing and medicine. We need to look at ways of improving the way in which Government inquiries examine costs when looking at the services that must be provided.

We should develop a philosophy of seeking small savings, the additive effect of which is to achieve large ones. We also need to plan on the basis of meeting need rather than demand and to ensure a fairer distribution of existing services. These two objectives can often appear contradictory, but the Government has to develop the capacity for saying "No" to boards of management which want to expand services. We do not need a Royal Melbourne Hospital in every suburb and major country town.

I take up the Minister's "hear hear". Prior to the last election I was saying, "No," or "it needs to be examined", while the Premier and the Minister of Health were saying, "Yes" to all kinds of propositions. We are now spending money on projects from budgets which this Parliament will not see for two or three years, and the Government told institutions that, on the basis of a letter, they can apply for Government-guaranteed loans from banks. The Minister knows that that is so. The money is not there.

We also need to examine—this does not seem to be properly realized—the situation of mental health services which have been the Cinderella service and the funding of which has been avoided by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should contribute to the running of the State's psychiatric services, just as it does to the operation of the acute hospitals. Debate on the Budget does not allow the time to talk about the need to examine lifestyle diseases; there will be other occasions.

The inquiry needs to study the present pattern of diagnostic and other services. Are we getting value for the pathology and radiology dollar? I understand, from the annual report of the Victorian Cytology (Gynaecological) Service at Prince Henry's Hospital, that it costs $2.82 a smear which compares with the current schedule fee for $9.40 a smear. That is a most efficient laboratory. But private practitioners still send smears to private laboratories on the grounds of free enterprise although the most efficient processing is done at Prince Henry's Hospital and also they do the most difficult analyses.

As a community, we also need to examine the manpower available. Are we training too many members in any of the health professions? Does this then
cost the State more than it should? The Minister says, “Yes” and I am inclined to agree with him. It is now accepted that we are developing an over-supply of doctors. Dr McEwin, Chairman of the New South Wales Health Commission, in a recent address to the ANZAAS Congress, said:

It is estimated that on average an over-supply of only 100 medical practitioners could generate between $6 million and $20 million of unnecessary yearly expenditure with accumulative effect over the years.

We do not know what the doctors are doing. There is no information about public hospitals, let alone private hospitals. There are, however, enough indications to be concerned. There are different views about the need for operations such as tonsillectomies, hysterectomies, appendectomies and so on. But the situation is that probably far too many of these operations are being done. Our rate is higher than almost anywhere else in the world and this places Victorians at risk.

The sitting was suspended at 6.16 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.

Mr ROPER—Before the suspension of the sitting, I was referring to the various threats from the Federal Government to the State’s health services. Another threat to the health services is the State Budget. I should like to have incorporated in Hansard a number of tables which clearly show the State’s health Budget broken down into a number of major areas. These tables have been prepared for me with the approval of the Treasurer by Treasury staff. The tables set out hospital services; overall health appropriations; community health appropriations; mental health appropriations and dental health appropriations, which are contained in a variety of different appropriations in the Budget. I seek leave for these tables to be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the tables were as follows:

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<th>HEALTH SERVICES</th>
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<td>1979–80 BUDGET</td>
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Page 23 Consolidated Fund

Allocation | $652 million
Provision for total expenditure | $599 million
Increase over 1978–79 | $53.6 million
Mr ROPER—These tables show that in one main area it is not clear on what basis the hospital expenditure is determined, whether there is any facility for additional services—given that some substantial additional services were agreed to in the last financial year—or whether there is enough money to run hospital services this financial year. It is not clear from these figures whether there is enough money to ensure that the present level of hospital services can be maintained.
It is clear, however, that there will be no money for new units or services. The agreement with the Commonwealth expires on 30 June 1980. It is hoped that Victoria may be spared because of the impending Federal election. The fact that Victoria might lose thousands of hospital jobs may have more influence on the Federal Government than the carrying out of the inquiry.

However, Victoria has only another few months of the agreement. The Hamer Government unlike other States deliberately sought a five-year agreement rather than a ten-year agreement. Worse than that, many facilities have already been completed and others are being completed for which there is no guarantee that these facilities will be used. There are 100 beds at the Alfred Hospital which may never be used; 150 additional beds at the Austin Hospital and 200 beds at the Essendon and District Memorial Hospital. Other units are being erected around the State.

The Labor Party wants a clear statement on whether staff will be available and, more importantly, if staff will be made available, which services will be closed or reduced, so that those beds can be staffed. The Labor Party has stated that no new service should open or be built unless money is available. The Government should adopt the type of honesty that the Parliamentary Labor Party has been putting forward over the past three years.

During the Committee stage of the Budget debate, the Labor Party will refer to the various items and the severe difficulties that the appropriations will cause. This Budget has done nothing to improve health services for Victorians and, indeed, in a number of important areas the Budget has exacerbated the situation. The Labor Party hopes that future Budgets will be of more use to the health of Victorians.

Mr Jasper (Murray Valley)—I have examined the Budget Papers and tried to analyse where the Government is expending most of its money. Four areas need to be examined when analysing the Budget Papers: Firstly, where Government money, which is shown as income for the next twelve months, will be spent. Secondly, from where those funds will be raised to undertake the programmes detailed by the Government. Thirdly, the priorities established by the Government. Fourthly, the economies the Government may institute when it is producing the Budget, which will probably be the most difficult to analyse or to find in the Budget Papers.

It is easy to look at the areas to determine where the expenditure will be allocated. It is certainly easy to see from where the Government estimates the income will be derived. Most of the Government's priorities over the next twelve months can probably be established by reading the Budget Papers. However, the National Party certainly cannot define any areas where the Government has said it will try to economize and obtain the best value for the revenue dollar.

The Government has stated that pensioner registrations will be reduced. The National Party applauds that policy. However, nowhere in the Budget is there any actual estimate of how much money this will cost the Government in a full twelve months.

There has been much debate about the reduction in motor registration charges but, once again, the Government has not provided any estimates or analysis of how it proposes reducing these registration charges and what these reductions will cost. If the Government is going to reduce registration charges by, for example, 15 per cent, that will cost the Government between $10 million and $15 million.

An air of uncertainty exists throughout Victoria in industry, commerce and the work force generally. Both the State and Federal Governments are responsible. However, the National Party is analysing the Victorian Government's Budget.

It is this Government's responsibility to stimulate the economy, business and industry. It is difficult to find evidence of any stimuli provided by the Budget.

Major employment in any economy is created by private enterprise. The Government is an employer but if it can stimulate private enterprise so that
business generally can operate more effectively and at full pressure, more people will be employed throughout the community.

The Government is to be congratulated on many areas in the Budget. The National Party applauds the increase in pay-roll tax exemptions from the base rate of $66,000 to $84,000; the reduction in motor registration charges for pensioners; the increased education allowances and grants to schools; the additional assistance to non-Government schools; the increase in gift duty exemption from $10,000 to $15,000; and the probate exemption for estates passing to grandchildren. However, these measures will not become effective until they are debated and passed through Parliament.

The National Party expresses its concern that a directive from the Premier that Government departments cut their expenditure by 4 per cent has not been adhered to. If one examines the Budget Papers and analyses the amount that has been allocated to Government departments this financial year, one will see that there has been an increase of approximately 13.5 per cent to $2,416 million. The Premier indicated that Government departments should cut their expenditure by 4 per cent. Victoria has an inflation rate of 10 per cent. Therefore, the maximum increase in spending by Government departments should be 6 per cent and not 13.5 per cent as revealed in the Budget Papers.

Page 11 of the Budget speech reveals that the total works programme of Government departments and major statutory authorities in 1979-80 is estimated to be $1,457 million—an increase of $124 million over last year. That is incongruous when the Budget's summary at page 4 is examined. Appropriations for works and services this year amount to $390 million, which is a decrease of $41 million over last year. In the first part of the Budget speech, the Government states that there will be an increase in money being spent by the Government and statutory authorities on public works and services. However, when one examines a summary of the expenditure by the Government, one discovers there is a drop of $41 million.

The Budget will be inflationary and what the Government should do is to change its priorities so that more money is spent through public works and services, which would stimulate the economy and provide greater employment. There should be a cutback in the expenditure of Government departments. I should like to see better value and better results for each revenue dollar the Government puts into Government departments.

Another area about which I am concerned is revealed by the Budget Papers. The documents make it apparent that there is an increase in the allocations to what I regard as the traditional and glamour departments. For example, the allocation going to the Education Department, which is 39 per cent of the entire State Budget, is $1,385 million, an increase of $105 million; the estimate of expenditure for the Health Commission is $652 million, an increase of $54 million; the allocation for the Ministry for the Arts is $52 million, an increase of $5 million over the expenditure of that Ministry last year; and there is an increase of $1 million in the allocation to the Ministry for Conservation, taking its allocation to $31 million.

I mention those figures because I want to compare them with the amount being allocated to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, $89.5 million, which represents an increase of $400,000 over last year's expenditure. That is a meagre increase when it is compared with the huge increases being made available to the departments I have mentioned. The works and services programme of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has been cut by $6.1 million to $31.7 million. In 1977-78 the expenditure by the commission on works and services was $46.8 million. Therefore, over the two years since 1977-78, there has been a large decrease. The allocation was $46.8 million in 1977-78, it was $37.8 million last year and this year it has been cut to $31.7 million. Those figures show quite clearly that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is not receiving the funds
it should be receiving in order to provide essential country water supply and sewerage projects as well as irrigation projects.

Figures supplied to me by the Water Commission indicate that it has approved country water supply and sewerage projects worth more than $63 million which it cannot fund. That highlights the Government's priorities. Page 32 of the Budget speech states:

The Government has supported country water authorities in their endeavours to improve the quality of water supply. The Government has continued its substantial financial assistance to country water and sewerage authorities.

The proposed works programme for local water and sewerage authorities, including funds from private borrowings and from the Works and Services account in the current year, is estimated at $44.4 million. That sounds really great and as though a huge amount of money has been allocated when compared with last year, but the amount spent on works and services for country water supply and sewerage projects last year was $47.7 million. Therefore, the Government has cut the allocation by $4.3 million.

The Budget speech certainly reads well, but if one puts it in the proper perspective one realizes that, if decentralization is to work and if there is to be equality of opportunity for country people, the essential services they require, such as good water supplies and adequate sewerage, must be provided. The Government must rethink its priorities and provide additional funds in those areas by cutting back the additional funds being provided for education, conservation and the arts.

It is not good enough for the Government to spend money on conservation and to attempt to deal with pollution of streams and pollution of the air by having officers from the department visit country towns and cities and attempt to dictate to the people and industries there the actions they should be taking. All of that is of very little use if the essential services are not provided.

To illustrate my point I need only give the example of my home town, Rutherford, which takes its water supply direct from the River Murray without any filtration. How that town has not suffered an epidemic or other problems I do not know, because the E. coli count is extremely high and on many occasions the water is hardly worth drinking. Despite that, money is being allocated to the Ministry for Conservation and the Environment Protection Authority in an endeavour to improve pollution without proper consideration being given to the provision of essential services so that people can live properly in country communities. I hope the Government will take note of my comments and realize that it must rethink its priorities in these areas.

It is obvious that there are many matters covered by the Budget about which I would like to speak, but I shall not in the time available to me have the opportunity of doing so. One area with which I shall deal is local government. Local government is the third tier of government and all Governments say that local government is vitally important and must receive consideration in all areas. This Budget speech requires only three-quarters of a page to deal with all the assistance to be provided to local government. At page 36, the speech states:

Despite the relative advantage gained by local government from the Commonwealth at the Premiers Conference, this Budget maintains existing subsidy arrangements.

There has been no increase, despite the fact that Government departments are receiving increases of millions of dollars. There has been no increase to assist local government to provide services such as libraries, home help, baby health centres and pre-schools, and the Municipalities Assistance Fund grant, which was $4000 to cities and $5000 to towns, has not been increased for many years. These services should be provided not only in country areas but in all municipalities throughout the State.

The local councils are being left to their own devices in trying to provide these services and, although I appreciate the assistance the Government has given in these areas in the past. I reiterate that the Budget contains no increase, which makes it extremely difficult for local government to provide the additional support services required. The Government must provide more assistance to local government.
I now turn to employment. At page 38 the Budget speech states:

One of the problems of our current employment situation has been the position of young people.

The Government has taken some initiatives in this area for which it ought to be congratulated. Those include the paying of workers compensation for first-year apprentices, increased living-away-from-home allowances for country apprentices attending block release training in the metropolitan area, a doubling of the work experience programme in secondary schools and the rural employment schemes, which have been of assistance to country Victoria and have provided some stimulus to employment.

All of those projects have been commendable, but once again the Budget does not do enough to stimulate the economy. If private enterprise could be given confidence it would expand and would employ additional people. That is the area in which I believe the greatest thrust to additional employment could be provided, and it is the area the Government should be attempting to stimulate.

Mr Simmonds—How would you go about it?

Mr JASPER—I shall detail that in just a few moments, if the honorable member would care to listen patiently. As I said earlier, more funds must be spent on works and services. The Government has cut back its programme from $431 million last year to an estimated $390 million for the current financial year. I have already mentioned the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and detailed the way in which its funds have been cut back. I reiterate that more money in this area would mean an expansion of works and services and it would allow country water supply and sewerage projects to be developed.

The Government must also provide business with incentives because if business receives incentives it will employ more people. When speaking in the debate on the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) (Licence Fees) Bill I dealt to some extent with the effects of the State Budget on the motor industry, which is the second largest employer in Victoria. Additional money will be coming from that industry to the Government through the fuel tax, which is now 1·2 cents a litre and which it is estimated will bring the Government approximately $60 million in a full year. The increased stamp duty on the purchase and transfer of motor vehicles—the duty has been increased from 2·5 per cent to 4·5 per cent—is estimated in the Budget Papers to bring in an additional $40 million a year. The surcharge on third-party insurance premiums has been increased by 100 per cent, from $4 to $8, and that increase is expected to bring in an extra $8 million in a full year.

There is a limit to what any industry can take and the motor industry is now in disarray. It does not know what the Government will do next to attack it. The measures proposed and introduced by the Government will be the straws that will break the camel's back. Leading people in the industry have told me that they believe there will be a great downturn in the motor industry. I reiterate that that industry is the second largest employer of labour in Victoria. It should be stimulated, not attacked in the way in which the Government has attacked it.

I shall discuss this matter further during the debate on the Stamps (Amendment) Bill, but I point out to honorable members that it is estimated that the motor industry will be paying an additional $108 million into State coffers. A large percentage of that money will go to the Consolidated Fund and will be spent in other areas than roads.

I have dealt with areas in which I believe employment could be stimulated right across Victoria. I have mentioned three areas in particular and I shall now mention another. The Government should maintain the flow of money through the Public Works Department. It is most demoralizing for a contractor to be told that his tender is successful and that the job will be going ahead and then to be informed that funds are not available and the job will not be proceeded with.
On many projects throughout country Victoria over the past three or four months, and probably in metropolitan areas as well, the Public Works Department has called for tenders on schools and other projects. The successful tenderer has found that, although he has been successful and has prepared to take on the job, the Government has said that the project cannot proceed, that it does not have the money for it or that there has been a change in priorities. The Government has changed the priority of many jobs. This situation is not good for industry or for the firms which are tendering. They lose confidence in the Government, and so they curtail their whole operation. Apart from the cost of preparing tenders, they decide that it is not worth while even tendering for a job because even if they are successful it will probably be changed.

I have mentioned those areas because they are areas that the Government should be examining with a view to providing additional employment and stimulating the whole economy. There are many other areas I would like to detail and I will briefly mention two or three.

Pay-roll tax is one area where the Government should be congratulated on extending the exemption at the lower end of the scale from $66 000 to $84 000. This will add stimulus to small business and will assist small business operators in providing employment. However, the exemption should be further extended because the present level only affects businesses employing of the order of ten people. My interpretation of a small business is one employing up to approximately 100 people. Whilst the Government is moving in the right direction, the extension of pay-roll tax exemption to a higher level is desperately needed. If it could be extended to businesses employing up to 100 people, many businesses could employ more staff and that certainly would be a stimulus to employment.

The National Party has sought exemptions from pay-roll tax for primary producers. The small number of primary producers who actually pay pay-roll tax would have little effect on this Budget. The Government should investigate the matter and exempt all primary producers from the payment of pay-roll tax.

As detailed in the Budget, there will be an extension of education grants to schools. Whilst I applaud the increase and whilst I can see merit in it, the whole area of advances to schools needs to be examined because many schools are receiving grants that are not being put to the best advantage. Some schools are finding difficulty in spending money in the right areas. There must be a limit to the facilities that can be provided.

Mr Fordham—What about Scotch College?

Mr JASPER—They have done it on their own.

Mr Fordham—What has that got to do with it?

Mr JASPER—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition brings up Scotch College. The college has done more to help itself than practically any other school that could be mentioned.

Mr Fordham—And the State schools get too much money now?

Mr JASPER—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is saying that he wants a Utopian situation, but there is no way that such a situation could be provided throughout the education system. I know he would like to see increased education allowances and that the sky is the limit.

In the earlier part of my remarks, I stated that this year the amount to be spent on the education system has been increased by $105 million. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition needs to examine his priorities, ensure that he gets them right, and see that the Government spends money on essential services. I hope the Deputy Leader of Opposition is not going to leave the House now because I would like him to hear what I have to say, and I would like to hear him reply later on. Not many people would appreciate his attitude in not wanting money spent on
such essential services as country water supplies and sewerage which I detailed earlier in my remarks. If the honorable member wants to accompany me on a visit to some areas of my electorate, I can show him where money needs to be spent.

Mr Fordham—I know it well.

Mr JASPER—Of course the honorable member has visited my area but his visits have usually been in a social capacity to visit the wineries at Rutherglen! Whilst my constituents appreciate his visits to the wineries, I would like to see him visit the area in an official capacity and I invite him to join me on a visit to some important areas of my electorate where I could show him examples where money should be spent—not only on the education system, but in other areas. Looking at things in a practical light, it is not possible to achieve a Utopian situation and no one in their right mind would think that we ought to do that.

I reiterate that some of the grants going to schools are not being spent as they should be. We have seen situations, for instance, where furniture has been delivered to schools when it has not been required. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and other honorable members will say that there are areas where furniture is required for schools, and I do not deny that. Certain schools within my own electorate require furniture, but the whole question of priorities needs to be examined and put in its proper perspective.

There are other areas I would like to mention, such as public transport and the poor transport provided in country areas, but I will have to do that on another occasion.

Mental retardation is another area where money needs to be spent and I am pleased to hear that the Minister of Health supports me in this regard. I shall be interested to hear what he says has been done in that area. It has been a forgotten area, one in which a lot of money needs to be spent.

There is a lack of understanding of the problems of country people. There is a need for the Government to rethink its priorities and to spend more money on essential services. A stimulus to employment is needed throughout the State. The Government has not taken the lead that it should have taken. I want more money spent on works and services as a true stimulus to private enterprise and to the economy of Victoria to make this a better State in which to live.

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—The Treasurer's Budget, his first, provides for the expenditure of about $4000 million, in round figures, of which some $7 million is allocated to the area of responsibility of the Minister for Minerals and Energy. The allocation does not cover the full responsibilities of the two statutory authorities responsible for the delivery of energy in this State, namely, the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria.

However, the Budget Papers did refer to the semi-Government and local authorities' new money borrowing programme for 1978–79 and 1979–80, and by far the largest allocation of loan borrowings is to be made to the State Electricity Commission. For 1979–80, some $196.5 million has been approved for loan borrowings, and $96.5 million of the sum represents the infrastructure borrowing for the giant Loy Yang project south of Traralgon in the Latrobe Valley. I refer honorable members to my remarks in the House last week in an endeavour to acquaint Parliament with a clearer understanding of the magnitude of that project which Parliament approved in 1974. The latest estimate for the final cost of that project is in excess of $2000 million, which is equivalent to one-half of this year's State Budget.

Honorable members will remember that, in 1974, the total estimated cost was some $1600 million, but that has now risen to more than $2000 million and it is still rising. Expenditure of that magnitude and the Government's acknowledgment of the necessity for
increasing the commission's borrowing programme should mean that Parliament ought to be given more details of accounting. Parliament should be told from where the money will be borrowed, the interest rate and what other conditions are associated with loans, particularly if those borrowings are to be made overseas.

Like the honorable member for Murray Valley, who has just resumed his seat, I register some disquiet about the inadequacy of the Budget Papers in so far as being able to determine precisely where the money is to come from and where it will be spent. I am more than a little concerned that, on more occasions than one, members of this House have asked the Government, the Treasurer and Ministers responsible for various portfolios, to determine and inform the House exactly where expenditure occurs and where the money comes from.

So far as the area of minerals and energy and the State Electricity Commission's responsibilities are concerned, I remind the Government that I asked for a disclosure of the arrangements that had been made to accommodate the State Electricity Commission's need for overseas loan borrowings. In particular, I asked what arrangements had been made with the providers of such funds from overseas sources with respect to interest rates, repayment conditions and other matters that might have been agreed upon. If Parliament is to approve such projects, honorable members are entitled to have that basic information. If such information is not provided when the loan funds are raised, it ought to be provided in some readily accessible form when the Treasurer presents his annual Budget. On this occasion, that information is not available to honorable members. I repeat my previous call that that sort of information be made available.

As I indicated during a previous debate, expenditure of the magnitude of $2000 million, which is equivalent to one-half of the State's annual Budget, on that one project—in this current financial year the commission will be spending something like $160 million to $170 million, or $500 000 every day of the week, every week of the year—places a responsibility on the Government to ensure that that level of expenditure does not disadvantage the area in which the expenditure occurs.

That is because the area concerned does not have the wherewithal to withstand the increased and accelerated pressures that are placed on it in trying to cope with the movement of goods and vehicles and the demand for housing and services that will naturally occur with the massive expenditure.

I shall not traverse the same ground as I did last week when I called upon the Government to honour an election pledge to establish a "Special fund", other than to stress again the need for the Government to acknowledge that additional planning and expenditure are required now in the Latrobe Valley so that the needs of the whole State can be met without disadvantaging those people who have to put up with the expenditure of that money and the development that is occurring there for the benefit of the State.

While I am referring to the expenditure of the State Electricity Commission and to the reference by the Treasurer in the Budget Papers to the commission's loan borrowings, I also want to amplify some of the remarks made by my colleague, the shadow Minister of Housing, when he made his contribution to the debate. The honorable member for Carrum pointed to a cleverly disguised figure hidden away in the Budget Papers which referred to the contribution that the State Electricity Commission has made to the general housing grant that Victoria will receive in the 1979-80 financial year. The shadow Minister of Housing pointed out that the Government, in its allocation of State revenue to housing in Victoria, included a figure of $6 million, which he said had been made available by the State Electricity Commission. Presumably the Federal Government, in determining its matching grant, took into consideration the $6 million that was supposed— I use the word advisedly—made available by the commission.
The Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement makes funds available to the States, on a subsidized interest basis, for so-called welfare housing for the needy and disadvantaged in the community. That fact ought to be borne in mind while I continue with my remarks.

Hidden away one finds a brief and obscure reference to some $6 million supposedly made available by the State Electricity Commission. A more detailed examination of that reference clearly shows that it refers to the amount that the State Electricity Commission has been able to secure from the National Bank for the provision of housing for construction workers and commission personnel at the Loy Yang project in the Latrobe Valley, to which I referred earlier. The average wage of the construction worker at Loy Yang and of the State Electricity Commission worker who could afford to purchase that form of housing can be two to three times more than that stated under the eligibility test for the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement.

I wonder whether the Minister of Housing or the Government made that known to the Commonwealth Government when negotiating the amount that the State was to receive in subsidized low-interest money for welfare housing, or whether that was a sleight of hand—a confidence trick—played on the Minister's Federal colleagues under this new brand of federalism? I regard this matter as serious, because it has much wider implications. From the outset honorable members have been told by the former Minister of Housing, the Minister for Minerals and Energy, and other Government spokesmen that housing for construction workers on the Loy Yang project was being financed by private entrepreneurs, developers and builders.

The Government made great play of an announcement that up to 1000 homes would be provided for the workforce necessary for that mammoth power station, and that finance for those homes would come from the builders and developers. As recently as this session, the Minister for Minerals and Energy repeated the statement.

My interest was further heightened by the reference by my colleague, the shadow Minister of Housing, to the item in the Budget Papers that $6 million had been made available to the Housing Commission by the State Electricity Commission, and I made further investigations. What did I find? I found that the Secretary of the State Electricity Commission was not aware that any reference to that had been made in the Budget Papers. He said that further inquiries would need to be made, and, when that was done, I was informed that the money was not made available to the Housing Commission; $6 million was the amount necessary to build the first 300 of the 1000-home programme that was to be financed by the local entrepreneurs.

However, it was not financed by the entrepreneurs because the interest on the finance that they offered was too high for the Government or the State Electricity Commission to accept. When told of the high interest rates involved, the commission said, "Hang on, we will arrange our own finance." The commission went to the National Bank and arranged for the $6 million to be advanced; it was not done by the Government or the Housing Commission. That $6 million provided by the State Electricity Commission through the National Bank is the amount that is to be used for the 300-home project by way of bridging finance. It will not be made available to the Housing Commission. The only connection that the Housing Commission has in the matter is in the supervision and administration of the building programme. Nevertheless it was stated in the Budget Papers that $6 million was to be paid to the Housing Commission, and presumably the Federal Government will be informed that that is closely related to welfare housing. Nothing could be further from the truth, and the very fact that the Government chose such an elaborate method to disguise facts and figures makes it stand condemned now for the folly it has committed.
I call upon the Treasurer, as the prime spokesman, the Minister responsible for budgetary matters in Victoria, to make some disclosure of the way in which the Commonwealth Government and the Victorian Parliament have been misled in this area.

As the shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy and the member representing the electorate of Morwell in the Latrobe Valley where this development is taking place, I state clearly that there is a real demand for housing in the Latrobe Valley. I have mentioned this on previous occasions. There has been and is now a demand for the State Electricity Commission to accept some responsibility for the financing of single men's accommodation in the Latrobe Valley to cater for the work force who will be encouraged to work on the project but do not wish to take their families there, or for those without families who are needed for the execution of the work.

The State Electricity Commission has so far denied responsibility for financing housing areas. It seems strange that, after all those denials of responsibility, it has now been caught up in arranging $6 million for the financing of a housing project which the Government, through the former Minister of Housing and the Minister for Minerals and Energy, claimed was to be provided by private entrepreneurs. So much for private enterprise! So much for the glib statements made by Ministers in the past!

Another area of the administration of the State Electricity Commission that has concerned me is the announcement that the commission intends to investigate and seriously consider the closure of the domestic briquette packaging plant in Morwell. I mentioned previously during a debate that the understanding is that the State Electricity Commission is now considering a proposal to continue only with the manufacture of industrial briquettes.

Mr Amos

In reply to questions I asked in Parliament, the Minister for Minerals and Energy wrote to me on 16 October, stating, *inter alia:*

The main market for briquettes now and for the foreseeable future is industrial applications, particularly as a replacement for the more scarce fossil fuels. The factory was designed to produce both the domestic and industrial type briquettes.

He went on to refer to the drop-off in the demand for domestic briquettes and claimed that the annual production of the factory was currently 1.1 million tonnes, and that domestic-type briquettes amounted to only about 10 per cent of the production.

I should have thought that a Government led by a Premier who has made such pious statements about the need for energy conservation as has the Victorian Premier would have done something more to encourage Victorians to use more domestic briquettes when it is faced with a reduction in demand. What does the Government do and what does the State Electricity Commission do? They talk about closing down production because of a reduction in demand, not about encouraging the use of this abundant fuel.

Not long ago, the State Electricity Commission spent $308 000 on a modern packaging plant to make the domestic briquette more attractive to domestic consumers. That investment, coupled with the Government’s stated desire for people to use a more abundant resource than imported fuel oil or, indeed, the more finite LPG or natural gas, should have encouraged Victorians, by a vigorous Government promotion campaign, to use more briquettes. The Government should have encouraged research into the manufacture of a more efficient type of burner—a cleaner, more attractive type of domestic heater or hot water appliance that uses briquettes—but that has not been the case. A simple analysis of the allocations made in the area of research to which I have referred shows clearly that the Government has not bothered to interest itself in the promotion of that sort of research.
I believe it is sheer folly, because of the drop in demand, for the Government to close the plant altogether at a time when there are escalated fuel oil prices and when LPG prices are going out of the ceiling because of the Federal Government’s policy. The Victorian Government is neglecting the real responsibility that has been placed on it in the allocation of energy resources.

The other matter to which I refer is the allocation made to the Department of Minerals and Energy for staff and, more particularly, the priority of the department, and of the Government, in discharging the obligation of Parliament. I refer to the proclamation—that is, the actual putting into effect—of an Act of Parliament that was passed eleven years ago. I refer to the Liquefied Gases Act. Honorable members have had many representations made to them about promoting the use of more liquefied petroleum gas because of the current fuel crisis and because of the current oil prices. There have been pious statements made by the Premier and the Government in respect of the greater use of LPG. On a number of occasions the Government has said that it will ensure that the use of LPG will not create any safety hazard to Victorians, and yet for the past eleven years an Act of this Parliament has been sitting in limbo waiting to be proclaimed only because the Government, the department, and the Minister for Minerals and Energy, have not drafted the necessary regulations to make the Act work.

I need not remind honorable members of the times I have raised that issue in this Parliament, particularly over the past three years. I asked the Library staff to detail for me the number of times I have raised that matter, and I have a list here which is too long for me to quote from or to refer to in detail considering the time left to me in this debate. Suffice for me to say that on each occasion I have raised the issue about the proclamation of the Act and the gazetting of the regulations, the Minister has replied that they are “just around the corner”. He said on one occasion that within the next few weeks he hoped the regulations would be drafted and the Act proclaimed. Only four weeks ago—the last occasion to which I can refer—the Minister said in this House, “Yes, they have now been drafted. They have been considered. Parliamentary Counsel is considering them and within a couple of weeks I hope to have the Act proclaimed.” I hope I am not doing the Minister an injustice by paraphrasing his remarks at that time, but today is 23 October, four weeks later, and I have been informed today that the Act has still not been proclaimed.

Eleven years after the Act was passed by this Parliament, there are no safety regulations for the safe transportation of liquefied gases in the State. Overseas countries have witnessed major tragedies in the transportation of this inflammable liquid, but this has had no bearing on the Government, and not one scintilla of concern has been shown by the Government in the appointment of staff necessary for the drafting of the regulations.

In 1974 the State Ombudsman criticized the department, and the Government, because a report that he investigated quite clearly showed that the department was understaffed and did not have the necessary expertise to draft the regulations. He was promised in 1974 that extra staff would be appointed and that the regulations would be drafted within a short time. What does the Government mean by a short time? I would have thought that the “short time” as indicated to the Ombudsman in 1974 would have meant 1975 at the very latest, but five years later in 1979 there are still no safety regulations. When the Minister was questioned about it, all he said was that it is a very complex matter which requires work; it requires staff and they have not had the time. If the Government administers Acts of Parliament in the same way as it administers other areas of responsibility, then God help Victoria. This one reference alone to Government administration clearly shows the neglect of the Government in responsibilities concerning the State. It is not
concerned with the fundamental issues of administration, nor is it concerned with the issue of safety, irrespective of world events that have time and again been brought to its notice.

The Budget shows that there is a real need for the Treasurer to inform the House exactly how Government expenditure occurs and from where finance and revenue originates, and I call on him to answer my earlier remarks as they relate to the State Electricity Commission.

Mr McArdur (Ringwood)—I wish to congratulate the Treasurer on the presentation of his first Budget, which I believe typifies this man's responsibility to the wishes of the community over many years. It is a business-like Budget and, above all, a responsible Budget, because it has been produced with no deficit, something to which the community in Victoria has become accustomed.

I wish to comment briefly on some of the issues mentioned in the Budget for which the Government has been responsible, and issues which have been acclaimed publicly by the community. One of the earlier speakers, the honorable member for Murray Valley, challenged the Government, and said that the Government was not stimulating the economy of this State. Within the scope in which a State Government, as compared with a Federal Government, can stimulate the economy.

I shall mention three points which should be made in answer to the honorable member for Murray Valley. One, of course, is the additional $10 million which will be made available to co-operative housing in this State. Another is the increase in pay-roll tax exemptions from $66,000 to $84,000. The third point, which I think is unsensational but very important to the stimulus of the economy, is the fact that the Budget is balanced. That is something which we became used to in this State over many years—in the Bolte era, and when the Premier, Mr Hamer, was Treasurer, and now the present Treasurer, the honorable member for Malvern, and the Deputy Premier.

The honorable member for Murray Valley made another point which I must answer. The Minister for Conservation and I heard him say that the conservation budget is up $9 million. The Government claims that this is wrong, and a recheck of the Budget Papers will show that the conservation budget is up by only $1·8 million. A check on page 39 of the Budget will show that the honorable member for Murray Valley appears to have added the works and services amount to the appropriation figure. Honorable members will notice a figure of $22·353 million in the Budget Papers. I believe the honorable member for Murray Valley is ignoring the fact that this figure does not include the works and services figures. These points should be made.

I now touch on the pensioner reduction of 50 per cent for motor registration and third-party insurance. One of the things that have been claimed and promised by this Government over the past year is the 50 per cent reduction in motor registration fees and third-party insurance for pensioners. The honorable member for Greensborough interjects that they are not getting it straight away. Election promises that have been made by any Government over the past decade have meant that they will occur within the three-year term of that Government, and the date, January, mentioned in this regard, represents an early stage of the Government's three-year term. It shows that the Government has been responsive. Some pensioner groups were worried that they would not receive the concession in third-party insurance because it did not appear in the Budget speech. A few meetings were held on this question but the 50 per cent reduction in motor registration fees and third-party insurance for pensioners will take effect from 1 January next.

I wish to refer briefly to education. The public, and the school councils in the Ringwood electorate, which I represent, have recognized that despite a reduction in funds overall, the allocation for buildings has been maintained in this Budget. I congratulate both the
new Ministers, the Minister of Education and the Assistant Minister of Education. The public and community acclaim and recognize the great value of TAFE—Technical and Further Education. Ringwood, the electorate I represent is very well served by the TAFE situation at Box Hill. Also widely recognized is the very sensible adaptation of the core-plus scheme, which has strong support from school councils, is a safeguard against a diminishing school population, or a school population which moves up and down without warning. The core-plus scheme will allow classrooms to be adjusted with the school population.

I mention briefly the police budget. Five years ago the police budget represented $23 per head of population, which was 4.1 per cent of the Budget at that time. The percentage has increased, although not by a huge amount, to 4.7 per cent of the total budget, representing $47 per head of the population. Victoria is well on the way to having 9000 policemen.

I take up a few points made by the honorable member for Doncaster in his speech last week. The honorable member and several other members, including myself, have had the experience of speaking at great length to members of the new squad, the BCI, or the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence, which has been set up by the Chief Commissioner. I congratulate the commissioner for setting it up. This new bureau has been established to assess organized crime and to look at white collar crime, as it is called, and to try and separate innuendo, rumour and hearsay from actual fact. This is a thoroughly worth-while bureau under Superintendent Silvester. Any new bureau has teething problems, and it naturally requires more money. As a member of Parliament I say that this is one of the sections of the Police Force the Government should be interested in strongly supporting.

The bureau seeks to gather evidence in the area of white collar crime and to delve into situations in which so-called respectable businessmen are not exactly what they appear on the surface. I strongly support additional funds being made available to the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence.

Health receives the second largest share of the Budget. Its allocation is huge. Of course, the biggest problem is the containment of costs and the present Minister of Health has handled this problem magnificently. He has been the Minister for only a short time and has done a superb job. He has to avoid irresponsible spending and must attempt to discourage excessive spending by autonomous hospital groups right around the State who all quite rightly are doing their jobs. In the past there has been a great overlap of all sorts of health services but the new Minister of Health has acted in a positive manner and has sought to stop the overlapping. He has brought rationalization to health care.

One of the most frequently publicized areas of health care is casualty services. I represent the electorate of Ringwood, which includes the Maroondah Hospital. That hospital has done very well in the past few months because of the Minister. On 19 April this year the Premier inspected the hospital and from that time the die was cast and the plans for the casualty section had to take another direction. From that time until only a few weeks ago the present Minister of Health, working with the management committee, local members of Parliament and the Health Commission, has been able to bring about a successful solution to this vexed question. An announcement was made a few weeks ago that the Maroondah Hospital will have a new casualty section by midway through 1980. The building work has in fact already started. The community is satisfied and the management committee is satisfied because of the positive attitude displayed by the present Minister.

The next matter concerning health with which I shall deal is commonly known as the MARP project. That name refers to the Maroondah Alcoholics Recovery project, which is operated by a group of people who are based in Croydon and Bayswater. It has
several homes that have been turned into hostels for people who were alcoholics, some of whom have come from Government institutions.

In the past, the group has had to apply to the Government for intermittent funding because there was some doubt about whether it came under the control of the Department of Health or the Social Welfare Department. It is now the area of the Health Commission and will be able to seek funds on a continuing basis, if possible, from the Government. The claims made by the group are very attractive. They say that on their figures an alcoholic can be treated and rehabilitated at a much lower cost than is the case with Government institutions. Those claims will have to be studied closely to ascertain whether they are accurate, but if they are they will provide food for thought for the future.

The final matter with which I shall deal is transport, which is of vital importance to many people in the electorate I represent. Ringwood is a railway junction and it also has single lines to Croydon and to Bayswater. The Budget mentions the completion of the Macleod to Greensborough railway line, which will be helpful to people in those areas, and states that work is continuing on the duplication of the Croydon and Bayswater lines.

It should be said many times in Parliament that the key to transport in Melbourne is the underground rail loop. In the past, many people have knocked the loop, including honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. The media has made jokes about it and has believed it is a good project to knock. It has become the butt of all jokes. However, more and more people are realizing that it will be of great benefit to the city when it is completed. It is planned that the duplication of the rail lines to Bayswater and Croydon will coincide with the completion of the underground loop. There is no point in having the duplication completed until traffic on the loop is moving. I look forward to that occurring as quickly as possible.

Mr McArthur

I reiterate that the underground loop is the key to transport in Melbourne and when it is completed the Melbourne railway network will be the pride of capital city railway networks in Australia. I congratulate the Treasurer for bringing down a responsive, business-like and responsible Budget, which I commend.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I was also pleased that the new Treasurer brought down the Budget because I have a high regard for him as a person. It is rather a pity that the honorable gentleman is locked into a situation in which the Government cannot be creative in its budgetary policies because it is saddled with a conservative Government in Canberra and it has supported that Government's conservative notions. In a sense, therefore, I am disappointed in the new Treasurer because this is not an imaginative Budget and I am particularly concerned about its implications for community welfare services.

Although there is an over-all increase of 12.7 per cent in payment for community welfare services, which might appear to be a significant increase, the reality is that it is quite insufficient to cope with the essential care and services that are needed in the present economic climate.

The allocation is severely eroded if the municipal and Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rate concessions and the fare concessions are subtracted from it, because those concessions now amount to $34.06 million, which is 29 per cent of the entire provision for community welfare services. I believe those payments should be a charge against the Premier's Department, rather than a charge against the Department of Community Welfare Services. It is nothing short of a hoax for these payments, which cannot be strictly defined as welfare, to be used to present an inflated picture of the Victorian Government's commitment to welfare. I hope the Treasurer will examine this situation next year and that he will ensure that the Budget makes real welfare commitments in the
Department of Community Welfare Services. The commitments owed to Victorians who reach an age at which or who are in a situation in which they cannot manage the full amount of rates or fares will be allocated correctly in the Premier's Account.

If that allocation were charged against the Premier's Department it would be possible to examine the welfare scene in real terms and to compare it with the situation in other States and with the Federal allocation. At present the situation is confusing.

It is now known that under the new Budget arrangements $120 is the upper limit for allowable rebates for Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and municipal rates. I am sure all honorable members will be aware that this is an erosion of the rate concessions previously granted and it means that many elderly people will have to bear an additional financial burden, particularly in areas where rates are reasonably high. In the municipalities of Eltham and Heidelberg in the electorate of Greensborough, many elderly people will have to pay an additional bill which they had not been expecting, particularly because when the Premier gave his speech prior to the election he made a number of commitments concerning concessions for pensioners on motor registration fees and third-party insurance premiums, but at that time the pensioners did not know that the honorable gentleman intended to rob Peter to pay Paul because he made no mention of changing rate concessions.

Having deducted pensioner concessions from the welfare Budget, one finds that all the Budget allocation does is to keep pace with inflation, and in some important areas it is actually well below inflation levels. In real terms the amount of money is very much the same as last year's allocation but because of the economic situation there is a far greater incidence of family and personal breakdown, an increase in the number of adults sentenced to imprisonment and an upsurge in alcohol and drug-related crimes. These problems are directly related to the economic priorities of the Federal Government and the State Government, which has gone along with the ideas of the Federal Government. Those Governments have deliberately chosen to allow a certain section of society to go to the wall but have not been prepared to provide in their Budgets the appropriate band-aid to prop up that section of society.

The Federal and State Governments cannot have it both ways. They must make a decision about allocating sufficient funds to provide a guaranteed minimum income and adequate housing. If they are not prepared to do that, they must be prepared to prop up the welfare system. I would prefer that they took action in a socially responsible way by providing a decent minimum income for everyone as well as adequate housing; not only has that not been done, but there has also been no upsurge in welfare spending.

I now turn to correctional services. The general expenses in the Budget have increased by 22.9 per cent. That might be pleasing in one way, but the general expenses for regional services and family and adolescent services, have been increased by only 3.8 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively, which is well below inflation level.

The department appears to have abandoned any idea that prevention is better than cure, and I find that extremely distressing. It seems that more money is being spent on correctional services because the department believes it cannot solve the problems before they happen and has sought to redress the situation by providing tighter security and more prison officers. That is a decline in what was previously a reasonable philosophical commitment to penal reform.

There has been a decrease in money terms in capital works for community welfare services of 29.7 per cent. In real terms it is 39.7 per cent, if one assumes that the inflation rate for the present financial year will be 10.7 per cent. After examining the Federal
situation, I do not believe it could be assumed that the rate will be any less than that. That means that the priorities expressed in the report of the Director-General of Social Welfare for the year ended 30 June 1978 have been disregarded. The director-general said:

The works programme of the department has shown a promising increase, but signs of growth in the prison population and the greater percentage of violent prisoners, alongside outmoded facilities, underline the urgent need for continued significant expenditure here.

There has been an enormous cutback in that area and it is upsetting to discover that the previously held notion of a humane environment in prisons has been disregarded at a time when the State is fairly short of money.

Like most reactionary Governments, this Government is fearful of new ideas and the Budget has cut spending on books and publications in every division of the Department of Community Welfare Services. Everyone remembers the book burning arrangements that were made by totalitarian governments in the past. Although the Government may not be into book burning, it is not allocating sufficient funds and therefore shows the same sort of philosophy. There has been a savage cut in these areas as well as in the amount allocated for postal and telephone expenses.

I have referred to delays in answering correspondence during the past couple of weeks. It takes three months for the Department of Community Welfare Services to answer a letter or to return a telephone call. These further Budget cuts will have a grave effect on the already inadequate services which are provided for people who need welfare services and who cannot wait so long to receive an answer.

The allocation for salaries and payments for the Family and Adolescent Services Division has increased by 6·4 per cent, but for the Training Division the increase is only 4·1 per cent. The increases in both divisions are well below the expected level of inflation and that indicates a winding down of services. Employees within the department have been fearful of this happening but the Budget allocation reveals that it is a reality.

Mrs Toner

The Budget allocations reinforce the widely held view that the move by the department to set up regional offices was a premature move made without the parallel commitment of staffing and funding. Honorable members appreciate that welfare should be a community responsibility but, unless back-up services are provided, the community voluntary agencies, which are very much an integral part of welfare in Victoria, tend to look upon the whole process as a confidence trick because a Government commitment has not been made. The responsibility for providing welfare services is being pushed back to the community, which is being asked to meet the associated funding and staffing responsibilities.

Regional offices have been established in eighteen centres, and 21 sub-regional offices have been located throughout the State. Notwithstanding that, essential services are not being provided.

One of the important responsibilities within the Department of Community Welfare Services relates to probation. There has been a 4·2 per cent increase in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for honorary probation officers. This is a miserable allocation and is an admission that the Victorian Government is prepared to write off a service which has been important over the years and which has made a significant contribution to the rehabilitation of offenders.

If one examines the situation of probation officers who have offered their services, one finds that one-third of them are without a case load. I shall pursue that situation at a later time, but the Budget allocation represents a real diminution in what is a most important area—that of penal reform and the operation of correctional services in this State.

The provision in respect of children or young persons in necessitous circumstances and payments to deserted wives and mothers pursuant to the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1978 has increased from $11 780 790 to $12·11 million, which is an increase of
2·8 per cent. That provision does not seem enough to carry those people through the remainder of this year.

The Opposition endorses the principle that the Commonwealth Government must bear a major responsibility in respect of income security programmes, while the States should concentrate on the provision of personal care and services. The Opposition fully believes that, but nevertheless it rejects the notion that lone parents and their children should be used as pawns in a chess game between the Federal and State Governments. The broad statement was made in the Budget speech:

The State has informed the Commonwealth that it proposes to withdraw from the present sharing arrangements for sole parents as from 1 January 1980—

This statement has had a frightening effect on those people who are concerned, namely, the lone parents in this State. No agreement having been reached between the States and the Federal Government, it was rather premature to promote a situation in which those least able to cope should be left in a state of uncertainty while the chess game proceeds.

The fact that only $4·9 million has been allocated under the works and services account for correctional services means, as I indicated earlier, that little significant improvement will be made to archaic prison conditions in this State. The plans for the long-term high security prison at Castlemaine, the remand centre in the city and the prison at Beechworth, which honorable members heard about from the National Party this morning, are still on the drawing board. It is not good enough for those people who expect rehabilitation from correctional services, but it should be remembered that it will be the families of those people who will suffer.

The Budget provision for community welfare services presents a grim picture when set against the high ideals contained in the White Paper on “The future of Social Welfare in Victoria”, which was presented to the Victorian Parliament in 1978. Whatever else honorable members might say about the Budget, they cannot say that it is a nice Budget for the poor and needy. The problem of welfare assistance is compounded by the miserable approach by the Victorian Liberal Government to public housing.

In contrast to the Victorian Budget, the New South Wales Budget made a new allocation of $50 million to its State housing authority. Figures released by the Federal Department of Housing and Construction show that of all Australian States only Queensland—I do not think any honorable member thinks highly of that State’s commitment to people in need of welfare—spends less per capita on public housing than Victoria. In 1978-79, Victoria spent only $8·98 per capita on public housing whereas the Australian average was $18·28. The highest spending was in the Labor-held State of Tasmania, where per capita spending on public housing was $35·20.

Mr Speaker, as in my own electorate of Greensborough and your electorate of Evelyn, you will be conscious of the fact that if anybody comes to you or to me with a housing problem, we have no solution to offer them in terms of public housing. The only choice we have is to send them to the high-rise flats in Richmond and Carlton. Although I do not negate the goodwill and ability of the people to work out their own problems, in Greensborough I do not want to send people out of their local community where support services can be provided and where community groups and structures have been established. Public housing is needed within these communities, but there has been no imaginative move in housing for outer urban areas. They are not currently provided for, and that further compounds the welfare problem.

There are now 22 170 applications on the Housing Commission waiting list, and an estimated 1 per cent of the population is without shelter at all. A recent table on the Budget prepared by the Shelter group indicated that there are at least three times as many households with incomes below the poverty line living in the private rental market as there are total Housing Commission rental dwellings. This includes 92 000 people on pensions and many thousands on unemployment and other benefits such as
family assistance payments. These people often spend more than one-half of their income on rent.

I refer particularly to women and the Shelter report, which indicated that in a recent survey of women leaving Victorian women's refuges, it was found that only 12 per cent were housed by the Housing Commission. Many more sought private accommodation instead, even though this would mean grave financial hardship, because of the lack of available and suitable public housing.

This highlights a point I made earlier concerning people in my own electorate who, after living in the area for 45 years but because of marriage breakdowns are left without appropriate housing, have had to leave the area. It is appropriate that they should be housed within the area in which they have lived and raised their children, instead of having to shift to areas which are totally alien to their lifestyles.

In respect of my own area, I am also very concerned about the education allocation in the Budget. In looking through the allocations in my electorate, I found that the Briar Hill Primary School is to be maintained and painted. It is a shabby old school, one of many shabby old schools in my electorate, but it is one school which has received an allocation under the Budget. It is most distressing, especially to those who have moved to the new area which has been set aside by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the State Government as a preferred development area. People had been informed that if they moved to these preferred development areas, certain priorities would be made in respect of their needs and concerns. People have moved there with the high expectation that their children would receive a reasonable education and that certain provisions would be made for social facilities, but instead, within the whole inspectorate, a Budget allocation has been made in respect of only one shabby old school. It is a tragedy.

I return to the area of community welfare services. I indicated earlier a number of important areas which had been promoted in the White Paper or the annual report of the department but which have received allocations well below the expected level of inflation. These areas will fall down in the provision of welfare services.

Commencing with the provision for salaries and payments in respect of family and adolescent services, there has been a 6.4 per cent increase which is below the expected level of inflation. The allocation for salaries for the Correctional Services Division has been increased by 10.7 per cent, which is about the estimated level of inflation. In the provision for training, the Government does not seem to be worried because it has increased the allocation by only 4.1 per cent, which is well below the inflation level.

On general expenses for all those areas, one finds that for regional services, there has been an increase of 3.18 per cent which honorable members know will not meet the level of inflation expected in the coming year.

For family and adolescent services, the increase is 6.9 per cent. For training the increase is 6.2 per cent, again below the estimated inflation rate for the coming year. For other services, and this relates to family and adolescent services under the heading "Other Services" there has been a big increase —$394,400 instead of last year's allocation of $14,724. I assume that that relates to emergency housing for young people.

Most honorable members will be conscious of the fact that grave problems exist in respect of young people who are unemployed and who are unable to cope with the family situation. There is an enormous need for emergency housing for those people. Before the election this year, there was a song and dance that the State Government was prepared to match the Federal Government in spending on emergency accommodation. In reality, the spending for emergency accommodation is set aside for projects which were previously funded under the Family and Community Services programme. Victoria might receive funds for four or five new programmes if the local

Mrs Toner
municipalities are prepared to contribute something towards the capital expenses. The high expectations of the community in respect of this provision have not been met. People are conscious of the fact that about 1 per cent of the community is not housed, and the Budget does not create much optimism about what will be done for those people in the coming year.

In the area of family and adolescent services, the over-all increase is 1.7 per cent. The Government has given lip service to the commitment to the family, and if the commitment to family and adolescent services does not keep pace with inflation, the gaols will have to be upgraded or one whole section of the community written off. I am fearful, in view of the noises made by the Department of Community Welfare Services in recent times, that this is what is intended. The problem is too difficult for this Government to solve and the people involved may be just locked away in gaols with razor ribbons and so on. Regrettably, although the Victorian Government seemed, until recent times, to have moved towards a more progressive approach to correctional services, it is now moving backwards to a reactionary attitude. In economic terms, in the long run, this will cost the community dearly, and will have a grave effect on families and the community for which the Government pretends to care.

It is a disappointing Budget but perhaps an expected Budget when one considers that every time the Federal Government has brought down a Budget, the Victorian Government, unlike some other Conservative Governments in Australia has said, "Yes, we concede that the priorities of the Federal Government are appropriate". Having said that, I suppose the Government had no alternative in respect of moving to a position of creatively thinking through solutions for the community. There has been a decline in Victoria's position. Although the State has been in the foreground since colonization, it has slipped back in the field of job creation and employment, and in the business situation in terms of the number of businesses that are going bankrupt.

The Government's priorities are wrong. The Government has made the mistake of locking Victoria into the Federal philosophy from which the people of Victoria are becoming more and more alienated. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, represent an area which has the same problems as an outer metropolitan area as the one that I represent, where there is not enough industry, where there are many young people and where there are not enough jobs for them. The Federal Government is cutting back on programmes which provide some sort of impetus for the young to be trained or at least to have somewhere to go in the months when they are unemployed. Nothing imaginative has been provided to replace those programmes. As I said at the outset of my speech, it is a disappointing Budget.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—The new Treasurer is to be commended on his first Budget. The National Party agrees with most of the matters contained therein. They largely reflect the policy of the National Party over recent years in areas of increased pay-roll tax exemptions, pensioner motor car registration fee concessions and increased exemption from gift duty, following largely the removal of probate duty. These matters have all had the strong support of the National Party and probably have been introduced as a result of pressure exerted by the National Party on the Government; it would be illogical for the National Party to criticize them. Faced with the constraints of balancing the Budget, the Treasurer has done a fairly good job.

One matter that concerns members of my party, and which has been mentioned by my colleagues, is the reduction of $40 million this year in the Government's public works programme. Conversely, there has been an increase in administration costs. In five years, the number of public servants in Victoria has increased by 30 per cent. Between 1975–1976, and 1977–1978, the annual
salary of public servants was 27 per cent higher than the rise in average weekly earnings for all employees over the same period. One would accept that during the period the rise in wages of employees generally was fairly generous and, with the indexation provisions, kept largely abreast of inflation. During that time, major gains were made by industrial action. Therefore, an increase of 27 per cent in salaries of public servants, coupled with the increase in their numbers of 30 per cent, represents an extraordinarily high percentage of the public dollar.

It could be said that a large percentage of those salaries has not really been wealth-producing. The salaries have been paid in the service sector, which is extremely vital but, in terms of underpinning the basic economy of the State, the contribution must be accepted as somewhat less than that of other sectors of the community. I am aware that members of the Opposition, which is founded on Socialist principles, would undoubtedly applaud these administrative increases and see justification for them but the National Party believes the Government should not be obsessed with the welfare-State mentality, particularly in an affluent country and an affluent State like Victoria. It should reserve its support for those who are genuinely in need, but it is depressing to human dignity for Government to take care of people from the cradle to the grave. This has been tried in other countries such as Sweden and New Zealand with fairly dire results. New Zealand has a failing economy and there is an influx of people into Australia from that country who are creating more problems than they solve.

To some degree, as the Government moves into this area, we see Socialism by stealth or default, with disadvantage to the private sector because, which after all, is composed of people like me who have mortgages, families and overdrafts, who are trying to make a living from their business, and who are using their abilities and largely bearing their own burdens. If the Government has been at fault in the past few years it has been for failing to support the private sector to the extent that it should. Certainly there has been support for the larger corporate structure but for the smaller business, the independent entrepreneur and the independent enterprise, the Government has not paved the way to extend that it could. It has simply to set up the mechanisms to enable them to function in a competitive environment, ensuring that they are not placed under unusual disadvantages; that there is fair and open competition, that they are not inhibited by too many Government regulations, too much legislation or, perhaps, the undue burden upon them of the whole administrative machine.

The National Party deplores the increase in the area of administration and would much rather have the funds involved expended on public works and services to stimulate building construction—home building and office building. As all honorable members are aware, 95 per cent of works carried out by the Public Works Department is by contractors, the remaining 5 per cent being carried out by day labour. Earlier, in an extremely good speech, my colleague, the honorable member for Murray Valley, stressed that this area should be stimulated. There have been cutbacks in the loan programme to all States of 13.6 per cent in Australian Loan Council allocations. Nevertheless members of the National Party believe the Victorian Government should have done more in the capital works area.

I am glad that the Minister of Public Works is present. In his statement the other day, the honorable gentleman said that he appreciated that he was operating under some difficulties. I particularly applaud his comments that, as Minister of Public Works, he would like to make it clear that, through more efficient management and a maximum regard for consciousness, in his departmental sector, he will ensure that greater value minimizes the effect of the reduced dollar programme.

Mr McInnes
All honorable members know that there have been substantial cutbacks in the housing area. Although the Federal Minister for Housing and Construction, Mr Groom, looks through rose-coloured glasses at the housing area for 1979–80, the industry takes a different view. It does not believe it will be a good year, and points to the various cuts that have been made. The downturn of some 13 per cent in housing commencement is a reflection of that. Yet it is known that there is a continuing need for housing in Victoria. In its 31 August Newsletter, the Master Builders Association of Victoria said that the prospects for sustained housing recovery in 1979–80 were not so good. It went on to say that the association viewed with disappointment the restriction of the 2·5 per cent depreciation allowance on income-producing buildings to only the tourist industry. The tourist industry will agree with that, as it applies only to units with more than ten rooms and is really a small token. It should be impressed on the Federal Government that there is a need to extend the allowance to encourage tourists to Australia and to stimulate the building and accommodation programme as a result.

In the housing area I make some criticisms which I do not think apply to the Public Works Department.

**Mr AMOS**—Mr Deputy Speaker, I direct attention to the state of the House.

* A quorum was formed.

**Mr McINNES**—I am indebted to the honorable member for Morwell for calling a quorum. Regrettably, I notice that not many members of the Opposition have responded to it. A stream of Ministers has entered the House and their return is welcome, but the Opposition appears to be totally indifferent to the fact that the Budget is being debated.

The Minister of Public Works referred to a more efficient management programme and a maximum degree of cost consciousness. One of the faults of the Housing Commission is that it does not employ quantity surveyors. One of the frequent complaints of small builders in particular is that the Commission changes specifications, sometimes substantially. In endeavouring to estimate the additional cost that is incurred, builders either over-estimate the cost, with the result that the final cost to the public is much higher, or they under-estimate the cost and go out of business. Many builders have suffered that fate.

In order to give a fair assessment of the increased costs in changes to specifications, a quantity surveyor should be employed to indicate the additional materials required. That step would also attract more builders to tender. The Housing Commission has not taken those steps yet, but I hope the Public Works Department will incorporate the services of a quantity surveyor in its projects.

An area of administration of which I am concerned in the ever-increasing escalation of costs caused by the time delay that occurs when water supply and sewerage trusts are awaiting approval to proceed with major works, from bodies such as the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. For example, the Yarram Sewerage Authority sought approval to use a private loan fund allocation on 6 July 1978. Six months later, on 5 December 1978, a report was completed by a firm of Melbourne-based consultants. On 23 April 1979 the report, containing the recommendations, was forwarded to the commission for general approval and by 20 September 1979, that report had not even been read by the commission. In the meantime, there was a tremendous acceleration in costs.

Local trusts are perplexed. They are experiencing difficulty in arranging their loan commitments. Surely it should not take very long for a decision to be reached, especially if use is made of regionalization and decentralization and professional services engaged closer to where the need lies. The names of many Melbourne-based consultant firms feature so often that I have heard it said by the Minister of Water Supply that on occasions they are almost an arm of the department. That is a matter
for criticism. The spread of expertise should be encouraged by ensuring that professional people close to where the work is being carried out have a chance of winning tenders for this work, in which case the long and inordinate delays that occur would be prevented. Those delays are embarrassing and costly to water and sewerage trusts, and the pattern is often repeated.

In education, a more practical programme is being instituted in schools. Over the past two or three years, restraint has been exercised among teachers generally and a better quality of teaching has emerged. At a recent meeting of principals of high schools in Gippsland, I learned that the principals have virtually no power of sacking a totally unsatisfactory teacher. This situation should be remedied. It might be said that, under the Public Service Act, principals have the power to do so but the practical difficulty and the retribution from unions and the odium that seems to be applied to any principal who is brave enough to take that action is such that the principal seldom considers it worthwhile. Instances have occurred in which teachers have been on the pay-roll for up to two years doing nothing more than playing darts. This is tragic. It certainly does nothing for the individual teacher concerned and it does not help the morale of fellow teachers, let alone the taxpayer who is bearing the quite considerable cost of education.

If those instances are reflected throughout the teaching system, it is time the practice was ended and more power was given to principals to dismiss unsatisfactory teachers after all the due processes were put into effect, including the right of appeal for the person concerned and a fair and impartial judgment on them after. I add also that, when these steps are taken, justice needs to be swift. A lapse of two years is far too long. I am surprised that this matter has not been raised earlier. Honorable members must support the principals of high schools and restore the prestige, responsibility and accountability of the appointment. The programme instituted by the Assistant Minister of Education is commendable and honorable members should give it support.

Honorable members have debated the allocation of increased fuel tax that was recently brought into effect. It is evident that the tax will produce considerably more than the predicted $42 million. With escalation, the amount will be substantially more. It is apparent that the Government is using this tax as a revenue-raising exercise. It is only partially justified through reduction in motor vehicle registration fees. Country motorists, who already suffer disadvantages, should be given consideration for a greater reduction in motor vehicle registration fees compared with fees paid by metropolitan vehicle owners. It ought to be based on the same proportion applicable to compulsory third-party insurance.

The Government has indicated that the money coming from the fund has been earmarked for an expenditure of $13.8 million on public transport. There should be a comparative evaluation of the benefits of that policy for country people. Public transport facilities are not provided to the same extent in country areas. Indeed, in many cases, public transport is not available. At the same time, the country fuel purchaser is probably contributing more than his metropolitan counterpart. I do not say that he necessarily uses the vehicle more but because of higher speeds travelled in the country, the country motorist is probably using more fuel. Consideration should be given to a greater parity in the distribution of funds from these sources.

I have said before that one of the problems in the country is that taxi services are not subsidized. As a result, elderly or infirm people who are not hospitalized but who are required to attend the nearest hospital or medical centre regularly must either call upon their friends and neighbours to transport them or they must call a taxi, which obviously cannot be kept waiting and which involves some cost. Mechanism ought to exist either at the instigation of the Minister of Transport or, more properly, the Minister of Health, should
act to enable part of the fund provided for assistance to public transport users to be directed to country people so that they may qualify for some reduction in taxi travelling costs for medical purposes. I limit that proposition to people in real need, to be regulated by a means test or from the production of a medical certificate.

In health care, private nursing accommodation is of concern to the electorate which I represent. The Leongatha-Woorayl District Memorial Hospital has provided plans for a 20-bed district nursing home. Over the years, approvals have been gained from the Health Commission and the hospital is awaiting approval for funding from the Federal Government. Quite candidly, the performance of the Federal Government has been disappointing and representations have been made to local Federal members and to Senator Guilfoyle but to no avail. There has been no worthwhile response. Funds to meet approximately two-fifths of the total cost of the project have already been raised in Leongatha and it would be possible for the community to go ahead and fund the operation. However, the community does not want to be disqualified from any subsequent reimbursement from the Commonwealth Government and quite rightly the hospital committee is seeking an undertaking from the Government that reimbursement will be provided when funds are available. However, the response has been nil and I can only deplore the total lack of interest shown by the Federal Government. It is now up to the State Government to assume more responsibility in this area.

The saying, "A stitch in time" can frequently be applied where maintenance may be carried out, provided funding is available. We do not want a return to centralization which the National Party deplores. The National Party wants increased responsibility for regional priority committees and school councils to grow.

However, all in all, the Budget could be described as a fair Budget. The Treasurer has made a valiant attempt to provide something that is reasonably fair to most people. The National Party supports the Budget with the qualifications I have mentioned.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—It will not have escaped honorable members' attention that even at this very early stage of the Budget debate, not a single Government supporter is prepared to stand up and defend the Budget. That is an extraordinary state of affairs by the standards of any Parliament. Yet it is hardly surprising because this Budget has come as a bitter disappointment to all those people who hoped against hope that with a change of Treasurer the
Government would have a change of heart. Nothing of the sort has materialized.

It is possible to sympathize very deeply with the honorable member for Gippsland South, who has just resumed his seat after delivering the extraordinary judgment that this is a fair Budget. Politics makes for strange bedfellows and strange judgments. It reflects the loyalty which the honorable member extends to his Federal colleague, the Minister for Primary Industry, that he is prepared to stand up in this House and offer the olive branch to the Liberal Party in terms which are furthest from the real feelings in his heart.

This is not a Budget on which words should be minced. It is a callous, cruel and deceitful document. It is a callous document because it neglects the festering sores that continue to disfigure Victoria in a way which will leave it worse off at the end of the financial year than it was at the beginning.

The Budget is a cynical and deceitful document because it fosters a number of illusions which go to the heart of the predicament in which this country finds itself economically and socially.

I will list the illusions which are enshrined in this Budget which the new Treasurer delivered. They are illusions which have characterized all the Budget speeches delivered by the Treasurer's predecessors as long ago as most honorable members in this House can remember.

The first illusion is that of two Liberal Parties—the illusion that somehow those Liberals who sit in this House and who are responsible for the Budget before the House tonight and those Liberals who sit in Canberra and who were responsible for the Budget which was brought down in August are two different sets of people, two different parties, two groups espousing completely different points of view. This is a very important illusion because it allows a constant passing backwards and forwards of the buck between Spring Street and Canberra. Everything that goes wrong in Spring Street, as the

Mr Mathews

Government would have Victorians believe, is the fault of the bad Liberals in Canberra. Most of the things that go wrong in Canberra, as those Canberra Liberals would have Victorians believe, is the fault of those people here in Spring Street.

The reality is that the Liberal Party is one undivided party, one undivided movement pursuing unrelentingly two key goals. Those two key goals were at the heart of the Budget which the Federal Liberal Treasurer, Mr Howard, delivered in August. Those two key goals are likewise at the heart of the Budget which the State Liberal Party Treasurer brought down a month later.

What are those two key goals? The first key goal of the Liberal Party, Federal and State alike, is the maximization and maintenance of a pool of unemployed in this community. The central reality of the Budget is that it makes no pretense of coming to grips with the problem of unemployment in the community.

The second key goal of the Liberal Party, the Federal and State Liberal Governments, enshrined in the Federal Liberal Budget and in the State Liberal Budget, is the strangulation of the public sector, the minimization of all those services which only people acting together in co-operation can provide—those services on which the disadvantaged sections of our community depend so overwhelmingly for the basic things in life which count so enormously and which enrich life for the community as a whole. Those are the two key objectives which came through loudly and clearly in this Budget. They came through loudly and clearly again when Victoria's Treasurer spoke in September.

The other illusion enshrined in the Budget is the illusion of phoney federalism. That is the device by which successive Liberal Governments, State and Federal, carrying out the basic philosophy of the united Liberal Party,
State and Federal, have staved off proper expenditure and investment in public services and facilities for most of the last quarter of a century.

In this country it is a commonly held view that there is a three-tier federalism. The Liberal Party has given Australia over the years something much more like three-card federalism. Those things on which Liberal Governments do not want to see much money expended are automatically held to be the responsibility of the States which have little money. Those things on which the Liberal Party does not want to see anything spent are fobbed off onto local government which has next to no money at all. Phoney three-card federalism is one of the essential and uniform themes which make up the Budget.

The other thread holding the Budget together is the illusion of high taxation. Last week the Assistant Minister of Education in his speech on the Education Department building programme said:

Just as there are limits to the proportion of their income that the public is prepared to pay in taxation, there is a limit to the amount of funds any Government can allocate on social programmes.

That is true enough, of course, as far as it goes, but the Minister’s speech is based on two misapprehensions which have been systematically promulgated in this society with increasing intensity over the past three years. The first of those misapprehensions is that by world standards Australia is a highly taxed country. Nothing could be further from the truth, as any comparison of figures produced by any reputable economic research body will demonstrate conclusively for any honorable member who doubts what I have said.

The second misapprehension which is systematically fostered in documents such as the Budget, by Ministers such as the Assistant Minister of Education, is the notion that $1 spent in the public sector on those goods, services and facilities with which people can provide themselves only through co-operation is somehow $1 which buys less value than the same $1 expended in the private sector.

Of course, as the Assistant Minister of Education said, people will resist paying taxation if they are constantly told that they are being over-taxed by world standards and if they are constantly told that the tax dollar they pay is less valuable than the dollar they could have spent individually.

So long as we subscribe to myths of that sort, this country and this State will have to put up with the perpetuation of those festering sores to which I have already referred, the most conspicuous of them being the avoidable problem of unemployment. Over recent months, Victoria has lost the distinction to which the Premier was so fond of pointing, that of being the State with the lowest level of unemployment in Australia. That is no longer true.

At the same time, manufacturing industry, which is the greatest generator of employment within the Australian economy, is in worse shape in Victoria than in any other State. Both these things being true, the Government has produced a Budget which nowhere includes proposals for making inroads into the problem of unemployment and which nowhere recognizes the predicament of the unemployed or the enormous social problems being piled up for the future.

I am asked by the honorable member for Murray Valley, who is interjecting, how something can be done about the problem. By his interjection, the honorable member acknowledges that the National Party has failed to come up with a solution to the problem. The answer lies, in the first instance, in the Government’s capital works programme, because, as has been correctly pointed out by a number of speakers in the debate, every dollar the Government outlays on capital works generates employment in the private sector. The Estimates show a diminution of 19.3 per cent in capital works. Secondly, there is the failure to enable local government to carry on with the provision of the services it should provide but from which it is at present being held back by budgetary constraints. Local government is the level
of Australian federalism that is most immediately and directly able to generate employment opportunities, providing the means are made available to it.

In accordance with Sessional Orders, the debate was interrupted.

ADJOURNMENT

Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd—Discrimination against migrants—Cheltenham court house

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The time appointed by Sessional Orders for me to interrupt the business of the House has now arrived. The question is that the House do now adjourn.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister of Housing in his capacity as guardian of Victoria's co-operatives. It relates to the investigator's report on Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd.

Since 1975 there have been many requests for inquiries into this co-operative and it has been the subject of two debates in this Chamber. Those protracted debates have been important. I raised two matters with the Premier during those debates in 1977 and in October of that year the Premier ordered an inquiry into the company by the Fraud Squad. An official investigator was subsequently appointed and, according to the Budget Papers, the cost of the investigation was approximately $120,000.

The report has now been completed but the Minister of Housing is refusing to release it to Parliament. That refusal has a variety of effects. The co-operative is currently attempting to raise funds to help it to meet its commitments to Barclay's Bank. There is no way in which these funds can be raised so long as investors are not aware of the matters contained in the investigator's report, which will have a considerable impact on their decisions to invest. In other words, investors are being asked to invest in the company without having any knowledge of the company's present financial standing.

The public is being kept in the dark about the fate of the $4 million guarantee provided from taxpayers' funds. The Opposition supported the guarantee and urged an investigation with the aim of helping the co-operative to clear up the problems it then faced. The Opposition was committed to assisting the co-operative but it is now in a situation in which it is not sure, because of the Minister's failure to release the report, of what view it should take. It does not know what the investigator's report has to say about the company's standing and is therefore at a loss to make a decision on how it should advise investors or the people of Victoria, who have a vested interest in the company.

I suggest that the easiest way out of the problem is for the Minister to make the report available to Parliament. If the honorable gentleman is not prepared to do that, he should give his reasons. It is bad practice for a Government deliberately to conceal a report that was designed, in the public interest, to investigate a company on the basis of some pretence that criminal prosecutions may follow. I urge the Minister to make the report available to Parliament so that the Opposition and the National Party can adopt appropriate attitudes.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—I bring to the attention of the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs a matter which relates to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board discriminating against migrants in their employment and its refusal to grant leave without pay to migrants wishing to partake in English language courses. Several courses are available to migrants, one of which is an evening course. Owing to shift work, tramway workers run into difficulty in endeavouring to attend this course. Another more advanced course, conducted through the La Trobe University extends for a period of nine weeks.

Tramways Board employees wishing to participate in these courses are confronted with the policy decision that they must resign from the board
to do so, but no assurance is given that they will be reinstated to their former position. In fact, the position is to the contrary.

I investigated the problem about a month ago but a similar case has brought it to a head. I received a letter and, with your permission, Mr Speaker, I shall refer to it. It concerns a conductor by the name of Aziz who was accepted for the nine-week course at La Trobe University commencing on 22 October. The course is funded by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and reimbursement of fees is made to the migrants who attend the course. At the same time as he was accepted for the course, Mr Aziz applied for promotion to an accountant's position in the head office of the Tramways Board. Mr Aziz holds a degree from the Middle East country from which he comes, but he could not obtain the position he sought because he was told that his English was not up to scratch. It was for that reason that he enrolled in the course conducted by the La Trobe University and then sought nine weeks' leave but he was refused and told that he must resign from the Tramways Board.

In order to resign, Mr Aziz was required to give one week's notice. Last Wednesday he attempted to give the requisite notice as he wanted to commence the course at the university on Monday of this week. He was informed that he had to give a full week's notice notwithstanding the fact that he had four days' leave accruing to him. Temper became frayed and Mr Aziz was sacked. He has left the Tramways Board and is now attending the course.

Two matters of principle are involved. The first is that the Tramways Board should have a responsibility to offer Mr Aziz re-employment after he has completed his nine-week course. Secondly, a thorough investigation should be made of the hard-headed policy of the Tramways Board in discriminating against migrants. It is atrocious that the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Government should publicly indicate that there is a policy to assist migrants in this country but that a Government instrumentality, in this case the Tramways Board, should refuse to grant leave to employees to enable them to participate in English-language courses which are essentially conducted for the advancement of the migrants concerned.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I raise with the Minister who represents the Attorney-General a matter which concerns the closure of the court house at Cheltenham. This matter was raised a number of times over a period of three or four months after it had been ascertained that the Cheltenham court house would be closed early in the new year. There was correspondence from the local council and myself to the Attorney-General who indicated in his reply that the matter was under review and that no decision would be made without consultation with local authorities and myself as the local member.

Suddenly the community became aware that the Attorney-General had decided to close the court house from 1 January 1980, although there has been no discussion or review concerning the matter.

What concerns the local people is that the Cheltenham court house serves the City of Moorabbin which comprises more than 100 000 people. The court house is located in a convenient location, being situated on the Nepean Highway at Cheltenham. It is well serviced by public transport, both buses and trains. The location is well known although admittedly the facilities are very cramped and need to be substantially updated because the building is old. However, the way to overcome the problem is not to remove the facility and knock the building down, which is the present proposal.

According to a letter received from the City of Moorabbin, the proposal of the Attorney-General is to shift the responsibility of the court house to surrounding courts. The closest court is at Chelsea which is 7 kilometres away. If this court is not available,
matters will have to be referred to the Sandringham or Oakleigh courts. Having checked the facilities at those locations, I have ascertained that they are already overcrowded. The closure of the Cheltenham court house will be counter productive, especially if it is proposed to use the other courts which are already overcrowded.

I urge the Minister who represents the Attorney-General to raise this as a matter of urgency with his colleague. The Cheltenham court house is very busy and its facilities are cramped and in urgent need of updating, but the answer is not to close it down next January and force the cases for which it is responsible to be heard elsewhere because the resources at the nearby courts are already overcrowded. I urge the Government to give serious consideration to this matter and to do its utmost to retain the court house at Cheltenham and to improve its facilities.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—In relation to the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I would be happy to make available to him and to the Leader of the National Party the opinion of the Crown Solicitor.

Mr Roper—Not the report?

Mr DIXON—That is right, the opinion of the Crown Solicitor. The Government, in its re-examination of this matter, is also seeking the opinion of the Solicitor-General. When that is available I will make it available to him and to the Leader of the National Party the opinion of the Crown Solicitor.

Mr Wood (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The honorable member for Heatherton raised a matter for the attention of the Attorney-General concerning the retention of the Cheltenham court house. I will bring this matter to the attention of the Attorney-General.

The House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

(Question No. 466)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

Whether any working parties exist with the Health Commission; if so—(a) what are their terms of reference; (b) what is their membership; (c) on how many occasions they have met; (d) what reports they have so far made available to the commission or the Minister; and (e) when the results of their investigations will be put into effect?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

Two separate working parties exist with representation by both the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Health Commission as follows:

(a) In June 1978, the Ministry and the Health Commission set up a small, informal working party with two officers from each area.

The working party has no formal terms of reference but was formed at the Ministry's instigation to assist the Health Commission develop its services for the ethnic communities. The working party met again in August and September 1978 and the following projects evolved from those meetings;

(i) Cross-Cultural Awareness for Nurses. This project, already in the development phases, was facilitated by the joint efforts of this working party. Two courses, in May 1979 and August 1979 have been completed.

(ii) A survey into the number, nationalities and problems of ethnic aged in State Government Geriatric Centres, private nursing homes and church-based nursing homes is presently being undertaken by members of the working party. The main aim of this survey is to discover whether the ethnic aged are isolated because of language difficulties and the extent of that isolation factor which may require special action by both agencies. The survey design has been completed and the pilot phase is about to commence.
The provision of multi-lingual information on health education to television commercials with voice-overs in seven languages are being produced for television channels. Additionally, multi-lingual information about local health services will be advertised on public transport.

(b) In August 1978, another informal working party was established with the broad objectives of:

(i) examining whether existing elderly citizens' clubs were under-used and if they were, how these might be made available to groups of ethnic aged;

(ii) examining what needs to be done to ensure that elderly citizens' clubs constructed in the future are available for use by all aged people in the area; and

(iii) examining whether financial help could be given to ethnic organizations currently functioning as elderly citizens' clubs.

There have been six meetings held and the first report to the respective Ministers is due in mid-July 1979.

HOUSE BUILDERS AND HOUSING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS
(Question No. 524)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether the House Builders Association was established by the Housing Industry Association; if so, who are the directors of each organization?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

The Housing Builders Association Ltd has advised me in the following terms:—

'The Housing Builders Association Ltd was established to seek recognition as an approved guarantor under the House Builders' Liability Act to enable the members of the Housing Industry Association to obtain recognition under that legislation.

Housing Builders Association Ltd is a company limited by a guarantee under the Victorian Companies' Act, 1961 and was incorporated on 28 December, 1973. There being no shareholdings, the Housing Industry Association has no ownership of Housing Builders Association Ltd.

The Directors of Housing Builders Association Ltd are:
Mr D. R. Dossetor (Chairman)
Mr N. J. Bale
Mr I. T. Sherwen
Mr A. C. Fuller
Senator D. J. Hamer

Housing Industry Association is a national organization and is a company incorporated in Victoria and registered under section 24 of the Victorian Companies' Act 1961.

The directors are elected by the membership (State by State, at the annual general meeting each year). The following held office on 21 June 1979.

W. Tapiolas—Queensland.
P. Bremner—Queensland.
M. J. Unwin—Queensland.
J. Ward—Queensland.
J. E. Graham—New South Wales.
D. E. Pryor—New South Wales.
K. J. Boundy—Australian Capital Territory.
G. Bisa—Australian Capital Territory.
W. Kirkby-Jones—Australian Capital Territory.
D. E. Piggott—Victoria.
D. R. Dossor—Victoria.
A. Moore—Victoria.
D. J. Thompson—Victoria.
K. V. Shelley—Victoria
J. Durell—Victoria.
R. D. Steel—South Australia.
N. F. McPeake—South Australia.
J. Lawrence—South Australia.
G. Matthews—Western Australia.
G. Spencer—Western Australia.
P. Sannard—Western Australia.

HOUSE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
(Question No. 536)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether the House Builders Association Ltd submitted to the Government for approval the clause in its contract which requires disputes and differences to be submitted to a mutually agreed arbitrator; if so, what was the date on which approval was—(a) sought; and (b) granted?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy) —I assume that the question refers to the Housing Industry Association Building Agreement. There is no requirement that the Housing Industry Association Building Agreement be subject to approval of the Minister for Local Government, and no such approval has been sought nor granted.

ARBITRATORS FOR HOUSE BUILDERS LIABILITY
(Question No. 537)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Which persons, who have served as arbitrators for the purposes of the house builders' liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958, are or have been members or office holders of the Housing Industry Association, the House Builders Registry Board or the House Builders Association Ltd, indicating the nature of the connection in each case?
Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

I have been advised by the Housing Builders Association Ltd in the following terms:

Stanley Baker—Member of the Housing Industry Association (Category of Building Consultant).

Peter Benetti—Member of Housing Industry Association (Category of Building Consultant). Elected State Councillor.

B. King-Siem—No connection.

B. Gallagher—Member of Housing Industry Association (Building Consultant). Elected State Councillor.

None of the four gentlemen named above is a member or office holder in the Housing Builders Association Ltd or the Housing Builders Registry Board, which is a Subcommittee of the Housing Builders' Association Ltd.

None of the gentlemen above have previously been members of or held office in Housing Builders' Association Ltd.

(Question No. 542)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether, in the absence of agreement between parties pursuant to the house builders' liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958, the responsibility for appointing an arbitrator rests with the President of the Victorian Chapter of the Institute of Arbitrators, Mr F. J. Shelton; if so, whether Mr Shelton is also the solicitor for the Housing Industry Association and the House Builders Association Ltd?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

No, in respect of arbitration on a dispute between a house purchaser and an approved guarantor, if the parties fail to agree on the appointment of an arbitrator an application may be made to the court under the Arbitration Act 1958.

CITIZENSHIP CERTIFICATES

(Question No. 549)

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

In respect of each of the years 1976, 1977 and 1978:

1. In which municipalities more than 100 certificates of citizenship were issued?

2. How many certificates were conferred in each municipality?

3. How many certificates were conferred in Victoria?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. Municipalities in which over 100 candidates were granted Australian citizenship:

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2. The number of persons granted Australian citizenship in each municipality:

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The insurance backing the liabilities of the approved guarantor bodies cover the full extent of those liabilities. Although the names of the insurance companies are known to me, I consider such information to be confidential.

HOUSE BUILDERS LIABILITY
(Question No. 687)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether any builders de-registered by an approved guarantor pursuant to the house builders’ liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958, have subsequently been registered by another approved guarantor; if so, what are the names of such builders and the grounds for de-registration in each case?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

The responsibility for determining whether or not a builder will be registered rests with the approved guarantor and I am satisfied that each approved guarantor makes adequate inquiries regarding the capabilities of those persons accepted as recognized builders. In any event, the approved guarantor must accept to guarantee the performance of builders recognized.

HOUSE BUILDERS LIABILITY
(Question No. 694)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether any persons have been charged pursuant to the house builders’ liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958; if so, what are the details?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

Yes, persons have been charged pursuant to the house builders’ liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958. However, as prosecutions may be launched independently of the Local Government Department I am not in a position to supply details.

(Question No. 733)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

Whether the review of the house builders’ liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958 reported in the press will include consultations with the Defective Homes Organization?

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3. The numbers of citizenship certificates conferred in Victoria for the three years specified are:

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58 810
Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

Constructive submissions from all sources will be considered.

HEALTH ACT
(Question No. 748)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of the Health Act (Special Accommodation Houses) Regulations:

1. What is the composition of the special working party set up to review the regulations, what are the terms of reference, and when it is expected that the report will be completed and made public?
2. In each of the past two years, what breaches of the regulations have been detected by inspectors, specifying the accommodation house and the action taken in each case?
3. How many premises which should be registered under the regulations are known to be unregistered, specifying the details in each case and what action is being taken?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The answer is:

1. The Health Commission has arranged for certain staff to review the Health Act (Special Accommodation Houses) Regulations and report to it and to me. This is an internal review. When I receive the report and the comments of the commission I will consider the matter further.
2. Inspectors have detected many breaches of the regulations in the past two years. Some were minor and others of a technical nature and many were remedied by discussion with proprietors of the special accommodation houses. Others were referred to the Crown Solicitor and in a number of cases prosecutions have proceeded and convictions have been obtained. A complete list of every breach, no matter how minor, has not been compiled. The preparation of a list of all breaches which were recorded would require extensive research and I am not prepared to direct the limited staff available to undertake such research in preference to other, more pressing, duties.
3. I know of no premises which should be registered under the regulations but are at present unregistered.

ETHNIC AFFAIRS ADVISORY COUNCIL
(Question No. 766)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

What have been the specific activities and achievements of—(a) the Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council; and (b) the Immigration Advisory Council from the dates of their inception to date, and how often the respective councils have met in each of the past two years?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

(a) The principal achievements of the Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council are summarized as follows:

(i) The planning and organization of a public seminar “Migrant Development in the Workplace”
(ii) Assistance in the establishment and representation on the Police–Ethnic Affairs Liaison Committee.
(iii) The preparation of submissions as follows:

“Group Libel”, presented to the Attorney-General for his consideration;
“Migrants and Employment”, presented to the Work for Tomorrow Conference on Employment;
“Teacher Education for a Multi-Cultural Society”, presented to the Victorian Inquiry into Teacher Education and the National Enquiry into Teacher Education.

In addition, the council has made numerous submissions through my office and through the chairman to State and Federal Government bodies, to industry, to educational institutions, and to community organizations.

Since the inaugural meeting of the Ethnic Affairs Advisory Council on 20 May 1977, the council has met on thirty occasions.

(b) The principal achievement of the Immigration Advisory Council has been a review of the current immigration programme, which has resulted in several recommendations to me, which are currently under consideration.

The council recommended and facilitated the secondment of an officer of the Ministry to the various employer organizations represented on the council to advise employers of the facilities and services and requirements for the recruitment of skilled personnel from overseas.

Since the inaugural meeting of the Immigration Advisory Council on 15 June 1977, the council has met on fifteen occasions.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BUREAU
(Question No. 767)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether the Anti-Discrimination Bureau of the Community Services Centre was consulted or invited to participate in the development of the study to ascertain the views of Victorians to migrants; if so, what form the consultation took and what was the extent of participation sought; if not, why?
2. What is the projected involvement of the Bureau in the proposed educational programme of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs?
Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. No, the study was properly a matter to be undertaken within the Ministry. The study was not to assess discrimination in the community.

2. If and when it is appropriate the Anti-Discrimination Bureau will be invited to participate in educational programmes.

MIGRANT SURVEY
(Question No. 768)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. What was the total cost of the study to ascertain the views of Victorians to migrants?

2. How many consultants tendered for the project, indicating—(a) whether tenders were sought through public advertisement and, if so—(i) what was the date and text of each advertisement; and (ii) in which publications the advertisements were placed; and (b) which consultancy firms tendered, and in each case, what was the cost quoted?

3. Whether the Tender Board gave approval for the project to be conducted by T.Q. Consultants Pty Ltd; if so, what was the date of approval?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. $32 000.

2. Three consultant organizations tendered for the project.

(a) Public advertisement for tenders was not considered because the expertise in societal research is restricted.

(b) The following organizations were briefed and asked to submit a quotation: Task Quantum Consultants Pty Ltd: $32 000; Inview Market Research: $41 750; MDA Research: $35 000.

3. Yes, approval was given by the Tender Board on 15 March 1978.

(Question No. 769)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether, in view of the findings of the study to ascertain the views of Victorians to migrants, it is planned to increase the staff and extend the functions of the Community Relations Division of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs; if so—(a) what increases in staff are proposed; and (b) what are the details of the changes in functions?

2. How many professional staff are currently employed in the division and what are their functions?

3. What is the relationship of the community relations function of the Community Services Centre with that of the Community Relations Division of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. A re-deployment of resources is planned for the Ministry to undertake the necessary actions in community education. Some increases in establishment have been sought, to particularly develop further the cross cultural training centre approach and to provide depth to the investigation function in the Community Relations Division.

2. One professional person is currently employed in the community relations division. The duties are to provide a liaison function with ethnic communities, government departments, voluntary agencies and local government, and to undertake investigation of cases of alleged discrimination based on race and ethnic characteristics, and to take such action as is deemed necessary to resolve proven cases.

3. Continued liaison occurs on matters of mutual interest and concern with the Community Services Centre.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIVISION
(Question No. 773)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether the Community Relations Division of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has produced an annual report of its activities; if so, whether he will make copies of the report available?

2. Whether the division has produced any community relations research reports; if so, what is the substance of each report and whether these reports will be made available?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. No separate annual report has been prepared for the Community Relations Division.

2. No specific research reports have been produced.

PROPOSED TRANSLATION UNIT
(Question No. 774)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether the translation unit proposed to be established within the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs will be funded either wholly or partly by the Commonwealth?

2. What are the reasons for the separation of the existing State Interpreting Services Bureau located at the Community Services Centre and the proposed State translation unit to be located at the Ministry’s offices?
3. Whether, in view of the inter-departmental working party on interpreting and translating recommendations urging centralization of these services, he will ensure that both the State interpreting and translating service are centrally located; if not, why?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. The translation unit will be funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments under recommendation 17 of the Galbally Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants.

2. Interpreting and translating are different skills and require separate training. The existing Interpreting Service Bureau, located in the Community Services Centre provides, in the main, advice to non-English speaking clients. The Translation Unit will provide service to State Government departments, instrumentalities and local government.

3. The inter-departmental working party on language services was superseded by the Galbally report. The working party did not in any case recommend that interpreting and translating services be located together.

SHENTON RECEPTION CENTRE, HAWTHORN

(Question No. 787)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. How many full-time and part-time staff, respectively, are employed at the Shenton Reception Centre at Hawthorn, and what is the total cost of such staff?

2. On how many days in the past two years the reception centre was occupied by newly arrived immigrants and how many people were occupying the premises each day?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. Two full-time staff are employed at the Migrant Reception Centre at Hawthorn. From time to time casual staff are employed on a needs basis. The annual wages cost is approximately $22,000.

2. The dissection of occupation at the centre has not been broken down beyond the following figures:

(a) During 1977–78 the centre had an occupancy rate of 531 bed-days.

(b) During 1978–79 the centre had an occupancy rate of 1023 bed-days.

TRANSLATION NEEDS

(Question No. 790)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether he will make available copies of the—(a) translation needs; and (b) local government surveys referred to in the Report of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for 1977–78?

2. What were the results of the survey into local government services for immigrants, indicating how these results will be transformed into action programmes and when, and how much money has been allocated for these purposes?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. Copies of the surveys mentioned have not been printed for distribution, but are available for viewing at the Ministry.

2. The survey on local government services to migrants revealed that councils, particularly those having a large concentration of migrants from non-English speaking countries, see a need to provide specialized services. Councils’ progress in providing services is hampered by the difficulty of ascertaining the needs of the migrants, the lack of language experts available to councils, and their lack of funds to employ bi-lingual, bi-cultural professionals to give service.

The major findings of the survey were discussed at a Ministry–convened workshop for municipal welfare officers in June 1979 to which all municipalities in Victoria and all relevant Government departments were invited to send representatives.

The workshop formed a base for an exchange of information and ideas among council officers, most of whom had not previously met.

The allocation of financial resources must be geared to council’s finer determination of needs and willingness to redeploy their resources.

IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

(Question No. 848)

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. What is the function of the Ethnic Affairs Research Unit and what research this unit has conducted to date?

2. What are the results of the surveys of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on—(a) the need for a translation service within the State Government sphere; and (b) the services available to migrants in local municipalities?
3. What progress has been made by the—
   (a) Ministry/Health Commission; and (b) Ministry/Ethnic Education working parties?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. The function of the Ethnic Affairs Research Unit is to put into practice recommendations made in the many reports written on migrant needs and problems, with particular regard to State Government departments. Its research is listed in the annual reports of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

2. (a) The survey on the need for a translation unit.
   (b) Resulted in action to set up such a unit in the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to service State Government departments, instrumentalities and local government needs for translated material.

3. (a) The Ministry/Health Commission working party has worked out the design of a survey into the location and needs of the ethnic aged. The pilot phases is about to commence.
   (b) The working party with Ethnic Education has discussed and taken action on particular problems and issues as they have arisen on an informal basis. A formal structure has been adopted for this working party.

4. The final report is being drafted for presentation to the two Ministers responsible—the Attorney-General and the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

This committee meets approximately every six weeks to discuss a wide range of matters on ethnic affairs as they impinge on the various departments.

Specific new initiatives have been in the co-ordination of information on funding of ethnic groups from the various departments, and the joint development of multi-lingual information kits for newly-arrived migrants.

ETHNIC COMMUNITY SERVICES
(Question No. 854)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

What action he has taken to ensure implementation at the State level, of the recommendations from the poverty reports which relate specifically to ethnic community services?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

The recommendations on migrants in the poverty reports have always been taken into consideration by the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Ministry has carried out a number of initiatives to implement these recommendations within the resources available.

IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS
(Question No. 855)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

What was the content of the brief given to the consultants who prepared the attitudinal survey for the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

The broad objectives of the attitudinal survey were to:

Obtain an improved understanding of the nature, breadth and width of negative attitudes towards migrants in Victoria.

Provide improved understanding of the nature of, and basis for, such negative attitudes in order to assist in the development of appropriate communication strategy aimed at modifying those attitudes.

(Question No. 856)

Mr CATHIE (Carrum) asked the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:

1. Whether he is aware of the New South Wales Ethnic Affairs Commission report on New South Wales State Government services to the ethnic communities?
2. Whether it is intended to direct research staff of the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to undertake a similar review of all State Government departments, authorities and instrumentalities to—(a) determine whether the services provided by these bodies are appropriate to the needs of the ethnic communities; (b) pinpoint the gaps in service delivery; and (c) make recommendations for changes to these services in order to ensure that all Victorians have the opportunity of equal access to State Government services?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—The answer is:

1. Yes.

2. No. The Ministry already has close links with other State Government departments and is assisting, on a continuing basis, many of the departments to provide better services for all Victorians, particularly those who have difficulty understanding the extent of services provided.

SUBSIDY FOR MOTHERS
(Subscription No. 903)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Assistant Minister of Health:

1. Whether a report has been received from the interdepartmental committee on a $2000 subsidy scheme to allow mothers to stay at home to look after their children, to which his predecessor referred on 16 May 1978 in response to question No. 838 and reported in Hansard at page 3131; if so, whether he will make available copies of the report and other details as promised by his predecessor on 12 September 1978 in response to question No. 839 and reported in Hansard at page 3578?

2. If the report has not been received, when it is expected?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Assistant Minister of Health)—The answer is:

Investigations are still being carried out by the interdepartmental committee and I will ensure that the request by the honorable member is considered when all investigations have been completed.

I anticipate a report being available in the near future.

CRIME IN OAKLEIGH ELECTORATE
(Question No. 950)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Whether he will bring up to date and consolidate in Hansard the answer about crime in the electoral division of Oakleigh which the former Chief Secretary gave the Member for Ascot Vale on 19 April 1978 in response to question No. 252 and reported in Hansard at page 1821?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The answer is:

The crime statistics for the Oakleigh Police Sub-district in the period from 1974 to 30 September 1979, inclusive, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of crimes reported in year indicated</th>
<th>Number of crimes cleared in year indicated</th>
<th>Crimes cleared in year as proportion of crimes reported in year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2287</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>49.2 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2356</td>
<td>1217</td>
<td>51.7 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>2309</td>
<td>1151</td>
<td>49.8 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>2972</td>
<td>1661</td>
<td>55.9 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>2915</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>47.4 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2247</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>37.9 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to 30 September 1979)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS AND FILMS
(Question No. 998)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Transport:

1. What public relations, information, extension or educational brochures, publications and/or films the departments, instrumentalities and/or divisions under the Minister’s control have been produced since the General Election held on 20 March 1976?

2. What was the cost of each publication, brochure and/or film?

3. What was the purpose of each publication, brochure and/or film?

4. What evaluation, if any, of the need for any such publication, brochure or film was undertaken before it was produced, and what evaluation, if any, of their effectiveness was carried out after production?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

The time, effort and expense entailed in collating this complex information cannot be justified. If the Leader of the Opposition requires information on any specific item arising
out of this department's public relations and information activities then every reasonable effort will be made to supply the information.

GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS
(Question No. 1027)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Transport:
1. What public relations and/or advertising firms have been employed by the departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions under the Minister's control since the general election held on 20 March 1976?
2. What projects they were employed to undertake and what was the cost of each project?
3. What evaluation, if any, was carried out on the effectiveness of these programmes both before and after they were undertaken?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:
The time, effort and expense entailed in collating this complex information cannot be justified. If the Leader of the Opposition requires information on any specific item arising out of this department's public relations and information activities then every reasonable effort will be made to supply the information.

(Question No. 1056)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Transport:
1. How many people are employed by the departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions under the Minister's control in each of the advertising, public relations, information and extension fields?
2. What is the annual budget for each of these activities in each of these departments, instrumentalities, authorities and divisions?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:
The time, effort and expense entailed in collating this complex information cannot be justified. If the Leader of the Opposition requires information on any specific item arising out of this department's public relations and information activities then every reasonable effort will be made to supply the information.

ALLOWANCE FOR MOTHERS
(Question No. 1120)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Assistant Minister of Health:
In respect of the proposal put forward by his predecessor concerning a substantial allowance for mothers who stay at home to mind their children, what is the current state of discussion concerning this proposal and when he expects to make an announcement?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Assistant Minister of Health)—The answer is:
I would draw the honorable member's attention to question No. 903 and my reply referring to this same matter.

POLICE CARS
(Question No. 1211)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:
1. Whether permission was refused to station an unmarked police car at the intersection of the Western Highway and Coburns Road, Melton, between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. prior to the recent fatal accidents at the intersection; if so, why?
2. Whether an unmarked police car was available for the proposed duty?

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The answer is:
1. and 2.
I am advised by the Police Department that the matter of stationing an unmarked police car at the intersection of the Western Highway and Coburns Road, Melton, between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. was not raised prior to the recent fatal accident at the intersection.

Traffic in Melton is receiving priority attention. Although unmarked cars could be stationed at the intersection the presence of marked units is a greater deterrent. Police motorcyclists have been instructed to pay particular attention to traffic in Melton and the night shift divisional van will give attention to speeding trucks in the area.

HEALTH COMMISSION
(Question No. 1294)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:
Whether he has yet received the first report of the Health Commission; if so, when; if not, when it is expected that it will be received?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The answer is:
The Minister of Health has not yet received the first report of the Health Commission. The Health Commission Act requires the Health Commission's report to be presented to the Minister by 1 November in each year. There have unfortunately been some delays in collecting and collating information but it is expected that the report will be available before Parliament rises. The bulk of the material was placed in the hands of the Government Printer on Friday, 19 October 1979.
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS
(Question No. 1371)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister of Health, for the Minister of Soldier Settlement:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government department or instrumentality for which the Minister is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(a) what is the address; (b) what is the floor area; (c) what is the form of tenancy; (d) when the tenancy commenced; (e) when the tenancy was last extended; (f) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (g) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the department or instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type of use of the area occupied?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Soldier Settlement is:

The following detail is supplied in connection with premises occupied by the Rural Finance Commission:

(a) Embank House—325 Collins Street, Melbourne;
(b) (i) 7th, 8th and 11th floors, total area—2027 square metres
(ii) Basement—275 square metres,
(c) Lease Agreement;
(d) 17.10.1966;
(e) 17.10.1976;
(f) 17.10.1982;
(g) Rural Finance Commission and staff totalling 120 personnel occupy the premises as office accommodation including equipment and records and stationery storage.

WHEAT RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(Question No. 1392)

Mr McKELLAR (Portland) asked the Minister of Agriculture:

Whether, in view of the criticism being levelled at the Government over the delay in extending the Victorian Wheat Research Institute at Horsham, he will outline the current situation and the background for the new agreement with the Wheat Industry Research Committee of Victoria?

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

Members of the National Party, both inside and outside Parliament, have accused the Government of breaking an election promise and of scrapping its plan to turn the Wheat Research Institute at Horsham into an “All Crops Institute”.

The Government made the promise and has until the next election to implement it.

The Government has not scrapped, nor will it scrap, its plans to put all its plant breeders together. At the moment, plant breeding is conducted at Walpeup, Horsham, Werribee and Rutherglen. Breeders at Werribee have already been informed that they will be required to shift to Horsham by the end of 1981.

The Government has been accused of breaking a 1976 agreement with the Victorian Wheat Research Foundation. Many of these accusations come from people who either do not know what the agreement was, or have forgotten the reason for the new agreement.

The original agreement between the Wheat Research Foundation and the Government was for the foundation to pay for maintenance and the Government to pay for research staff.

On September 20 1976, I was forced to announce that four employees—two farm labourers and a cleaner at the institute—had been given dismissals notices, due to the failure of the Victorian Wheat Research Foundation to keep its part of the agreement with the State Government.

I pointed out then, that the Victorian Government had lived up to its part of the agreement, and had continued to pay the salaries of research staff. In 1976, this staff bill was $400 000.

At that time, the maintenance bill was $88 000 and the foundation’s Chairman, Mr E. E. Nitske advised me that the foundation could only pay $20 000 and he asked for Government assistance.

I suggested that, if the foundation could not honour its part of the agreement, it should hand the institute over to the Government. I said that, if the foundation would draw up a new agreement to effect, the Government would expand the institute and pay the maintenance.

That then, was the agreement—if the institute was handed over to the Government, the Government would pay the maintenance and expand the institute.

By 30 March 1977, agreement in principle appeared to have been reached by both parties and, in the 1977 Budget, the Government honoured its part of the agreement, even though it was not signed, and allocated $118 700 for maintenance.

In November that year, the foundation wrote requesting amendments and, in particular, that the following words be included:

“The Government will, subject to the necessary funds being made available by the Treasury, forthwith plan the extension of the institute and will construct buildings and facilities of a minimum capital value of $1 200 000 to cover all capital costs other than those for industry funded projects.”

From then, there were protracted negotiations and it was only last December that the foundation returned the documents to my department for final scrutiny.
The Crown Solicitor wanted a small amendment made and this was finally agreed to, and my department sent a letter in June this year, giving approval for the foundation to proceed with engrossments. This has not yet been finalized by the foundation.

However, while all of these negotiations have been proceeding, the Government has continued to honour its promise to pay maintenance. Since 1976, it has paid $345,600 in maintenance and our staff bill at the institute last year was $418,900.

Therefore, our commitment each year is over $500,000 and, last year, the total wheatgrower commitment was $121,600.

The Government will expand Horsham as soon as funds permit, and it has promised that funds will be made available within the life of this Parliament.

In the meantime, plant breeders will continue to operate at different localities throughout the State.

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Legislative Council
Wednesday, 24 October 1979

The President (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 4.22 p.m. and read the prayer.

Absence of Minister

The Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General)—The Leader of the House, the Honorable A. J. Hunt, is absent attending a conference of education Ministers in Perth.

Questions without Notice

Mitchell River Dam

The Hon. G. A. Sgro (Melbourne North Province)—Will the Minister of Water Supply inform the House what effect financial commitments to the Mitchell River dam in the next two years will have on over-all water supply funding? In particular, will there be sufficient funds to assist the Board of Works with its projects thus reducing the impact of Board of Works rates on Melbourne ratepayers by slowing down the rapid increase in rates?

The Hon. F. J. Granty (Minister of Water Supply)—I do not know whether I heard the question correctly, but I thought the honorable member referred to the Mitchell River dam. The Mitchell River dam is not for the metropolitan area; that is the Thomson River dam. The finances are entirely different. The Mitchell River dam will be financed from State funds. The Thomson River dam is financed from funds allocated under the loan fund principle. The Mitchell River dam will be funded by Treasury in the next Budget to be presented. I do not believe it will have any effect on the funding of the Thomson River dam, especially in respect of Board of Works rates.

Compulsory Blood Samples

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain (Western Province)—Is the Attorney-General aware that in his report the Chief Commissioner of Police stated that it is not an offence for a person providing a compulsory blood sample to give a false name and address at a hospital, the effect being that some 106 potential offenders have not been able to be located? Will the Minister have the matter examined with a view to closing this loophole in the law?

The Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General)—I will certainly ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to examine the matter. On the face of it, it seems to be an obvious anomaly. I have some recollection that there is a fairly well-enshrined principle that people should not be forced to disclose evidence or make admissions against themselves, and this may have something to do with the fact that the requirement of giving one's name and address is not accompanied by a sanction such as it being an offence for the incorrect name and address to be given. The matter should certainly be examined, and I will ask the Minister to do so forthwith.

River Murray Commission

The Hon. W. R. Baxter (North Eastern Province)—I ask the Minister of Water Supply whether the Ministers who comprise the River Murray Commission met in Melbourne in recent days. If so, what was the result of that meeting and is the Minister aware of criticism levelled by the Commonwealth
Minister, the Honorable Kevin Newman, at attitudes expressed by the Victorian Government, and what is the Minister’s response to that criticism?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Yes, the Ministers met in Melbourne on Monday last and, as I had indicated to the House prior to the meeting, I put the case on behalf of the Victorian Government for a Ministerial Council in respect of the River Murray Commission, and in respect of the over-all administration of that extremely important river. The other Ministers rejected the Victorian proposal and stated that they would instruct their Attorneys-General to meet and draw up legislation in respect of the agreement which had been worked out by the working party appointed.

After I reported to the Premier, the honorable gentleman made a media announcement that Victoria would also proceed with legislation. I told the Ministerial meeting that I would report to Cabinet at its next meeting which will be next Monday, and I will do that.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS CONVERSIONS

The Hon. D. K. HAYWARD (Monash Province)—I ask the Attorney-General, who represents the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, a question relating to liquefied petroleum gas. By way of background, I mention that liquefied petroleum gas is a highly dangerous substance in terms of its propensity to explode and ignite. It is heavier than air and tends to lie in recesses such as depressions in the floors of motor vehicles.

In Melbourne there is a strong body of opinion that many of the conversions to liquefied petroleum gas that have so far been carried out are dangerous in their nature. Is the Government satisfied that the current regulations are sufficient and adequate to ensure the safe conversion of vehicles to liquefied petroleum gas and the safe operation of those vehicles?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimbewade)—Order! During questions without notice, an honorable member should not seek an expression of opinion from a Minister. Perhaps the honorable member would like to rephrase part of his question.

The Hon. D. K. HAYWARD—Does the Government propose to take action to strengthen the regulations which pertain to the conversion of vehicles for liquefied petroleum gas operation to ensure safety of that operation?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—This obviously is an extremely serious matter. Regulations for the use of liquefied petroleum gas in vehicles were made in August of this year based on SAA 1425 1973 Standards under which conversion to liquefied petroleum gas must be made. Other regulations have been proposed—for example, placing appropriate stickers on converted vehicles. Nonetheless, a working party has been established within the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services and matters being considered in particular are controls for the conversion of these vehicles and methods of determining an appropriate standard.

I also add that in the light of current events reported in the media yesterday of accidents arising from the use of the gas, an immediate investigation by the Department of Labour and Industry boilers and pressure vessels inspectorate has begun on how leakage can be controlled, and how regulating of the conversion is to be organized. That study is in addition to the working party that is investigating the standards of fittings of vehicles and conversions.

NEWPORT POWER STATION

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—Because of the vastly increased traffic of contractors’ trucks during the construction of the Newport power station, the road flanking the station, Douglas Parade, is in a disgraceful condition. This is further diminishing the already sharply falling property values in the area. Large amounts of money are being spent by the State Electricity Commission on beautifying the area inside the power station.
station, and I ask the Minister for Conservation whether a proportion of the money could be spent on the maintenance of Douglas Parade.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I am not aware of the classification of the road to which the honorable member refers.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy—Do you know where it is?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—It is near the Newport power station, Mr Eddy. I shall investigate the matter.

MOUSE PLAGUE

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—Is the Minister for Conservation aware of a plague of mice that is affecting north-western Victoria and the subsequent damage that is being caused to cereal crops in the area? Is he also aware of a serious shortage of various poisons, including strychnine, which are used by district farmers in an effort to overcome the effects of the plague? If so, what action is being taken to rectify the supply problem and to deal with the plague?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I am aware of the damage that is being caused to cereal crops in Victoria and I am also aware that strychnine is in short supply, no doubt because of demand. Officers of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board have found a substitute chemical which, although not as effective as strychnine, is an alternative chemical. Efforts are being made successfully to obtain more supplies of strychnine.

SOIL EROSION

The Hon. J. W. S. RADFORD (Bendigo Province)—I ask the Minister for Conservation what action has been taken by the Soil Conservation Authority to overcome the soil erosion problems that exist at Navarre Hill?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—There is an area of ground at Navarre Hill on which requirements have been placed by the Soil Conservation Authority for dealing with soil degradation. After much negotiation and persuasion, which has been unsuccessful, action has been taken against the landowner.

THE GRANGE

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—Is the Minister of Water Supply aware of the extraordinary delay that has occurred in the negotiations between the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Oakleigh City Council over the second stage of the purchase of the property in Dunlop Road, Westall, called The Grange? Considerable correspondence has passed between the board and the council, which is concerned about the matter, and there has been a delay in the valuation. Will the Minister investigate the matter?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I shall examine the matter. It was raised by Mr Saltmarsh some time ago during debate on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting of the House. I referred the matter to the Board of Works, but it is really within the province of the Ministry for Planning as it relates to the planning section of the Board of Works. Nonetheless, I shall make inquiries.

SALINITY

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—Is the Minister of Water Supply aware that the terms of reference of the Public Works Committee's investigations into salinity are confined to the implementation of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's report of May 1975 and that they do not include an assessment of the extent and magnitude of the salinity problem in Victoria, the monitoring of the problem or a strategy for overcoming the problem of salinity? If the Minister is aware of the narrow terms of reference, what steps will he take to ensure that the problem of salinity is adequately assessed and monitored and a proper strategy is determined?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—The honorable member's statement on the terms of reference is probably quite correct. The terms of reference were drawn up some
years ago and the investigation by the Public Works Committee has been proceeding for some time. I should like to study the terms of reference in respect of the matters raised by the honorable member. They are narrow. I am not sure whether they should be enlarged at this stage because there are other matters that the Public Works Committee is currently investigating. One is the mini-Tyrrell scheme, which is probably part of the over-all strategy plan enunciated by the commission in 1975. The problem of salinity is severe and investigations into it should be updated from time to time.

TRIAL BY JURY

The Hon. J. A. TAYLOR (Gippsland Province)—Recent newspaper reports suggest that the jury results of some corporate criminal trials are more like raffles than verdicts. One report suggested that a system of three judges would be better in deciding the issue and that juries should be abolished. Has the Attorney-General received criticism similar to these reports of juries on criminal trials and, if so, is the Government considering the substance of the reports?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Criticism is made of juries in criminal trials from time to time and quite often there is a particular criticism about the trial rather than general criticism of the system. Although more serious objections are made in the case of corporate crime where sometimes the evidence is very technical and difficult to follow, it is suggested that it would be better handled by a judge or a panel of qualified people rather than by a jury of men and women selected at random.

However, the Government is not proposing to abolish trial by jury. It is worth noting that it is a right which is to the benefit of the accused and that right is an important part of the system of justice. Since it is a right to the benefit of the accused it has given grounds for belief that it ought to be an option of the accused. In the United States of America and Canada, accused persons are able to elect not to have a trial by jury but to have a trial by a judge sitting alone. At times, this is an option which the accused prefers because there might have been potentially damaging publicity before the trial which would affect a jury but not a dispassionate judge who is used to putting out of his mind pre-trial material. On another occasion, it may be a matter that is best dealt with by a judge. This matter will receive the consideration of the Government.

LATROBE VALLEY (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Latrobe Valley Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

VICTORIAN FISHING INDUSTRY COUNCIL BILL

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish a Victorian Fishing Industry Council and to amend section 3 (1) of the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958, the Fisheries Act 1968 and the Ministry for Conservation Act 1972.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

FISHERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Fisheries Act 1968.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PAPERS

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

Environment Protection Authority—Report for the year 1978–79.
Registration of Births Deaths and Marriages Act 1959—General abstract of births, stillbirths, deaths and marriages during the year 1978.


On the motion of the Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province), it was ordered that the papers be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

COMMONWEALTH INDUSTRIAL LEGISLATION

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I move:

That this House, mindful of the need at all times to seek avenues to industrial peace in Victoria, regards the actions of the Government of the Commonwealth in relation to the recent passage of the Conciliation and Arbitration Amendment Bill as potentially disruptive of such peace, and calls upon the Government of Victoria to urge the Government of the Commonwealth not to proceed with the implementation of that legislation, but to take prompt action directed towards its repeal.

The National Parliament has enacted a law which, if used, will be the signal for massive civil disobedience across this country. It is a law which arises from the complete inability of the Federal Government to control the Australian economy and, in order to draw the attention of the public away from its own sins of omission and failure, that Government has decided once again to kick the union can and to blame the trade union movement for ills mainly of its own making. Because the Federal Government, despite its interference, has not been able to force the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission towards the direction of its own peculiar economic policies, and because it has been unable to convert the Arbitration Commissioners to puppets of its party's policy, the Federal Government has pursued single-mindedly a policy of confrontation with the organized trade union movement of this country.

Indeed, what Lord Bruce tried to do in 1929, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser now seeks to do in 1979, that is, to destroy the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of this country. I believe everybody is the owner of his own body and his own mind and he cannot morally be required to deliver those possessions to another person, except on conditions and terms acceptable to himself or herself. The belief in this fundamental right has been the cornerstone of mankind's struggle for development and his search for equality down through the ages.

Despite the battery of legislation which exists to prevent unions in this country from pursuing their legitimate objectives, those who currently rule in Canberra, demonstrating their masterful concept of deceit, have created yet another Draconian law—a law which, as I say, if enacted, will result in one of the greatest upheavals and civil disturbances this country has ever seen.

I want to briefly take the House through some of the sanctions which are already law from either the national or State Parliaments and, in particular, from this Parliament and the national Parliament. There are, of course, already a variety of legal sanctions that may be used against unions and unionists taking industrial action. The existence of these sanctions is based on the false assumption—and false, indeed, it is—that legal sanctions have a constructive role to play in industrial relations in this country. In my experience, and in my firmly held belief, they act to the contrary and do nothing of the sort. They in fact worsen the situation.

The use of sanctions against unions and unionists in the course of legitimate industrial disputes is likely to worsen those disputes and make them more difficult to resolve.

The Hon. D. G. Crozier—How would you define legitimate industrial disputes?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I think any matter which is of concern to members of a particular union is legitimate. Members of a union are free, able-bodied men, and they are capable of asserting for themselves what is in their own interests. In addition, the use of sanctions may cause permanent damage to the relationship between employers and unions and between employers and employees. I have already seen that occur in so many ridiculous instances following amendments to the...
Trade Practices Act under section 45 (d), all of which were barrister banquets; all of those which were finally settled were settled by practical means and involved men from both sides of industry, representing both labour and management.

The Liberal–National Country Party Government in Canberra has adopted the misguided policy of strengthening and increasing the legal sanctions in the industrial arena. It has created new sanctions and revamped some of the old ones. It has attempted to reduce the power of unions to effectively represent the working men and women of Australia. This strategy is seen by the trade union movement as a real threat to its basis of existence.

The authority of the organized trade union movement in this country should not be impeded in the performance of its traditional and responsible functions which must include—difficult as some members may find it to concede—the right to withhold labour or impose limitations on the performance of work—otherwise the minimum wages and conditions of work awarded by tribunals become the maximum and inhibit the possibility of improvements.

I now turn to the recently-passed legislation, and the amendments that that Act enacts in respect of the existing Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of this country. The first major amendment requires a commissioner to consult with the deputy president, to whom he is responsible, before making or varying an award relating to wages and conditions.

The second amendment prohibits the commission from ordering, recommending or sanctioning in any way, an employer paying wages to an employee for time when the employee was engaged in industrial action.

Thirdly, the new Act provides for the commission to hear applications for the insertion or variation of a stand-down clause in an award, “expeditiously”. One cannot help but wonder, and fall back on one’s experience in this area alone, that expedition has been the order of the day by the present commission as previously constructed on a hearing for a stand-down application. However, the Government of the day has sought again to amend this section of the Act.

Fourthly, it provides that the question of whether an industrial dispute exists may be the subject of a reference to a Full Bench of the commission. I will come back to some of these points later, but suffice to say, even at this early stage of my comments, such a proposal is absurd in the extreme. There would not be any legitimate practitioner in the field who could justify the finding of a dispute matter being referred to the Full Bench. It is clearly a product and brain child of Parliamentarians who are frustrated that they have not been able, through the logic of their arguments, to persuade members of the commission that the national Government policy is correct.

The fifth part of this new law enables an industrial dispute or part of an industrial dispute to be referred to a Full Bench of the commission at the conciliation stage—a massive departure from the traditional concept of conciliation and arbitration in this country. Even before a matter has found its way through the conciliation process, it can be referred to a Full Bench of the commission for a decision. That is an absurd state of affairs. I believe conciliation should be the emphasis of industrial relations.

Sixthly, it increases the powers of the president of the commission by enabling him to withdraw a matter from another member of the commission and either deal with it himself or refer the matter to a Full Bench of the commission. In other words, the president of the commission—very much a political appointment in the sense of the approach of this Government—can be weighed upon by the Minister, the Prime Minister or others, and told that a particular member of the commission is not taking the right sort of attitude, and therefore “we want you to take over the case”.

The seventh amendment establishes other means by which an organization registered under this Act may have its registration cancelled, and where the organization, or two or more members of that organization, engage in industrial
action which "has had, is having, or is likely to have, a substantial adverse effect on the safety, health or welfare of the community or part of the community".

I wish to refer the House to section 2 of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The terms and objects are set out in section 2 of that Act, and the chief objects are (a) to promote goodwill in industry; (b) to encourage, and provide means for conciliation with a view to amicable agreement thereby preventing and settling industrial disputes; (c) to provide means for preventing and settling industrial disputes not resolved by amicable agreement, including threatened intending and probable industrial disputes, with the maximum of expedition and the minimum of legal form and technicality.

The provision goes on to talk about the observance and enforcement of agreements and awards, and to encourage the organization of representative bodies in union membership and employer membership. The fifth object is to encourage the democratic control of that organization.

I would have little quarrel with such objectives, that is, the objectives of ensuring goodwill in industry. The Opposition would endeavour to promote and encourage that goodwill by means of conciliation. Where that fails, there should then be an umpire. I think that is in effect a thumb nail sketch of the spirit of the existing Act and what it is all about.

However, from my knowledge of this country's history, recently we have for the first time had members of the judiciary and former members of the judiciary condemning the legislation I have just referred to, which was recently passed in the Federal Parliament. The facts are that all the Melbourne-based commissioners, when they assembled in Melbourne, voiced their protest to the Federal Government.

Opponents of this Act are hardly all mad lefties. I refer to His Honour Sir Richard Kirby, His Honour Mr Justice Staples, the commissioners themselves and, although it may be difficult for some honorable members to believe, even Mr B. A. Santamaria who came out in opposition to the recent amendment. Mr Santamaria finds himself in strange company because the entire trade union movement of this country agrees with him.

The Australian Constitution, dealing with the "Powers of the Parliament", in Part V, provides in section (51):

Conciliation and arbitration for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one State. It is the power of the national Parliament to introduce laws relating to conciliation and arbitration for the prevention and settlement of disputes.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (High botham Province)—Mr Deputy President, I raise a point of order and seek your guidance. So far, the Leader of the Opposition has spoken entirely about an Act passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, and in so doing he has reflected not on the policies of the Commonwealth Government but on an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament. Mr Landeryou has not yet alluded to any matter over which this State has jurisdiction. Mr Landeryou is discussing matters which come entirely within the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. Mr Deputy President, I seek your guidance on whether in those circumstances his remarks are relevant or irrelevant.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! It is perfectly true what Mr Hamilton states. However, Standing Order No. 130 relates to Acts of this Parliament. When one examines the import of the motion which has been moved by Mr Landeryou, all that Mr Landeryou is asking is for the Government of Victoria to make an approach to the Commonwealth Government on an Act which it has passed. That is the total import of the motion. The motion has been accepted by the House as a motion able to be debated and consequently I believe what Mr Landeryou has said to date is in keeping with the motion moved by him. I rule, at the moment, that he is in order.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—The public has been informed by the national Government that consideration was given
to this measure at a secret Liberal Party meeting in Canberra. At the end of that meeting, all members present were required to surrender their copies of the proposed legislation before leaving the party room and they were requested to keep the briefing confidential.

As His Honour Mr Justice Staples has pointed out, uncharitable minds might construe the act of ignoring the commission and its views as insulting to the integrity of the commission as a whole. It is clear that the amendments were produced under conditions of secrecy, conditions which are hardly appropriate in any law-making field, particularly where the prime concern should be one of conciliation to overcome a conflict of interests.

Apparently the Department of Industrial Relations played no part in the drafting of the amendments. No member of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was consulted and no trade union or peak council representing either employers or employees was consulted.

In his second-reading speech on the Bill, the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Street, claims that the initial proposals—not the final proposals—were shown to some members of the National Labour Consultative Council but he admitted that no trade union had had the opportunity of examining the proposals. Mr Street did not claim that the initial proposals were forwarded to the trade union representatives who were entitled to attend the meeting or left in the possession of the employers’ representatives who were at that meeting. He did not claim that the final proposals were shown to any member of the National Labour Consultative Council or to the council as a whole. Furthermore, he did not offer any reason for his failure to take the final proposals to the council as a whole before their introduction into the legislative process.

That is an hysterically absurd way to make any law, let alone a law dealing with the sensitive area of industrial relations. Any law-making procedure which seeks to search for consensus to accommodate various conflicting interests and viewpoints and which adopts that procedure is clearly not in the interests of this State or nation.

Laws which are the product of such one-sided, narrow thinking will not obtain broad assent, let alone respect. Laws of any Parliament, in the normal course of events, are entitled to be accepted. Any Government which races into legislation a law which is socially divisive and unjustified, knowing that to be so, must also be contemplating what its options are following its massive rejection by large sections of the society that it claims to govern. It is those options which follow that consideration which is of considerable concern to me. For that reason Mr Hamilton might again contemplate the future in terms of what this legislation will mean if it is ever enacted.

The recent amendments seek to pollute even further the already muddied areas of industrial relations and laws in this country. The concise, precise and fairly simple wording of the objectives and aims of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in this country will now be replaced by what will be a cluttered row of barristers, more delays, more complex procedures and indeed more costly disputes. I am on the side of reform of our industrial laws but this amending Act represents not reform but reaction in the extreme. I do not argue for yet another barristers’ banquet, but for common sense.

I have spent almost a lifetime in many industrial disputes. That experience has taught me, as I have previously stated in the House when discussing similar matters, that there are no golden rules in industrial relations. However, disputes in this State which drag on, particularly those with legal arguments attached to them, are hard to settle. Indeed, my experience suggests that the longer a dispute goes on the harder it is to find a settlement.

The Act on which I take issue and ask the House to join me in my call to the Government of this State to use its influence with the national Government to repeal the legislation, introduces a further time-consuming delay with its
attendant costs for advocates and officials who appear in the court procedures. It will also cause tempers to rise in industrial disputes, particularly when there appear to be unnecessary delays.

In regard to the new procedures which are supposed to be followed, whether the disputes are confined to this State or across our borders, historically those matters have been heard by one commissioner but, in future, they will be heard by the Full Bench. Disputes which were previously settled in hours could, in future, take years. Traditionally, of course, Full Bench matters have taken a long time to complete. Honorable members need only ask the women engaged in the workforce in Victoria who waited years to gain equal pay, or those workers who are still waiting for Anzac Day to be declared a holiday in this State, to confirm this.

The former President of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, Sir Richard Kirby, said:

The right to judge on the basis of what is said can only be a right of those who have heard.

This Act removes the right of a commissioner to determine a matter. He must consult with presidential members of the commission, but I shall come back to this point later.

To reinforce the point made by Sir Richard Kirby, I refer to an extract from a letter written by Mr Justice Staples in which he pointed out that members of the commission, pursuant to the aims and objects of the commission, will be required to:

consult with presidential members in certain circles, in a smoke-filled back room, as it were, to deal with the interests of absent parties. In every sense this proposal deprecates the competence and integrity of commissioners. They are directed to submit their will and their judgment in the discharge of an office—

I interpose to point out that members of the commission have taken an oath to "faithfully and impartially perform the duties of that office"—

to the overriding determination of another.

The one with whom the commissioner must consult does not have to be present during the presentation of the arguments. He can make up his mind, for whatever reason, in terms of that consultation, without having heard the arguments for or against.

Under the terms of section 22A of the new Act there is already fairly widespread acknowledgment that there is a large degree of informal discussion or consultation, to use the wording of the Act, between commissioners and presidential members.

I assume that is part of the everyday life of the Arbitration Commission. Mr Guest implied by a quotation recently that, when members of the same profession gather to talk business, it is a form of conspiracy. I do not entirely agree with that point. However, it does underscore the view of at least one member of the legal profession that some form of consultation naturally occurs whenever members of that profession gather. I suppose he was applying that right across the board to all professional jobs and, for that matter, to all vocations.

The Act seeks to formalize that process of consultation or of informal consultation or discussion. The Act does not provide any definition of "consultation". "Consultation", arguably, could mean many different things. It may range from prolonged consultation or discussion to a cursory telephone call. Failure of the Act to give a precise definition of that term means that the requirements of that section could defy legal enforcement. If a High Court writ were issued, for instance, requiring a commissioner to consult with the appropriate deputy president, how could it be proved in a court of law that the commissioner had not consulted or that he had consulted as required by the section? Surely nothing but an express refusal to consult by that commissioner would lead to court intervention. Consequently, that section would have a formal rather than a substantive effect on the commission's procedures. However, that is not what the Minister has said in public utterances.

In addition, the insertion of section 22A into the Act gives rise to yet another problem. If, somehow, it were
proven that a commissioner failed to consult with his deputy president—that is, if the umpire does not leave the sports field and talks to someone else who is not even watching the game before he gives his decision—and that commissioner proceeds to amend an award, what is the effect on that decision because the commissioner has failed to consult? If no one takes that point initially in the early stages, is the award or the variation invalid? The answer to that question is unclear.

In the present state of the law, it is difficult to say categorically that a failure to observe a procedural obligation such as the one I have just mentioned will not affect the validity of the eventual decision. The possible effect, therefore, of the new section 22A is that an award of a commissioner may, at some time after its making, have its validity successfully challenged by some interested person who could be either a party to the award or, under the Act, the responsible Minister or an interested Minister.

I turn now to another aspect of the new law. Despite the great battery of law that exists, the Act itself provides for deregistration of unions and empowers a full bench to make a relevant declaration aimed at deregistration of a union. That is where it is satisfied that two or more persons have, in the past, engaged in industrial action which has had a substantial effect on the welfare of the community or part of the community.

As the Honorable Clyde Cameron, the member for Hindmarsh in the Federal Parliament, has argued in that Parliament, the losses incurred by shareholders may form the basis of such a declaration. Obviously, such persons are part of the community.

To underscore that point and to return to Mr Justice Staples's argument, one of the key practices of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes is to dissolve trade unions and to put puppets in their place. Whilst one may question, from a conservative point of view, the colourful language used by His Honour, the reality historically is true. It has been one of the first steps along the march towards dictatorship to fix up the trade unions on the assumption that, once you have fixed the trade unions, you will not have any difficulty with them because they will all be puppet-controlled and there will not be much else left to beat.

His Honour further stated:

This legislation provides for precisely that possibility. The amendment is framed so as to manoeuvre this Commission into providing respectability for an exercise which is essentially reactionary and under which this Commission may be rendered perfectly superfluous if it is not willing to be an instrument of the Government's will in a particular case. We have already seen a number of examples recently where the present Government's will has been declared to have been thwarted by the decisions of this Commission.

Therefore, it follows that what the Federal Government wants to do, having sought to impose its will on the community and to use the Arbitration Commission as a vehicle to impose its economic sanctions on the ordinary wage and salary earners of this country, and having not been completely successful in that endeavour, is to resort to a new law which is potentially, in my view, the most disastrous piece of legislation passed by any Parliament.

It will create in this State and, indeed, in the Commonwealth, the basis for confrontation such as the community we live in has not yet seen. If the purpose of the Act is to so reduce the power and the influence of individual arbitration commissioners to that of mere puppets for the economic policy that emanates from the Liberal and National Party Government, clearly arbitration no longer exists in this country, let alone proper conciliation.

I have mentioned to the House in previous debates the strictures imposed on affiliate members of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Its constitution is such that unions which are controlled by Governments cannot be affiliates. If the Australian trade union movement cannot be free from Government interference—and this Act clearly makes it possible for the Minister and the Governor-General in Council to seize control of union assets, to dismiss union officers from power and from their elected positions, to prevent members of an industrial organization from
standing for office and from participating in elections for successors—clearly there is Government control of unions.

If that becomes the effective law, rather than merely the wish of the gerrymandered majority in Canberra, then the Australian Council of Trade Unions and its affiliates will no longer be eligible for affiliation in the international trade union movement. It is my firm belief that the ordinary, average citizens in our community have no real bargaining power as individuals; and even as wage and salary earners, when they are collectively organized, they are not represented by anything approaching the sort of power of organized employers, of large corporations or the Government. Even the collective industrial strength of the entire trade union movement of this country is no match for the power of the big multinational companies. Indeed, we heard fall from the lips of one of the backbenchers of the Liberal Party in this Chamber last night how the national Government has been stood over by such a corporation.

Unhesitatingly, I would call for and I would support a call for a campaign of massive, mass, civil disobedience by all Australians who cherish freedom of speech, freedom of action and freedom of association if this legislation is used against one union in this country, let alone all of them. It is the responsibility of the Government of Victoria to ensure that its voice is raised on behalf of the Victorian people against laws passed in other Parliaments which adversely affect the welfare of Victoria and its citizens, and that its voice is heard in the councils of this country. Let the dictators who are responsible for this fanatically one-sided piece of absurd legislation take the next step that the legislation envisages. Then let them see, and let those members opposite who disagree with my views see, the irreparable damage that will be done to our society and to this country. The legislation to which I have referred was conceived in deceit and born in secrecy. It will die, just like all other Fascist laws have died, under the eventual rock of the organized might of the ordinary, average Australian.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Mr Landeryou has taken this House through an elaborate analysis of this Act which was introduced and dealt with in the Commonwealth Parliament. If I may say so, his analysis was one that would have been better made in the Commonwealth Parliament when that Bill was being debated than being made in this House.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—He made a better speech than some of his Labor colleagues in Canberra, too.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—We acknowledge that the better-performing members do come to this House, where matters can always be debated quite rationally and sensibly. However, Mr Landeryou did not demonstrate in any way the relevance of what he had to say to the motion that he moved. Rather, he took this as an occasion to debate a Commonwealth Bill and to put his point of view, as he is perfectly entitled to do, but he has done so in this House under the guise of this motion.

The House ought to be discussing constructive, rational measures for ensuring that industrial peace prevails in our community because industrial relations are the most vexatious and intractable of problems. They have been so for many years and they remain so. It is of immense importance to the State that its industrial machinery be effective, that it fosters an atmosphere of harmony and encourages cooperation and mutual benefit to all persons involved in the work force. I do not propose to talk about the actions of the Commonwealth Government or about the terms of the Commonwealth legislation because that is not a matter with which this Chamber should concern itself. The House should look to the future and what can be achieved for Victoria and, it is hoped, by example, for the rest of Australia.

I cannot help but note that despite the comments made by Mr Landeryou there has been a significant improvement in man-hours lost because of industrial action in recent years compared with the period when a Labor Government was in
office in Canberra. Mr Landeryou continues to interject. Obviously the honorable member is stung by hearing facts and figures. I am prefacing my argument by pointing out the facts. During the time when the Labor Government was in office in Canberra an average of 4.1 million man-days were lost a year because of strikes, stoppages and disputes. The average for the three years to 1978 was 1.8 million and if one includes the Medibank aberration it is 2.1 million.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—What is the justification for more Draconian legislation—are't you going to answer that?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—Wait for it. First, I shall move an amendment to the motion moved by Mr Landeryou. I move:

Omit all the words after “industrial peace in Victoria,” and insert—

“acknowledges that any system of industrial relations requires a spirit of co-operation amongst all the parties concerned and a willingness to abide by the decisions of duly appointed tribunals; accordingly it commends the continuance of policies of industrial relations that will foster an atmosphere of harmony and mutual benefit for all sections of the workforce.”

If so amended, the motion will reflect the views and wishes of all members of the House. It is a constructive acknowledgment of the importance of a system of industrial relations which produces harmony and an effective process for resolving disputes which will inevitably arise. There is no need to seek justification for introducing legislation at this stage. I do not propose to discuss the terms of the legislation but there is no doubt that in recent times there has been a heightening of industrial dispute in this country. There has been a departure from reliance upon the industrial system which at present exists. The Minister who introduced the legislation in Canberra pointed out that the attitudes adopted by the Australian Council of Trade Unions and others indicated that they were not going to conform with the guidelines on wage indexation and dashed hopes that the Arbitration Commission was going to continue the process which led to the many man-hours lost that I mentioned earlier.

The Hon. D. R. White—This is convoluted.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—I am sorry that Mr White is not able to follow what I am saying. There is no doubt that industrial unrest affects every part of the community and not only those who are on strike, because of the diminution in services, the drop in income as a result of people not being able to continue the life they have chosen.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—You know that there are existing laws to cover all of those situations.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—The existing laws have not been successful in stopping industrial disputes in recent times which have caused more trouble and havoc for the community than in the past.

If one wishes to talk about how to deal with these industrial disputes, one must look at the machinery that is available. I know Mr Landeryou says he is not opposed to change. The Government has looked at the machinery available for solving industrial problems and has introduced a Bill in another place. That is a recognition of the fact that it is important to try to avoid friction and encourage discussion and cooperation and have machinery which will enable effective resolution of disputes when they arise. Without cooperation there will be industrial unrest which will affect everyone in the community.

The spirit of cooperation was exemplified last week when Mr Maclellan, the Minister of Transport, did not hesitate to go to the office of a member of the Labor Party to discuss these matters. That is a good example of co-operation, conciliation and an endeavour to find a rational solution to a dispute which otherwise could cause problems for the community. That illustrates my point.

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Since the last century Victoria has had a unique wages board system under which employers and employees are represented. That system brought together employer and employee and provided a
structure to resolve disputes and produce resolutions which would be acceptable to all sides. Although that system has worked, over the years in Victoria there has been increasing sophistication and complexity in the community, so it is necessary to consider whether that system should be reformed.

The Government followed that process of reform by establishing a committee consisting of representatives of employers and employees and the Government. That committee produced a report which led to the proposed reform to the Victorian wage fixing system. For example, Victoria has established the means of trying to achieve a system that is fair and just and which will work for all parts of the community.

The Federal Government sought to do the same because the proposals Mr Landeryou talks about were presented to the National Labour Consultative Council. As Mr Baxter said, by way of interjection, employee representatives did not attend that meeting despite the council having written to them earlier pointing out the importance of the meeting. Because of their absence, they were not able to make the contribution that they should have made. Perhaps if Mr Landeryou had had his way employee representatives would have been sensible enough to attend the meeting and be part of the process which led to the introduction of the legislation. It is still not appropriate for Mr Landeryou to say that they were not consulted or did not have the opportunity of contributing to legislation.

I repeat what I said earlier because apparently Mr White did not hear. I do not propose to discuss the details of the legislation. That is a matter for the Federal Government to discuss. It seems to me that honorable members opposite are more concerned to make what they judge to be political capital out of something which concerns another Parliament than to concern themselves with what can be done in this place to assist the community.

The Government is concerned to resolve, within the jurisdiction available to it, those problems which affect the people of Victoria. For that reason, the Government introduced the Bill which will be passed by the Legislative Assembly and will come to this House where it can be debated in detail. That is one illustration of how the Government has tried to introduce modern machinery, supported by all parts of the industrial process, to resolve disputes which occur.

In the last century when the wages board system was introduced it was a novel piece of industrial machinery and Australia was foremost in the world. There is no doubt that the Federal Government introduced this legislation because of pressures placed on it, which is no doubt recognized by Mr Landeryou and members on the other side of the House. Members of the Labor Party ought to constructively consider any changes which might improve the machinery, or if it cannot be improved, replace it with something else.

I remind honorable members that at the last Premiers Conference it was decided that the Labor Ministers for the Commonwealth and the States would meet to consider the industrial machinery available in this country and whether there should be a reference of power to the Commonwealth Government so that the Commonwealth would have total legislative power over industrial relations for the whole of Australia instead of it being divided between the Commonwealth and the States.

I would be interested to hear whether Mr Landeryou supports the reference of power to the Federal Government so that it would have control over the industrial relations machinery, or whether he prefers the States to keep an interest in these matters not covered by Commonwealth legislation and power.

That review by the Labour Ministers is still proceeding. The Ministers are to have another meeting later this week. One hopes some instructive proposals will emerge for the reform of industrial machinery throughout Australia, whether it be by way of the Commonwealth extending its powers, by a reference of powers to the whole area of industrial relations or by an improvement to the existing system.
Honorable members should support whatever proposals arise, provided those proposals fall within the types of guidelines the amendment I have proposed suggests.

The Hon. D. R. White—Does the proposed legislation enhance an atmosphere of harmony and mutual benefit as your proposed amendment suggests?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—Since the proposed legislation is something the Labour Ministers have not yet decided upon or referred to the Premiers Conference, it is difficult for me to say whether that is so.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Mr White is talking about the Street amendments, the ones which have just been passed, the subject-matter of the motion.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—The proposed amendment is not legislation, but if Mr White is asking whether the debate tonight will engender a spirit of co-operation amongst all the parties concerned, the Government believes it should if everybody participates in the debate in the spirit in which the amendment is moved.

I was pointing out to Mr White that, instead of examining what the Federal Government might have done, he should have been more concerned with encouraging the Labor Ministers to fundamentally re-examine the industrial relations machinery in this country on a completely non-party and bipartisan basis so that the spirit of that amendment is fulfilled within the machinery existing in both the Commonwealth and State spheres.

For those reasons, the Government does not believe it can support the motion moved by Mr Landeryou, which consists of an analysis of some other Government’s legislation, but rather, supports the proposed amendment, which espouses a spirit which all members of this House ought to support.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—The National Party is disappointed that Mr Landeryou is trying to make up for the inept and incapable handling of the situation by his colleagues in Canberra.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—Mr Landeryou is trying to make up for the inept and incapable handling of the situation by his colleagues in Canberra.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER—That might be so, Mr Hamilton; I cannot judge that. I listened with interest to what Mr Landeryou had to say. If honorable members waste the time of this House discussing the legislative actions of other Parliaments, that is an incorrect use of the forms of the House. Where will it all end if honorable members are to waste the time of this House making recommendations to other Governments? This House has enough problems on its own plate to occupy its time beneficially. In addition, it is a matter of opinion whether the legislation is or is not good. Like the Attorney-General, I do not intend to canvass the merits or otherwise of the legislation, because I do not believe that is appropriate.

The House should be concerned with how strikes are affecting all the “little people”, that is, the man in the street. What about the transport strike last week? What about the workers who could not get to their employment last week? What about all the small businessmen who were put under economic threat because either their freight did not arrive or they were unable to ship their goods? What is astounding is that when one looks at the number of industrial strikes Victorians have to put up with, one cannot find the people who want to go on strike.

After the number of strikes Victoria has experienced, I have yet to find many ordinary men and women who actually wanted to go on strike. As Mr Chamberlain says, they are not even asked. I use the example of a “strike poll” I conducted the other evening. I travelled on three separate trams last Wednesday at about 11.00 p.m. Because the trams were virtually deserted, I took the opportunity of inquiring whether the tram conductors wished to go on strike for the following two days. The three tram conductors replied, “No. We do not want to miss a day’s pay. They did not ask us whether we wanted to go on strike”.

For those reasons, the Government does not believe it can support the motion moved by Mr Landeryou, which consists of an analysis of some other Government’s legislation, but rather, supports the proposed amendment, which espouses a spirit which all members of this House ought to support.

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—The National Party is disappointed that Mr Landeryou brought this motion forward in terms that will do nothing to overcome a difficult situation.
The Opposition would be far better employed convincing some of their union leader colleagues that they are completely out of step with the rank and file unionists. The National Party appreciates the pressures unionists are under as a result of rising costs. Naturally, unionists are anxious to receive higher wages; honorable members will agree that that goes without saying. However, the disruption to this nation’s economy by unjustified strikes is doing untold harm to the very people the union leaders claim they are endeavouring to help.

Victoria would benefit if the activities of the Labor Party were directed towards overcoming the problem of wildcat strikes. Victorians are heartily sick and tired of the whole episode. Wildcat strikes are bringing the economy to its knees. This action can only detrimentally affect the workers of Australia no matter which industry they are employed in.

Mr Landeryou made one significant statement when he said that he would make a call for civil disobedience if this law were used against any particular union. I agree with Mr Jenkins that that is an appalling statement. Because Mr Landeryou disagrees with a law passed by a duly elected Parliament, he is going to break the law by inciting civil disobedience. Where will that type of action lead this nation? There are many laws that I disagree with, but I accept the fact that those laws have been made by this Parliament and that they must be accepted.

Victoria is in a critical situation. I regret that this evening’s debate degenerated after the first speaker into a rather desultory offering of blandishments of no real value or meaning. The Opposition notes with interest that the Attorney-General is not willing to discuss the essence of the Street amendments to the Act; the Attorney-General is clearly embarrassed to do so. The Opposition cannot honestly understand how the Attorney-General’s contribution to the debate is worth much unless he is willing at least to reflect upon those amendments and then address himself to the motion. The Opposition regrets that the Attorney-General did not do so.

The Opposition is interested in the Attorney-General’s proposed amendment. It is amazing that the honorable gentleman should use such brotherhood statements as “the spirit of co-operation”, and “decisions of duly appointed tribunals”, but the Opposition is not very happy about the way duly appointed tribunals are being manipulated at the moment. The duly appointed tribunal’s powers are being changed and altered. However, what is really amazing is the last phrase of the amendment which reads:

Accordingly, it commends the continuance of policies of industrial relations that will foster an atmosphere of harmony and mutual benefit for all sections of the work force.

The Opposition assures the Attorney-General that this legislation certainly will not do what the honorable gentleman seeks. It is interesting that the honorable gentleman uses the words...
"continuance of policies". "Continuance of existing policies" would suit the Labor Party far better than the words suggested in the present amendments to the Federal legislation.

It is amazing that the Attorney-General did not comment on the essence of the amendments. The Labor Party is amazed that the Attorney-General suggested that all honorable members should be in favour of his amendment as if it were related to Federal legislation.

Honorable members in this House are in a critical situation. The way the press reported the debate last week in the Federal Parliament on this issue was such that the essence of the amendments was not really canvassed in the press. It is fortunate that the issue reported in the press related to a letter from Mr Justice Staples, an important letter that the press and the media generally managed to carry in such a way that only one-half of the issue was covered. Therefore, the essence of what was happening did not come through.

I will talk about Mr Street in a moment, but the Street amendments are oppressive, tyrannical and unjust. On the surface it appears that nobody supports these amendments, least of all, Mr Street.

The Attorney-General is upset by these amendments and is not willing to comment upon them. The Labor Party regrets that, because the essence of the motion is to examine those legislative amendments and then apply them to what might occur in this State.

A system of conciliation and arbitration cannot work without co-operation. It cannot work without the co-operation of the unions and yet the legislation is cast in such a mould that it almost ensures a lack of cooperation by the unions. That is a despicable approach to the whole issue. The Attorney-General's amendment suggests cooperation. The Federal legislation suggests, even promotes, a lack of cooperation. How can the unions cooperate with such Draconian legislation? How can these measures work? A good law is a law that works. Clearly, this law will not work and I comment in passing that the legislation is aimed at making a Federal election possible.

The Labor Party is sure that, when Mr Fraser finds that the time is right, he will be able to apply the provisions of the legislation in such a way that industrial unrest will become an issue in a Federal election. That is as clear as the nose on one's face. It is easy to see why the Prime Minister is keen on the legislation. The Prime Minister will bide his time.

In the medium and the long term, no Government can win on measures such as these. The Government will bring discredit to the long-standing and reasonably operated Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1904. That Act is under attack. Indeed, the traditions that have been so well established in Australia and recognized worldwide are under attack in such a way that the Federal legislation could bring down the present systems that have worked so well.

Confrontation and the use of Draconian powers will not resolve industrial problems. Even the honorable members on the Government side of the House would agree with that. However, I cannot hear them saying that they believe the amendments proposed to the Federal legislation are just. Perhaps honorable members who will contribute to the debate later will say so, but the two honorable members from the Liberal and National parties who have spoken have not addressed themselves to the proposed amendments.

I shall comment on several parts of the measures that Mr Street introduced and in doing so I shall refer to the Federal Hansard for Tuesday, 9 October 1979, and some of the comments made by the Honorable Clyde Cameron that are reported in it. It is clear that no consultation took place during the drafting of the proposed amendments. The Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber made that statement and I point out to honorable members that between 1972 and 1975, when a Labor Government was in power in Canberra, there was an atmosphere of consulta-

The Hon. E. H. Walker
tion abroad. At page 1776 of the Federal Hansard Mr Cameron is reported as saying:

... On every occasion on which I sought to amend—

Mr Cameron was the Minister at the time—

the Conciliation and Arbitration Act I sent copies of the proposed Bill to the judiciary, the unions and the employers before it was brought into this House. On frequent occasions, as the parliamentary draftsmen will testify, I made substantial alterations to those drafts after receiving comments from the judiciary, the trade union movement and, on one occasion, even from the employers.

That illustrates a decent process of consultation, but it was not used in this instance. This measure has been brought in, in an atmosphere of total smear and is now being rammed down the public's throat. One could also well imagine that it is being rammed down Mr Street's throat because he is clearly not happy with it.

The issue that Mr Baxter raised, the notion that there are no such things as justified strikes, is also worthy of comment. Mr Baxter did not answer the question when it was put directly to him and I hope it is not true that he believes that is the case. Of course there are justified strikes. What other weapon does the union movement have in a situation in which no other process is working? What other weapon does the worker have in order to gain reasonable conditions and wages for himself?

I am amazed at Mr Baxter's comments about the rail strike last week. Perhaps he could explain how a rail worker who has a wife and five children can live on $1.30 a week. It is impossible. All the railway workers are asking for is parity with New South Wales. They are asking for a measly $8 parity payment and Mr Baxter should be ashamed of having mentioned the rail strike. It was a justified strike.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I do not understand how the honorable member's remarks relate to the motion.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I am interested in making comment on the notion of justified strikes. I again quote from the remarks made by Mr Clyde Cameron, which are recorded at page 1777 of the Federal Hansard:

... Let us examine the situation of a strike brought about as a result of a safety issue. For instance, miners may claim that methane gas in the mine constitutes a threat to their health or to life and limb. Surely no one would say that if they went on strike and as a consequence of the strike finally settled the dispute to their satisfaction they would have no right or the Commission would have no right to say that they should have been forced to lose wages over a matter in which they were completely justified.

Of course there are justified strikes, and one could quote example after example.

I also comment briefly on the powers now being transferred to the Executive Council. That transfer of powers is the essence of the difficulty and it is that transfer of powers to the Executive Council that is the basis for the unrest the Opposition fears could occur if the measure is put into effect. It is clear that the Federal Bill takes powers that were within the realm of the Federal courts and transfers them, particularly those relating to deregistration of unions, to the Executive Council. As honorable members realize, the Executive Council consists of the Governor-General and two Ministers. That is an extremely small group and the Ministers can be any two Ministers. The idea that the transfer of judicial powers of this kind to such a group is a reasonable and just method of determining whether deregistrations should occur is wrong. I again quote the remarks made by Mr Clyde Cameron, which appear at page 1777 of the Federal Hansard:

I turn now to the second point, which relates to the power of certain members of the Parliament—

Mr Cameron is there referring to the Executive Council:

to exercise the judicial powers which now reside in the Federal Court. I refer to the processes of deregistration under section 143 and proposed new section 143A. If two members of any union stop work in some remote corner of the Commonwealth, the Minister— not the Judge, not the full bench—can ask the full bench of the Commission to give a certificate to the effect that there are two members on strike in the Gulf of Carpentaria. If the Minister proves that two members of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union are on strike the full bench is obligated to give the Minister a certificate that he has asked for,
He there refers to a certificate of deregistration. It is extraordinary that such powers should be written into any measure. It is extraordinary that those powers can apply to two union members in a far-flung corner of the country and can then bring about the deregistration of the union concerned in the whole country. I shall again refer to the remarks made by Mr Cameron.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! May is quite clear on the point that no honorable member should use the remarks of another honorable member or of some other person to produce his own speech. It is up to the honorable member concerned to give his reasons to the House. He may substantiate his argument by the use of some comments or writings made by other people but it may not be the other way round. The honorable member is getting very close to doing just that. I therefore ask him to cease using that process.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER—I suppose I have used enough of Mr Cameron’s words. I shall be quite happy not to continue quoting from Federal Hansard.

I presume honorable members on the Government side of the House are delighted with the proposed legislation, although they do not look delighted. They will probably say that the measure is long overdue, unionists need to be pulled into line and the proposed legislation is exactly what has been required for years and should have been put into effect long ago. I shall be interested to hear them say that because for them to do so will illustrate that they have no consciences.

The proposed Federal measure will cause social dislocation in Victoria, not just because of union unrest, but because the proposed amendments are unjust. It will assist in the process of widening inequities that already exist. The proposed amendments are further steps to what will shortly become a police State, and that worries me. I do not believe the Federal Government cares about that. It is moving in such a direction that soon power will reside in only one man and he will want to rule the country in such a way as to determine what will be done and what will occur.

Honorable members may smile when I say that, but of course the measure is another example of the centralizing of power and the movement towards a police State. The proposed legislation will worsen unemployment and it has no inherent justice. Unions are seen by members on the Government side of the House as bodies of people who can be kicked and blamed for an economy that is rapidly deteriorating.

I began my remarks by saying that I believe the proposed legislation is oppressive, tyrannical and unjust. It now seems that there are no spokesmen, other than the Prime Minister, who are willing to stand up and justify these measures. It seems that no justification will be offered by honorable members opposite. The Attorney-General would not make any comment and Mr Baxter simply slid past the principle. I shall be interested to hear the other contributions that will be made because someone may defend the proposed legislation, even though it is Draconian and should never have been introduced. I support the motion and the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in calling upon the Victorian Government to urge the Federal Government not to proceed with the implementation of this Draconian measure, but to repeal it.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—I may do what Mr Walker has just suggested, because a basic principle has been overlooked by members of the Opposition. That principle is that only those people who break the law feel the weight of the law and from what I can gather the main thrust of the argument put by the Opposition has been that there should be no legal constraints on unionists who engage in industrial action.

In this country there have been industrial actions involving property damage, physical violence and a total disregard for the general community. Earlier Mr Landeryou referred to section 45d of the Trade Practices Act. In this country there have been secondary boycotts that have severely damaged the
economic position of companies not directly involved in the dispute in question. There has been a move away from the more traditional activities of the trade union movement in which the course of industrial action against employers has been pursued.

Mr Walker referred to the fact that the railway workers in Victoria are seeking an amount of $8. That is being done on the good old principle that if the camel drivers in Afghanistan get more than the camel drivers in Australia, the camel drivers in Australia should be given more. Where will that lead? It seems to me that so long as an employee can find someone somewhere who gets slightly more than he does, he can claim the extra and justify his argument.

I cannot understand how a responsible trade unionist could have the morbid fear that the Fraser Government is out to wreck the whole of the trade union movement. If all Liberal Governments are union-bashing Governments, I should like to know why Australian workers have working conditions equal to those in any other country after 23 years of Liberal government. Most of those conditions have been achieved without the massive disruption that has existed in the past few years.

I have worked in industrial relations for the past fifteen years and for only three of those years was there a Socialist Government, and the only people from the trade union movement who were given no consideration by Governments of either political persuasion were militant stirrers who refused to act in a responsible manner.

During the term of the Whitlam administration it was shown that pandering to such people merely exacerbated the situation. The man-hours lost due to industrial disputes rose alarmingly between 1972 and 1975, mainly because the Whitlam Government was not prepared to take a firm line with union activists.

The majority of trade union leaders have nothing to fear from the industrial relations legislation, but they allow themselves to be manipulated by stirrers and activists within their ranks. It appears that the whole trade union movement is in uproar over these proposed changes. It is about time the rank and file members stood up to be counted. The Government is prepared to stand up and enforce the law of the country against any militant union leader who wants to impose the use of union power on the community and hold it to ransom.

I move now to a couple of other points.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I raise a point of order; Mr Bubb is obviously reading his speech.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—It is possible that Mr Kent is correct, but, as Mr Bubb is a new member, I am prepared to give him exactly the same latitude as I would give to any other new member in the House. I believe Mr Bubb is just using copious notes, and I trust that he and other new honorable members will use them for only a limited period.

The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—Earlier the Leader of the Opposition referred to multi-national corporations and their power versus the power of the unions. He would be well aware that I worked for an employer organization, some 90 per cent of whose members were classified as small businesses. Fewer than 100 people were working for the organization, and it was defined as a small business.

When the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union was formed and amalgamated with the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths Society and the sheet metal working unions, it was purported to have 180,000 members. Its annual subscription at that time was $40 a member, which gives a gross income in subscriptions of some $7 million. The union’s investment at that time was about $500,000, which would generate about $50,000 in investment income. The union, under the terms of its registration under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, is not liable to
taxation, and, taken together, 90 per cent of the companies which belong to the organization for which I worked would not have a gross income of $7.5 million. If people talk about equal might, equal right or equal power, they ought to consider that situation. Clearly, one ought to look further than that and ascertain how the person who has the power to control those funds obtained that power. It is commonly said that many of the officials of the union were elected on the votes of a very small percentage of the voting membership.

Tremendous economic and real power is vested in the hands of these people, and they can use it if they wish. I shall read a small quotation from Laurie Short, who I think most people would admit is a responsible union official. He stated:

There is no simple answer to the problem of achieving a greater degree of industrial peace, but Australia needs more responsible and representative union leaders elected in democratic ballots in their unions, with a large percentage of the members voting.

They are the words of Laurie Short, who is the national secretary of the Federated Ironworkers Association. I stress the two words, "responsible" and "representative". Again I draw the attention of the House to the fact that people who meet neither of those criteria have available to them enormous financial reserves and tremendous power; they have the power to wreck the economy of this country. Any Government which has the courage to step up and cause these union activists to be curbed and to protect the economy of the country is, in my view, to be applauded.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I support the motion and oppose the proposed amendment, because I regard it as meaningless garbage.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! Mrs Coxedge will find, if she consults her Standing Orders and, indeed, parts of May, that they provide that what any honorable member has said may not be spoken of by another honorable member in that way in the House, and accordingly I ask Mrs Coxedge to withdraw the last comment she made.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy President. I will therefore say that I regard the proposed amendment as meaningless.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—I asked Mrs Coxedge to withdraw the comment she made. She will withdraw the comment first and use another phrase later, if she wishes.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—I withdraw the original comment, and I will start again.

I support the motion and oppose the proposed amendment, because I regard it as meaningless. I reiterate some of the points that my colleagues of the Opposition have made, that under the guise of changes in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, supposedly designed to remedy the deficiencies in the operation of the Act which have become evident in recent months, the Federal Government is moving to enact the toughest anti-union laws ever devised against Federal unions. The most drastic new law will give the Government, through the Governor-General, complete power over the operation of unions without any control being exercised by the Arbitration Commission.

The Government will have power, firstly, to suspend any of the rights of the union or all or part of its membership under any award or the Conciliation and Arbitration Act; secondly, to direct what rights suspended under the award may be exercised, and how; and, thirdly, to freeze or control the use of union funds or property which could involve a prohibition on spending funds on pay or other industrial campaigns, such as publishing union journals.

If this Bill becomes law—obviously it has become law and I understand it has been proclaimed—these powers could be exercised either in addition to or instead of the deregistration of the union. The only condition upon the
Government exercising these unprecedented powers is the obtaining by the Government of a declaration from a Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission that industrial action by the union is having, "a substantial adverse effect on the safety, health or welfare of the community or part of the community".

In reality, as we all know, it will not be difficult for the Government to use the power against any union it chooses from time to time, whatever the rights or wrongs of the dispute may be. Other completely one-sided proposals would prevent the Arbitration Commission from permitting payments to be made to workers while they were engaging in industrial action.

At present the commission decides from time to time that where workers were justified in taking action—for example, refusing to work under dangerous conditions, which seems fairly reasonable—there should be no loss of pay. This is now to be forbidden, even where the union and its members are held by the commission to be completely justified in their action. Still other amendments to the legislation are designed to ensure that employers can more easily and quickly obtain stand-down orders against workers, whatever the reasons for the dispute, without even having to be satisfied, as at present, that an application to have the matter dealt with by a Full Bench of the commission is in the public interest.

Finally, the Bill is a deliberate attempt to intimidate and undermine the integrity of the members of the Arbitration Commission. Each commissioner will now be obliged to "consult" with a presidential member, who may know nothing of the background or facts in a disputation, before taking a decision on any matter. The amendments will also enable a matter to be taken out of the control of any member of the commission and dealt with by the Full Bench.

A former Arbitration Commission President, Sir Richard Kirby, the Deputy President, Mr Justice Staples, and numerous arbitration commissioners have expressed criticism of the amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act passed by the House of Representatives on 10 October. One commissioner has been publicly reported as having said that it will be difficult for parties to disputes to have confidence in the commission if they believe a commissioner is going to run and talk about what he will do with someone else.

I am astounded that the Government has been so blatant in singling out Mr Justice Staples for attack simply because he had the courage to criticize employers when he honestly believed them to be at fault. No members of the Opposition would doubt that if he had shown bias in favour of employers, the Federal Government would have applauded his action. The Government shows its double standard in relation to Mr Justice Staples, because when Sir Garfield Barwick entered the political arena—

The Hon. N. B. Reid (Bendigo Province)—On a point of order, the honorable member appears to be quoting from a document, and members are unaware of the author's name.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge—What document? It is my handwriting.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—You are reading your speech!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—I was going to ask if Mrs Coxsedge was reading from a document and, if she was, whether she would produce it. I do not want to be in conflict with Mr Kent or other honorable members over this matter, and I trust that under the circumstances Mrs Coxsedge is using copious notes in making her speech, which I hope will be for an extremely limited period.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge (Melbourne West Province)—Thank you, Mr Deputy President. The Government shows its double standard in relation to Mr Justice Staples, for when Sir Garfield Barwick entered the political arena it
helped to bring about the destruction of the Whitlam Labor Government and democracy in 1975.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT—I do not think that has anything to do with this motion. The House is dealing with a Bill which has been before the Federal Parliament, and that is clearly spelt out in the motion. The points Mrs Coxseedge is raising now have nothing to do with the contents of the motion, and I ask her to refrain from continuing in that vein.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Certainly. Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy President.

If the Government goes ahead with the proposed legislation, we will all live to regret the day. This type of legislation will be used to intimidate people and to draw attention away from the real issues facing this country with which conservative Liberal Governments, both in Victoria and in Canberra, cannot and will not come to grips.

Past experience, in Germany and Italy in the 1930s and, more recently, in Chile in 1973, shows us that this sort of legislation, which virtually tries to wipe out the trade union movement, is taking Australia a giant step towards becoming a Fascist State.

The sitting was suspended at 6.31 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER (Nunawading Province)—If unions operate within the law, all is well, but many unions consider themselves to be above the Government, above the Parliament and above the law. This is the reason why measures such as those introduced and passed in the Commonwealth Parliament have been brought forward. Mr Landeryou has suggested that all strikes are legitimate. I would go so far as to say that some strikes may be considered to be legitimate because, at various times, more particularly in the past than at present, ruthless companies have not given the workers a fair go. In the main I suggest that such a time is long past and in this day and age we have the political strike where the unions say that they are more important than Government and make political decisions on their own behalf over and above the free Governments elected to represent them.

The parties of the right—call them Liberal or conservative or what you will—must take action to protect the standards of living of the country, so that the country's economy is not ruined by the policy of indiscriminate union action.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Whose standard of living are you protecting?

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—Everybody's standard of living. The Parliament represents everybody. Some unions can be described as extremist. In my opinion, many of the others are unduly conservative and narrow in their approach to public affairs. In Germany, our past enemy, and Japan, also our past enemy, the unions have achieved high standards of living for their members by behaving in a cooperative and responsible fashion. The unions in the present democratic Germanies—both of them are democratic, I trust, but West Germany to a greater extent than its eastern neighbour—remember the ghastly inflation which existed in the year 1923 and they say that it will never happen again. They have been much more responsible in their approach to national affairs, and their standards of living have improved to an enormous extent through the doctrine of union responsibility.

I believe in trade unionism. Not a member in this House does not believe in trade unionism, but in this day and age, in this country the doctrine of responsibility hangs heavily on unionism. In the United Kingdom and Italy the unions' doctrine of irresponsibility has run rampant, and the countries have suffered as a result. It has been suggested that we have imported the English disease in that for some reason trade unionists have emigrated from England to take positions of responsibility in Australia. I believe this country has been poorer because of an undue English migrants shop steward influence. Australia has a high
and rising standard of living despite the militant activities of many Australian unions.

Let us consider the areas of change provided in the Federal Bill. The amendments are mild in their approach, and operate only when the unions have gone beyond the law. The first amendment requires a commissioner to consult with his deputy president before making or varying an award relating to wages or conditions. Is this not a reasonable condition? Does this not mean that increased consultation takes place before some measure of decision is taken?

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—As you did on the land deals.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—I do not know whether I am to be continually confronted by irresponsible interjections. The Leader of the Opposition is honest enough to realize that his interjection is mainly to try to stop a member of the Government party from making his point.

The second amendment prohibits the commission from ordering, recommending or sanctioning in any way an employer paying wages to an employee for time when the employee was engaged in industrial action. Now let us consider this point. It has been the insane habit of some employers, to prevent or stop a strike, to actually pay striking workers their wages for the period when they were on strike. Mr Landeryou, and probably all the members of his party, in their inner hearts would realize the insanity of an employer paying a worker for the period when he is on strike.

The third point is to provide for the expeditious hearing of stand-down applications either before a single member of the commission or a full bench. I do not understand how the Opposition could possibly object to this provision.

The fourth point is to provide that the action to decide whether an industrial dispute exists may be the subject to a reference to a full bench of the court. Surely, in many areas of court decisions, whether it be the County Court of Victoria, the Supreme Court of Victoria, or the High Court, decisions can be referred in one way or another to the full bench rather than for the decision of a single judge. What possible objection could there be to this provision?

The Hon. E. H. Walker—It is unworkable.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—Let us give it a go. Who causes this situation to prevail? The initial cause was a strike. The other point was to enable an industrial dispute or part of an industrial dispute to be referred to the full bench at the conciliation stage—a fairly mild sensible provision. Who could possibly object to this situation?

The Hon. E. H. Walker—We do.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—I do not think Mr Walker has made his point. The next point reinforces the powers of the president of the commission by enabling him to withdraw a matter from another member of the commission and either deal with it himself or refer the matter to a full bench. The processes of democracy surely exist as far as this area of responsibility is concerned.

The final point is to provide increased protection for the community by creating an alternative path to deregistration of organizations, thereby removing delays in the deregistration process in cases where the safety, health or welfare of the community are put at risk by industrial action. Surely this situation prevails on some occasions. The provisions that are objected to by the Opposition are mild. As the Minister for Conservation said, a provision or action which may now be considered to be Draconian, was instituted by the Right Honorable Joseph Benedict Chifley when Prime Minister of Australia in 1949, when he caused the Army to be moved into the coal-mining areas of New South Wales, because he put the country before the unions and he put the country before politics.

The Hon. D. R. White—And you put the stock exchange before this place.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—I do not know on how many occasions over the next year or two I have to be put at the mercy of the dingo from Doutta Galla.
The Hon. W. A. Landeryou (Doutta Galla Province)—I raise a point of order. I take objection to the aspersions cast by the honorable member on either one or two members of the Opposition party and I call upon the honorable member to withdraw the expression.

The President (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—The words used are offensive and I ask that the honorable member withdraw them.

The Hon. V. T. Hauser (Nunawading Province)—In deference to the Chair, I most certainly withdraw the words. I believe Mr White is an “MBA”. I also believe he has earned the right to add other distinctions to his name, such as “FPE”—Failed Private Enterprise—and “SS”—Started Socialism.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—You have an appalling lack of imagination.

The Hon. V. T. Hauser—All honorable members have different qualities. Compulsory unionism is supported by the Opposition. The only compulsion that the Opposition supports is compulsory unionism. It will not support compulsory anything else, particularly compulsory democracy.

Mr Landeryou said the solution to these problems is for the Government—and in this sense he means the Commonwealth Government—to persuade the unions to come to its point of view by reason and logic. Various Commonwealth Governments, including occasionally the Whitlam Government, have been trying to do just that for decades. Unions, by their very nature and reaction of jealousy of people who work hard, are incapable of understanding logic. They stand, to the nth degree, by the hard line and for this reason, in the early years of the century, an arbitration court was necessary. Unions are illogical. They refuse to understand the lessons of logic.

The Hon. D. R. White—No wonder you are still in the “has-beens” corner.

The Hon. V. T. Hauser—Mr White’s oft-mentioned “has-beens” corner has presented many elegant and successful gentlemen to the House. “Hands that the Rod of Empire might have swayed” would be an appropriate description of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr Walker, as he has joined the wrong party. Mr White should not forget that Mr Walker was elected Deputy Leader over him before he had even taken his seat in the House. The Labor Party made the right decision.

Deregistration of unions obviously is a very important matter. In an extreme situation very few people would disagree that a union should be deregistered. The irony is that Liberal Governments, by their very nature, have made this process very difficult to achieve over the years. If a union disobeys the law or behaves outrageously, the union should lose the legal right to registration and it should be open to any member of the union in disagreement with the union officials to register another union in the same line of work.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—Scab unions.

The Hon. V. T. Hauser—they can only be described as such on a political basis when one disagrees with an opposite point of view. History has suggested that so-called scab unions or competition in unionism should be developed. It would be right and valid for many liberal-thinking unionists to set up Liberal workers’ unions. After all, the Liberal Party would not be in Government if 25 per cent to 33 per cent of unionists did not vote for it.

If, on the one hand, compulsory unionism is accepted, on the other hand, the principle should be accepted that any person who so wishes can open up another union in the same area of work in competition with the union that exists. Let there be hundreds of unions. This would aid the process of democracy.

The majority of strikes are ordered by union leadership rather than by a democratic vote of unionists. I admit that it is difficult on many occasions, for reasons of cost and communication, for any union to contact all of its members, particularly a large union, but on many occasions all honorable members have heard complaints from individual unionists that they had not been consulted and that they had not wanted to strike. Those complaints are innumerable. Ex-
tremism exists at the top "management" of most unions and it is presumed by a union leadership that it must perform, even by extensive strike action, to achieve something for its members in conditions of work or higher salaries.

There must be a way in which increased communication and consultation can occur in unions so that more democratic, instead of less democratic, action results in a more conciliatory decision. The Australian people are becoming sick and tired of the innumerable strikes. Mr Walker made a revealing point in the debate when he said that the Commonwealth Government had introduced these measures for election purposes. The logic in that argument must be that the majority of the Australian people are really sick of innumerable strikes and will vote for the political party that takes straightforward action against striking unions. Surely, that is self-evident.

Over the past six months, strike action in Victoria by rail and tram unions has shown that if the unions do not like the umpire's decision, they will strike. If the umpire's decision goes against the union, that is not acceptable, but if the umpire's decision goes with the union, that decision is final. That policy contributes to the lack of sympathy of the Victorian people for strikes.

If the Australian Labor Party were more reasonable in its attitude, the Australian workers would have a better deal. If the Labor Party, like similar parties in Germany and Japan, considered the welfare of the nation and the importance of inflation and put the nation first, the workers would be better off because the country would then be able to afford higher wages. Strikes cause less money to be available and the total situation tends to become worse than otherwise. If one did an exercise of examining many of the union situations and considered the number of days and amount of pay lost in any individual year for a particular union, one could determine that a worker may have lost $500 to gain $400 because of successful strike action.

A Liberal Government is not a nasty, Draconian Government that tries to harass the worker on many or most occasions. The objective of the Commonwealth Government in initiating legislation is not to hit the workers in any nasty fashion. Its purpose is to make Australia a more competitive nation in its manufactures so that the value of the dollar can be improved, the rate of inflation decreased, and as a result the workers will be better off in the long run.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—It is a long run, is it not?

The Hon. V. T. Hauser—It might be, but it is the correct run and in one way, every person is a member of the working class—even capitalists. The better off Australia is, the better off everyone is. No one would want the country dragged down to the extent that Italy and the United Kingdom have been dragged down over recent years because of indiscriminate strike action.

Mr Landeryou referred to civil disobedience. It was pointed out by Mr Baxter and followed up by Mr Bubb that these were dangerous words. I can understand Mr Landeryou from a political point of view suggesting that civil disobedience be indulged in to demonstrate objection to Draconian Commonwealth legislation. But is not one of the reasons for the amendments the fact that unions tend to indulge in civil disobedience on far too many occasions for too prolonged a period? If the unions were more responsible, is it not possible that these amendments would not be necessary? Is it possible that there are more people of goodwill in the community, in the Liberal Party and in the National Party, and even in the Labor Party, than Mr Landeryou believes? Does he really think the Liberal Party and members of it want to union-bash? Does he think members of the Liberal Party want unionists to earn as little as possible? This is nonsense. Members of the Liberal Party want everyone to enjoy the maximum standard of living that this lucky country can afford.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—How many wage claims have you supported in the past ten years?
The Hon. V. T. HAUSER—I have supported a few wage claims, not recently, but before 1972 when I thought in certain areas people were paid too little and that action on behalf of a union was justified. However, over the past year or so there have been no cases of that kind and I cannot remember one case in which strike action has been justified.

The labour force in the railways and tramways might be considered at base level to be paid too little. However, the vast majority of those workers, if not all members of the union, do earn more through payment of overtime rates for penalty work at week-ends and their true total wage a week, a month and a year, is much greater than the minimum wage that has been described. That the union objected so much—and I can understand this—to the suggestion that its members be not allowed to work at penalty rates at week-ends, is significant. Penalty rates mean a lot to railway and tramway workers. Over 40 hours penalty rates should be paid under some circumstances but not all. Possibly, increased employment could result in the hotel and restaurant industries, if any 40 hours were taken as a base and penalty rates were not paid at week-ends. The whole industry would benefit and increased employment would result.

I do not agree with the suggestion made by Mr Landeryou that civil disobedience will be a natural result of the passing of the Commonwealth legislation. Civil disobedience will not win the unions anything, as it did not in the 1949 crisis in the New South Wales Coal industry when Mr Chifley called the Army out. The Commonwealth Government had been driven to do what it had done by excessive and provocative union action. The Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, is a responsible man who has the interests of Australia at heart. In my opinion, Mr Fraser is the best Prime Minister we have had since Alfred Deakin, as he has the courage of his political convictions. He has the courage to be unpopular. I suggest that there are too few people, particularly on the other side of politics, who have the courage to be unpopular, and my admiration for the Prime Minister lies in the fact that he has this attribute. I believe honorable members should vote in favour of the amendment and against the motion, and I believe we should support the Commonwealth Government in its effort to create a sane state of industrial peace in this country.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER—(Thomastown Province)—It was not my intention, initially, to become too deeply involved in this debate, but some members of the Government party seem to think they have an unwritten right to pontificate about what the working class does and how it should act. Therefore, I want to deal with two aspects of this debate. The first is not my view but that of Sir Richard Kirby. Obviously I do not think Government supporters could claim that Sir Richard, the former President of the Arbitration Commission, could be described as a rabid left-wing Socialist, Communist or anarchist, however they would like to describe him. Equally so, as a person with some experience in the industrial movement, with some experience of strikes, with some experience of representing the members of the Furnishing Trade Society, I presume to challenge some of the remarks made.

The general tenor of the remarks was that the unions cause all the industrial disputation. Very little credit was given to the fact that unions are basically defensive organizations, simply trying to protect the interests of their members within the confines of the industrial and arbitration system, the wages boards, and so on, which go with this Parliamentary system. It was suggested earlier by Government supporters that we should abide by the umpire’s decision, after the umpire’s decision had been “cooked”. That is really what it is all about.

I did not come here to berate members on the Government side of the Chamber, but if they are going to make suggestions that the Labor Party set the guidelines and the rules of the Arbitration Commission, and for that matter all of the other industrial legislation, the right of assembly, the Essential Services Act, and the rest of it, they have to
be joking. The Labor Party did not do that. It all emanated from conservative Governments.

I will take honorable members back to the Combination Act which was introduced by Edward VI, in 1647. It stated that no person had the right to combine, or organize, to protect his interests, and it was directed at the Government's representatives, not ours.

The Hon. H. M. Hamilton—What about Mr Wran's Act?

The Hon. G. A. S. Butler—I will come to that in due course. Let me start 450 years ago. Ever since then the working class, whether in Europe or this country, has had to fight and struggle for legislation which would protect its rights to wages and employment conditions. I am not a Rhodes scholar by any means but, if I am not a bad judge, every piece of legislation that has been enacted since the Combination Act was repealed has been designed to restrict the organized working class, and so we have another measure now. The forerunners of the Liberal Government were not content, when Bruce was defeated in 1929, with the Arbitration Commission being formed. The Government had to lose the seat of Flinders to teach it a lesson. The Labor Party has been fighting ever since, it is fighting again, and it will keep on fighting. It has been fighting for 500 years and its members will keep doing it.

I heard some honorable members in this place talking about their pedigree. I do not claim to have a very good pedigree. I just happen to be one of those "Pommie bastards" someone referred to earlier, and I ask you, Mr President, to forgive the expression. On the other hand, those people who were my ancestors were drawing long bows long before Government members were springing rabbit traps, and it was done for the purpose of protecting this institution, and having done that, we expect some justice from it.

There are members on this side of the House who, because of history and because of experience, tend to be a little bit cynical about the operations of the establishment. Nevertheless, we are here to participate and we will give Parliament due deference, and we will also expect that the people who represent the Government in this State for the time being and those who represent the Commonwealth of Australia for the time being, will give due deference to it, too. When legislation is introduced which the former president of the commission describes as probably being unconstitutional, and subject to challenge in the High Court, the Opposition is justified in requesting the Victorian Government, as my Leader does in the motion, to ask the Federal Government to repeal, or at least to not act on that legislation until such time as it can be sorted out.

If the Government wants a class war, it can have it. My Leader expressed his views, and I will express mine. I have no wish to engage in any outright struggles. I have been through enough of them to know that one has to give and take a little or one will not win. However, if the Government wants to take the unions on, as it did in the Clarrie O'Shea case, and it really believes that after 500 years of struggle the industrial movement is going to sit down and be kicked to death to provide an excuse for the mismanagement of the Fraser Government of this country, I fear it is mistaken.

Some of the wiser heads on the Government side would understand that confrontation does not work in the twentieth century. Mr Hauser alluded to it when he suggested that we should emulate the German or Japanese system. I will not be known as an advocate of that system, but I understand the social democratic system very well. I understand that the capitalist system in Europe is about 50 years ahead of the capitalist system in Australia, and therefore it understands that it must provide social legislation and social welfare programmes, in recognition of the industrial movement and in recognition of its justified aims.

After all, when one looks at the statistics of days lost through industrial disputation, one finds that 51 per cent of those days lost were about wages, and wages only. In other words, the unions, the workers, were simply
attempting to update their weekly wage to keep level with the increase in the cost of living over which they had no control.

Further, 25 per cent of the disputes were the cause of management, and the Act suggests that the commission should no longer have the right to determine that an employer was wrong, and that he should pay wages in lieu of a strike. Yet that 25 per cent of industrial disputes, whether for safety or any other matter, were caused by the employer.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—Where does 25 per cent come from?

The Hon. G. A. S. Butler—that is in the statistics of the Commercial Bank of Australia, and Mr Taylor is as capable as I am of looking at them. With due respect to the Attorney-General, I find it impossible to support the amendment which suggests that I should have a willingness to abide by the decisions of a duly appointed tribunal. If the Government is talking about the tribunal that was there, the Act that was there, the commissioners who were there prior to the amendments to the Act initiated by the Federal Government, I might agree.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—You did not abide by them then.

The Hon. G. A. S. Butler—I might have. At least I would have had the courtesy to listen. Government members know, I know, and this House knows, that the introduction of this legislation was for one purpose, and one purpose only—the commission had the temerity to grant wage increases to the workers on application and the Fraser Government, more correctly the Liberal Party Government in Canberra, did not like those decisions; they were not in conformity with its economic policies, so it has decided to strip the Arbitration Commission of its rights. It will be like the Combination Act again. It may happen tomorrow, it may take 100 years, but in the end it will be done. There is no question, and there can be no question, if that is what the people want, that the industrial movement will be mobilized throughout the Commonwealth of Australia to oppose this legislation. If the Government wants to take it on and have the sort of silly confrontation that is taking place in Western Australia where, if three people meet without the permission of the police commissioner—

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—Don’t you know the law?

The Hon. G. A. S. Butler—Parliament makes the laws, and if Parliament is so stupid as to revert to something that is 500 years old forbidding three people to meet, then I suggest that Parliament should look at itself. This is the twentieth century.

An Honorable Member—Who was the umpire?

The Hon. G. A. S. Butler—The question of the umpire is very interesting. That is what is always thrown at the Labor Party, at the trade union movement, that we should accept the decision of the umpire. In the same way, honorable members accept the decision of the Chair, or of the President, subject to respect for the Chair. If one does not have respect for the Chair, one does not accept its rulings. If the Arbitration Commission is constructed in such a fashion that no one respects it, who will accept it?

Honorable members do not have to take my word, but they should accept the words of the former President of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission—who is not exactly Joe Blow in the workshop—who said that the Government was trying to tell the commission how to conduct its business, and that any legislation which requires the commission to act or to prevent it from acting in a particular way in the prevention or settlement of any industrial dispute is a very bad thing.

I do not want to belabour the point, but the motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition is designed to suggest that the Government should add its weight to a very strong body of opinion in the community that these amendments to the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act
at least ought to be stayed or not acted on, in a desire to prevent industrial conflict and confrontation.

That is what the Opposition is putting and suggesting the Victorian Government should do. If that is not done, obviously, as a member of the trade union movement in this State, I will take the position that I am obliged to take, that is, of engaging in the right of assembly, negotiation and argument.

If I correctly understood Mr Howard in his maiden speech, he suggested that in this day and age there were many tensions in our industrial society and there was a need for people to stand back and look at what they were doing.

As long as I am convinced that that is occurring on the Government side of the Chamber, I am prepared to discuss and look at questions collectively, but by the same token if I feel that members on the Government side are simply carrying out the dictates of people in another place, quite frankly, I am prepared to revert to my class position as dictated by the Combination Act and I will fight and extoll every member of my class to fight in the same fashion, because there is no purpose in our being gentlemen unless we can expect honorable members on the Government side to act as gentlemen.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (High in botham Province)—This has been an interesting and unusual debate, because in this Victorian Parliament honorable members have been debating an Act which has been passed by the Commonwealth Parliament. Honorable members have heard that Act roundly criticized. In debating Commonwealth legislation, I suggest this House is reflecting on the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. By interjection—I believe by Mr White—it was asserted that this had also occurred during the term of office of the Whitlam Government between 1972 and 1975. If my memory serves me correctly, although the policies and decisions of the Whitlam Government were attacked during that period no reflection was made on an Act of the Parliament of the Commonwealth. That is why this is a most unusual debate.

This debate has been brought on in this House by the Labor movement in an endeavour to cover up the ineptitude of its colleagues in Canberra, and their inability to produce logical and reasonable arguments to oppose the legislation which was passed by the democratically elected Parliament of the Commonwealth. I underline that last phrase and in answer to the many interjections I point out that democracy triumphed in 1975 because the people gave a decision.

Using the words of the Minister of Labour and Industry, it is true to say that industrial relations have become one of the most vexacious, intractable and frustrating problems of our time. I propose to illustrate that industrial turbulence in modern times has destroyed our prosperity, sabotaged our economic recovery, reduced some employers to ruin and some employees to penury and indeed reduced to a catastrophic level the employment of people in this State.

The Hon. C. J. Kennedy—Mr Fraser did all of those things.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—It serves Mr Kennedy well to claim that Mr Fraser did that, but I point out that it was largely achieved through the tunnel vision of the trade union movement. I make it clear that when I refer to the trade union movement I am not referring to trade union members but to the leadership of the trade union movement in this country because all honorable members have heard tonight from the Opposition has been from the point of view of a trade union leader.

In the first place I speak as a former unionist and a former employer of labour, and I have seen the argument from both sides.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge—Which union?

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—I started work on a few bob a week, just as members of the Opposition are so proud to claim. As a matter of interest I belonged to a union which for years satisfactorily negotiated with its employers and obtained a better position than most other people engaged in the same area. However, suddenly the union
gained the services of a militant unionist to lead it and from then on its position consistently deteriorated and what had been a matter of negotiation and agreement across the table became a matter of confrontation and fight, and the members of that union have suffered ever since.

It was in the day of the unlamented Federal Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr Cameron, that the economy of this country was destroyed. During the time when Mr Cameron was Minister, sanctions against unions and unionists were removed from the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, but sanctions have always remained against the employer. In other words, it is all right for a union to do what it likes and not accept the umpire’s decision if it does not want to, but if an employer strays one inch from the conditions laid down by the commission in its awards, that employer is immediately taken to task and under the law has to face very severe penalties.

This evening honorable members heard high-sounding words such as "co-operation", "harmony", "goodwill", all vague but high-sounding terms from members of the Opposition, but in the long run if agreement is not reached someone must arbitrate and give a decision. If one side or the other will not accept that decision, what are we to do—have anarchy or some means of enforcing the decision? That is what it boils down to.

Mr Walker referred to the railway strikes. I point out that a decision on the railway workers’ claim was given by the appropriate conciliation commissioner and the decision went against them. Honorable members heard members of the Opposition state that the Government appealed but it should remember that the appeal was still within the properly laid down channels provided in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The appeal was upheld, but now the unions claim they will not accept the umpire’s decision, they will strike as they want the right to deal directly with the Government. The unions did not want the right to go to this organization which the Opposition is stoutly defending tonight. By their arguments, members of the Opposition are upholding the right of the railway workers to bypass the commission, but I suggest that in doing so the Opposition is destroying and undermining the status of the commission.

One has to be logical; one either supports the system or one does not. Members of the Opposition are trying to have a bob each way. They want to retain the right of the workers to go to the commission to get an increase but if they do not get their increase, they want the right to strike and negotiate directly with the employer. The Opposition cannot have it both ways.

I am speaking about union leaders and not unionists, because most unionists are decent people, a large proportion of whom vote for the Liberal Party and help keep it in power. The majority of the unionists have expressed fear and mistrust of their leadership. Honorable members hear about “meaningful negotiations”. That phrase means to trade union leaders, “Accept our terms”.

A small proportion of strikes do have the support of the rank and file, and like my colleague who spoke earlier, I have tried to discover the support for strikes. On odd occasions I have not been able to find out where the support is centred, but I have received expressions of hostility from union members who have been forced to go on strike, often without having the right to vote or express an opinion.

A few months ago there was a strike within the building industry. One afternoon I happened to be passing through a building under construction and saw a couple of people huddled together. They were obviously building workers and a union official was speaking to them. I stopped and listened. He was telling them why they were going on strike. I have forgotten the details but I know that what the official said was totally untrue, just as the union movement is being fed a lot of hogwash on the proposed amendments to the Workers Compensation Act which are before another place. A lot of hogwash is being put by union leaders who are attempting to stir up trouble.
Very often these strikes are engineered by trade union leaders who seek to preserve at all costs the position of power which they have obtained in our community.

I have good authority to back me up in the person of the Socialist writer, Paul Johnson, whose recent writings have been full of this. He says that the trade union movement is irrelevant in the twentieth century, that union leaders have become drunk with their own power and that all they seek to do is to preserve their positions. There are widely discussed cases of union officials and leaders accepting payment—bribes, if one likes—to overlook breaches of awards or exploitation of workers or to ensure that certain employers are protected against industrial stoppages. Members of the Opposition cast doubts on that statement. I suggest they read the Sweeney report, for a start.

The Hon. Joan Coxsedge—Who is Sweeney?

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—It was the report of Mr Justice Sweeney into the activities of the Seamen's Union. I suggest honorable members go further and look at the building companies operating in this State, some of which are plagued by industrial troubles and some of which are totally free of them. Honorable members may like to relate some of those situations to houses built for certain trade union leaders, such as a couple I hear of at McKenzies Beach.

I go further and point out that it has long been a subject of scandal in the building world and in the trade union world how a number of trade union leaders and officials have had swimming pools built for them. These are serious matters. I am an accountant by profession and, if I accepted a bribe or a gift to induce me to conceal an irregularity or a discrepancy in accounts, I would face the most awesome penalties. I would be charged with a criminal offence and at the very least I would be fined any sum up to $10,000 and possibly more; but it appears to be in order for a union official to accept a bribe to ensure, firstly, that there is no industrial trouble in a particular industry, or secondly, that the union official closes his eyes to the exploitation of members of his union. I reiterate that some of these matters are documented in the Sweeney report.

Companies are constrained by very tight legislation and we hear demands, particularly from the Opposition, to tighten that legislation still further, the justification being that it is in the public interest. I suggest that the public's interest in the activities of companies is minimal but that the public's interest in the activities of unions is enormous.

I shall reflect for a moment on the effects of a strike. To put it briefly, any strike reduces the total wages and purchasing power available within the community; it reduces the sales and/or production of a particular enterprise; it increases the overheads of a business; in other words it forces up costs and gives impetus to the inflationary spiral which bedevils our economy today; it forces employers to look for alternatives to labour and to employ, to a much greater degree, mechanical means provided by the modern, technological age; it leads further to a contracting economy. This situation spells disaster.

Honorable members may think I am exaggerating. I have a document which admittedly was prepared for me by an employer organization, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, in which that chamber surveyed the effects of the 1977 power strike in the Latrobe Valley. That strike was a disaster in this State and it is estimated that, in the manufacturing industry alone, it cost 4400 permanent jobs. There are workers in the Latrobe Valley today who swear that they will never again go on strike, workers who are still making up the losses they incurred in that disastrous period. The whole economy of this State was literally sabotaged by that ill-considered strike.

Let us bring it closer to home. The railway unions have been striking regularly over the past twelve months. The reason is, that, as part of his
election deal, the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Wran, granted railway workers in New South Wales an arbitrary increase without any reference to the commission or the proper channels. Before he was elected, he promised an increase. Honorable members heard from Opposition members immediately after the election of the Wran Government that New South Wales had the answer, that railway employees in that State had been granted extra money, that fares had been reduced and that New South Wales would make its railways pay.

They have certainly done that! The New South Wales Railways are facing a deficit of $500 million this year and the Government does not know where to turn to make up that loss. Fares have surreptitiously been increased until, I understand, they are higher than comparable fares in this State. That was the great Utopia that was often thrown up at the Victorian Government a couple of years ago! Because of that increase granted by Mr Wran, railway employees in Victoria say, with some justification, that their counterparts in the nextdoor State are receiving $X a week above the Victorian standard and that that gap must be closed. As soon as that happens, New South Wales will probably "up the ante" again and the whole situation will be repeated. It is the old game of leap-frog that brought disaster in the period from 1972 to 1975.

Trade union leadership, in its blind efforts to retain its position of power, has prolonged the economic problems of this State, has added to the inflationary pressures and is probably one of the principal causes of inflation today. It has created an enormous amount of unemployment as a direct result of its actions. That is quite a record for people who claim to be interested in the workers! They have thrown them out of work, reduced the purchasing power of the worker's dollar and yet claim to stand for the workers.

I reiterate that if, in the public interest, it is necessary to control companies by surrounding them with the most horrific penalties for any small transgression by a company officer or executive, it ought to be just as good to surround trade unions with similar parameters and to apply similar principles to ensure that, in the public interest, the affairs of unions are conducted properly. What company would get away with some of the elections that trade unions get away with? What public company would be allowed to produce some of the accounts produced by the trade union movement?

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Tell us about ASL when it went down the drain.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—I invite the honorable member to tell us about the $40 000 that the Storemen and Packers Union was supposed to launder from ACTU-Solo which somehow did not get through.

There is in the community a widespread fear of the the power of trade union leadership. There is a very real fear that blind and tunnel-visioned trade union leaders are leading the community headlong into economic disaster, and there is a public demand that something be done about it. That is the background to the legislation which the Labor Party is protesting about tonight.

My colleague, Mr Hauser, gave a lucid account of that legislation and what it is supposed to do, and I do not propose to go over the same ground again. I agree with what the honorable member had to say. I disagree completely with the motion put by the Leader of the Opposition and support the amendment proposed by the Attorney-General.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I did not think I would ever have to say this, but I believe this Chamber will have to be modernized. The old-world architecture seems to be getting to our friends on the Government benches because they are starting to think like the men who sat here when the Chamber was first built; they are beginning to think like yesterday's men.

I support this motion because I believe it is good. Some honorable members believe it is out of order and
that this Parliament should not be criticizing or attempting to influence Federal Government legislation. Recently this Parliament passed a Bill, the Constitutional Powers (Coastal Waters) Bill, which seeks to change Federal legislation and members opposite all voted in favour of that Bill. Then last week the Premier and the Leader of the National Party rushed to Canberra to do a bit of patchwork on the coalition, trying to influence Canberra decisions again. Therefore, it is nothing new and it is quite right that, in view of the way this country is going at present and the confrontation that this legislation will bring, the Government of Victoria should try to influence any decision being made which will affect every Australian.

I have apparently led a very sheltered life. I have not come across the practices of the conservative movement to any great degree so that these past few weeks have been an eye-opener to me. I had believed that, despite their being politically misguided, honorable members opposite knew what life was all about and knew something of the way in which the ordinary people in this State and this country lived. However, judging by the comments made this evening, honorable members opposite apparently know very little. They do not know that 20 per cent of Victoria's population are living below the poverty line.

For the edification of Government members and with your permission, Mr President, I will quote from The Journal of Australian Political Economy (No. 2) dated June 1978, which contains an item on the distribution of incomes in this country. However, before I do that, I have a couple of quotes on popular misconceptions. Our first popular misconception started in the days of the gold diggings and it is a misconception which apparently still exists today among members opposite. The article states:

> There is no aristocracy at the diggings, no distinction of classes—all are 'hail fellow, well met', and the wise course to pursue is to hold good fellowship with the industrious and honest, however humble they may be.

Further the article states that some people even went on to suggest:

> Such was the amazing amount of wealth which had fallen into the hands of the working classes, that society was turned upside down and once for all in the history of the world (in point of wealth at least), 'Jack was as good as his master', and in some cases, far better.

That is the kind of attitude some members opposite have exhibited tonight. As late as 1967, Harold Holt said:

> I do not know of any free country in the world where what is produced by the community is more freely and evenly distributed amongst the community than Australia.

That current attitude is a complete fallacy because the figures indicate something vastly different. An article from the Bureau of Census and Statistics, written in 1978, and relating to the distribution of wealth in Australia, revealed that 1 per cent of the adult population owned 22 per cent of the personal wealth; the top 5 per cent of the population owned 46 per cent of the wealth; the top 10 per cent of the population owned 60 per cent of the wealth; half of Australians owned 8 per cent of Australia's wealth; the top 5 per cent owned more than the bottom 90 per cent put together; and the top 2000 people in Australia owned as much wealth as the bottom 2255 000. That is what it is all about. That is why there will be industrial trouble in this country and why Australia's conciliation and arbitration laws must prevent disputation and confrontation. During the course of this debate the word "conciliation" has not been mentioned often.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904 had as its objectives:

(i) To prevent lockouts and strikes in relation to industrial disputes;
(ii) to constitute a Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration having jurisdiction for the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes;
(iii) to provide for the exercise of the jurisdiction of the court by conciliation with a view to amicable agreement to the parties;

Those are the first three clauses. In 1930 the Scullin Government replaced the first somewhat negative object of the Bill to the aim:

To promote goodwill in industry by conciliation and arbitration.
Earlier in the evening I obtained the definition of "conciliation" from the dictionary. "Conciliate" means to overcome distress or hostility of by soothing and pacifying means, to placate either to win or gain. That was the purpose of the original Act. This evening honorable members have not heard much about conciliation, and I believe this Act will remove conciliation from the Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

I raise a couple of points, especially one which has been hammered home by members of the Government party on several occasions—respect for umpires' decisions. I take the memories of members back a short period to when the greatest umpire in this country, the people of Australia voted a Government into power. That was the umpires' decision in 1974. The umpires' decision was that that Government should govern for three years. What happened? The Senate went on strike and refused to vote on a money Bill; it did not stop it but merely refused to vote on it. All honorable members know the consequences of that act. Prior to the last State election, a member of the Government party in this House said that if the Labor Party won power supply might be stopped in this House. He was not prepared to accept the umpire's decision about which honorable members have heard so much this evening.

Not enough is being done in industrial relations in this country. Can honorable members opposite tell me how many large companies employ an industrial psychologist? I do not know of any. Perhaps Mr Bubb may know. How do those companies know how workers feel and what problems they have outside of their work?

The Latrobe Valley strike was mentioned. Trouble was fermenting in the valley eighteen months before the strike took place. That is when industrial relations should start, not when the confrontations begin. It is too late when the two conflicting parties are at each others' throats. A group of people whose name I cannot mention because they are still negotiating their log of claims have done everything correctly. They are not militant. They have gone through the correct procedures and made their applications and submissions. Since 1971 they have been trying to upgrade their position, but they are still awaiting a decision. It is hoped that it will arrive this week. Is it any wonder that trade unions go on strike and that people living on an income of $130 to $140 a week try to make ends meet when the employers know the conditions under which they are working and do nothing about them?

I conclude by saying that I support the motion. On occasions like this, this Parliament should try to influence decisions made in Canberra, especially when they affect the whole of this State and every Australian. It was reported in this evening's newspaper that this year the Victorian inflation rate could be more than 10 per cent. If ever there was a time for a Government to sit down and work out problem areas and get some conciliation into the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, rather than bring forward repressive legislation, it is now. I commend the motion strongly to the House.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I am disappointed that members of the National Party have not contributed to the debate.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—That is rubbish. Mr Baxter was the third speaker in the debate.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—I agree with Mr Dunn that it was a lot of rubbish, when he referred to Mr Baxter's contribution to the debate.

I congratulate my colleague Mr Butler for the magnificent speech he made on important principles. Behind this debate is the ideological centre of gravity in Australia and I hope I would be far to the left of what may be considered by some people to be the centre. Much has been said about conciliation. The word is frequently used by the Government as though it is conciliatory. All honorable members know from experience that every attitude that has been taken and supported over the years by the Victorian Government and the
Federal coalition Government has been designed to divide the people of Australia, to imply that people working within the capitalist system who, in order to survive, form themselves into unions because that is the only way in which they can obtain any measure of justice, are not regarded as people because they are in the unions. There is a tendency to imply that the unions are authoritarian, and that the vast majority of unionists are innocent bystanders who are not given the opportunity of being involved in the union decision-making process.

That may be so in some organizations which, to their embarrassment, perhaps have used the name "union". The Victorian Farmers Union, which has now elevated itself to the title of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association, was an example. It had no ballot for the election of the president. The rank and file members were not given an opportunity of participating in the ballot to decide whether there would be an amalgamation to form the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association. The only people who were eligible to participate in that ballot were members of the Victorian Farmers Union or the United Dairyfarmers of Victoria who were also members of the employers organization which was a sub-branch of that union. That was only because the Conciliation and Arbitration Act made it compulsory that they be entitled to a vote. The rank and file members were not eligible. I know that because I happened to be one. Although I have been an employer, I was not a member of the employers union because of the objections that the organization had to going to the Arbitration Commission to argue for higher wages for the workers. It believed that the employee should not be given a higher wage, whether $50 a week or whatever.

I do not believe, in the companies represented so strongly on the other side of the House, the chairman of directors is elected by a ballot of shareholders or that decisions are made in conformity with the wishes of the rank and file shareholders. Yet, honorable members are given to understand that unions are the most authoritarian and least democratic organizations, holding positions of power and responsibility in this country. Because of the success of the reactionary Tories, this state of conflict exists in relation to organized labour, because over the years the community has been indoctrinated with the belief that it is a great human virtue to get as much as one can for oneself. That is the capitalist principle.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—It is based on self-improvement.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—It is obvious to anyone who has been about that the acquisition of wealth does not mean self-improvement. Obviously there is an enormous ideological difference between Mr Dunn and myself.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I am glad of that.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—I also am delighted about that. I thank Mr Dunn for the compliment. The organization of labour has been such that the workers and many employees have accepted the principle that the desirable and necessary key to survival is to attempt to obtain as much as one can for oneself, and they have not been particularly successful except in certain cases. The Capitalist system thinks, and employees falsely believe, that a cheap labour force is necessary for their survival. Usually the labour force is not even dignified by being regarded as people; it is just another tool in the production chain; it is just another cost which must be kept down to a minimum.

Mr Mackenzie made some statements which really indicate more accurately than most things that have been said tonight the reason for the inflation within our society—the inequalities that exist in the income system throughout the society. Yet the Government believes that, whatever the circumstances, or conditions of employment or the wages a person receives, a person is not justified, especially if he is on a lower level, in using the pressures that the employers apply on the market.
I have to buy some things to survive. I frequently find that the goods I buy are not available at the prices of last week. I have not heard about an application to any tribunal or similar authority, but those manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers are striking by not providing their goods at the prices that applied the previous week. If the person who has a skill, service, or whatever he has to offer adopts that same principle, he or she is regarded as being irresponsible and acting detrimentally to the interests of the nation.

The Opposition accepts that there is a certain amount of truth in the statements made by Mr Hamilton, who has now retired from the Chamber, and Mr Hauser, that the public is sick of strikes. Since 1975 the issue of strikes has been vital to the maintenance of the dictatorship which exists in Australia today. I am referring to the obvious fact that, having obtained office by fraud and deception, the only method by which the Fraser Government has maintained its position—and it has been re-elected—is by developing a belief in the community that the enemies of the people are the people themselves in the guise of trade unions which represent the major portion of the work force.

Backed by the media and laundered funds from various sources, usually cheques which are not signed by the original donor but which find their way into campaign funds, the Liberal Party has divided the community.

Unfortunately, one thing which makes it easier to divide the community is the lack of solidarity in the trade union movement. There are many causes about which trade unionists should exercise their power. The Opposition would like to see a united trade union movement. Because of a multiplicity of unions, one particular union going out on strike draws attention to itself as that is the only way it can gain publicity. Strike action usually occurs only after months or perhaps years of waiting for a wage decision or a case concerning conditions.

Unfortunately, there are many other people in the community who are members of unions and, therefore, the beneficiaries from union activities, but who may be slightly inconvenienced for a day or two by union action. Sometimes it is a lack of tact on the part of the union, but frequently it is the lack of public relations facilities, as unions do not have the resources to provide public relations.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—I am having some difficulty in relating the member's remarks to the motion.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—It is obvious to most people that I am relating my remarks to the psychological attack which has been made for so long on the people of Australia and which has culminated in this legislation.

The PRESIDENT—Order! That has nothing to do with the motion at all. If Mr Kent wishes to continue, I suggest that he keep to the terms of the motion.

The Hon. D. E. KENT—The motion asks this Government to express its opinion on the legislation passed by the Commonwealth Government. As part of the Australian nation, Victorians have a responsibility in that regard. The Opposition rejects the implications contained in the Attorney-General's amendment that there have been relatively harmonious industrial relations.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—Would you like it to be that way in future?

The Hon. D. E. KENT—I would certainly like industrial relations to be harmonious. I have been trying to explain to honorable members, who should be interested in this matter, that there are basic reasons behind the situation Victoria faces today which make the task of unions so difficult in adopting a conciliatory attitude.

I believe I have succeeded in making one or two points which could be of interest to members because this House has witnessed an attitude designed to create two nations, two classes of people: Those who own or control the nation's capital and those who are the employees and the providers of labour.
However, as members opposite would also acknowledge, Victoria faces a situation in which, by the very success of the Government's efforts, by the profitability which employers have enjoyed and because of frequent Federal legislation, large employer groups and industries have been sufficiently profitable to displace people with machinery. The National Party's Federal members bear a very heavy responsibility because that party has been a collaborator in that type of action throughout the years.

Government members have not been prepared to contribute frankly to this debate. The Government maintains that there is complete legitimacy in profit, no matter to what extent, which is honourable and desirable.

There has been a great deal of debate about accepting the umpire's decision. This House is tonight discussing new rules which affect the actions of the umpire. No doubt the umpire will be surprised that his decisions will now be affected by those rules and that is what the Opposition complains about.

I do not want to say any more because some honorable members do not appreciate what is being said. However, the sort of conspiracy of which they are the victims should be made clear to the people of Australia. Not all Australians believe the divisive propaganda which has been proclaimed.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Is the Leader of the Opposition exercising his right of reply?

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—Yes, Sir. I refer the House briefly to some of the principal arguments I put earlier this evening. This motion strikes at a specific law which will interfere with the jurisdiction of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to make decisions in respect of payments or entitlements, in a judicial sense, of those who are involved in industrial disputes prior to or during a particular hearing.

The legislation also goes to the question of requiring quite unnecessarily, permission to deal expeditiously with stand-down provisions. The legislation also goes to the question of requiring consultation, whatever that means. Interestingly enough, the Attorney-General did not, amongst all the issues chosen to debate, apply his competent legal mind to that question. The legislation also goes to the question of referring matters to a Full Bench on the application of the Minister with regard to the deregistration of unions.

Perhaps more importantly, this debate has ranged from the Attorney-General indicating that, so far as he was concerned, no argument had been advanced by the Opposition which was far superior to that which had been put in Canberra. The Attorney-General, despite repeated challenges from this side of the House and in particular from myself, shied away from his responsibility as Attorney-General of this State in commenting upon that particular legislation.

Indeed, the Attorney-General suggested at one stage that the tremendous industrial record of the present Fraser Government—which must be one of the worst Governments in the English-speaking world—resulted in fewer strikes since November 1975. In other words, comparing the period of the Whitlam Government with that of the Fraser Government, comparatively fewer strikes occurred.

However, the Attorney-General, not to be outdone in terms of logic, went on to suggest that this law was required, as were more laws, to control pending industrial disputes. That is an extraordinary contradiction in terms of logic. However, I reiterate that the most condemning aspect of the Attorney-General's response tonight to this important motion was his complete refusal to meet at any stage our criticism of the so-called legislation.

This legislation could be known as the Street legislation because, one way or another, it will give Mr Street a mention in the notorious industrial law-making chapter of this country or, alternatively, it will turn the people of this country out on to the street.

I now turn to Mr Baxter's contribution to the debate. Mr Baxter told us about a tram ride. I am sure that
if it was as interesting as his address last week on trade waste, it must have been very interesting. No doubt, after that interesting address, which was made after dinner, the honorable member went on a tram ride. Also, no doubt, the honorable member used his gold pass and looked for Snowy and conducted his so-called public opinion poll. After the honorable member had announced who he was—he has never been bashful about that, particularly when speaking to someone employed as a servant of the State Government and appropriately, according to Mr Baxter, paid a lowly wage—Mr Baxter would then have made sure that there was no civil disobedience from the employees and I am sure that any contrary suggestion would have resulted in Mr Baxter's driving the tram.

Mr Bubb, in making his contribution, ranged from the Afghanistan camel drivers to that illustrious object, the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures. Those much-abused, ill-paid employees, the so-called advocates of the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, do not even have civil rights in connection with their car park. Late on a Friday night, when negotiating some matter of concern to the Chamber of Manufactures, I would make sure that the negotiations extended late into the evening because I knew that the advocates had to get back to get their cars out of the car park before 6 p.m., otherwise they would have to wait until Monday morning. Those are the employment conditions offered by the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures.

Some people are prepared to sell their souls for what they believe are the interests of capital, in the belief that it will serve their personal interests in the end. I do not believe that that constitutes a reasonable moral position. To take a hypocritical attitude to the rights of small businesses is wrong. What has the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures done in recent years to advance the cause of small business? I believe this community and the economy would be best handled so that there could be an immediate and sure-fire recovery if the bureaucrats and this big-business Government got off the backs of small businessmen and encouraged small entrepreneurs to once again risk capital. But that is not what industrial advocates of the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures have been on about. They might want to attempt to persuade their membership that that is what they talk about at the commission, but I often wonder how some of them ever got married. I was never able to get them to say "Yes" to me in negotiations.

It seems to me that it is hypocritical to suggest that the Chamber of Manufactures has advanced arguments on behalf of small businessmen when that organization's members have never been anything but apologists for the multi-nationals and for the very large companies that control the economy.

I shall now deal with the contribution to the debate made by our friend, our economic adviser, the bull and bear expert from the stock exchange, Mr Hauser. I am not quite sure whether Mr Hauser is in favour of compulsory unionism so far as the stock exchange is concerned or so far as the trade union movement is concerned, but the honorable member demonstrated a degree of flexibility that would have horrified most of his clients. Mr Hauser, like Mr Baxter, conducted some sort of public opinion poll in respect of the three—

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—On a tram?

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—One would never see Mr Hauser on a tram. It would not be suitable. One would have to be suffering from an hallucination. It is quite clear that the honorable member conducted his public opinion poll amongst his partners, because he suggested that wage claims were caused by union leaders.

As Mr Hauser knows, I was a union official for a considerable time. During that time I was elected as secretary of the union. It was a democratic election, even though that might upset Mr Hauser and some other honorable members, and it was conducted under the
That election was the first election held in the organization for some years. I campaigned on one ground, which was membership control of the organization. The sorts of people to whom Mr Hamilton was referring controlled the union before that. They were the sorts of people Mr Bubb referred to, the genuine, the respectable, the honest trade union officials. They were the sorts of people who would almost be eligible to join the Melbourne Club. However, the union members had not had a wage increase, independent on the national movements in the basic wage and the margins of those days, for eighteen years.

One can have tame-cat unionism of the sort advocated by the extreme right of the Liberal Party—which, most inappropriately, is placed on my left—but the reality is that the average person who pays his union dues and attends his union meetings is much the same as anyone else. It has been suggested that not as many attend union meetings as should. I accept that, but I have been to a few shareholders’ meetings because my position in life requires me to hold a number of shares as a trustee and I have been astonished at the small number of people who bother to turn up to annual general meetings of companies. In fact, it is astonishing when Mr Hamilton talks about Mr Halfpenny being Mr One Cent. Some of the companies with which Mr Hamilton ought to be associated and ought to know about should be disappointed about the small number of their shareholders who turn up at meetings.

The reality is not, as Mr Hauser suggested, that wage claims are created by trade union leaders. In fact, in my experience as a trade union leader, I was not capable of creating anything on my own. It ought to be remembered that union wage claims arise from members employed in an industry and covered by a particular union. The preparation, presentation and prosecution of those claims result from a democratically arrived at decision from day one through to finality. The myth believed by the conservative forces, which believe that union leaders have only to push a button for major stoppages to occur, is wrong. It does not happen like that. Unionists are real people. They have families, they make love, they have children, they own homes and they try to exist in society. They are no different in many ways from the rest of society.

It is nonsense to assert anything different, but Mr Hauser did not bother to tell the House about how some of the companies I was talking about earlier decide on price increases. I wonder whether they arise from a consideration at a middle-management echelon level or, would it be more probable and more likely that they arise from secret consideration at a board level? Perhaps Mr Hauser does not know. Perhaps he is not consulted by the companies whose many shares he has to sell from time to time.

The reality is that everyone in the community knows that those decisions are made by men of real economic power and they are not trade union leaders. It is possible to kid oneself if one wishes to do so, but no one should try to kid those of us who represent 51 per cent of the community.

Mr Hamilton did his cause great justice. One thing I can say about Mr Hamilton is that if ever I have seen a personal representative campaigning for mental health and hygiene reform, it is Mr Hamilton. That is clear from some of the arguments put tonight by Mr Hamilton. In connection with some aspects of the Sweeney report, I repeat what I have always said, both publicly and in this place, that to the extent that the Sweeney report suggested there were some
underhand payments, the Labor Party and I disassociate ourselves completely from that, as does the Australian Council of Trade Unions. That was set out in the executive decision and the congress decision in very clear language. It should be clearly understood. There is no doubt where we stand on that sort of behaviour.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—Should not unions that behave like that be subject to the sanctions that apply to others?

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Mr Guest ought to know. He is well-read in the law, or at least he tells us that. It is not possible for this Parliament or the national Parliament to make a law to compel somebody to do something he is not prepared to do. That is almost a strain of thought that runs consistently between the Labor Party and the progressive wing of the Liberal Party. No Parliament has the capacity to create an industrial law that will solve an industrial dispute. The Australian Constitution says so. High Court judgments say so. The Australian Labor Party says so, and Sir Robert Menzies, God bless his soul, also said so.

Mr Hamilton made a point about the dispute in the Latrobe Valley that did so much damage to the State’s economy. He is right, but what he has consistently forgotten is that it was the Premier who said, after the dispute had been settled, in response to questioning by the shadow Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr Amos, and the Leader of the Opposition in another place, Mr Wilkes, that in fact it was the State Electricity Commission that had misled the Government. Mr Hamer, as Premier, has to live with his public utterances. That is what he said on the Liberal-owned radio station, 3XY, in an interview on the day after the settlement of the dispute.

All opponents of the Act who support the arguments the Opposition has put forward tonight cannot, as I indicated in my opening remarks, all be dismissed as mad Lefties. Their number includes people of stature and responsibility, such as Sir Richard Kirby, His Honour Mr Justice Staples, the Melbourne-based commissioners and—need I repeat it—even Mr Santamaria.

The proposed legislation was indeed conceived in deceit and born in secrecy, but I repeat that it will die, like all Fascist laws, under the eventual wrath of the organized might of the ordinary, average Australian.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Haddon Storey to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

| Ayes | 13 |
| Noes | 26 |

Majority for the omission of the words 13

AYES

Mr Butler
Mr Kennedy
Mr Kent
Mr Landeryou
Mr Mackenzie
Mr Sgro
Mr Thomas

Tellers:

Mr Trayling
Mr Walker
Mr Walton
Mr White

NOES

Mr Baxter
Mrs Baylor
Mr Block
Mr Bubb
Mr Campbell
Mr Chamberlain
Mr Crozier
Mr Dunn
Mr Evans
Mr Granter
Mr Guest
Mr Hamilton
Mr Hauser
Mr Hayward

Tellers:

Mr Houghton
Mr Jenkins
Mr Knowles
Mr Lawson
Mr Radford
Mr Reid
Mr Storey
Mr Taylor
Mr Ward
Mr Long
Mr Wright

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Haddon Storey to be inserted be so inserted (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

| Ayes | 26 |
| Noes | 13 |

Majority for the insertion of the words 13
AYES

Mr Baxter  Mr Houghton
Mrs Baylor  Mr Jenkins
Mr Block  Mr Knowles
Mr Bubb  Mr Lawson
Mr Campbell  Mr Long
Mr Chamberlain  Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Crozier  Mr Storey
Mr Dunn  Mr Taylor
Mr Grant  Mr Ward
Mr Evans  Mr Wright
Mr Guest
Mr Hamilton  Tellers:
Mr Hauser  Mr Radford
Mr Hayward  Mr Reid

NOES

Mr Butler  Mr Trayling
Mrs Cox  Mr Walker
Mr Eddy  Mr Walton
Mr Landeryou  Mr White
Mr Mackenzie  Tellers:
Mr Sgro  Mr Kennedy
Mr Thomas  Mr Kent

The motion, as amended, was agreed to.

VICTORIAN FISHING INDUSTRY COUNCIL BILL

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON
(Minister for Conservation)—I move:
That this Bill now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill before the House is to constitute a body corporate which is to be known as the Victorian Fishing Industry Council. In essence, the council will have three main functions: Firstly, promoting and obtaining and securing markets for Victorian fish; secondly, providing a source of advice to industry and to Government; and thirdly, helping to meet the special educational requirements of the industry.

I am sure that honorable members will be well aware of the fact that our commercial fisheries are one of our more important renewable natural resources. Indeed, over the years, the Government has sponsored a great deal of research into the needs of the industry and the development of new fisheries in our coastal waters.

The industry is very diversified. Geographically, it extends along the Victorian coast from one end of the State to the other. It encompasses not only commercial fishermen but also fish marketers, wholesalers, processors, retailers and, of course, ultimately the consumer.

It is generally accepted that commercial fishermen are represented by the Commercial Fishermen’s Section of the Victorian Farmers Union while the Victorian Branch of the Australian Fishing Industry Council represents fish processors and marketers. However, there is no one organization which represents the industry as a whole. This creates a number of problems. For example, it is often difficult to obtain an over-all industry viewpoint on a particular issue or to undertake such activities as market promotion on a co-ordinated basis.

These problems are recognized by the industry and by the Government and, as a result of discussions last year between representatives of the Victorian Farmers Union, the Australian Fishing Industry Council and the Minister for Conservation, a joint industry and departmental working committee was formed to review the situation and to put forward proposals for the establishment of an industry-wide organization.

The present Bill reflects the recommendations of that committee which have been accepted by the Government.

Before dealing specifically with the provisions of the Bill, it may be of assistance to the House if I briefly outline the general concept of the Victorian Fishing Industry Council.

The proposed council is not intended as a replacement for any of the bodies currently representing the interests of the industry. What is intended is that the council will bring together in one organization representatives of the various components of the industry so that the industry can speak with one voice and act in a co-ordinated manner. I have already mentioned that the council will be a body corporate. Incorporation is considered desirable as it is envisaged that the council will hold and dispose of both personal and real property and employ staff.

The council will have eleven members representing the various aspects of the industry. Five of the members will
represent commercial fishermen while fish marketers, wholesalers, retailers, processors and consumers will each be represented by one member. The chairman of the council is to be a representative of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Ministry for Conservation. I emphasize that the chairman, or any person acting in his stead, will not have a deliberative vote at meetings of the council, but he will have a casting vote where there is a deadlock.

The administrative and other costs of the council are to be met by voluntary contributions by the industry and industry groups although it is proposed that matching contributions on a predetermined ratio will be made by the Government. As the council will consist of only part-time members, the council is to be empowered to appoint an executive officer and such other staff as is required to carry out the objects of the Act.

The Bill contains nineteen clauses and I now propose to comment on each of these provisions in turn. Clause 1 is the usual citation clause. It also provides for the Act to come into operation on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Clause 2 defines the meaning of "Council" for the purposes of the Act as being the Victorian Fishing Industry Council. Clause 3 constitutes the council as a body corporate. Clause 4 sets out the objects of the council. As mentioned earlier, these relate to the obtaining and securing of markets for Victorian fish and promoting its consumption, providing a source of advice to the industry and to Government and promoting education in the industry.

Clause 5 empowers the council, subject to the general direction of the Minister, to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the pursuit of its objects. Clause 6 sets out the membership of the council, as I have already described. Clause 7 fixes the term of office of members as being not more than three years and provides that a member shall not make improper use of any information gained as a member. Clause 8 provides that the chairman of the council shall be the representative of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division and deals with the election of an alternative chairman in the event of the chairman being absent from a meeting.

Clause 9 enables the council to act notwithstanding a vacancy or a defect or irregularity in an appointment to the council. Clause 10 enables fees and travelling and other allowances to be paid to members who are not officers of the Public Service. Clause 11 empowers the Governor in Council to remove a member from office on the ground of misconduct or other ground which makes him unfit to be a member. The clause also deals with the vacation of office of a member and the filling of extraordinary vacancies.

Clause 12 provides that the chairman of the council, or a person elected to act in his place, shall preside at meetings of the council and requires meetings to be held at not less than three-month intervals. As I indicated earlier, the chairman of the meeting shall not have a deliberative vote, but he will be entitled to a casting vote. This clause goes on to fix a quorum of six members of which not less than two shall be representatives of fishermen and not less than two shall be representatives of marketers, wholesalers, retailers, processors and consumers.

Clause 13 requires the council to appoint an executive officer and empowers the council to appoint such other staff as it thinks necessary. Clause 14 provides that any person appointed as an officer of the council who, at the time of his appointment, is an officer within the meaning of the Superannuation Act shall be deemed to continue to be an officer within the meaning of that Act.

Clause 15 establishes a Victorian fishing industry trust fund and deals with the expenditure of moneys from the fund. Clause 16 requires the council to keep proper accounts and records of its transactions and affairs and provides for the audit of its account by the Auditor-General. The council is also required to prepare an annual report on its administration and activities and copies of the report and audited accounts are to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

The Hon. W. V. Houghton
Clause 17 amends the interpretation of "Authority" in the Local Authorities Superannuation Act 1958 to include the Victorian Fishing Industry Council and will have the effect of applying the provisions of that Act to employees of the council.

Clause 18 repeals those provisions of the Fisheries Act 1968 relating to the Commercial Fisheries Council. The main function of the Commercial Fisheries Council, which has four members—two from the industry and two from the Fisheries and Wildlife Division—is to advise the Minister on all matters concerning the development and management of commercial fisheries and on all matters concerning the welfare of the fishing industry. The role of the council has already become largely superfluous following the establishment of the Fisheries Management Committee as a result of amendments to the Fisheries Act in 1975. With the establishment of the Victorian Fishing Industry Council, the Commercial Fisheries Council will become redundant and, accordingly, the relevant sections of the Fisheries Act are to be repealed.

Clause 19 will have the effect of making the Victorian Fishing Industry Council Act a "conservation Act".

The constitution of a Victorian Fishing Industry Council represents an important initiative in terms of this State’s fishing industry. The proposal has the support of the industry and, in the view of the Government, will be of considerable benefit, not only to those engaged in the industry, but also to the community as a whole. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, October 30.

**FISHERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL**

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this rather brief measure is to revise the fees payable for certain commercial fishing licences. The effect of the Bill will be to increase the fee for a master fisherman’s licence from $35 plus $5 a crew man to $40 plus $10 a crew man; for an abalone licence from $250 to $300, and for a crayfish licence from $3.50 a pot to $4.50 a pot. A flat fee of $300 is to be introduced for a scallop fishing licence in lieu of the present fee of $8 per 10 cm of dredge length. Provision is also being made to adjust boat registration fees from $10 to $20.

I take this opportunity to point out that commercial fishing licence fees are paid into the Fisheries Research Fund which, in turn, provides the bulk of funding for the fisheries research and development work undertaken by the Fisheries and Wildlife Division. Over a full year, it is estimated that the new fees will result in an additional $45,600 being credited to the fund. I am advised that the commercial fishermen’s section of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association has accepted the need for a great contribution to the fund by commercial fishermen and in the circumstances I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, October 30.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Board of Works files—Soccer complex, Altona — Olympic Games — Ethnic television — Salinity — Country Fire Authority—Justices of the Peace—Plenty Hospital—Mr Charles Hider

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I move:

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—Yesterday, in questions without notice, I asked the Minister of Water Supply to lay on the table of the Library all of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works files relating to the introduction of regulation
HSN 1705 concerning the banning of the use of plastic pipes and clay pipes in certain municipalities. The Minister indicated that he wished to consider the right of Parliamentarians to have access to files of statutory authorities. I ask the Minister: Has he given further consideration to this matter and will he lay on the table of the Library the files relating to the introduction of that regulation?

The Hon. H. A. THOMAS (Melbourne West Province)—I put to the Minister of Water Supply, as the representative of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, an urgent question. The Altona City Council has raised a question of capital works funding for municipal councils. I have received a letter from the town clerk stating that that council has received advice from the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation that it has again failed to obtain an allocation of funds towards the provision of a soccer complex which is under construction on the site of the former State Electricity Commission briquette depot, which was purchased from the Housing Commission by arrangement with the State Treasury.

After discussions with the Premier two years ago, the council believed priority would be given to the development of the soccer complex to meet the needs in that area and the council proceeded towards development. The total funding requirement is now estimated to be in the vicinity of $500 000, including the $160 000 paid for the land by the Altona City Council. The indications given by officers of the department were that, the council having failed to obtain the subsidy in 1978 and 1979, the project had top priority in 1979 and 1980. In the light of this advice and of escalating costs, the council commenced development and proceeded towards construction.

I ask the Minister to investigate this matter and further examine what financial assistance can be given so that the council can be assured of the funds source for its forward planning. I will pass on to the Minister the letter from the Altona City Council.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—I raise with the Minister of Water Supply, as the representative of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, a matter relating to the 1988 Olympic Games.

In view of public discussion about the possibility of Melbourne being the host city for the Olympic Games in 1988 and the fact that a committee has been preparing a submission to be presented to the Government on the appropriate siting of the games, can the Minister inform the House whether the City of Waverley and VFL Park have been given careful consideration as possibly the most desirable location for such a major sporting activity? There is throughout the district a spread of excellent sporting facilities including the international standard facilities at both Rusden State College and Monash University.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Can the honorable member relate his remarks to the administration of the Victorian Government?

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—The matter to which I refer comes within the purview of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. I urge the Minister of Water Supply, who is the representative of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, to examine whether adequate consideration has been given to VFL Park and surrounding facilities as the most adequate centre for the Olympic Games should they be held in Melbourne.

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province)—A few days ago I read in the Herald about ethnic television and that those people or members of ethnic groups in Victoria who want to watch it in the future will have to pay $2.50 a week. I request the Minister for Federal Affairs to examine the matter. I read in the paper only a few weeks ago that a private company has been formed by Mr Tony Delmonico, which will spend $12.5 million. That is the company which wants to charge the people who want to watch ethnic television $2.50 a week. I would like the Minister for Federal Affairs
to investigate the matter and find out why taxpayers or migrants of Victoria are being double taxed.

**The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT** (North Western Province)—I inform the Minister of Water Supply that considerable quantities of saline water are being deliberately let into the River Murray system from Lake Hawthorn, at a time when probably one of the greatest disasters to face Victoria is the salinity problem. In addition, the water from Lake Hawthorn, which is finding its way into the River Murray, contains thousands of European carp, which have been called the “rabbit of the Murray”.

It is short-sighted and incomprehensible that this sort of policy should apply. In 1968, the Lake Hawthorn scheme was implemented when saline water was pumped away to drainage basins at Warang but the policy of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission was that 3700 megalitres a year is to be pumped away and 3100 megalitres is to be allowed into the River Murray at this time of high flow. Many complaints have been made and the matter has been exacerbated because the new interceptor bores in the Merbein area are now operating and once again more saline water is being pumped into the Wargan basin.

I urge the Minister to instruct the commission to permanently close the outlet from Lake Hawthorn so that it is all pumped away and therefore almost one-half of it does not enter the River Murray, increasing the E.C. level by up to 25 units. I also urge the Minister to initiate planning for the extension of the Wargan basin so that all saline water from Lake Hawthorn and the Merbein interceptor bores can be accommodated.

**The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER** (Thomastown Province)—I draw the attention of the Minister of Water Supply to an article that appeared in the October edition of the Record, a journal issued by the LaTrobe University, which contains a front page article stating that rural reforestation could help combat problems of salinity. It appears that Dr Christopher John and his colleague Mr Charles Lamp have conducted research on the use of trees suitable for reforestation in areas along the River Murray that are subject to salinization.

Everything that can be done for salination is expensive. More than $40 million has been spent on removing saline water to other areas. The article will be of interest to honorable members, particularly my country colleagues. I have an interest in reforestation because, as a former cabinet maker, I have used timber. The suggestion by the research scientist is that money could be well spent in reforestation and in experimentation in an endeavour to alleviate the problem.

**The Hon. B. P. Dunn**—That is a well-established fact.

**The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER**—It is good. After all, any research depends entirely on funding, and the point is made in the article that research needs support from all sections of the rural community and from the Government. In raising the matter, I wish to ascertain whether the Government is prepared to assist in funding any further research programmes which are necessary.

**The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE** (Geelong Province)—I raise a matter for the Attorney-General, who is the representative in this House of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Mr Jenkins and I were privileged to attend the hand-over of expensive equipment to the Geelong brigade of the Country Fire Authority. I give the Government its due. I have always called for equipment for the Country Fire Authority and I am pleased that the Government has honoured its commitment to this worth-while operation.

The Country Fire Authority has been provided with a new pump with a 50-foot extension ladder. It is an exceptionally fine machine and it is part of a parcel of equipment which includes an expensive contribution of a $220 000 Skymonitor. This is an elaborate machine that extends 80 or 90 feet. It is badly needed in Geelong to cope with high-rise buildings such as the hospital and the Travelodge motel and
for buildings that are proposed to be constructed. All of the firemen have undertaken a 10-day course in the use of the machine. The firemen are enthusiastic about it and it is very important that Geelong has the equipment.

Unfortunately, due to a design oversight, the machine will not fit into the fire station. This has created doubts on whether the machine will reach Geelong. Two machines have been allocated, one for Dandenong and one for Geelong, and concern is now expressed that the machine destined for Geelong may find its way to Frankston. I urge the Minister to take up the matter with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and to inform him of the concern of the people of Geelong. They want the machine and probably the fire station at Geelong will have to be reconstructed.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I wish to query the Attorney-General on why the wheels of justice work so slowly in the appointment of justices of the peace. A former mayor of Oakleigh for the years 1974-75, Mr Lee, was appointed a temporary justice of the peace during his term as mayor. When his term finished, he applied for confirmation of the position. I remind honorable members that a justice of the peace is an important member of the community because he sits on the Bench, he witnesses documents and he has the power to issue penalties.

I wrote to the Minister on 25 September supporting the application and the Law Department answered on 10 October saying that the applicant lived in Monash Province and he would need the support of Mr Guest and Mr Hayward. I telephoned the department to inform it of the error and to assure it that, according to the electoral roll, Mr Lee was domiciled in the Waverley Province. I was informed that there were too many justices of the peace in the area.

Despite the fact that Mr Lee had applied for confirmation of his temporary appointment five years ago and that possibly twenty justices of the peace had been appointed in the area since that application was made and certainly that number has increased since April of this year, Mr Lee has not received confirmation from the Law Department. I appeal to the Minister to balance the Bench and not to create the possible impression that it could be said that appointees were all of a political party.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—On 19 September I raised a matter in the House for the attention of the Minister for Conservation, who is the representative of the Minister of Health, and who was not then present. The Leader of the House asked me to repeat my remarks the following week by which time the Minister for Conservation, who was representing the Government at a function, would have had an opportunity of following up the issue. I have not heard anything further. I again draw the matter relating to the Plenty Mental Hospital to the attention of the Minister for Conservation to raise with the Minister of Health.

On the previous occasion I referred to correspondence that I received from the Shire of Whittlesea and information I had received from the voluntary services auxiliary regarding the frustration experienced by the nursing staff because of the need for an additional 24 ward nurses. I pointed out that, as a result of this frustration, a ban has been placed on admissions for the next two months. Over the years, the submissions of the nursing staff have been blocked by the imposition of staff ceilings. The Minister is aware of my remarks on this matter and I wish to have the answers I requested from him on the last occasion the matter was raised.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I ask the Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to an article which appeared in today's edition of the Chadstone Progress under a heading “Youth clubs get grants” where it is claimed a Mr Charles Hider, MLC for Monash Province last week announced Government grants. I ask the Attorney-
General whether that means the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation has sent out press releases in the name of Mr Charles Hider, whether Mr Hider has gained preselection for Glenhuntly, whether the Liberal Party has endorsed him, or whether Mr Brian Dixon has endorsed him, and whether all these facts are true or partly true as it is now known to me that Mr Hider is no longer a member of the Legislative Council and no longer has the privilege of using those initials.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—A number of matters have been addressed to me in one capacity or another. First of all, Mr Sgro—and I am very grateful to him—addressed a matter to me in my capacity as Minister for Federal Affairs. This is the first time since I have been Minister for Federal Affairs that anyone has asked anything covered by that portfolio. I am not sure whether it is appropriate for me to answer as Minister for Federal Affairs that anyone has asked anything covered by that portfolio. I am not sure whether it is appropriate for me to answer as Minister for Federal Affairs, but the matter raised concerned the question of ethnic television telecasts being made available up on payment of $2.50 per week, and some reference to a company being formed by a Mr Delmonico. If Mr Sgro will give me a copy of the press report, I will follow it up and ascertain what the position is and let him know. I am sure it will not turn out to be any question of discrimination. Any right to have a television transmission is something that is carefully controlled by the Broadcasting Control Board.

Mr Mackenzie raised a matter of vital concern to him, and the people in Geelong, relating to a skymonitor which will not fit into the fire station at Geelong. It is a regrettable fact, and I will take it up with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to see what can be done about it.

Mr Kennedy raised the question of the appointment of justices of the peace. I say a couple of things about the observation of Mr Kennedy. First of all, justices of the peace are not appointed with any political considerations in mind. Anyone who has had any experience of appointments of justices of the peace would be able to verify that that is so. A further comment was made that it was not until I changed the policy which existed for 100 years, three years ago, that members of the Legislative Council were able to recommend people for appointment as justices of the peace. I point out that it does not follow as a matter of course that a mayor or a shire president, after their term of office expires, should automatically be able to retain appointment. If that were so, after a few years the State would be overcrowded, as it were, with justices of the peace, because council officers change virtually each year and their appointment as justices of the peace during their term of office, and for one year after, is something that flows from their office. If they wish to be re-appointed they would have to make application and be considered in the same way as anyone else.

Having said that, I am concerned that apparently the application was thought to belong to an electorate other than that represented by the honorable member. That must be due to some mistake in the office. I am sorry that occurred, and I will follow up the matter to find out whether the application has been properly considered and, if it has not been, I will ensure that it is properly considered.

I do not think Mr Kennedy mentioned the name of the applicant, but if he informs me afterwards, I will follow the matter through.

Finally, Mr Landeryou mentioned a matter concerning Mr Charles Hider. If that is the same Mr Charles Hider who was a member of this House, I have no doubt that he would still have the interests of his electorate at heart and make information available to them. I am unable to explain the mistake, if it is a mistake, on the part of the Chadstone Progress in describing him as an MLC. I am sure that would not have been any doing of Mr Hider's, and it could well be, as Mr Dunn said, an old statement that has been retrieved and published fairly recently. However, I understand the point that has been
made by Mr Landeryou and I will take it up with the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Mr Eddy raised a question about the Plenty Hospital and staff shortages that are alleged to exist there. There are 10,000 people working in the Health Commission. I used to know where they all worked, but I have not been able to keep abreast of that. I am aware of alleged staff shortages in various parts of the commission and I undertake to procure the answer for Mr Eddy as soon as possible.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Mr White asked whether I will table files dealing with matters of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, namely, HSN 1705. As I stated yesterday, this is a file of a statutory authority and the authority has a certain amount of autonomy. The file, or files, deal with a matter that is currently being investigated by the State Development Committee, referred to it by this House of Parliament, and I do not intend to table that file, or those files, in the Library.

Mr Thomas asked me to refer to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation a matter contained in a letter forwarded to him by the City of Altona regarding capital funding of works on a soccer complex. I will refer the matter to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation. Mr Thomas has already made the letter available to me for which I thank him.

Mr Saltmarsh raised a matter which is also under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, namely, the site for the proposed Olympic Games in 1988. Mr Saltmarsh, as honorable members know, has been a strong advocate of the VFL Park at Waverley for the Olympic Games. He referred to the excellent facilities available there, and I am sure that the committee which is investigating the proposed site and many other sites will consider the proposition put by the honorable member. I will draw that to the attention of the Minister.

Mr Butler drew attention to an article which appeared in the La Trobe University Record regarding trees suitable for planting in areas affected by salination. Reforestation in these areas is always considered by the Forests Commission, and the $15 million project at Kerang is part of the subject of the report which was brought in by the Public Works Committee. I assure the honorable member that tree planting will be part of that programme.

Mr Wright drew attention to the saline water entering the River Murray system from the Lake Hawthorn system, and also the European carp. I did not know that European carp were in Lake Hawthorn.

The Hon. K. I. Wright—that is where they started.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER—the discharges from Lake Hawthorn would, in my opinion, be under the jurisdiction of the River Murray Commission and agreement would have to be reached for the discharge of saline water. I will take this matter up with the Water Commission. I am sure it would only allow saline water to enter the River Murray at Lake Hawthorn, or the Mildura area, when the river is at a certain flow. The honorable member asked me to approach the commission to have this water pumped inland to dry lake basins. I will bring that matter to the attention of the commission, especially as a long-term policy.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.57 p.m. until Tuesday, October 30.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

RAIL FREIGHT REVENUE

(Question No. 117)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Transport:

(a) What amount of revenue was received by VicRail for the cartage of wheat, barley
and oats in each of the financial years from 1970-71 to 1978-79?
(b) What percentage of railway income from freight does this represent?
(c) What is the actual or estimated cost of providing the service to gain this revenue and, if such detail is not available, why is this so?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—As the answer supplied by the Minister of Transport to the first two parts of the question is statistical and includes two tables, I seek leave to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:

(a) Revenue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Barley</th>
<th>Oats</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>14,640,231</td>
<td>1,597,709</td>
<td>2,075,437</td>
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<td>1971-72</td>
<td>12,713,952</td>
<td>1,696,580</td>
<td>1,585,947</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
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<td>9,362,566</td>
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<td>13,979,181</td>
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<td>13,251,177</td>
<td>2,776,276</td>
<td>1,624,997</td>
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<td>1977-78</td>
<td>21,392,320</td>
<td>2,694,468</td>
<td>981,163</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>20,962,491</td>
<td>3,962,586</td>
<td>1,295,286</td>
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</table>

(b) Percentage of total freight income:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wheat per cent</th>
<th>Barley per cent</th>
<th>Oats per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>22.58</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.27</td>
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<td>1971-72</td>
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<td>23.11</td>
<td>2.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>20.59</td>
<td>3.89</td>
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</table>

(c) The board has experienced difficulty in presenting figures on a separate commodity basis.

Negotiations are currently progressing with the view to appointing a firm of consultants who will be asked to devise a cost model for the cartage of grain.

TURANA YOUTH TRAINING CENTRE
(Question No. 141)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

Have plans for the new security section at Turana Youth Training Centre been prepared;

INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS
(Question No. 174)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

How many social workers are working in the assessment of parents who have made application for inter-country adoptions?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Community Welfare Services is:

My department operates, within its adoption section, an inter-country adoption unit currently comprising three social workers. An additional position is currently being considered by the Public Service Board.

I would draw the honorable member's attention to question No. 775, which was recently answered in the Legislative Assembly and which sets out in full the structure of the department's adoption section.

TRAFFIC ON WESTERN HIGHWAY
(Question No. 179)

The Hon. K. I. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Local Government, for the Minister of Transport:

Has there been a reduction of traffic entering Victoria from South Australia by the
Western Highway in the past six months; if so—(i) to what extent; and (ii) why?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Transport is:

The Country Roads Board does not keep specific records of the traffic volumes of vehicles entering Victoria from South Australia by the Western Highway.

The nearest permanent traffic counting station on the Western Highway to South Australia is located at Dadswells Bridge (258·9 km). The average daily traffic volumes for the six-monthly period from February to July inclusive at Dadswells Bridge indicate traffic volumes have declined 5·6 per cent in 1979 from 1978. The reason for this decline is not known.

I am tempted to add that the recent notable political event in South Australia is partly responsible for the reduction in intrastate freight.

STATE RIVERS AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION
(Question No. 208)

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province) asked the Minister of Water Supply:

What adjustments to staffing of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's operations in North Western Province have taken place in the past financial year, and what are planned for this financial year; indicating the position and locations affected, and the time of adjustment?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—The answer is detailed and lengthy and I ask that it be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:

The North Western Province covers the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's Centres at Sunraysia, Swan Hill, Kerang, Cohuna, Pyramid Hill, Boort, Murtoa, Horsham, Birchip and Ouyen.

Set out in Appendix A is a statement of the commission's staff employed under the Public Service Act 1974, at each of these centres. There has been no adjustment in the number of such persons employed at these centres other than the posting of an Executive Engineer and an Administrative Officer to Sunraysia to supervise the Mildura–Merbein groundwater interception works and the posting of an additional Engineer to Birchip to supervise the construction of the Wycheproof urban storage. At this stage, it is not anticipated that there will be any adjustment to these numbers during this financial year.

In Appendix B there is a statement of the numbers of employees engaged under Federal awards and State determinations. These persons are employed on a weekly hire basis and the numbers have been broken down over the past fifteen months. There has been no retrenchment of employees in this category at these centres during the period shown. The figures highlight the seasonal nature of the Commission's works programme particularly the intense winter maintenance season.

Additional employees have been engaged at Sunraysia in connection with the Mildura–Merbein groundwater interception works. Other variations have occurred through seasonal works and natural wastage. It is not planned to make any adjustments to the day labour force at this time. However, the situation is being monitored and will be reviewed in depth during December, 1979.

APPENDIX A

AUTHORIZED STAFF ESTABLISHMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Administrative and clerical</th>
<th>Water distribution and works inspectors</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pyramid Hill</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Kerang</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>...</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouyen</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill</td>
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Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 24 October 1979

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 2.5 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—As announced today, the consumer price index increase in Melbourne for the September quarter was 2.6 per cent, higher than any other capital city in Australia. This represents an annual rate of increase of 10.4 per cent. I ask the Premier what steps the Victorian Government proposes to take to ensure that inflation in Victoria during the current financial year will not continue to rise higher than the national rate. In particular, will the Government reconsider its current policy of increasing taxes and charges which add to inflationary pressures in Victoria?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—It is noticeable that the Leader of the Opposition does not draw attention to those quarters when the increase in the consumer price index in Victoria has been lower than in other capital cities. The fact is that, as he would be aware, there are seasonal fluctuations throughout Australia.

Mr Wilkes—It is your petrol levy. You know what it is.

Mr HAMER—The petrol levy was not in operation and would not have come into these figures, as the honorable member knows, and I am sure he does know. The fact is that there are seasonal fluctuations. The Government has kept prices, charges and fees in Victoria down to the lowest possible level.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS TANKS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Following several accidents which have occurred across Australia with liquefied petroleum gas tanks in motor cars in recent days, could the Minister for Minerals and Energy inform the House what steps the Government will take concerning the accreditation of those responsible for conversion of vehicles to liquefied petroleum gas and to set standards for the equipment used?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I shall start with the latter part of the honorable member’s question. The Government took steps by promulgating regulations under the Motor Car Act to ensure that all conversions are done to a certain standard, and those regulations are now being complied with.

The question of accreditation of converters is under consideration. The Gas and Fuel Corporation has established a
school at Clayton where people are being trained at the rate of about thirteen every ten days. Upon successfully completing that course, those people will obtain a certificate which the Government hopes will be recognized by insurance companies.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Have you any plans to accredit them?

Mr BALFOUR—I realize that that does not answer the honorable member’s question. The matter is under consideration and may be the subject of legislation, which I trust my colleague the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, will be dealing with during this sessional period.

The matter of accidents is something which honorable members ought to keep in proper perspective. Liquefied petroleum gas has been in use in various ways in this country for more than twenty years, more particularly in motor vehicles on the road over the past ten years, and it is unfortunate that an accident has occurred. The Government is in close contact with Rheem Australia Ltd, the company which manufactured the tank concerned. It appears that the gauge indicating the quantity of gas in the tank fits on to a boss which is welded into the tank and at that point there is a gasket. At this stage, that appears to be where the problem lies.

I have one of the fixtures in the office that the honorable member can view if he so desires. Victoria has not really had any accidents in this area. Rheem Australia Ltd will be making announcements about what it recommends people should do. Unfortunately those recommendations were not published in this morning’s paper; I hope they will appear in this afternoon’s paper and in the morning press over the next three days. I suggest that people who have converted vehicles should accept Rheem’s suggestion that if they have any doubts they should take their tank to the point where it was originally converted or to the Gas and Fuel Corporation which will inspect the tank to ascertain whether it was converted by the corporation.

This morning I sent my own car to Carlton to be checked. I had no doubts whatsoever about it. I have a gas fitted car which I chose deliberately so that I would personally have some knowledge of some of the problems in relation to the use of liquefied petroleum gas. I took advice and sent the car to be checked.

EXPORT OF WILDLIFE

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I address a question to the Minister of Health who represents the Minister for Conservation in this House. In view of previous steps taken by the Government to curb the illegal export of Australian wildlife and growing community concern at the continued exploitation and cruelty perpetrated on Australian wildlife by this export, can the Minister tell the House what steps are being taken by the Government to clamp down even further on the illegal exportation of Australian wildlife?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The Wildlife Act that this House saw fit to pass in 1975 introduced a dramatic change in the administration of wildlife in Victoria. The most difficult matter following the enactment of that legislation was to draw up the wide variety of regulations that were needed to put the new concept into action. Only in relatively recent times has the work of drawing up those regulations been completed.

Running parallel to that was the need for additional staff to enforce the regulations if and when they were available. A further complication was the fact that during this period the Public Service Board saw fit to look at the over-all administration and structure of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division. The result was that in December last year final approval was given for the six senior officers who would be involved. They are called regional officers. Recruitment, as was accurately reported in the press, came from within the division. With a stop on recruitment from outside at that time, it was not possible to recruit the junior people needed to fill the positions vacated by those people, and that is what is taking place at present. Additional staff is needed to put the recently completed regulations into effect.
On the general question of protection of wildlife and the prevention of the export traffic, there is extremely close liaison between the Department of Customs and Excise and the officers of the Fisheries and Wildlife Division. During my term as Minister I have received no evidence of an export racket, say, in reptiles. It was common knowledge that right around Australia there was a lucrative and cruel racket involving the illegal export of birds.

The next step is to deploy all the officers who are needed, and I hope that will be achieved before very long.

LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS TANKS

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—Further to the question answered by the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, in view of the recall of liquefied petroleum gas tanks by Rheem Australia Ltd, whether the Victorian Government will order all vehicles converted to liquefied petroleum gas off the road until such time as a proper investigation has ascertained their safety.

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—The Minister for Minerals and Energy and I conferred early this morning and, as a result of advice received from the experts of his department, it was decided not to take that step at this stage until an examination has been made of the cause of the accident.

REGIONAL TOURIST AUTHORITIES

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Has the Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism recently made a statement that those municipalities which have not contributed to regional tourist authorities will not be able to receive moneys from the Tourist Fund? If so, does he not consider this to be a form of blackmail and, if so, what are the reasons for such a decision?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The question is in order except for that part which asks for an opinion.

Mr HAMER (Minister for State Development Decentralization and Tourism)—The honorable member for Mildura will be aware that regional tourist authorities have been formed in all regions of Victoria and it is generally regarded as an obligation of the municipalities to support their regional authority. What I have said, and this certainly has the wholehearted support of the regional tourist authorities, is that if a municipality does not see fit to support, in a financial sense, its regional tourist authority, priority should be given to municipalities which do so. If they claim to be concerned about tourism and ask for support from the Tourist Fund to provide facilities, it is reasonable to show preference to municipalities which have at least evinced some support for tourism as a whole. I regard that as a reasonable approach because of the shortage of funds—there always will be a shortage of funds—so let us have self-help and support for those municipalities which are prepared to help themselves.

NUCLEAR REACTOR

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston)—Has the attention of the Premier been drawn to reports from the Mornington Peninsula, in particular the Standard newspaper, and other reports in regard to Portland on the establishment of a nuclear reactor on the Mornington Peninsula and at Portland to supply electricity to those two areas? Has the Government changed the policy it announced before and at the time of the election, and has it made any decision in this matter?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—There has been absolutely no change in the attitude and policy of the Victorian Government. It is not the Government’s policy to favour the establishment of nuclear power plants in Victoria. The Government sees no need in the foreseeable future to establish nuclear power plants. Indeed, all studies undertaken by the State Electricity Commission indicate that, for as many years as we can see ahead, Victoria will be relying on brown coal in the Latrobe Valley for the generation of power. The reference made by the honorable member arose
from a study at a Federal level. The State Government has not been consulted about this study, and certainly would not support any such proposal.

**LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS TANKS**

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—I ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy when his department first became aware of the faults in Rheem liquefied petroleum gas tanks.

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I became aware of the matter yesterday, when I received a lengthy telex. If the honorable member is interested, I shall be happy to give him the opportunity of reading it.

**UNEMPLOYMENT**

Mr McCLURE (Bendigo)—Is the Treasurer aware of a recent study by Dr Paul Langley of the La Trobe University into unemployment in which he reports that unemployment in Bendigo is amongst the highest in Australia? If so, is the Treasurer prepared to consider making special funds available for employment relief works in areas in Victoria which are severely affected by unemployment, and in Bendigo in particular?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I learned of the study today. However, on a State-wide basis I am pleased to note that the Commonwealth Employment Service figures show a slight decline in unemployment in Victoria and that Victoria still has the lowest level of unemployment of any State.

Mr Wilkes—It does not.

Mr THOMPSON—According to the Commonwealth Employment Service figures, Victoria has the lowest level of unemployment of any State. The survey to which the honorable member referred has indicated a higher level of unemployment in Bendigo than in some other parts of Victoria. In the next few days, the Government hopes to be able to announce details of a rural unemployment relief programme. As a result of representations from the honorable member, the Government will be specifically examining allocations to councils in the Bendigo area generally. I appreciate the remarks of the honorable member because, in his bricklaying activities, he has an intimate knowledge of industry development and the activities of employees in the electorate he represents.

**TRANSPORT COSTS**

Mr CRABB (Knox)—Because the transport component of the consumer price index for Melbourne for the September quarter has risen by 4.9 per cent, can the Premier confirm that the price rise in petrol of 1.1 cents was caused by the imposition of the Government's 4.5 per cent licence fee which came into effect on 1 August this year and consequently was included in the consumer price index? Will he therefore, contrary to the assertion he made in reply to an earlier question, admit that the 4.9 per cent increase in the transport component is due directly to the 4.5 per cent licence fee imposed by the Government?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—As the honorable member well knows, the transport component of the consumer price index is made up not only of petrol prices but also of public transport charges and many other factors.

Mr Wilkes—Including petrol.

Mr HAMER—Yes. All I said was that the Government—

Mr Crabb—You said that the petrol levy was not there.

Mr HAMER—I shall explain the situation in words of one syllable. The proposals made by the Treasurer in the Budget which affect transport and other factors are all part of the consumer price index. As honorable members will know, the figures for the consumer price index were taken in the middle of August.

Mr Crabb—The prices went up on 1 August.

Mr HAMER—Some did, and some did not. The honorable member would know that the fuel levy came into effect on 1 September.
ECHUCA TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Is the Assistant Minister of Education aware of reports that parents in the Echuca area propose to blockade the bridge over the River Murray to prevent children from New South Wales attending the Echuca Technical School if the Government restricts the right of entry of their children to attend the Echuca Technical School next year? What action does the Assistant Minister of Education intend taking to ensure that such a confrontation does not take place and that all those children who wish to attend the Echuca Technical School next year can do so?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—The matter raised by the honorable member is under consideration by the Minister.

RED ARMY CHOIR

Mr SKEGGS (Ivanhoe)—Will the Assistant Minister of Education examine the propriety of secondary schools circulating permission slips to parents requesting children to attend, in their elective hours, a performance of the Red Army Choir, as that affects children of people from countries behind the Iron Curtain?

Mr LACY (Assistant Minister of Education)—Yes, I will give the matter consideration.

LIQUEFIED GASES ACT

Mr EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale)—The Minister for Minerals and Energy would be aware of the repeated requests made in this House over the past eleven years for the Government to proclaim the Liquefied Gases Act, an Act that was designed to control the cartage of liquefied gas, specifically LPG. In view of the Minister's response a month ago that the Government would proclaim the Act within a couple of weeks, and as a further two weeks have elapsed, could the Minister explain briefly why the Government has not proclaimed the Act?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The Government is waiting for the regulations to be printed.

G. J. COLES FOUNTAIN

Mr McARTHUR (Ringwood)—I refer plans which will result in Parliament House losing a significant area of lawns and car parking space on the southern boundary. With this in mind, and in view of the concern of individual members of Parliament, groups of members and staff, could the Minister of Public Works indicate whether any serious conscientious attempts have been made to find an alternative to this plan and to obtain members' views?

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Public Works)—This matter is under discussion by the House Committee at present. The only role my department has played so far is that Mr Swan, the Director of Buildings, has provided plans of a proposal incorporating the G. J. Coles fountain.

Naturally, many members are concerned about the restriction this fountain may place in the future on parking space on the southern boundary of Parliament House. It should be noted that there are long-range projects or programmes for car parking to be made available on the east side. This will involve relocating the tennis court and the bowling green which will allow for underground parking in that area. A plan has been produced and it is up to other people to make the decision whether that plan will be accepted.

TRANSPORT OF NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—I ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy: What regulations are in existence to control the transport of nuclear waste across Victoria and through Victoria's ports, and if there are no such regulations, will the Minister immediately consult with his counterpart in New South Wales in order to protect Victorians by adopting the requirements introduced by that Government?

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The Government is not aware of any nuclear material or nuclear waste currently being transported through Victoria. The Commonwealth and various States are consid-
ering this matter and regulations are being prepared to take account of those contingencies should they arise.

**MOTOR REGISTRATION FEES**

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Because of the public interest in the cost imposts on the motor industry, both those which have come into effect and those proposed by the Government to come into effect, can the Treasurer indicate when the proposed reduction in motor registration charges will be announced and when they will come into operation?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—Legislation will be introduced this sessional period—I believe at an early date—indicating the nature of the restructuring of motor registration fees, plus the level of reduction.

**INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

Mr CRELLIN (Sandringham)—I ask the Minister of Labour and Industry: Is it a fact that industrial accidents cause more lost time to industry than industrial disputes? If this is so, can the Minister indicate to the House what further action the Government can take to improve industrial safety and to reduce industrial accidents?

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—It is a fact that industrial accidents cause more lost time than industrial disputes. Last year, some 468,000 days were lost through industrial disputes, and a few years previously, 726,000 days were lost through industrial accidents.

Mr Remington—What year was that?

Mr RAMSAY—1974–75. The comparison, however, is one which merely brings to the attention of the community the fact that both figures are far too high, and of the two, the number of days lost through industrial disputes is probably much easier to reduce.

The situation on a world-wide basis is that the number of days lost through industrial accidents is a particularly high figure. In Victoria, the Government is taking steps to do what it can to reduce that figure. It needs to be recognized that the figure includes those accidents that are not caused by unsafe conditions in the working place, such as normal everyday accidents of a person getting up from a desk carelessly and cracking his knee on the side of the desk or twisting his ankle. Accidents of this type become part of the lost-time statistics.

The Government has a continuing programme on industrial safety. Last year about $3 million was spent on industrial safety. Some 30,000 specific safety inspections were carried out in factories, and if one takes the total number of figures of inspections, including inspections of lifts and cranes and boilers and pressure levels, all of which have a safety content, there were 269,000 separate inspections conducted by my department last year. When that is added to the work of the industrial safety groups, the seminars and educational programmes conducted by the Government, and the encouragement for the installation of safety signs that can be readily understood by people who do not have a command of English, it will be seen that the Government has a continuing programme for safety under way.

**RADIOACTIVE WASTE**

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I ask the Minister of Health whether he has ascertained into which mine his predecessor dumped 30 tonnes of radioactive waste material which was found at Bairnsdale Technical School. If he has found out, can he inform the House where and what were the details of the safety arrangements? If he has not informed himself on this matter, will he do so immediately and prepare a statement for the House on this dumping and the dumping of other radioactive waste disposal for which he is responsible?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—I am not familiar with the matter that has been raised by the honorable member. I suggest that he puts the question on notice. This is not for the purpose of delaying him, but so that it is there, and I will give an answer to the House.
WOMEN'S REFUGES

Mr McCANCE (Bennettswood) — Is the Minister of Housing aware that an organization called the Victorian Women's Refuge Group has made a statement that single mothers are being discriminated against by the Housing Commission? If so, has the Housing Commission any special criteria by which applicants for emergency accommodation are sorted out?

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing) — I am aware of a report in the Age which was headlined "Lone Mother Crisis". The report comes from a document, "Women and Housing" which was produced by the Victorian Women's Refuge Group. Unfortunately, the Age article has selected only certain passages from the report and printed them out of context.

Nevertheless, some of the matters that have been printed and that come within the report have given officers of the Housing Commission grave concern because they are inaccurate. The Commission has no policy or practice of discriminating against single mothers or children. The same criteria are applied to all applicants, irrespective of sex, colour or creed.

The Standing Orders were suspended to enable the petition to be read, and the petition was read by the Clerk. It was in the following terms:

THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND THE HONORABLE THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble petition of parents, teachers and interested community members respectfully showeth that—

(1) The existing Brunswick Technical School building and site is totally inadequate for the needs of modern education.

(2) Ministers of Education and the Education Department have failed to rebuild the school or to guarantee a definite and adequate portion of the Millers Ropeworks site to the School.
(3) The planning arrangements for the development of the Millers Ropeworks site have been incompletely carried out.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the House will take such action as it may to—

(i) institute new planning procedures which allow for wider participation and representation of Brunswick interests;

(ii) ensure that the Millers Ropeworks site is developed as a matter of urgency for the benefit of the children and people of Brunswick; and

(iii) make certain that the Brunswick Technical School receives at least 74 acres for its reconstruction and future development.

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

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

Regional shopping centres

Mr McGrath (Lowan) presented a petition from certain members of the Horsham Chamber of Commerce praying that action be taken to review the procedure for issuing permits for new regional shopping complexes and to prohibit the issue of such permits in the interim. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 21 signatures.

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

PAPERS

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

Environment Protection Authority—Report for the year 1978–79—Ordered to be printed.


Taxation—Analysis of Operations—

Land Tax for the Assessment Year 1979
Probate Duty for the year 1978–79
Gift Duty for the year 1978–79

Town and Country Planning Act 1961—

Croydon—City of Croydon Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 83.

Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos. 90 (Part 1B), 125.

RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr Maclellan (Minister of Transport) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Railways Act 1958 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

URBAN LAND AUTHORITY BILL

Mr Dixon (Minister of Housing) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish an Urban Land Authority to make provision with respect to the functions and powers of the authority and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS BILL

Mr I. W. Smith (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for pesticides to be described as agricultural chemicals, to make provision concerning the use of agricultural chemicals, to amend the Pesticides Act 1958, the Health Act 1958, the Stock Medicines Act 1958, the Fertilizers Act 1974 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PUBLIC SERVICE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr Hamer (Premier) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Public Service Act 1974 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr Ramsay (Minister of Labour and Industry) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Labour and Industry Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Town and Country Planning Act 1961, the State Coordination Council Act 1975 and the Geelong Regional Commission Act 1977 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I move:

That this House expresses its concern at the failure of the State Development Committee to pursue a policy of open meetings during the course of its inquiries and requests His Excellency the Governor in Council to ensure that the Committee comply with the spirit of the law as prescribed by section 13 of the State Development Committee Act 1958, the principle of which was referred to by the Crown Solicitor in his opinion given to the Committee dated 10 September 1979.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I second the motion.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—The motion means, in simple terms, that law makers should not be law breakers. Those who make the laws should understand them, should be able to interpret them and, above all, should abide by them. I shall read the relevant section, section 13 (3) of the State Development Committee Act, which relates to this motion. The Act is clear and unequivocal in its terms.

Except where the Committee are of opinion that it is desirable in the public interest that their proceedings should be held in private the Committee should sit in open court:

Sub-section (3) continues:

Provided that proceedings shall be held in private where any person tendering evidence as to his financial position requests that such evidence be taken in private.

That sub-section clearly provides that the committee shall automatically conduct its hearings in public. Whenever the committee is hearing evidence which could be disadvantageous to a person or company presenting the evidence, it should, in the public interest, conduct its hearing in private. The opening words of the section clearly indicate that the State Development Committee should meet in public, except on occasions when, in the public interest, it may be moved that it meet in private.

What is the story behind the motion? What has brought this motion before the House? The State Development Committee has been operating for approximately 38 years, during which time, to the best of my knowledge, it has met in private on only a handful of occasions. In other words, for many years, the spirit of the Act that the committee should meet in public has been adhered to, because it is not possible for the committee to meet in private unless it has before it a motion that the committee meet in private and unless that motion is carried by a majority of members of the committee. Every time the chairman says, "I declare the meeting open," the committee is automatically sitting in public and it can go into private session only if there is a motion from one of the members of the committee and if it is the opinion of a majority of the members of the committee that it is in the public interest for the committee to meet in private.

Considering the enormous length of time that this committee has met in public, it has naturally been with some concern that I have found in recent weeks that, at the beginning of each meeting, a motion has come before the committee and the committee has found it necessary to meet in private.

The history giving rise to this motion began in late 1978. Complete information is not available on the matter. The files thus far have not been available from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Had those files been available, no doubt honorable members would have been in a stronger position to ascertain the decision taken by the Board of Works when it introduced House Service Notice No. 1705 on 3 April this year.

It was obvious to certain honorable members making inquiries that last year there were meetings between Vitclay Pty Ltd, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Premier and the honorable member for Ballarat North.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the matters the honorable member for Niddrie is now discussing have no relation to the motion before the House. The scope of
Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, it is abundantly clear that if honorable members are to make a proper determination on this motion it is essential that the background giving rise to the motion be brought before the House. That is my purpose in supplying these details. The points alluded to by the honorable member for Polwarth will then be dealt with in some detail in order that members may be assisted in reaching a determination of this matter.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—On the point of order and in support of what the honorable member for Polwarth has put to you, Mr Speaker, clearly the alternatives will be whether the House will hear background and counter-background and a debate extending over what the committee may or may not have been considering, or whether there will be discussion of the motion before the House. If the honorable member for Niddrie regrets not having widened or rephrased the motion, I feel sorry for him. The motion he has moved is narrow and calls for this House to express an opinion. The House is perfectly capable of doing that when it takes a vote. The motion does not invite honorable members to discuss all the inquiries of the committee over the past 30 years, or the past 3 months or 3 days.

In coming to your decision on the point of order you should be guided by the fact that if the debate is to be on background and counter-background, assertion and counter-assertion, it will not be debate on the motion moved by the honorable member for Niddrie but rather debate on the work of the committee.

Mr EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale)—Further on the point of order, before you come to a decision, Mr Speaker, you must consider that this House has established itself on precedent, and irrespective of what the Leader of the Government has said on this argument, there is plenty of precedent to show that a lead speaker moving a motion such as the motion moved by the honorable member for Niddrie is given some latitude in providing a background for his motion. I believe that is precisely what the honorable member is doing before he gets on the meat or subject-matter of the motion. Such brief references as he has made to date have generally been considered to be in order to enable the detail of the motion to be examined thoroughly by the House.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The point of order relates to relevance of the argument before the Chair. Standing Order No. 99 provides that no honorable member shall digress from the subject-matter of any question under discussion. It is relevant that the honorable member may look at the operation of the committee in years gone by, and accept as practice or otherwise what the committee has done as part of his argument. I uphold the point of order inasmuch as it is not relevant at this stage to look at the background of the matter that the committee is examining. It is reasonable to make passing reference to it, but there should not be a debate on the matter that the committee is presently examining. The House is discussing whether the committee is entitled to do what it has done—to hold its meetings behind closed doors.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—Thank you for your guidance, Sir. These remarks will be made merely in passing reference. Following the decision by the Board of Works on 3 April 1979 to introduce HSN No. 1705 there was an amendment to the resolution on 24 May 1979, which extended the time of the regulation by two months. There was a further amendment which then meant that the date of implementation of such instruction was deferred. Those changes may have been caused by a number of factors. One could have been the writ before the Supreme Court, or the meeting at the Broadmeadows Town Hall, or a motion moved in another place, but as a result of one of those things it was eventually decided by the Parliament that the Victorian State Development Committee should hold an inquiry.
What has occurred since the committee commenced the inquiry? I bring to the attention of the House meeting No. 22, which all committee members agree was a public meeting. At that meeting it was resolved that the committee should consider its programme for hearing evidence during the week commencing Monday, 13 August. The committee resolved that when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works presented evidence to the inquiry it should be required to table any relevant files dealing with the prohibitions placed on the use of UPVC and vitrified clay sewer pipes in certain municipalities. The secretary was asked to make the necessary arrangements with the board.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—I raise a point of order. Mr Speaker, you previously ruled that although this subject-matter was not within the true context of the motion before the House, a passing reference could be made. I have now listened for two or three minutes to passing references. The honorable member for Niddrie is not following your ruling but is delving into another matter that is completely outside the motion that he has put before the Chair. If he wishes to deal with those things, he should have included them in the motion before the House.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honorable member for Niddrie is developing a point of view and the Chair is not in a position to know where the point of view is leading, as perhaps the honorable member for Polwarth, as a member of the committee, may be. I must overrule the point of order until I find the honorable member is straying beyond the bounds of relevance. I draw the attention of the honorable member for Niddrie to the fact that the motion is fairly narrow and the House does not want to examine each meeting of the committee. The debate must be relevant to the question before the Chair, which relates to the way the committee decides to conduct its meetings—publicly or privately.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—I am sure you will follow the argument I am putting, Sir. In giving the content of some of the meetings I am trying to assist you in understanding the reasons behind the sudden change in the formula which has taken place over a period of 38 years.

The SPEAKER—The general course of the actions of the committee is acceptable, not specific details of committee meetings.

Mr SIMPSON—A letter was sent to the Board of Works requesting information. It was signed by me as the acting chairman and stated:

I should be glad if you would kindly arrange for the officers of the board who are authorized to present evidence to the inquiry to bring with them the file or files containing the date on which the board based its decision to prohibit the use of UPVC and vitrified clay sewer pipes in certain municipalities.

The response from the Board of Works on 9 August stated, in part:

As the board understands the provision of the State Development Committee Act 1958 No. 6376 and the regulations made thereunder, the committee may by issue of a summons require the production of documents relevant to the terms of reference of the inquiry.

That was signed by Mr Croxford. I now come to the crux of the motion. The minutes of meeting No. 27 show:

It was moved by Mr Simpson and seconded by Mr Simmonds that in accordance with the resolution carried by the committee at its meeting on Tuesday 31 July a summons be issued forthwith requiring the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to produce for examination by the committee any file or files containing the data on which the board based its decision to prohibit the use of UPVC and vitrified clay sewer pipes in certain municipalities.

It was then moved by Mr Burgin and seconded by Mr McKellar that the decision to issue a summons be deferred pending the completion of the hearing of all evidence.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I cannot see how this relates to the motion before the House. I ask the honorable member to explain how it does.

Mr SIMPSON—I will do that now. At meeting No. 30 of the State Development Committee the new members, the honorable members for Polwarth, Portland and Noble Park and the Honorable
R. I. Knowles, MLC, Ballarat Province, were of the opinion that the committee usually met in private and that the State Development Committee was the same as the other committees of which they were or had been members.

The honorable member for Reservoir, who has been a member of the State Development Committee for almost ten years, pointed out that the committee was different from other committees. He read the relevant section of the Act and explained that the committee met in public. The members of the committee asked the committee secretary to give a ruling on section 13 of the State Development Committee Act. On 27 August Mr A. N. Castle stated in a memorandum to the chairman of the committee:

There seems little doubt that, because of the operation of section 13 (3) of the State Development Committee Act 1958 No. 6376, all meetings of the Committee should be held in public unless the Committee are of the opinion that the meetings should be held in private.

Even with that sort of direction, some of the new members of the State Development Committee thought that, by tradition, the committee had met in private and that that tradition should continue. The honorable member for Reservoir, the Honorable D. R. White, MLC, Doutta Galla Province, and I were unable to convince the new members that the committee automatically met in public. It was considered that the fairest and most honest way in which to handle the matter was to call for an opinion from the Crown Solicitor.

Mr Maclellan—On whose suggestion?

Mr SIMPSON—It was a unanimous suggestion. The committee has a large and important charter. I hope the Minister of Transport will support the view of the members of the committee to do everything possible to function within the law.

The Honorable R. I. Knowles, MLC, wrote to the Crown Solicitor and on 10 September 1979 a memorandum was received from the Crown Solicitor which referred to a passage in the letter from Mr Knowles, which stated:

Traditionally, ordinary meetings have been held by the Committee in private, whilst meetings at which evidence has been heard have been conducted in public.

In his answer, the Crown Solicitor, Mr E. L. Lane, stated:

The division of the committee’s meetings into public and private meetings in the way described in the second paragraph of your letter receives no warrant from the provisions of the Act. The governing provision on this question is sub-section (3) of section 13 from which it is clear that the general rule is that the committee’s meetings are to be open to the public, the exceptions being as stated in that sub-section. The fact that evidence is taken on oath is not of itself a reason why meetings should be conducted in public if the committee were of the opinion that it was desirable in the public interest that the particular proceedings should be held in private, or if the proviso to sub-section (3) of section 13 operated.

The Crown Solicitor said that the meetings were to be held in public. An article appeared in the Age on 22 September with the headline, “Pipe Probe Loses Bid for Privacy” which stated:

The Crown Solicitor has quashed a bid to keep some meetings of the State Government’s clay pipe inquiry secret.

The legal row erupted after some inquiry members tried to force the Board of Works to hand over the files on its decision to ban plastic pipes from 14 Melbourne municipalities.

A Board of Works engineer has told the inquiry that the pipes ban was partly motivated by “political considerations”.

A responsible section of the media—the Age newspaper—the secretary of the State Development Committee and the honorable member for Reservoir, who had been a member of the committee for ten years, were all of the opinion that the committee meets in public unless it is a matter of public interest that the committee should not do so. The final paragraph of the Crown Solicitor’s findings stated:

If the division of the committee’s meetings into public and private envisaged in sub-section (3) of section 13 of the Act is to be altered it would be necessary to introduce appropriate legislation.

The Crown Solicitor stated that if the committee wants to do what the new members believe it did by tradition, the Act will have to be altered. I do not quarrel with that. If sufficient members of the committee and this House believe that should be the formula, an amendment should be made to the Act. But let me make it clear that the Opposition will vigorously oppose any amending Bill introduced in this House right through to its third reading.
The argument now before the House is that the Opposition wants the Governor in Council to direct those who appear to misunderstand the interpretation of the Act. Four members of many years standing in the House have misunderstood the position which was expressed by the full-time secretary of the State Development Committee and the Crown Solicitor. Since the Crown Solicitor's letter was received the chairman declares the meeting open and the honorable member for Polwarth says, "I move—that this be a private meeting, in the public interest".

To emphasize that, I shall reiterate the point.

Mr Maclellan—that is exactly what section 13 states.

Mr SIMPSON—Yes—"in the public interest". But members of the committee are not even supplied with an agenda of the matters coming before the committee. Members of the committee should be prepared to act as a committee and to examine matters of State development publicly. However, in reality the operation of the committee, as former Senator Pat Kennelly said, is a numbers game, and the numbers say that the committee will not operate that way when it wishes to adopt a narrow interpretation of the Act to conduct meetings in private.

On one occasion last week, when some of the colleagues of the honorable member for Polwarth were absent from the meeting, the chairman declared the meeting open and the honorable member for Polwarth moved that in the public interest the meeting be private. The chairman called for the motion to be seconded but, because the honorable member's colleagues were not present, there was no seconder to the motion. The chairman then said that he would second the motion. John Wren should be classified in the same vein as some great Christian missionary for his actions compared with that action of the chairman of the committee. That is one example of what has been occurring within the State Development Committee, which is why the Opposition asks the Governor in Council to ensure that the committee complies with the spirit of the law as prescribed by section 13 of the Act. That principle was the subject of an opinion by the Crown Solicitor.

Mr Maclellan—What happened on the vote?

Mr SIMPSON—I shall tell the Minister. It lapsed, because eventually the honorable member for Reservoir alerted the chairman to the fact that the chairman was not able to second the motion.

Mr Burgin—You were not there.

Mr SIMPSON—The meeting was a public meeting. At that moment the public information was directed to me, quite rightly and properly. Any member of the public is entitled to know this particular information because the committee was meeting as a public body; it can meet in private only when a motion is passed that the committee meet in private. At the meeting to which I am referring, the secretary of the committee said that information would be provided from the Housing Industry Association—or the Plastics Institute of Australia Inc., I am not sure which—that was highly confidential.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—On a point of order, in view of the confusion arising from what the honorable member is saying, it would be of assistance if honorable members knew which of these gems arise from public meetings and which arise from private meetings. It appears that the honorable member is able to inform the House of matters that arose in private sections of the meeting, and, if so, he is treading on dangerous ground, which members of the House should not encourage. I ask the Chair to advise the honorable member that, before he divulges information arising from the committee, he should define whether he is referring to the public or to the private meetings of the committee.

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie)—The committee meets publicly until a motion is passed by a majority of the committee that the meeting be held in private. I have put nothing before the House that has not been said at a public meeting and I have not put before the House anything that has happened at a private meeting, and nor would I.
The honorable member for Polwarth interjects, “what rot”. He will have the opportunity later of expressing his point of view. The Minister of Transport is positively wrong in his allegations that I must be careful about transgressing on private matters. I have not transgressed on anything that has occurred in a private meeting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The Minister of Transport did not suggest that the honorable member for Niddrie had transgressed in divulging private information before the committee. Members of all Parliamentary committees must be aware that, where a meeting is public, matters may be discussed, but honorable members may not divulge matters of private meetings or details of the deliberations of a committee. The Minister of Transport did not refer to any particular divulgences of the honorable member. Instead, he is asking the honorable member to be aware of that point.

Mr Simpson—I find the Minister of Transport fascinating. He said that I was talking of something being in confidence.

Mr Maclellan—that is what you said.

Mr Simpson—Of course. At a public meeting, the secretary said there was some correspondence that was highly confidential. When that information was given to the committee, it was then proposed that the committee go into a private meeting. When members of the committee know that there is something of that nature that will be put before the committee properly and in accordance with the Act, this action will be taken. But when no agenda is presented to members of the committee and members do not know what to expect, how can they support the proposition that the committee go immediately into a private meeting? The situation is further exacerbated when the chairman of the committee, because there is not a seconder to the motion, himself seconds the motion. That is another reason why it is vital for the Governor in Council to direct the attention of all members of the committee to the true meaning of the Act.

On one occasion, a debate ensued on whether the committee should hold its meeting in private or remain public. Eventually, the vote was taken and the majority decision was that the committee should go into a private meeting. The journalist who was present was asked to leave. On the following day, 18 October 1979, the journalist, Kerry Wakefield of the Age, wrote an article entitled, “Libs close pipe probe”, and stated, inter alia:

The State Government’s clay pipes inquiry is being conducted in secret despite the Crown Solicitor’s advice that general meetings should be public.

A heated row broke out among inquiry committee members yesterday as three of the seven MPs tried to open up the hearing. But the issue was lost on party lines, with four Liberal MPs out-voting two Labor MPs and one National Party member.

But Mr Ken Wright, National Party MLC for North-Western, said: “I have always held the opinion that it’s better for these things to be held in public.”

That statement was made by the representative of the National Party on the committee. He is a man held in high esteem by members of the committee and by members of Parliament. He has been a member of the committee longer than any other member, with the exception of the honorable member for Reservoir.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Where practicable, yes—that is the answer.

Mr Simpson—With great respect to the Leader of the National Party, the Act contains a provision that when there is something of a highly confidential nature, it will be in the public interest—

Mr Ross-Edwards—Not highly confidential; it has to be confidential.

Mr Simpson—it is quite clear that the spirit of the Act is that the committee should meet in public.

Mr Burgin—you should attend the committee meetings and sort it out yourself.

Mr Simpson—I accept the interjection. The Labor Party sorted out this
matter because it obtained the opinion of the Crown Solicitor. If the Leader of the National Party makes statements which are not his opinions and that does not satisfy members of the State Development Committee, do honorable members think that the committee will be influenced by my arguments or the arguments of the honorable member for Reservoir? For that reason the Labor Party sought the opinion of the Crown Solicitor, who endorsed the opinion of the Labor Party. The four Liberal Party members on that committee will not accept the Crown Solicitor's advice. The National Party representative does, the three Labor Party representatives do, but the Liberal Party representatives do not.

How are honorable members going to resolve this problem? The Labor Party cannot get the Liberal Party to accept the Crown Solicitor's opinion. The Labor Party has no alternative but to bring the matter into the forum of the Victorian State Parliament and 'let Parliament give its direction on whether it believes what the Crown Solicitor says. That is what the matter amounts to and that is a decision that this House will have to make.

The information is readily available for honorable members to read, and has obviously created a lot of interest in the community. The specific inquiry has had voluminous evidence given under oath, screeds and screeds, all heard in public, and properly so. On 19 October this year the Age editorial stated:

Government business is the public business.

The article then referred to a few other incidents in which the public was denied knowledge of various things that were happening under the Hamer administration. The Age had this to say:

The third incident was on Wednesday, when four Government MPs outvoted Labor and National Party representatives on the State Government's clay pipe inquiry to bar the public and Press from hearings.

All are examples of politicians denying the public the right to know.

However, the Age had more to say:

Much of the evidence to date has been heard in public but on Wednesday, the four Liberal members of the committee outvoted the National Party and two Labor Party representatives to close the inquiry to the public. The vote came at about the same time as the committee was again debating whether it should demand to see the board's file on the ban. We would have thought that the file was central to the whole question of whether the board's decision was well-founded and in the interests of home builders. The community must be satisfied that political considerations or favoritism played no part in the decision. As with the other two instances of Government secrecy, the public has a right to know.

Mr Maclellan—You support that view, do you?

Mr SIMPSON—Of course the Labor Party supports that view. The public has a right to know what is going on in the State Development Committee when it says that it will meet in public and has done so for the past 38 years. Suddenly there is this one request to obtain the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works files on its decision to introduce House Service Notice No. 1705, followed by a new set of rules.

When the committee resolved unanimously to call for the Board of Works files at a properly constituted forum—a public meeting—the acting chairman of the board wrote to the committee saying, “You may summon the board for the files”, and a different result was obtained.

The information contained on those files must be fascinating because the committee has taken on a new complexion. When the Labor Party tried to institute debate on the matter in public, the honorable member for Polwarth constantly moved that in the public interest the committee should meet in private and that there is no agenda. This House does not even know what it is going to talk about. Honorable members have not heard the minutes or the apologies. The committee has adopted the attitude of, “Close it up, remove the press, everyone out”. This has resulted in Mr White having to ask for the files in another place as a member of Parliament.

It is a poor state of affairs when Parliament, by resolution unanimously determined in the Legislative Council, directs the State Development Committee to inquire into UPVC pipes and vitrified clay pipes. The starting point is the files of the Board of
Works because of its decision to introduce House Service Notice 1705, but those files cannot be obtained. Action has to be taken outside the inquiry’s powers to subpoena people and documents, but still the board’s files cannot be obtained.

Imagine the ludicrous situation if Sir Gregory Gowans had been denied access to the Housing Commission files on the Pakenham, Melton and Sunbury land deals, and had to ask the honorable member for Niddrie to request the files so he could have a look at them. Imagine his having to obtain the files through a member of Parliament!

A Royal Commission is under way at Swann House under the chairmanship of Sir Sydney Frost and Mr Commissioner Ellwood. All the files are available. The point I am making is that the inquiry should be entitled to examine all the files on the 117 Housing Commission deals.

It is ludicrous that files cannot be obtained from a statutory organization. A member of the State Development Committee now has to exercise his rights in Parliament to ask for the files. What a joke is being made of Parliament in the eyes of Victorians! Victorians must be disgusted with the fact that the Labor Party must seek the Crown Solicitor’s opinion that the committee should meet in public. Only on rare occasions and in rare circumstances will the Labor Party committee members go into private session.

The public is witnessing politicians clamping up and meeting in private. That is an outrage. In this instance the Labor Party will oppose this attempt to have the committee meet in private. The Labor Party has nothing to hide. Nothing has occurred of which I am ashamed to talk in this place. The Labor Party does not ask to go into private discussion in this Parliament. Why should honorable members be ashamed of anything they may want to discuss in that area?

I am speaking on behalf of the Opposition and I believe I am speaking on behalf of the Leader of the National Party who said, “It is better to be in public than to be in private”.

Mr Simpson

I want to finish as I began. I said: Law makers should not be law breakers. Those who make the laws should abide by them. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—All that the honorable member for Niddrie has revealed is a fascinating farrago of bits and snippets out of the committee. Regrettably, very little related to the honorable member’s motion.

In a sense honorable members can be a little sorry for members of the committee if relationships have broken down to the extent that the committee is now to be ruled by a sort of bush lawyer’s interpretation of the Crown Solicitor’s opinion. However, one wonders how the committee will get on with the job if the atmosphere that the honorable member now promotes is to be the atmosphere of its work.

Members of this Parliament have served on many committees. I was on the Statute Law Revision Committee for some time before that committee even discovered the difference between a public and a private meeting. Members of the committee discussed amongst themselves opinions about witnesses and matters of much significance to the reports which eventually came to this Parliament. I never knew the committee to divide on party lines, as the honorable member for Niddrie so tactfully put it. I found a spirit of co-operation and no one taking the narrow view.

Of course, as the committee later discovered, the rules were that when witnesses appeared before the committee it was important that other people should be present. However, when members of the committee discussed the preparation of a report, it was forbidden to have anybody other than the secretary present. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say that the committee should be held in public on all occasions. It will be interesting when members of the Labor Party on the Statute Law Revision Committee next have to consider this matter, because it has long been a tradition that when members are meeting as a committee, they
meet in camera with no one present, other than the secretary of the committee, while that committee considers the report.

It is under a completely different set of rules. I can appreciate that honorable members moving from one committee to another might expect that the atmosphere with which they have become familiar on one committee may also exist on another but, lo and behold, they find the honorable member for Niddrie lurking on this particular committee.

I refer to section 13 (2) of the State Development Committee Act. It reads:

The Committee shall not sit while either House of Parliament is actually sitting except by leave of the House.

That is, the committee cannot sit in a public or a private capacity when the House is sitting. Section 13 (3) of the Act states:

Except where the Committee are of opinion that it is desirable in the public interest that their proceedings shall be held in private, the Committee shall sit in open court.

Mr Crabb—What is the problem?

Mr MACLELLAN—I do not know what the problem is. It is a matter for the committee. As the honorable member said, as did the former Senator Kennelly, it is a numbers game and if one does not have the numbers, one gets rolled. The honorable member seems to be a bad loser. He yaps and complains because the committee apparently reaches an opinion when he has drawn its attention to the distinction between a public meeting—that is an ordinary meeting at which no member of the public happens to turn up, and is therefore a fairly private meeting—and a private meeting. Now that he has pointed out this intense legal distinction, and had the Crown Solicitor's opinion, he does not like the committee, having obtained the Crown Solicitor's opinion and having noted his distinction between the 30-odd years of public meetings which were really private because nobody was there, now taking his good advice, and that of the Crown Solicitor, and specifically resolving that it is in the public interest, in the view of the majority of the committee, that it meet in private, and hence it does meet in private. That situation is completely and utterly for the committee to decide.

If the honorable member's motion is in any way serious, it invites this House to express concern, to ask the Governor in Council to tell the members of the committee, presumably the majority of the committee, although I think the honorable member for Niddrie indicated there would be occasions when he, too, would vote for a closed meeting, but the Leader of the Opposition says that the meetings should be open——

Mr Wilkes—Of course they should be open.

Mr MACLELLAN—That is an interesting little distinction. I would not expect any party Leader to give instructions to his members on a committee, whether or not they should favour an open or private meeting. I think it should be left to the members of the committee to decide, exercising their individual responsibilities.

So far as I know, the committee on which I served never took a political point of view, but there was always one party that had the numbers on both sides. The distinction has been carefully drawn and the Crown Solicitor's opinion is that if the committee is of the view, and resolves accordingly, presumably in the public interest, that it wants the sittings to be in private, they should be in private.

The honorable member for Niddrie invites the House to come to a contrary opinion and to ask the Governor in Council to tell the members of the committee that their opinion is somehow wrong, and not to obey the actual provisions of section 13 (3) of the Act—not to worry about that, but to worry about the spirit of the law.

Frankly, nothing that the honorable member said moved me to be concerned enough to ask the Governor in Council to tell the members of the committee how to run their affairs. I take up the interjection made by the Leader of the National Party to invite
the Crown Solicitor to one of the meetings. Instead of writing to one another, somebody might be able to take the initiative to get the Crown Solicitor to attend a meeting to discuss how best the committee might organize its meetings so that that which a majority believes ought to be in private will be in private and that which a majority believes ought to be in public will be in public and they are not bedevilled by formalities to the point where the committee's operations become unworkable.

The honorable member asks how it can be resolved to hold a committee meeting in private when there is no agenda. I suppose there are the minutes of the previous private meeting and the adoption of those minutes will be the first item of business. A small problem could arise if reference were made in that public meeting to the previous private meeting.

I do not know of the course of the inquiry and I do not think the House needs to be concerned to tell members, who have the right under section 13 (3) of the Act to come to an opinion, when they come to an opinion that they are wrong. I could well imagine, if the members of the committee could stop distrusting each other—

Mr Simpson—Just give us the file from the Board of Works. Can you help?

Mr MACLELLAN—That interjection helps more than anything to explain the reason for the motion. Perhaps what the honorable member really means is that the files ought to be provided. If that is what he had moved, honorable members have a different debate on their hands, but why take up the time of the House with a bush lawyer's opinion on a Crown Solicitor's opinion that somehow the committee is not obeying the law but ought to obey the spirit of the law? It is unacceptable to the House, and to the Government, in my view, to so interfere with the committee's functions as to tell it what its opinion ought to be. I suggest the House should reject the motion.

If one looks at the history of how this matter was made public, how it was handled in the media and at the time the inquiry was initiated——

Mr Maclellan—Are you going to debate this motion?

Mr WILKES—Of course.

Mr Maclellan—You are not talking about the motion now, are you?

Mr WILKES—I should have thought that the Minister combed over the motion, and a whole host of other matters, when he was informing the House why the committee should be able to determine a situation despite the opinion of the Solicitor-General. The Minister says, "I have been a member of the Statute Law Revision Committee and its members were not quite aware of what the rules were in relation to committee meetings held in private and committee meetings held in public." The Government and its members have been manipulating committees for their own purpose for 25 years.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! On the motion.

Mr WILKES—I am taking about this committee. That is what the motion is about.

Mr Maclellan—You will take that out of Hansard, won't you?

Mr WILKES—I will take nothing out of Hansard.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition has just stated to the House that in his opinion this Government, and members of this Government, have been manipulating committees. I take personal exception to the remarks
of the Leader of the Opposition. I have been in this House for four years, and at no stage have I been a party to the manipulation of any committee at any time.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—What is the point of order?

Mr COLLINS—if the Leader of the Opposition believes he has evidence to suggest that manipulation is taking place by any honorable member, he should have brought it to the attention of the House a long time ago. I take exception to his remarks.

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—If the honorable member for Noble Park is offended by what I have said, I say that the Government has used the committee system for its own purpose, and that has been evidenced in the committee that honorable members are talking about today. Would honorable members have thought that this matter would have been referred to this committee if the Government could have got away with the original intention of the regulation from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The Leader of the Opposition is straying from the terms of the motion. I ask him to speak to the motion before the Chair, which is quite explicit.

Mr WILKES—Indeed, the motion is quite explicit.

The motion states:

That this House expresses its concern at the failure of the State Development Committee to pursue a policy of open meetings . . .

I shall talk about the open meetings of the committee. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, would be well aware of the matter being discussed by the State Development Committee, as I am and as no doubt other honorable members are. There is also no doubt that the people affected by the original decision are extremely well aware of it because it cost them money. When that matter was referred to the committee it was decided that an opinion should be sought from the Crown Solicitor as to whether the committee should continue its deliberations in public or whether they should be conducted in camera.

One would have to examine the reasons why the committee decided it was necessary to seek that opinion from the Crown Solicitor. I say again that I believe all committees should hold public meetings when they are discussing, as this committee was, matters of public interest. Any deliberations on matters of public interest should be open to the public at any time and the public should be able to go to those meetings and discover—as was not the case with the committee to which I am referring—what the attitudes of particular members are.

Mr Burgin—What rot! While they are listening to evidence!

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member for Polwarth will have an opportunity of making his contribution to the debate.

Mr WILKES—There have been a number of occasions on which committees hearing evidence have been open to the public all over Victoria, but only some committees. For political reasons it was expedient for the State Development Committee to say that it did not want that to occur and to prevent it from occurring. The opinion of the Crown Solicitor was sought and the Crown Solicitor left no doubt as to what he thought of the situation. Ministers often come to this Chamber and read letters from the Crown Solicitor and expect certain actions to be taken and I should have thought that the advice of the Crown Solicitor would have been followed.

The opinion of the Crown Solicitor, Mr Lane, was that the division of the committee’s meetings into public and private meetings in the way described in the second paragraph of the letter sent to him received no warrant from the provisions of the Act. In other words, as the honorable member for Niddrie has said, the committee is acting in a fashion contrary to the provisions of the Act. The honorable
member for Niddrie wants Parliament to take some action. He wants the Governor in Council to take some action.

I suggest to you, Mr Speaker, as custodian of the affairs of this House, that the Government and the Governor in Council should take action if the committee is violating an Act of Parliament and if, as the Crown Solicitor says, it receives no warrant from the Act to take the action it has taken. If that is not a situation in which the Government can use its numbers on the committee to prevent that from happening, it is high time the Governor in Council took action to prevent a violation of the Act in that way.

I am inhibited from commenting on why the committee took the action it took, but there is an excellent reason and I believe that reason is now well known, not only to the Government but also to everybody who is affected by the decision. If the Parliamentary system is to continue, this House ought to act within its charter and if the Act is specific in its provisions concerning the way in which the committee is to function and the committee refuses, because of the members of a political party who are also members of the committee—in this case it is the Government party—it is high time the Governor in Council took action. There can be no free and frank report emanating from the committee under these circumstances.

If the committee cannot reach agreement on whether its meetings should be public and if it refuses to take the advice of the Crown Solicitor, how can it hope to bring a report back to Parliament on what should or should not be done about the vexed and complex subject it is discussing in the interests of the people who are affected by the decisions being made? It is absurd and ludicrous for the committee to continue with its present practice of not wanting to accept the advice of the Crown Solicitor.

The Minister mentioned the file from the Board of Works. That is another clear example of the Government using its numbers to prevent a committee from dealing with a matter that must have a bearing on the final decision of the committee. I can understand, purely on political grounds, why the Government does not want—and there has obviously been some communication about this somewhere down the line—the committee to carry out the recommendation of the Crown Solicitor, but the action it has taken is to be regretted and the members of the committee who are members of the Government party will live to regret a decision taken in that vein.

I support the views expressed by the honorable member for Niddrie and I believe he put them carefully and in an apolitical fashion. If the committee does not accept what the Crown Solicitor says is prescribed by section 13 of the State Development Committee Act, it ought to do one of two things: It ought to get out of business or it ought to change its membership so that a free and frank discussion can take place on a matter that will affect thousands of people throughout Victoria.

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—I do not believe I have ever heard the Leader of the Opposition make such a dreadful speech as the one he has just completed. For many years I was a member of a committee of which the Leader of the Opposition was also a member, and I respected his views and listened to them. I know his thoughts on this matter. As the honorable member is now the Leader of the Opposition and has to keep his back-benchers in order, he is willing to prostitute everything he believes in. I am disgusted that this kind of thing has to happen in politics because it downgrades a man.

It is necessary to go back in this saga to the moving of the original motion by the Right Honorable A. A. Dunstan, who was the Premier of the State at that time. During his second-reading speech he said:

This is the only way in which we can obtain the desired results. If the Government submits a proposal to Parliament at the present time party politics, as I have indicated, will creep in.

Mr Ginifer—That was in 1941 in a wartime situation.
Mr BURGIN—That is right, but that fact has nothing to do with what I am about to tell the House.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—I raise a point of order. Will the honorable member indicate from which document and from which page he is quoting?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Can the honorable member for Polwarth indicate those facts?

Mr BURGIN (Polwarth)—With pleasure, Mr Speaker. I am quoting from the remarks of the Honorable A. A. Dunstan, the then Premier of Victoria, reported in Hansard volume 212 of 1941. My first quotation began on page 1541 and I am about to quote from page 1542. The then Premier went on to state in his second-reading speech:

The Committee will, unless it decides otherwise in the public interest, hold its sittings in public.

The Premier stressed “unless it decides otherwise in the public interest” and used that phrase in his second-reading speech. Let honorable members have no doubt about that observation.

Mr Simmonds—Forty years ago?

Mr BURGIN—Yes, 40 years ago, and the Act has not been changed in that respect—it is still the same.

It appears that the Premier was worried about politics coming into the committee system. That has well and truly happened and if it continues it will mean the end of the committee system in this State. A motion on this subject was moved in the other House by Mr White, and during his speech he made certain references. I refer to issue No. 1 of Hansard for May 1979, page 124, where Mr White stated—

Mr Simpson—What date is that?

Mr BURGIN—29, 30 and 31 May. Take your pick!

Mr Simpson—This year?

Mr BURGIN—I stated that before. Mr White stated:

There is certainly no technical justifica—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member may not quote from a debate which has taken place during this sessional period.

Mr BURGIN—Mr White had a lot to say on this matter and it must be conceded that he was able to get the matter referred to the State Development Committee. I point out that the Council accepted the Government’s terms of reference under which the State Development Committee had to work when investigating this subject and the Opposition in the other place accepted those terms of reference.

What were the terms of reference given to the State Development Committee on this subject? They were:

This House recommends to His Excellency the Governor in Council that the State Development Committee be empowered to inquire into and report on the use of U.P.V.C. and vitrified clay pipes for sewerage purposes within Victoria having regard to the future supply of suitable sewerage pipes to meet the needs of the public and the viability of decentralized industry.

The terms of reference given to the committee directed it to look at the future uses and needs of UPVC and vitrified clay pipes and to consider those uses and needs in regard to decentralized industries. The terms of reference were not to examine the original decision which had been made by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the committee was to look to the future.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Can the honorable member relate his remarks to the motion before the Chair?

Mr BURGIN—Yes, Mr Speaker, and in doing so I ask for some indulgence from you because of the latitude that was given to the leading Opposition speaker in this debate, who was allowed to cover these matters. If his remarks are not rebutted, a wrong impression will have been given to the House. However, I shall be passing very quickly through these matters and shall merely touch upon them.

Mr White spoke very forcibly in moving his motion and then accepted the terms of reference for this inquiry to
be undertaken. He then had himself appointed to the State Development Committee.

Mr BURGIN—Mr Speaker, it is a very important part of the whole problem which is involved in this question.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

The SPEAKER—Order! Whether the State Development Committee was working within its terms of reference is irrelevant to the motion before the Chair. I ask the honorable member to confine his remarks to the motion, which is rather narrow. The honorable member has stated that he wished to rebut some of the remarks made by the leading speaker for the Opposition. I have allowed him some latitude in that regard but his remarks are now going beyond that.

Mr BURGIN—Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the specific matter of the committee holding private or public meetings, however honorable members wish to classify them, it is important to consider what occurred during the time this matter was discussed, and to take account of the question put to the Solicitor-General. The question submitted was: Traditionally, ordinary meetings have been held by the committee in private, whilst meetings at which evidence has been heard have been conducted in public.

Mr SIMPSON—That is not true; traditionally we didn’t meet in private.

Mr BURGIN—If only the honorable member for Niddrie would listen. I said that was the question put to the Solicitor-General, and the honorable member for Niddrie nods his head, so he agrees with me. There have been occasions when the honorable gentleman has nodded his head but has meant another thing, but I assure honorable members that that was the question put to the Solicitor-General, and that was the basis on which he gave his answer. The Solicitor-General stated that section 13 (3) of the State Development Act 1958 provided:

> Except where the committee are of opinion that it is desirable in the public interest that their proceedings shall be held in private the Committee shall sit in open court.

Provided that proceedings shall be held in private where any person tendering evidence as to his financial position requests that such evidence be taken in private.

Mr SIMMONDS—Who is arguing about that?

Mr BURGIN—That is right, who is arguing, because what it boils down to is that the committee is acting completely within its rights under the ruling of the Solicitor-General when it rules that a meeting be held in private as it is in the public interest to discuss matters within the committee. That is what has been occurring. When honorable members heard the story put forward in the Chamber this afternoon of these meetings being held in private they would have gained the impression—I am sure just the same as the press has done in the past—that most of the meetings of this committee are held in private.

Mr Ross-Edwards—Don’t you consistently move that its meetings be held in private?

Mr BURGIN—Will you just wait for it?

Mr Ross-Edwards—I have been waiting for ten minutes!

Mr BURGIN—That is just not so. Of the meetings held by this committee since I have been a member of it—

Mr SIMMONDS—You are one of the new members.

Mr BURGIN—Yes, I am. Of the meetings held by the committee since I have been a member, perhaps up to 40 meetings, at last week’s count only 5 or 6, so far as I can establish, have been held
in private; and those meetings took place after almost all of the primary evidence had been taken in completely open meetings and the committee had reached the point of deliberating about the evidence adduced before it. When a committee reaches that stage, there are matters it needs to discuss and those matters cannot be discussed in an open meeting with members of the press present. The committee has discussed the type of evidence given and whether certain evidence could be relied on. Can a committee throw such questions around in an open meeting? I stress that since I have been a member of it on only about five or six occasions has the committee met in private, and those private sessions have followed the taking of primary evidence.

During my period of service as a member of the committee, because of another inquiry it has been involved in, it has had meetings with the Portland Harbor Trust, the Geelong Harbor Trust and the Port of Melbourne Authority. In the light of this debate, I wonder what some members of those trusts and authorities will feel about some of the things they told members of this committee. If the meetings were private and committee members were free to go out and announce what was said at those meetings to the press and the community, I wonder whether the committee would get the same kind of information ever again from those people. If I were in that position, I would not provide information to the committee.

Let honorable members realize what brought this matter to a head when matters were discussed in committee or it was thought that they were. Is the honorable member for Niddrie going to deny that he gave to the press information which was considered to be confidential?

**Mr Simpson**—When I get the right to reply, I will take the opportunity of responding to everything the honorable member has said.

**Mr BURGIN**—Very well. In one case the honorable member for Niddrie was the only person who had a copy of a document which included certain information.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I do not like the way the debate is heading at this moment. The honorable member for Niddrie is not on trial. The question before the House is how the committee operates, whether its meetings should be private or open and whether that should be at the decision of the committee. I do not wish the debate to proceed towards a trial of one of the members of the committee.

**Mr Simpson**—It happens to be not true, by the way.

**Mr BURGIN**—Mr Speaker, I am only getting to the point of why it was necessary to have a motion moved to ensure that the committee could discuss those matters. I do not know whether that has been able to be achieved even now. It may be that changes are necessary. An amendment of the Act may be necessary to ensure that this can be done. I am certain that no committee will be effective if, when it comes to deliberate on evidence presented to it, it has to conduct its deliberations in an open forum. It would be wrong for that kind of information to be available to the public before the committee brought down its report. It would be impossible for the committee system to carry on under those conditions.

I believe quite firmly that the committee is working within the Act under the provisions referred to by the Crown Solicitor. Motions have been moved and the committee has worked under those conditions.

Finally, I stress that, of some 40 meetings, only 5 or 6 have been in what I have considered to be closed session. As I go back to that forum and have to continue discussing the types of matters I have mentioned, I will once again move the same motion so that the committee complies with the Act and is able to continue its work. It is very important work on which a lot of jobs depend. Perhaps big finance is involved in the results of the committee's deliberations. I want to be able to finish the job. It has been very difficult to do that, mainly because of the problem of getting members to attend committee meetings. Every one of its members is busy, but
this is an urgent inquiry and I want to be able to get the committee's work finished; however, I will not be a party to publicly discussing evidence that has been given and submissions that we are preparing, not for anyone.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The Leader of the National Party.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, could I ask how the Leader of the National Party will be speaking? On the basis of the call going to and from the question that is before the House, would the honorable member indicate whether he is about to speak for or against the motion?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The Chair has no indication, neither should the Chair say in advance how the National Party spokesman is going to speak. It is up to the honorable member to indicate that when speaking. The National Party has not spoken on this motion. Both sides have spoken through a number of speakers and I believe the call should now go to the Leader of the National Party.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Mr Speaker, I am somewhat amazed at the point of order! First, the House must examine the motion in question. It expresses concern at the failure of the State Development Committee to pursue a policy of open meetings during the course of its inquiries and requests His Excellency the Governor in Council to ensure that the committee comply with the spirit of the law as prescribed by section 13 of the State Development Committee Act 1958. In other words—

Mr Simpson—Read the last bit.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I am not concerned about the last bit. What I wish to emphasize during this debate is that the Opposition asks His Excellency the Governor in Council to ensure that the committee comply with the spirit of the law. That is an impossible request because one must interpret the Act as it is and once the Act is interpreted the Governor in Council cannot say that it has to be done this or that way. Much as I am upset by the honorable member for Polwarth and much as I deplore his attack on the honorable member for Niddrie and, in fact, on members of the committee from all parties—in essence that is what he did—the National Party cannot support the motion because it is senseless. The principles raised by the honorable member for Niddrie are far reaching and are important. I agree with the thrust of his speech. He has said that committee meetings should be open to the public except in special circumstances. I do not think any member of the House would challenge that.

Mr Roper—The majority of the committee has.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—The majority of members in the House would not do so because public hearings have been a long-standing tradition for all committees. I was horrified to hear that on occasions—I must accept this and the honorable member for Polwarth probably will not have the opportunity of saying that it is not true, although he can say so later, either inside or outside the House—someone stands up at the beginning of the meeting and, without knowing what is to be discussed, moves that the committee meeting be held in private. That is wrong. The committee should have an agenda or there should be a discussion about what will be discussed.

Mr Simpson—The meetings are public at that time, so you can come and look.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—I am a busy man. What concerns me most is that the all-party committee system has worked effectively for years; and now we have a dog fight between the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Roper—And the National Party.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—No; I wish to defend the member of the National Party. The view held by the Honorable K. I. Wright is that when the committee meeting should be held in private he will vote accordingly. He believes that, where possible, committee meetings should be held in public. He has not voted with the Labor Party or
with the Government but has voted according to his conscience and the circumstances of the day, for which I give him full marks. It is a pity that the balance of power is not held by the National Party because sense would prevail.

I do not wish to delay the House but warn the members of the Government and the Opposition that if these announcements persist the committee will be abolished and the committee system will be put at risk. This is the first time in many years that there has been a division of parties. It is a sad state of affairs. It is not in the best interests of the committee system and destroys the benefits afforded to Victoria because much of the legislation presented to the House has resulted from members sitting around the committee table and thrashing matters out, regardless of party views.

Any political party knows before a party meeting whether a matter has the support of the National Party, the Government or the Opposition and that often sways the party to endorse a measure. The Road Safety Committee is an outstanding example of the committee system in action. That committee has tackled and surmounted some difficult problems. The State Development Committee made the mistake made by many committees by calling for the opinion of the Crown Solicitor. If a committee wants a legal view it is better to call the person before the committee to discuss the matter rather than to exchange letters.

Mr Roper—That would have had to be in public.

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS—It would not matter whether it was in public or in private. If the person is present at the meeting the committee can discuss the problems with him, but if the committee receives a letter there can be two different interpretations, one from the Opposition and one from the Government. That is unsatisfactory. I deplore the personal attack made by the honorable member for Polwarth on the honorable member for Niddrie. That is not his usual form in this House.

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—The motion before the House is necessary because the State Development Committee which was set up, as the honorable member for Polwarth said, in 1941, has performed a task which has been of benefit to Victoria over the years. I contest with the honorable member for Polwarth the proposition that the committee has ever been in the position of holding a private meeting except by resolution on matters that are confidential. That motion is usually passed unanimously. In my time as a member of that committee, that motion had never been contested. Past members of the committee will agree. My experience is that if the committee hears evidence in public any person in the community interested enough to listen to the proceedings can do so.

The State Development Committee Bill was introduced in 1941 when Sir John Harris, Minister of Public Instruction, speaking in the Legislative Council, explained that all parties would be represented on the State Development Committee. In other words, the committee would comprise two representatives of the then Country Party, two representatives of the Labor Party, two representatives of the United Australia Party—there were no Liberals—with one Independent member, and one member representing the Legislative Council. It was based on the proposition that there should be all-party representation and that the meetings would be held in public unless, in terms of the present Act, a decision was made in the public interest to do otherwise.

The procedure which is followed at virtually every meeting, other than meetings where evidence is taken, is that the honorable member for Polwarth upon entering the room moves that the meeting be held in private in the public interest. That happens even before the minutes of the previous meeting are read, and, on occasions when there is a lack of members to second the motion, the chairman will do so. That is a prostitution of the normal forms of conducting business meetings. It is the responsibility of the chairman to ensure that motions are moved and
seconded before committing himself to an issue before the chair. That shows the level on which the committee operates.

As a member of that committee for a number of years, I have never had to account for my own integrity when hearing evidence. I am not prepared to take part in a committee meeting at which my integrity is challenged. The contribution made by the honorable member for Polwarth indicates a lack of confidence in the integrity of members of the committee. By interjection, the honorable member for Polwarth says that it is one person. I am not in a position to read the mind of the honorable member for Polwarth when he moves a motion. That applies to the whole committee. When a member or the person occupying the chair moves that the committee meeting be held in private, even before material or evidence is placed before the committee, that implies that if the meeting is held in public he is not prepared to say in public what he is prepared to say in private. That is not my way of doing business. My experience on the State Development Committee is that when a minority report has been presented—one example is the Grain Elevators Board inquiry when a minority report was adopted—I have signed that report. That indicates that I made a contribution to the committee based on the issues at stake. To suggest that committee members attend meetings other than to listen to evidence and contribute to the assimilation of evidence indicates that the committee will degenerate to the stage at which it is unable to perform its task.

I am reminded of the debate in 1941 when the State Development Committee was set up by the various members. The Honorable P. J. Clarey spoke on the Bill. He spoke because of a concern about the war council and the decentralization needs of Victoria. He envisaged the committee developing the transport system and decentralization. There were members of the United Australia Party who saw the committee differently. They saw it as developing the education system to put Victoria in the forefront of Australian communities. There were people who related to the issue of development control in terms of Hitler Youth in another area. The whole proposition was discussed in an informed and enlightened way on the proposition that the State Development Committee would work on an all-party basis, committed to the proposition of a consensus viewpoint in the interests of the welfare of the State. The legislation which was introduced in 1941 has not been amended except in 1965 when the committee was given power to take evidence outside Victoria in the service of Victoria. That seemed a wise and substantial improvement and an expansion of the role of the committee.

The committee sought the opinion of the Crown Solicitor because the situation is intolerable. The honorable member for Polwarth quoted figures on the number of public and private meetings. If he subtracted the number of meetings which were held to hear evidence in public and the number of meetings held prior to receiving advice from the Crown Solicitor, he would find that on every other occasion, except one, on which the committee has met since receiving that opinion, either the honorable member for Polwarth or a member of the Government party has automatically moved that the meeting be held in private in the public interest. That motion is moved even before the minutes of the previous meeting are read. This morning a question was asked about the one public meeting held yesterday when the Government members were not in attendance. The minutes of the previous private meeting were not dealt with because the members present said that they would not do so in the absence of the members who were present at the earlier meeting.

Again this morning a motion was moved, before the minutes were dealt with, that this meeting be a private meeting. Therefore, the minutes of the previous meeting, which was a public meeting, would have been suppressed in a sense if that motion had been carried. It is to the credit of the chairman that, when I pointed out that it would be inappropriate to accept such a motion prior to receiving the minutes of the
public meeting yesterday, the mover of the motion withdrew it and the minutes of the public meeting the previous day were endorsed this morning in public.

I have taken the position since then, and since the motion was put again that the meeting be a private meeting in adopting those minutes that the Labor Party members cannot continue to sit in a meeting where automatically, without explanation, agenda or reason, a member on the Government side of the committee—I use those terms because unfortunately that is what has happened—automatically moves that it be a private meeting. That has placed every member of the committee in the position of assuming that his integrity is such that the matters discussed in the committee will somehow or other be used to the disadvantage of other members of the committee. That is not a proposition in the correct functioning of any committee. I am not going to continue in a position where that resolution is automatically moved on each occasion that the committee meets.

The committee is currently involved in a clay pipes investigation. That is incidental to the issue at stake. The issue of clay pipes versus plastic pipes is such that there are vested interests on both sides. Certainly it will be necessary and expedient to respect confidentiality of evidence given, if that request is made. That request has never been refused in the past and, as far as I am concerned, will never be refused in the future.

However, the fundamental question is whether this committee should stand up to its obligations to the community in accordance with this Act and make its deliberations freely so that they are open, demonstrating that the committee has nothing to hide. For my part, I do not have a preconceived attitude in respect to this inquiry. I am concerned about 120 jobs in Ballarat and the four factories in the area of the honorable member for Noble Park. Those employees will suffer if PVC pipes lose out in this area.

The Labor Party is gravely concerned about, firstly, the denial of rights of the members of the committee to act in a proper and collective manner in a spirit of co-operation and consensus and, secondly, the denial of the opportunity to obtain evidence which at least half the committee wants. All members of the committee requested information from the Board of Works which the Labor Party regards as pertinent to this inquiry. It is also pertinent to the 120 workers in Ballarat who want to know what is happening. On their behalf and on behalf of employees in the plastics industry the Labor Party wants to know what is going on.

However, the Labor Party is not going to prejudice that position by sitting with people in an atmosphere of a lack of trust. Members of the Labor Party will not sit on that committee when a situation is going to develop where meetings are held in such an atmosphere. Labor Party members will receive reports, minutes, or evidence put to this inquiry but it will not sit in private with people who are afraid to speak on matters which are properly and correctly interpreted under this Act as being necessary to be conducted in public.

Evidence exists that the Crown Solicitor's interpretation of the Act is correct. The second-reading speech by Sir John Harris in the Legislative Council in 1914 was devoted to the intention of this committee performing on behalf of the people of Victoria and conducting its inquiries in public. There is no question about that. It was a feature of the legislation when it was introduced, on post-war reconstruction in Victoria, to ensure that those people who fought the war, the soldiers and workers who went to war, returned to a better State.

It is a sad state of affairs that the vision of those people who drew up this legislation has been so prostituted by the events of the last week.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—The word "prostituted" is being used a lot today and possibly it is coming back into fashion. The impassioned plea of the honorable member for Reservoir on behalf of the workers in Ballarat was not enhanced by the use of that word.

As the honorable member for Niddrie well knows, it took the State Development Committee no less than five
attempts to get a member of the Opposition to agree to a time to go to Ballarat. So much for the Labor Party's commitment to jobs. I hope the statements of the honorable member for Reservoir will carry more weight in future.

I cannot refer to the evidence given before the committee. It was a public meeting where evidence was taken and that evidence will form part of the committee's deliberations. History will show the feelings of the union officials and the Ballarat Trades Hall Council about this matter.

I should like the honorable Leader of the Opposition, a man of great experience in this place, to correct me if I am wrong as I speak on this matter. I shall be pleased to hear from him if I stray from the straight and narrow. The conduct of the committee is governed by an Act of Parliament. Appointments to the committee are made by that Parliament. In turn, an allowance is made through the Budget to meet the fees of members of that committee. The committee reports to the Governor in Council, not to this Parliament.

With great respect to the member for Niddrie, it is obvious that there is no more enjoyable member on the committee than the member for Niddrie when that committee goes away. Generally a good time can be had by one and all, invariably in private but occasionally in public when the member for Niddrie is present. The newly constituted committee has met 53 times since 31 May this year. Many members have been diligent in their attendance but others have been notable for their absence. Mr Wright was not able to take his place until he was sworn in in the Legislative Council. The attendance is relevant to the extent that members determine by their attendance the manner in which the committee's meetings are conducted.

With regard to the current inquiry before the committee, there have been occasions when the only members who have been present have those from the Government side and they have been joined during the last moments of the meeting by a member of the Opposition. I guarantee the Labor Party's friends in the media upstairs will not take too kindly to that because the odds are that they would not have been there either.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I advise the honorable member that he may not recognize strangers in the gallery and that includes the media. The matter of attendance or otherwise of members of any party will not be recognized by the Chair.

Mr COLLINS—At one of its meetings, the committee sought an opinion from the Crown Solicitor, not the Solicitor-General, as to the status of its meetings. That is, whether they were public or private meetings. A resolution was passed unanimously on 27 August 1979, on a motion put by Mr Burgin, and seconded by Mr White, that:

An interpretation of section 13 of the Act be sought from the Crown Solicitor.

A motion was also passed “that in the meantime all past meetings be deemed to have been held in private until this question was resolved”. That motion was moved by Mr Burgin and seconded by Mr White and unanimously carried.

The honorable member for Reservoir did not rise and protest at the status of that meeting or protest that some rights had been taken away from him in that he could no longer express himself in public. No member rose to speak on this issue. We sought the Crown Solicitor's opinion and made a clear statement about the status of those meetings.

With regard to some of the emotional things said by members of the Opposition on how they see their role in the committee and how they could not take part in future meetings, it has only been during the last two meetings that the honorable member for Reservoir has removed himself from the meeting. Yet that member has been a party to many resolutions regarding meetings being held in private, including the one on 27 August.

The honorable member for Reservoir also said that the chairman, Mr Knowles, seconded the motion that a meeting
be held in private. However, that was disallowed as the chairman was out of order. The motion was subsequently seconded by Mr Wright. The three Labor members objected to the seconding of a similar motion the next day.

The motion before the Chair is that this House should express concern at the failure of the State Development Committee to pursue a policy of open meetings, and so on. As a new member of the committee I was given a lot of advice by the committee's secretary who has been there for many years. Information given to members of the committee was that "it is customary for the position of chairman to be held for a period of six months and for the position to be rotated amongst the parties". There is nothing in the Act about that; it is part of the spirit and tradition of the committee, and that is an interpretation of the members. It typifies the spirit in which the committee has operated.

On the recommendation of the honorable member for Niddrie, it was moved that Mr Knowles be chairman for twelve months. The honorable member for Niddrie seconded the motion because he recognized the numbers were not there. When I was given advice, no one said, "Peter, be careful because you could be in public but you might be in private. We do not know which way we are." The advice I was given was that the committee can regulate its meetings as it sees fit. This committee, apart from being appointed and paid through the public purse, does not report to this Parliament. The committee's one obligation is to report once a year to the Governor in Council, to the Government of the day. That is what the Act says.

Another interpretation I personally made was that the provision that the committee reports once a year, in itself, demonstrates that the committee meets in camera and is only required to report on its activities once a year, or on the completion of an inquiry referred to it by the Premier.

The honorable member for Reservoir has been a member of the committee for ten years and, according to the information I have, he is the longest-serving member of the committee. Perhaps it is time that some aspects of the committee were changed. Perhaps there should be a register kept of the times of attendance and departure of committee members. If that were done there would be a different picture of the fees received by honorable members. It would be very different if they were paid from the time they arrived until when they left.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member should return to the terms of the motion.

Mr COLLINS—Some members of the committee sneak in the door just before the end of the meeting in order to get their money.

The SPEAKER—Order! The attendance of committee members and the fees they are paid have nothing to do with the motion before the Chair. I again ask the honorable member to return to the terms of the motion.

Mr COLLINS—As usual, Mr Speaker, you are right. Members' attendances have nothing to do with the motion before the House. No provision concerning that subject is contained in the Act. The manner in which the meetings are structured has nothing to do with the House because the committee does not report to the House; it reports to the Governor in Council on behalf of the Government. In essence, this is what the motion is about. It asks the House to express the view that it has no confidence in the State Development Committee.

Mr Ginifer—After hearing you today there could be no confidence in you.

Mr COLLINS—The honorable member for Keilor is a fine one to talk.

If that is the opinion of the House, the committee should be disbanded and the inquiries it is making can be started all over again. At present the committee is, amongst other inquiries, completing an investigation that has been continuing for three and
a half years. Its members could well be dead before the committee reports on that inquiry. If the committee is not able to meet in private, it will get nothing done.

The State Development Committee is an advisory committee only. It has no executive function. It merely advises the Government. Parliamentary committees advise the Parliament. Unless the advice I have received is completely wrong, all Parliamentary committees meet in camera until they decide, if they wish to do so, that their meetings should be held in public. Nonetheless, from the start, all their meetings are held in camera. I ask the Leader of the Opposition whether that is correct.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honorable member should not seek interjections by requesting answers to questions.

Mr COLLINS—Parliamentary committees automatically meet in camera, all of them, and they have ever since there have been members of this House. Perhaps they should meet in public. If that is so, something should be done about it. During the four years for which I have been a member of this Parliament, I do not recall the Leader of the Opposition moving a motion to suggest that that should be done. If that is his view, it is time he moved such a motion and found out where the other members of the Labor Party stand.

The functions of the State Development Committee are to report to the Governor in Council on matters referred to it by the Premier for investigation. The terms of reference of the committee for its present inquiry are:

To inquire into and report on the use of UPVC and vitrified clay pipes for sewerage purposes within Victoria, having regard to the future supply of suitable sewer pipes to meet the needs of the public and the viability of decentralized industry.

I am getting the wind-up signal, so I shall wind up quickly. Correctly or incorrectly, I believe the evidence clearly shows that the State Development Committee is entitled to determine in its own discretion the manner in which it should conduct its meetings.

If members of the committee believe those meetings should be held in private, they should be held in private. If members believe there should be a formal agenda to commence proceedings, it is time those members did something about it. I cannot recall any such suggestion being discussed prior to this debate. I suggest that the members of the committee should so move at the next meeting of the committee.

There have been 53 meetings of the committee this year, during which the committee has heard evidence from harbor trusts, railway authorities and various Government departments. According to the honorable member for Niddrie, those meetings were all held in public until such time as it was decided that they were to be held in private by a resolution on 27 August supported by all members present, including the honorable members for Niddrie and Reservoir.

Why have these members not discussed publicly the intimate plans and proposed developments of the bodies which supposedly submitted evidence in public? I do not believe the honorable member for Niddrie would or that the honorable member for Reservoir would or has. At the same time, I do not believe the committee could conduct its work properly, in the manner suggested by the Opposition today.

If the committee is to continue fulfilling its role, we need a spirit of goodwill between all members and I sincerely hope that goodwill comes back from the Opposition. In this particular matter, it has not.

The Age, in its editorial of 19 October, stated:

The inquiry has been asked to report to the Government on whether the decision was proper.

That is not the task of the committee. As usual, the Age was inaccurate. I suggest that it writes another column tomorrow entitled "We were wrong" and that the entire editorial should be put in the correct context and made accurate. The motion should be thrown out.
The House divided on the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes ... ... 31
Noes ... ... 46

Majority against the motion ... 15

AYES

Mr Amos
Mr Cain
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Edmunds
Mr Ernst
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Giffier
Mr Jolly
Mr King
Mr Kirkwood
Mr Mathews
Mr Miller
Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Rowe
Mr Sidropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Dr Vaughan
Mr Walsh
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton
Mr Gavin
Mr Hockley

NOES

Mr Austin
Mr Balfour
Mr Birrell
Mr Borthwick
Mr Brown
Mr Burgin
Mrs Chambers
Mr Coleman
Mr Collins
Mr Crelin
Mr Dixon
Mr Dunstan
Mr Ebery
Mr Evans
Mr Evans
Mr Evans
Mr Hann
Mr Hayes
Mr Jasper
Mr Jona
Mr Kennett
Mr Lacy
Mr Lieberman
Mr McArthur
Mr McCance
Mr McClure
Mr McInnes
Mr McKellar
Mr Mackinnon
Mr Macielian
Mr Ramsay
Mr Reynolds
Mr Richardson
Mr Ross-Edwards
Mr Skeggs
Mr Smith
Mr Smith
Mr Tanner
Mr Templeton
Mr Thompson
Mr Trewin
Mr Weideman
Mr Whiting
Mr Williams
Mr Wood
Mr Cox
Mr McGrath

PAIR

Mr Cathie
Mrs Patrick

RACING (FINANCIAL PROVISIONS) BILL

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Racing Act 1958 by:

(a) increasing the commission deducted from trifecta totalizators and altering the formula for the distribution of this commission;

(b) providing for the Totalizator Agency Board to conduct its own trifecta totalizator pools on interstate and overseas events where no on-course trifecta totalizator is operating; and

(c) empowering the Treasurer to guarantee the repayment of loans raised by the Totalizator Agency Board.

Trifecta betting, where the first three horses past the post must be selected in the correct order, has been operating very successfully at metropolitan and several country racecourses for some time, and will be extended gradually to most country race meetings.

The Totalizator Agency Board has already introduced a trifecta totalizator service for its telephone betting subscribers, and will provide the same service for patrons of its agencies when the new CRISP cash betting system is implemented towards the end of 1980.

In New South Wales the rate of commission on multiple bet types such as the trifecta is 17 per cent. In Victoria it is at present 15 per cent although commission at the rates of 17 per cent and 19 per cent are deducted from off-course daily doubles and quadrella totalizators respectively.

As honorable members will remember consultations with representatives of the racing industry have taken place on the subject of the finances of the industry. In the course of the most recent discussions the question of the differing rates of commission on trifectas between Victoria and New South Wales was raised. It was suggested that the commissions should be the same and the additional commission distributed so as to benefit all parties which now receive income from totalizator sources.

The Government has, therefore, accepted a recommendation supported by the racing industry that the rate of commission on trifecta totalizators, both on-course and Totalizator Agency Board, be increased to 17 per cent. As well as insuring the Racecourses Development Fund and the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation against a loss of
income if there is a transfer of investments from other types of betting, the increased commission will be of direct benefit to the racing, trotting and greyhound clubs.

Clubs operating a trifecta totalizer on course will receive an extra three-quarters of one per cent of turnover in commission from on-course investments. The Consolidated Fund and the Racecourses Development Fund will receive one per cent and one-quarter per cent of the on-course turnover, respectively.

Out of the commission to be deducted from off-course trifecta totalizators the Totalizator Agency Board will receive 8·5 per cent, the Consolidated Fund 5·25 per cent, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation 2 per cent and the Racecourses Development Fund 1·25 per cent of turnover. This is the same distribution formula as for the Totalizator Agency Board daily double and feature double.

The racing clubs will, of course, share in any additional surplus which the Totalizator Agency Board derives from trifecta betting, and benefit from the moneys paid to the Racecourses Development Fund.

Let me now show in more concrete terms the estimated gains to the racing industry and the Government should the commission on trifecta betting be increased, and I seek leave to incorporate these tables into Hansard.

Leave was granted, and the tables were as follows:

Firstly, the projected gains from on-course totalizators operating at metropolitan race meetings, based on the 1978-79 trifecta turnover of $28·5 million:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commission 15 per cent $ (million)</th>
<th>Commission 17 per cent $ (million)</th>
<th>Gains $ (million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Fund</td>
<td>1·923 (62½ per cent)</td>
<td>2·208 (75½ per cent)</td>
<td>0·285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>2·351 (84½ per cent)</td>
<td>2·565 (9 per cent)</td>
<td>0·214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racecourses Development Fund and Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Fund</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0·071 (¼ per cent)</td>
<td>0·071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4·274 (15 per cent)</td>
<td>4·844 (17 per cent)</td>
<td>0·570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, the gains from country on-course trifecta totalizer if the turnover is one-quarter of the metropolitan on-course turnover:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commission 15 per cent $ (million)</th>
<th>Commission 17 per cent $ (million)</th>
<th>Gains $ (million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Fund</td>
<td>0·332 (44½ per cent)</td>
<td>0·402 (54½ per cent)</td>
<td>0·070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>0·717 (104½ per cent)</td>
<td>0·770 (11 per cent)</td>
<td>0·053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racecourses Development Fund and Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Fund</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0·017 (¼ per cent)</td>
<td>0·017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1·049 (15 per cent)</td>
<td>1·189 (17 per cent)</td>
<td>0·140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr Dixon
Thirdly, the gains from Totalizator Agency Board off-course trifecta totalizators based on an estimated turnover of $18 million for 1979-80:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15 per cent</th>
<th>17 per cent</th>
<th>Gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(million)</td>
<td>$(million)</td>
<td>$(million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Fund</td>
<td>1.125 (6½ per cent)</td>
<td>0.945 (5¼ per cent)</td>
<td>(0.180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>1.530 (8¼ per cent)</td>
<td>1.530 (8¼ per cent)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racecourses Development Fund and Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Fund</td>
<td>0.045 (½ per cent)</td>
<td>0.225 (1¼ per cent)</td>
<td>0.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>0.360 (2 per cent)</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2.700 (15 per cent)</td>
<td>3.060 (17 per cent)</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The net gains are therefore estimated at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On-course</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Off-course</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Off-course</td>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$(million)</td>
<td>$(million)</td>
<td>$(million)</td>
<td>$(million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidated Fund</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>(0.180)</td>
<td>0.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racecourses Development Fund and Greyhound Racing Grounds Development Fund</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.360</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.360</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr DIXON—There are a few points I should make concerning these figures. First of all, I remind honorable members that the totalizator commissions paid into the Consolidated Fund are remitted to the Hospitals and Charities Fund after the costs of collection are deducted.

Next, the off-course trifecta turnover should increase to $50 million when the Totalizator Agency Board is able to offer cash betting facilities for this bet type. The Totalizator Agency Board expects that half of this will be new money, but the other half will be transferred from existing off-course totalizators such as the daily double, the quadrella and the off-course quinella. This transfer would result in a significant reduction in the revenue of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. The department therefore needs to share in the trifecta commission if its youth, sport and recreation programmes are not to be seriously affected.

I must add that the over-all result of the introduction of trifecta totalizators has been a higher turnover of total investments on both on-course and off-course totalizators.

The second purpose of the Bill is to allow the Totalizator Agency Board to conduct its own trifecta totalizator pools on selected interstate and overseas events when there is no Victorian on-course totalizator operating on those events.

The Totalizator Agency Board already does this for other bet types in respect of interstate meetings and special overseas events such as the Grand National at Aintree. This facility appears to be appreciated by punters, and the Totalizator Agency Board considers that there will be a demand for trifecta betting on these events. The racing industry has indicated that it supports this proposal.

Finally, the Bill empowers the Treasurer of Victoria to guarantee the repayment of loans raised by the Totalizator Agency Board.
The State Treasury considers that the Totalizator Agency Board, as an important statutory authority, should have the facility to borrow on the loan market in accordance with the policy of the Loan Council. Before the Treasurer executes a guarantee to facilitate such borrowings the Treasury will need to be satisfied that the loan is necessary and the repayment is within the capacity of the board.

These proposals demonstrate the Government’s continuing support for the racing industry, and I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr TREZISE (Geelong North), the debate was adjourned.

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

APPROPRIATION (1979–80, No. 1) BILL
(Budget Debate)

The debate (interrupted on the previous day) on the motion of Mr Thompson (Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh)—Prior to the adjournment of the sitting last night I had demonstrated that the Budget was a failure, and a callous one at that, because it did not grapple with the main economic problem facing this State and this country, which is the problem of unemployment. I shall now refer to some other areas of specific failure of the Budget. Before doing so, I preface my remarks by saying that there are circumstances in which unacceptable Budget provisions make it incumbent on Ministers to offer their resignations on the grounds that the appropriations made available to them do not enable them to fulfil the obligations of their departments to Parliament and the community. This is particularly so in the case of the appropriations which have been made to the Minister for Community Welfare Services, the “Minister of ill fare and child abuse”, as he is rapidly becoming known in Victoria.

Fortuitously, the shortcomings of the Budget as far as the responsibilities of the Minister for Community Welfare Services are concerned have been borne out and documented by the coincidence of the annual general meeting of the Children’s Protection Society being held midway through the Budget debate. I hope no member of the Victorian Parliament would argue against the proposition that the protection and welfare of the children of this State is a prime responsibility of the Minister for Community Welfare Services. Yet, the Budget made no provision for carrying forward the work which the Minister is supposed to undertake in this field. No new ground has been broken in the field of child protection as a result of the Budget which the Treasurer presented to the House.

I draw to the attention of the House the consequences of that situation as they have been set out by the expert body concerned, the body which has the best reason through practical experience to know the situation that now exists in Victoria. A statement was made days ago by the President of the Children’s Protection Society, Mrs Clemens, on the occasion of the society’s annual general meeting. Mrs Clemens said:

Child protection seems to be too costly for the Victorian Government. It has no priority in the State Budget brought down in the International Year of the Child. Services to children at risk have been restricted in spite of increasing cries for help from such children and their distraught parents.

Whilst the Government is supporting a child protection unit in Geelong, resources for a metropolitan service are still woefully inadequate and virtually non-existent over the rest of the State.

The limited support given to the society this year has not resolved the financial problems which forced the society to withdraw its services from four metropolitan areas in October last year.

Demands for protective services have remained high with a significant increase in reports and referrals from the inner suburban areas of Melbourne. Children continue to be at risk because services are inadequate for the demands and poorly co-ordinated. There is insufficient regard for the key services which a child protection unit can provide in a region.
I come to the point where Mrs Clemens encapsulated this proposition—

It is ludicrous for the Government to imagine that it is meeting its responsibilities for the at risk children of Victoria by the provision of but one unit in Geelong and token funding for the metropolitan area.

Ludicrous! That was the word which this woman, superbly accomplished in the field of child protection, used a week ago. "Ludicrous" was what she said, and she spoke of token funding in the metropolitan area.

There comes a point where the conflict between the responsibility which a Minister owes to Parliament and the community and the appropriation which is made available to him by the Government of which he is a part becomes so blatant and destructive that no course of action other than resignation is open to that Minister. I believe that is the course of action which the Minister should have taken rather than countenancing the situation in which the President of the Children's Protection Society of this State could make the comments which I have just been drawing to the attention of the House.

The Minister for Community Welfare Services—the "Minister of ill fare and child abuse", as I suggested he should be called—is presiding over a situation in which the whole fabric of social welfare in Victoria is coming apart at the seams. Again and again, we have heard from those people who are best placed to know the truth and to know what is going on how the dedicated members of the Public Service who work in the field of social welfare have been asked to give and give and give again, over and above the call of duty, to meet the commitments of their clients to the point where, after 12 or 18 months, they burn out and simply resign from their positions with the Department of Community Welfare Services.

This is the phenomenon—one sees a colossal rate of wastage, which is documented in the records of the Department of Community Welfare Services. The honorable member for Noble Park, who is interjecting, may care to consult those records. This applies to every regional director of community welfare services in the State.

It is a phenomenon with which they are confronted at every turn. It is also well known that the exigencies of staffing in the Department of Community Welfare Services have become such that the files of people who are urgently in need of services are being withdrawn and only those who are in the category of desperate need still have some sort of vestigial contact maintained within the department. These are the facts as they are known to the directors of the divisions within the department as they are known to the social welfare profession, as they are known, most bitterly, to the clients concerned and as, I am sure, they must be known to the honorable member for Noble Park. Since the honorable member for Noble Park raises the point by interjection, I am prepared to acknowledge that constituents do from time to time contact—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—I remind the honorable member for Noble Park that he is not privileged to enter into a direct debate across the House with the honorable member who is speaking, and I ask him to desist immediately.

Mr MATHEWS—I say that it is counterproductive for the Minister for Community Welfare Services to preside over a situation in which social welfare workers are constantly subjected to stresses in a way which at present is literally bleeding the service to death.

A similar conflict exists in the field of housing. Also, the appropriation brought down by the Treasurer blatantly contradicts the need for housing in this State. The responsibility was such that the Minister should have resigned rather than live with this level of appropriation and the social approach which it represents.

In the short time that the Minister has held the Housing portfolio, the number of people waiting for Housing Commission accommodation in this State has risen to an all-time record of 22 170. Some 22 170 households are waiting for Housing Commission accommodation. When can the Minister offer those people any encouragement that their places on
the waiting list will be reached? Last year the number of tenders let by the Housing Commission dropped from 2200 to 1450. It can be confidently asserted that this year the number will again be lower, and that is a reflection of the fact that in 1978–79 Victoria spent only $8.98 per capita on public housing while the Australian average was $18.28. Less than one-half of the Australian rate was spent in this State. In this situation those 22,000 applicants for public housing can only despair.

The contradiction is blatant in the area of health, and particularly in connection with the hospital building programme. Indeed, in his Budget speech the Treasurer said:

provision can be made in the hospitals area only to meet current work in progress. New projects and commitments must be deferred until existing commitments have been met and the full impact of the current cost-sharing arrangements on new hospital facilities has been assessed. The hospitals building programme for 1979–80 includes provision for the continuation of major works at the following hospitals—Austin, Essendon, Sunshine, and Western General at Footscray.

The significant feature of that list is its complete omission of the needs of the south-eastern suburban region of metropolitan Melbourne. The hospital services of the south-eastern suburbs are being thrown completely out of kilter, with disastrous effects on the health needs of the people there. This has occurred because planning for the hospital network in that area was predicated on the Government's 1976 election undertaking to relocate the Queen Victoria Hospital at Clayton—the undertaking that there would be a 1000-bed Queen Victoria Hospital on sites at Clayton and in Warrigal Road, Burwood. As a result of the Government's failure to live up to that promise, intolerable burdens are being thrown on other hospitals in the south-eastern suburban areas, which those hospitals are neither intended nor designed to carry. This shows up vividly facts which may be uncomfortable for the Minister to face. Over recent weeks, I have had occasion to draw to the attention of the Minister the situation of casualty facilities at public hospitals.

It is extraordinary, where these sorts of issues are involved how Government members will condemn the presentation of the facts, will condemn the exposure of the failure of the Government to live up to its promises and will somehow regard their own involvement in the breaking of those undertakings as being beyond reproach. The honorable member for Syndal has not entered the House and it is notable that in 1976 he, before all other members, joined with the former Minister of Health in this place in making a solemn undertaking to the people of the south-eastern suburban region that their 1000-bed Queen Victoria Hospital at Clayton, and at Warrigal Road, Burwood, would be built immediately permits were available. There is still no specific undertaking from the Government as to when this key project for the health-care needs of the south-eastern suburban area will be planned, let to tender, contracted and, far less, finished. There is only the twofold proposition that work will begin after the Austin Hospital is completed, that is some time in 1983.

The people of the south-eastern suburban region would be justified in saying that they had heard that one before because the promise from predecessors of the honorable member in this place was that work on that hospital in the south-eastern suburban region would begin when the Alfred Hospital project had been completed. So the leapfrogging process goes on. At every point the south-eastern suburbs are neglected.

Last night I commenced my remarks with the proposition that this was a callous and deceitful Budget—callous because it neglects pressing needs in health care, social welfare, education and urban planning; and deceitful because it continued the long-standing Liberal argument that there can never be funds available for these projects because they are State responsibilities and the necessary money is in Canberra.

Mr WALSH (Albert Park)—One is surprised that the back-bench members on the Government side of the House are not prepared to support the Government's Budget. One is surprised in this.
place on numerous occasions. The Budget is nothing more than an extension of the August Federal Government's Budget. It shows support for the social and economic policies of the Federal Government, and it creates no jobs. It creates hardship for the disadvantaged, the unemployed, and the low wage earners of this State.

In the Budget speech, the Treasurer blamed rising wages for the economic decisions of this State. He said that over the past decade average weekly earnings have increased greatly but he did not mention that the cost of living has increased much more than the average weekly earnings. From 1974 to 1979, the average weekly earnings have increased by 57 per cent, whereas the cost of living has increased by 60 per cent, and the male award rate has increased by only 58 per cent.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, only 33 per cent of the Victorian full-time wage earners receive the average weekly wage. About 67 per cent receive far less than the average weekly earnings; so over the past ten years 67 per cent have not received a large increase in wages. They have been neglected and have certainly been neglected in this Budget because of the Government's propositions.

I now turn to one of the most important areas of this State Government's responsibility—education. This year the increase in education finance has been only 8 per cent. The August Federal Budget speech predicted a 10 per cent inflation rate for the 1979–80 financial year. This Government has decreased the predicted inflation rate by 2 per cent. The money that has been allocated over the past eight years is the lowest increase per head of population in the field of education since 1972. In 1972, the Liberal Government of that time increased the education rate by $15.72. That was the lowest increase prior to this year.

In 1972–73 there was an increase of $19.17; in 1973–74 it was $21.58; in 1974–75 it was $48.53. It started to decline again from 1975–76 onwards, when there was a $44.35 per head increase. In 1976–77 the increase was $37.32; in 1977–78 it was $34.54; in 1978–79 it was $27.28; and this year there has been an increase of only $18.48 per head of population.

Much is said about young people being educated to go out into the work force so that they can give more to the community and be available for more sophisticated jobs. A reference to education leads me to refer to unemployment. The reference to allocations to assist the unemployed in the Budget speech is ambiguous but, on my calculation, $9 million has been allocated to that area.

Mr Gavin—Is that all?

Mr Walsh—That is all. The unemployment figures for Australia in April 1974 showed that 1.3 per cent of the work force was unemployed. Five years later, the figures showed that 5.8 per cent of the work force was unemployed. From reading the Budget speech, I cannot determine that jobs will be created to assist the unemployed and the figure allocated for transport concessions for the unemployed is paltry. On a rough calculation of a figure of 94,000 persons unemployed in Victoria, the concession would amount to $10 a year for each person, which, broken down, would be 20 cents a week and 4 cents a day for a working week from Monday to Friday. Obviously, unemployed persons would have to stay home on a Saturday because they would not be able to go far on 4 cents.

In New South Wales, an additional allocation of $4 million was made for travel concessions for the unemployed. A voucher was issued to an unemployed person for three months. If that person was unemployed for longer than three months, he was given another voucher to travel on a half-fare concession. The Victorian Budget does not even provide the price of a one-section tram fare per week. That is an insult to all unemployed persons in the State.

Young Victorians of fifteen or sixteen years of age receive no income from the Commonwealth Government. It is
certainly time that the State Governments accepted responsibility. For various reasons, many young people leave school at the age of fifteen years. They do so for home reasons, because they cannot cope at school, and so on. No weekly allowances have been made to enable these young people to exist and the Government should do something about helping them. Since 1975, sixteen to eighteen-year-olds have been receiving $36 a week, which is certainly about 60 per cent below what they should be receiving. There is no provision in the Budget which would allow these people to try and enjoy their lives as unemployed people in the country.

In the Federal Budget one has to look at the decision made for increases in the allocation to unemployed persons. If one has no dependants and is over the age of eighteen years, one will receive $51.45. There will be no increase in that amount this year. This group represents about 50,000 unemployed persons in Victoria. I have calculated that possibly 50 per cent of those unemployed in Victoria would receive the single unemployment benefits. In the Budget, there is no further benefit for those people and it is time the State Government accepted responsibility for its unemployed.

There are no fringe benefits for the unemployed—for example, pharmaceutical allowances—whereas the unemployed should receive those benefits. State Governments should make those arrangements. Similarly, there is no allowance for the housing of the unemployed. In the electorate I represent, a young unemployed person living in some sort of a flat that is suitable for a single person in the area of Middle Park would need to pay approximately $36 a week for furnished premises. In addition, young people have to keep themselves from the remainder of the finance that they receive.

Even though the figures from the Commonwealth Employment Service for August indicate that there is a slight decline in unemployment in Victoria—except for the hidden unemployed—the statistics show that staff-

Mr Walsh

ing in the public sector needs another 160 persons. In the past twelve months, 160 fewer persons were employed in the public sector in Victoria. Unemployment is a problem that must be examined and Governments should ensure that unemployed persons receive benefits sufficient for them to exist.

I refer to concessions that have been made for pensioners in the Budget. Probably very few pensioners own motor vehicles and yet there will be a 50 per cent reduction in motor registration fees for pensioners. I do not understand whether the reduction relates only to motor registration fees or whether third-party insurance is included. That is not spelled out in the Budget. If third-party insurance is not included, pensioners will have to pay increased premiums.

On municipal, water and sewerage rates, the maximum rebate any pensioner will be able to receive from 1 July next year is $120 for municipal rates and $120 for water and sewerage rates. Many pensioners are now paying rates that amount to more than $240.

There is a further burden placed upon pensioners of the State, the disadvantaged, the low-income earners and the unemployed. Probably, the majority of those persons smoke cigarettes and they will have to pay an additional 2 cents a packet. Probably most have a need for electricity for lighting in their homes, and there is a further increase in electricity charges. No doubt, there will be a further increase in gas bills. These people are hit harshly by the Budget, especially when one considers today's announcement of an increase in the consumer price index for Victoria of 2·6 per cent. These people are suffering. They have suffered enough. The Government should do something about alleviating their hardship.

I shall not say too much about payroll tax. It is unreal for the Government to expect an extra $44,405 million in revenue from payroll tax and expect that to create more jobs. That
is not a satisfactory statement. The exemption may help an additional 1500 small businesses, but it will not forestall the rise in the unemployment rate.

In regard to the insufficiency of finance that is available, one should consider that the Federal Treasurer predicted an inflation rate for 1979–80 of 10 per cent. Obviously, the Federal Treasurer will be wrong again. In 1978–79, he predicted a 5 per cent inflation rate, whereas it was actually 8.2 per cent. With State taxation revenue in Victoria, the inflation rate for 1979–80 will increase by 14 per cent and I should have expected the Federal Treasurer to have had the wisdom to determine that the inflation rate for 1979–80 will be approximately 13 per cent or 14 per cent.

The Victorian Budget does nothing to help the people in the electorate that I represent. It is not in the interests of the people of whom I have previously spoken. The Budget does nothing for the community. It will not assist in the education of young people. It will not create jobs. It places further hardship upon the disadvantaged persons of the State.

Mr Richardson (Forest Hill)—I commend the new Treasurer on his first Budget. It was brought down in difficult times. The Treasurer has done a commendable and professional job in the interests of the people of Victoria. It is acknowledged by the community, with the exception of members of the Labor Party, that Australia is facing difficult times financially and therefore the task of framing the Budget was difficult. The result is to the credit of the Treasurer and the dedicated officers who serve in his Ministry.

Some highlights of the Budget deserve restating. There has been a great deal of extraneous material introduced into the record by the Opposition. It should be recalled that in the Budget there are increased pay-roll tax exemptions. This is significant because when one turns, for example, to the Budget brought down by the Labor Treasurer of Tasmania on 18 September 1979, one learns that revenue from pay-roll tax is the largest single source of State taxation and that a lifting of exemptions to any level could not be supported at present. However, in Victoria, the Treasurer was able to increase the exemption level, thereby bringing relief and encouragement to businesses, particularly small businesses. Despite the pallid assertions of the honorable member for Albert Park, it will result in an increased stimulation to employment in Victoria.

Motor registration fee concessions to pensioners are a real contribution to the welfare of a significant and important group of people. This represents a meeting of an earlier commitment to reduce and restructure motor registration fees.

Increased exemption from gift duty shifts the burden of gift duty away from another significant group of people who have been bearing very high costs. An increased land tax exemption for the family home is a measure which will be welcomed through the community. It is regrettable that it has not been possible to increase land tax exemptions to some commercial properties, particularly large shopping centres. I acknowledge that small businessmen operating in large shopping centres have to carry a heavy burden of land tax. I have made representations on this matter and I will continue to do so, but I recognize that the public purse is not a bottomless pit. At this stage it is not possible to meet the request for relief from small businessmen who operate from premises within large shopping centres.

Small businessmen operating in an expensive shopping centre naturally have to carry the cost of that operation, and the amount of land tax which they have to bear is often very high and causes difficulties for business people operating in those large centres.

There is a continuing drive in this Budget for strict economy in departmental spending and saving. I note that once again there has been a reduction in the number of employees on the State's
pay-roll. This is in line with the Government's objective of reducing spending to a minimum and it will enable the State to function in the most economical and efficient way.

I was disappointed when I listened to the comments of members of the Opposition, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, who commented on the economic policy contained within the Budget. He made some comments on the economic policy of the Labor Party.

Mr Amos—It was quite sensible, too.

Mr Richardson—I take up the interjection of the honorable member for Morwell, who said that the economic policy outlined by the Leader of the Opposition was quite sensible. My difficulty is knowing to which economic policy the Leader of the Opposition is referring. Is he referring to the economic policy prepared by his own advisers, the official economic policy of the Labor Party, or is it in fact the alternative Australian Labor Party economic policy which was authorized and endorsed by Kevin Hardiman, State President of the Australian Labor Party, and Jim Roulston, State President of the Amalgamated Metalworkers and Shipwrights Union, and published as a supplement to the Labor Star? I am an avid reader of the Labor Star, and the policy authorized and endorsed by comrades Hardiman and Roulston—and presumably comrade Wilkes—states:

It is shown how Labor's proposed economic policy is inadequate—the new economic circumstances, internationally and locally, require new responses from the Labor Party.

That is stated on page 2, and on the same page it states:

The policy is essentially one of accommodating the needs of big business and is contrary to the interests of the mass of working people.

The House will understand my difficulty in comprehending which policy the Leader of the Opposition was drawing on when he made his contribution to the debate. On page 6 of the alternative Australian Labor Party policy it states:

The long-term economic strategy of the Labor technocrats is not as explicitly developed as that of the Fraser conservatives, but its basic argument is essentially the same.

What are honorable members to believe if the Labor Party cannot sort out its own economic policy and decide between an official economic policy and an unofficial economic policy? I would have thought that the honorable member for Geelong North would have understood it. How could the people possibly take seriously any alternative economic policies produced by the Leader of the Opposition as espoused in this House? The people of Victoria find great difficulty in taking the Leader of the Opposition seriously.

It is quite clear that the Labor Party cannot sort out its own economic policy because the confusion in the Labor Party reflects the conflict between the extreme left, which controls the Labor Party organization, including Roulston and Hardiman, and the weakies on the right, who seem to be the ones elected to Parliament. They have real problems until they work out which economic policy is going to be the official Australian Labor Party policy. All their economic contributions in this House seem to be very thin and they are not being taken seriously by the Opposition at present. Some members of the Opposition are interjecting because they find themselves exposed to the ridicule they deserve. Some of them are remaining silent because they cannot think of anything to say, and the honorable member for Geelong North, as usual, is suffering from foot in mouth disease. He should approach this matter with an open mind instead of an open mouth.

There has been continuing development in educational facilities in this State. Victoria leads the Commonwealth in the provision of educational facilities and can hold its head high among the western countries of the world when our staff-student ratios are compared with those that prevail in other countries. There is a great deal of nonsense talked—particularly by the more extremist leaders of the teacher unions—about a staffing crisis in Victorian schools. They send literature home with the children, intending to frighten the parents. One of the schools in my electorate sent home a circular
pointing out the terrible situation the school was in regarding staffing, and it urged parents to get in touch with their local member, the honorable member for Forest Hill. That circular went home to more than 700 families, and it is a measure of the distrust in which the community holds these extremist leaders of unions that not one person responded to that circular.

A couple of weeks earlier a similar circular was sent home from the same school pointing out the staffing crisis. One of the reasons that there was no public response to the exhortations by the unions at that school was that I was able to point out in the local press that the time spent in front of classes by full-time teachers at the school was around 16 hours a week. Faced with those facts, the extravagant, scare-mongering claims that are made by teacher union leaders, who are concerned more with trying to pull their own members into line than with achieving any educational advancement, seem extremely shallow.

Victoria has reached a unique situation in its history in that instead of a continuing growth occurring in the school population, enrolments have actually declined. Over the past three years, the number of teachers in the Teaching Service has increased by 4000, but the number of pupils at Government schools has decreased by 12,000. This is a phenomenon which is unique in the history of the State because there has been a history of continuing expansion in the school population. With the decline in the number of children attending Government schools, it is clear that the extravagant claims of staff shortages, and the continuing demands for more staff for schools that are continually brought to the attention of the public by the extremist leadership of teacher unions, are false.

There is now an opportunity of rationalizing the staffing situation in the schools. Staff resources can be deployed in a way that has never previously been possible. There is a problem in the provision of educational facilities because despite the continuing decline in school enrolments, there is a need for new schools to be built. At present there are more than enough class-rooms. One of the difficulties, however, is that many of them are in the wrong place.

There are difficulties in creating capital works in terms of fixed buildings of brick and mortar, and this is now in the process of being overcome by what is known as the core-plus system of school construction. This is an important development. It is one which has been thought about for many years. The difficulty in implementing such a scheme has been one of finding suitable materials with which to construct the schools. The schools are now being constructed, and one is to be located in Weeden Drive, Vermont South. No doubt that school will prove satisfactory to those people who have been anxiously awaiting its construction.

One of these “core-plus” schools has been established nearby at Jells Park. I visited the school shortly after it was opened and found that the staff, students and parents were very satisfied. They took pride in the school’s attractive appearance and it was functioning extremely well. I have no doubt that the proposed school in Weeden Drive will prove to be equally satisfactory to the children who will attend it and to their parents.

The challenge still lies before us and Victoria continues to progress. This Budget sets out an economic programme and explains how Victoria is to achieve its stated objectives. The Budget establishes achievable objectives and shows the difference in philosophy between the Government and the Opposition. Responsibility is demonstrated by the Government, particularly by the Treasurer in his Budget speech, compared with the irresponsibility of the Opposition. That is why the Government continues to occupy the Treasury benches and the Labor Party continues in Opposition, and will do so for many years.

Government supporters have accepted the proposition that there is no such thing as a money tree. The public purse
is not a bottomless pit, but the Labor Party has never been able to move away from its free lunch philosophy, and like all Socialist parties, it supports a philosophy that the Government should be able to pay for everything.

It should be clearly established and understood that Governments do not have money, it is the people who have the money, and Governments redistribute the money of the people. This Government is concerned with using the financial resources of the community in the best possible way to serve the needs of the people of Victoria without acting irresponsibly or having to reach deeper into the pockets of the people by imposing excessive taxation, which is part of the Socialist philosophy.

The Government has displayed moderation in its taxation policy and has shown vision in the progress which it wishes to maintain in a responsible and economic manner. I congratulate the Treasurer and commend the Budget to the House.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—The honorable member for Forest Hill has established that he does not have a credibility gap, he has a canyon. The honorable member pontificated over the responsibilities of his Liberal Party Government. I suggest the administration of the Government is riddled with incompetence which goes back over the years it has been in office.

The blunders made under Liberal Party administrations continue endlessly and have cost the taxpayers of this State billions of dollars, not millions. Successive Liberal Party Governments have been tools or instruments for the grafters, profiteers and racketeers, during their years in office, and evidence of that is there for any honorable member who wishes to read it, commencing in the days when oil and gas exploration started in Bass Strait.

When that exploration occurred the Government was manipulated, used and instructed by the racketeers and profiteers who subsequently reaped huge profits from that work but which resulted in a loss of $300 million to this State.

Racketeers and profiteers have been engaged in land deals. Liberal Party Governments have been used and manipulated by racketeers and profiteers who have syphoned off millions of dollars of public funds to the point where we now have a ridiculous situation where the Housing Commission, having purchased land at enormously inflated prices, is faced with the task of trying to utilize the land for housing development. One wonders what will be the end cost of erecting a home on that land. The cost will be astronomical or the alternative will lead to further millions of dollars being lost. Let the honorable member for Forest Hill inform Parliament that that is good business management—the honorable member would not get a job running a pie stall for the Victorian Football League, and everyone knows how hungry the VFL is. Talk about business administration, the honorable member for Forest Hill would not hold down a job in a canteen.

I turn to the document produced by the Minister of Public Works entitled, “1979–80 Victorian Budget: Effect on the Building and Construction Industry.” In the document produced by the honorable gentleman, one finds relevant information under the heading of “Governmental Departments and Authorities—Capital Works Programme.” I shall refer to three items. The first is school buildings, and in 1978–79, an amount of $174·299 million was expended on this item. In 1979–80 the estimated expenditure is $153·808 million, or a reduction of $20·491 million.

Those figures demonstrate the business managability of the Government, its ability to plan for the needs of the community. However, this is a Budget which the honorable member for Forest Hill held out as an example of sound economic management and sound administration.

In addition to the school building programme allocation being reduced by $20·491 million, honorable members must also take the inflation factor into account. I dare say I may be getting a little ahead of the honorable member for Forest Hill, but I shall keep my
remarks fairly simple in the hope that the honorable member can keep up. Taking an inflation factor of 10 per cent, that figure works out at $17,429 million. Expressed in another way, in addition to the $174,299 million expended last year, to just maintain last year's level of expenditure one needs to add $17,429 million to last year's figure. The total loss this year in the school building programme in real terms is $37,92 million.

Therefore, taking into consideration the inflation factor plus a natural reduction of $20,491 million, the 1979-80 expenditure on the school building programme has been reduced by $37,92 million. Let the honorable member for Forest Hill try to tell me that that is sound economic management!

I turn to the housing area and again taking the figures produced by the Minister of Public Works, in 1978-79 an amount of $158,114 million was expended and the projected figure for 1979-80 is $119,419 million. The Budget provision this year is down $38,704 million but again one must take the inflation factor into consideration. Using a 10 per cent rate of inflation, that figure represents $15,811 million—no one would argue against a 10 per cent rate of inflation and even the honorable member for Forest Hill, I think, understands that! Taking into account the inflation figure of $15,811 million, the total reduction in the housing area is $55,515 million.

The Budget is a horror Budget for the people of Victoria. As was pointed out by the honorable member for Oakleigh, the Budget document is misleading as it does not present the true facts. I suggest the Budget has been constructed for the purpose of misleading the people of Victoria.

The honorable member for Forest Hill referred with pride to the monumental decision of the Government to give concessions to those aged persons in the community who are fortunate enough to own motor vehicles—they are to receive a concession on their motor registration charges. Those persons probably feel happy to receive a reduction in the cost of registering their motor vehicles, but what about the thousands of aged pensioners currently living in unsatisfactory housing accommodation, who are being subjected to the open rental market and who are receiving no protection from the Government?

In the housing area, there has been a reduction in the allocation by $55,515 million and I am sure that figure will not provide much comfort to those unfortunate people when they understand the true situation.

I turn to the hospital and mental hospital field. In 1978-79 the expenditure in those areas totalled $76,84 million. In 1979-80 it is estimated the expenditure will be $75,919 million, which represents a reasonably small reduction of $921,000. However, when one takes into consideration the inflation factor, to maintain the level of the 1978-79 works programme an amount of $7,684 million must be added to that figure. In real terms the total loss in the hospital and mental hospital field is $8,605 million. The people of Victoria will find no comfort in the Budget when they understand the situation on the funds being provided for the hospital and mental hospital works programme.

The City of Melbourne is faced with inadequate medical services, particularly in the area of hospitals. As I have mentioned on a number of occasions, supported by other honorable members who represent the area, the City of Broadmeadows with a population of more than 130,000 people has inadequate medical services. The only relief it has received has been the provision of a portable building to house the local community health service. That facility represents the total extent of medical services in the City of Broadmeadows.

Honorable members will recall when the Royal Children's Hospital became so desperate to alleviate the enormous pressures confronting its out-patient department that it put forward the proposition that it was prepared to establish a regional clinic in the Broadmeadows district. The answer of the Government to that proposal was a flat "No". Under no circumstances would it allow the Royal Children's Hospital to participate...
in that type of operation. The end result of that refusal has been that the Royal Children’s Hospital is still suffering the enormous pressures which have been placed on its out-patients department.

The sitting was suspended at 6.15 p.m. until 8.5 p.m.

Mr WILTON—Prior to the suspension of the sitting, I was making the point that, rather than being a document demonstrating sound financial management and holding out some hope for the communities within the State, the Budget is a dismal document. The document produced by the Minister of Public Works clearly shows, taking three areas of major capital works—school buildings, housing and hospitals—that in real terms there will be a loss to the State in the forthcoming financial year of $101·4 million. That indicates that there is little hope for many communities which for years have been trying desperately to convince the Government of the urgency of their needs.

I take as an example the situation in my own electorate, which is being discriminated against by the Government. Firstly, I present to the House the case of three schools: Lalor North High School, the Bethal Primary School and the Coolaroo Primary School. These three schools commenced operations this year. However, for the two previous years, Lalor North High School was an annexe of the Lalor High School, and this year it is a school in its own right. None of these three schools is included on the list of schools declared to be disadvantaged.

Members of the Labor Party who investigated this matter were informed by the Minister that these schools were not included on that list because, at the time of the survey conducted to establish the criteria to be used in determining which schools would be classified as disadvantaged, they did not exist. That really means that the Government is not prepared to take into account the needs and the circumstances of the schools but rather, because they did not exist at that time, the Government says they should miss out. It is a ludicrous situation.

The Lalor North High School was originally established as an annexe to the Lalor High School and drew all its pupils from that school, which had been declared a disadvantaged school. This year the additional enrolments came from the same district where other schools exist which have also been declared disadvantaged.

The same situation applies to the Bethal Primary School, which drew a large number of its pupils from the Meadow Fair North Primary School, which is also a disadvantaged school. The total school population comes from the same district; the families whose children attend this school belong to the same socio-economic group which is sending students to the Meadow Fair North Primary School and the Coolaroo South Primary School, both of which have been declared disadvantaged schools. The same situation applies to the Coolaroo Primary School. A large number of the first enrolments at that school came from the Coolaroo South Primary School.

The purpose of establishing these schools was to take the pressure off existing schools in the area. Here again, schools in the immediate vicinity have already been declared disadvantaged. All honorable members would know that a new school is the most disadvantaged school in any district because it has not had time to establish itself in terms of providing additional equipment such as library equipment, physical education equipment and so on. These three schools are being discriminated against by the Government.

The Broadmeadows Technical School is an example of an older school. In a letter dated 25 May 1973 the then Minister of Education, the present Treasurer, stated that a high priority had been allocated to a gymnasium/music block for that school. In October 1979 that gymnasium is No. 62 and the assembly hall for this school is No. 49 on the “regional extended 1979–80 plus” list. It appears that this school is further away than ever from receiving those facilities.
In addition to the fact that it has not been declared a disadvantaged school, the Lalor North High School is housed entirely in portable class-rooms. Representations have been made to the Minister in an attempt to obtain some indication of when this school may expect a permanent building. Its present enrolment is 332 students and the anticipated intake of students into Form I over the next five years is approximately 120 a year. The school is in a high growth area and the school population is likely to be more than 850 students by 1985. One can see that the students attending this school will, in all probability, go through the whole of their secondary education in portable accommodation. I ask honorable members opposite whether they are prepared to accept that as a fair and reasonable situation. Are members on the Government side of the House prepared to argue that these students are being given equal opportunity in education? They certainly are not. They are being disadvantaged.

Over the years there has been a number of deputations to a number of Chief Secretaries, including the Premier in the days when he held that portfolio, and arguments have continually been presented to the Government in support of a new 24-hour police station for the Thomastown-Lalor area. Those representations were even being made as long ago as the days of the late Sir Arthur Rylah. He was convinced of the necessity for this building and authorized the purchase of land some years ago. That land has been sitting idle ever since. Over the years, these deputations have continually presented facts and figures to the Minister of the day showing quite clearly that the need for this station exists and has existed for a number of years, yet continually my electorate and its needs are overlooked. Again, I believe the area is being discriminated against by the Government.

I refer to the situation of public transport services in the northern part of the City of Broadmeadows. This area is comprised entirely of Housing Commission dwellings. The Housing Commission has established families in this area where public transport is practically non-existent. After midnight on Saturdays there are no buses to the railway stations. On weekdays there is only one bus every hour until 5 p.m., when the service terminates. There is no transport to Upfield station after midday on Saturdays and no bus transport to either the Broadmeadows station or the Upfield station on Sundays. Arguments have continually been presented to the Government for an extension of the electrification service north of the Broadmeadows railway station. The Broadmeadows City Council has also expressed grave concern for the situation.

In this area, there are now thousands of families with small children and they find the situation extremely difficult, particularly when the breadwinner has to find his way from his home to his place of employment. The only alternative for these families is to provide their own transport, and that means that they have to go into debt whether or not they are capable of servicing the debt. In many instances their place of employment is quite some distance from their place of residence and, because of the lack of public transport, these people are forced to go heavily into debt to provide their own transport.

The honorable member for Albert Park mentioned the unemployment situation. In this respect, I regret to say that the Broadmeadows and Thomastown areas are no exception. My party undertook a survey to discover what the current situation is and what are the chances of young people finding employment. The alarming situation is that the most common answer received from the people interviewed as to why they were not able to find employment, particularly the younger people, was that employers are now demanding experience. I ask Government supporters if they can explain to me how a school leaver can overcome this kind of problem. The Government itself is not prepared to play a part. It has deliberately introduced staff ceilings within Government departments as an economic measure.
This even further reduces the opportunity for many young people to gain work experience. According to the latest figures released by the Lalor office of the Commonwealth Employment Service for the Shire of Whittlesea in the past twelve months, there has been an increase of 26.7 per cent in the number seeking employment in July 1979 compared with July 1978. A total of 1100 people are now registered for employment compared with 868 at the same time last year. In the past month alone almost 100 people have registered for employment. For the month of June, 413 juniors were unemployed and there were 19 vacancies. The ratio of juniors seeking jobs compared with vacancies was 21.7 per cent.

Coupled with this is the added problem that stricter work tests have been announced by the Federal Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs who stated that juniors are not making reasonable efforts to find work. I assure the Treasurer and the Government that the efforts made by the young people from Broadmeadows are genuine but the handicaps they are expected to overcome cannot be overcome by them alone. The Government must play a more meaningful role than it does at present.

Another matter of concern expressed by schools in the electorate I represent is lack of maintenance. Millions of dollars of public money are invested in these buildings but they are slowly rotting because of lack of maintenance. I shall use Broadmeadows Technical School as an example because it has existed for a number of years. Cyclic maintenance is due at that school which will cost $150,000 and although it has a high priority, if one looks at the figures in the Budget, one does not like the school's chances of getting that maintenance done. No maintenance has been done for ten years and the deterioration of buildings has reached a crisis level. Replacement of the plumbing is now long overdue, at an estimated cost of $30,000. The paintwork and the windows are decaying, but there is no sign of work being done on the building in the near future.

An example of how delays result in increased costs is the Broadmeadows High School. It is one of the oldest high schools in the district. Some years ago asphalt was urgently needed and an estimate of $12,000 was made in 1972. The school waited each year for the work to be carried out until it had reached the point that because the estimate was so old a fresh estimate was required. The estimate in 1977 was $72,000. The chance of getting that work done now is less than it was in 1972. These figures show that electorates like Broadmeadows are being discriminated against by the Government. The needs of these areas are neglected.

An alarming situation exists at the Broadmeadows sub-regional office of the Department of Community Welfare Services. That office had the misfortune to lose the services of its school attendance officer who tendered her resignation some months ago, but because of staff ceilings the position remains vacant. The office was advised that if it could recruit someone from within the service it could do so but it could not advertise outside the service.

This is a matter of grave concern for school principals because many schools have a high truancy rate. Many students need constant counselling and assistance but because the position of school attendance officer is left vacant nothing is done. By allowing this situation to continue the Government is directly contributing to the future social welfare problems of the State.

The Budget is a disaster. It holds no hope for the people I represent. I condemn the Budget as a document which does not give the community the true facts.

Mr TREWIN (Benalla)—I congratulate the Treasurer on his first Budget, albeit a worthy and factual Budget. It is interesting to note how the Treasurer's plans are resolved. Some of the
intentions indicated in the Budget will assist some communities around Victoria. The Budget is definitely affected by what happens in Canberra.

Honorable members know that the practice of tripping to and fro by the Premiers and Treasurers of the respective States to the Premiers Conference appears to be disappearing although the gentlemen who represent their States will be able to gain from the Prime Minister and Treasurer of the day an indication of how the nation's economy is performing. In the Federal sphere, where the economy is so delicately poised, one must make more than a passing reflection on the fact that over the past twelve months the Federal Budget has received a boost of $2000 million which I am sure will reflect in a small way on Victoria's future.

Motoring has been and will continue to be a luxury. Unfortunately some people can afford luxuries because of their financial position but other people cannot because of where they live. It will become a luxury for people living in country areas to own a motor car. The cost of motor transport will rise from perhaps 20 cents a mile, in the old-fashioned language, to 40 cents a mile or more. People who live in country areas will be harnessed with this huge cost, not only for pleasure, but in whatever industry they are involved.

I shall refer to primary industry because it is one of the largest users of fuel in the nation. It is the most important industry and generates the wealth of the nation because crops are grown and new money is created. Because of the availability of funds, additional labour will be required to process the food produced and for transportation to deliver it.

One of the biggest changes in primary industry prices has been in the meat section. Since this time last year the meat industry has gone from being the pauper industry to almost the sublime. Prices of cattle and sheep have more than trebled and some primary producers who were handicapped because of lack of funds are now in a position that in the next year or two they will have to pay taxes. Because primary industry is a heavy cost industry one can appreciate that in the past few years, because of low prices and high costs, there has not been a margin for financial security.

The Budget places emphasis on the wheat harvest. Last year the wheat harvest was a record and there will possibly be another record harvest this year. Profit in the wheat industry is not high, unless there is a high production rate, because costs are extremely heavy. Not only does this affect the farmers' pockets but the transport industry and the railways. VicRail had an excellent year because of the large amount of grain it handled. The wheat industry provides profitable traffic for the railways. I am sure the Treasurer will agree that another good wheat harvest will make a substantial contribution to the income of that section of the State.

An area of major concern is that Dookie Agricultural College, the prime agricultural college in Victoria, has received a reduction in its allocation to operate the college of $54,252. Dookie Agricultural College functions as a farm. The labour costs are reasonably high. Production is excellent and extremely good prices are obtained from livestock sold. The college is a complete entity and is almost self-sufficient, functioning as a farm unit.

For the 130 to 140 students who are currently there, a certain number of staff are required. This principle applies to any school, especially at the tertiary level.

At this college the students obtain as well as agricultural education, farm experience which is most important because three-quarters of the students come from the metropolitan area or a country town. I have been informed that the Minister of Agriculture does not look kindly upon Dookie Agricultural College. The Minister has made suggestions that portions, if not all, of the land should be leased to whoever seeks it for farming purposes.
The area involved comprises about 4000 or 5000 acres. It would present an excellent proposition for anyone wishing to lease land.

However, the National Party is firmly of the opinion that this college must be retained in its present state. The Government must not let the college run down. Although the college has been given extra courses to conduct, a portion of courses is being transferred from Burnley Horticultural College to Dookie.

Much harm has been done to Dookie by reducing the funding available to it by $54,000. The National Party hopes the Government will re-examine this matter so that the college can be retained as an important entity.

Irrespective of the areas represented in this Parliament, honorable members must become involved in education. It is of interest to note that in the few years I have been a member of this House the amount spent on education has increased tremendously because of the need for better facilities, the lowering of the pupil-staff ratio and the requirements for wider courses to be undertaken.

In 1961–62 the Government spent on education $39.30 a head of population. In this Budget the estimate is $356.97, which is about ten times as great as was the case in the early sixties. It is foreseeable that a limit will be placed on education at some time in the future.

The National Party is aware that the teaching profession has achieved an almost Utopian state of existence. Teachers have obtained excellent conditions of work. Whilst some sections may require more facilities, the staff in general at most schools in Victoria are well catered for.

Listening to honorable members in this House detail the difficult conditions that exist in the schools of some electorates, it is obvious that further building construction is needed. The schools in my own electorate are of a reasonably high standard and consequently, while not being altogether satisfied, one must be prepared to accept that in a couple of years the situation will have changed.

For example, a new wing at the Benalla High School will be commenced shortly, as will a new primary school at Euroa which will cover the Benalla electorate. There is an extensive bus service in my electorate. Honorable members representing rural areas are appreciative of the rural bus service. Whilst it is costly, this service provides people in isolated areas with the opportunity of sending their children to school which is to their advantage.

I turn to examine that section of the Budget dealing with water resources. The water storage areas in the north east of Victoria provide the State's irrigation centres with an assured water supply to be used for production and living requirements. This season has been reasonable enough to ensure that the water storages are almost full and, consequently, the irrigators will be assured of their supply for next summer.

During the ten-year plan of the Bolte Government when several large water storages were constructed in this State, evidence was taken at the small township of Euroa from local people who wanted a water storage facility in close proximity to the township. However, for some reason known only to those who make the top level decisions, that water storage facility was never built, with the result that the township of Euroa has been in difficulties nearly every summer, particularly during a dry season.

Next Friday the Minister of Water Supply will officially open Euroa's new water storage facility. This facility will provide an assured supply of water which will not only enable the town people to receive the benefit of that facility but will provide the opportunity to expand the town's industry as would the original water storage had it been constructed. Lake Eildon which was the first major water storage project which was planned and contracts let in the period of the McDonald Country Party Government in the early fifties.
set in chain the building of the major water storages in this State.

Lake Eildon services large irrigation areas and the towns of Seymour and Shepparton via the River Murray. Lakes Nillahcooie, Mokoan, Buffalo and William Hovell, are the four storages in the north-east which provide a plentiful water supply to the towns further downstream.

Had Euroa been fortunate enough to have a Government water storage the town would have progressed considerably. The water storage to be opened next Friday has had some problems relating to the foundations and the contractor. Another problem was the inability of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to determine certain issues. The residents of Euroa will have to pay for the town's water storage which will impose a heavy financial burden in the future. The least that could be done by the Government is to allocate funds above the normal funding made when a town's water storage is being constructed.

In Victoria's central area is the vast military camp of Puckapunyal which is within my electorate. Only recently I had the opportunity of viewing some of the activities of this well known and very efficient military camp. Puckapunyal generates the activities of this nation's military forces. There are four or five other military bases around the nation but Puckapunyal is the major one because of the experience gained and equipment centred there. It is the only area capable of handling anti-tank activities and accommodating specialist equipment such as the Leopard tank.

The municipalities surrounding Puckapunyal have a close affiliation with the military base. The town of Seymour, although 4 or 5 miles away, provides medical, hospital and dental services, as well as schooling for the wives and children of service men. Therefore, a heavy burden is placed upon the municipal services in Seymour. Representations have been made to the Government seeking additional funds for these services. These representations have been successful in most cases but further funds are needed.

Seymour is linked with Melbourne by a four-lane highway. Consequently, the citizens of Seymour have a close affinity with Melbourne and yet, being a rural town, Seymour has a close association with Puckapunyal.

Whilst the National Party does not agree with everything contained in the Budget, its members appreciate that reasonable efforts are being made. The National Party also appreciates that in order to balance the Budget additional moneys and revenue must be obtained from somewhere.

Will there be too few people providing the extra revenue that is essential? I could nominate several areas that have been given an added burden by the Budget while others could possibly carry a greater load than they do.

In general, the rural community is paying well and truly through the nose for the facilities it receives. I assure honorable members that so long as I am a member of this House I will seek to gain benefits for the people who live in rural Victoria. Although the facilities are improving, much remains to be done to lift them to a level of efficient and effective home living.

Mr BROWN (Westernport)—At the outset of my remarks I compliment the Treasurer on his first Budget. It is one of which I believe he should and will be proud and will take pleasure in having presented it. I am aware that in the electorate I represent the Budget has gained good community acceptance.

I should be remiss if I did not also compliment those members of the National Party who have spoken so far, because they have obviously researched the contents of the Budget and have comprehended that it will be good for the State. Unfortunately, that has not been the case with members of the Opposition who have spoken to date because, in my view, either those honorable members have not read the Budget Papers in detail or they have not comprehended their contents.
I direct the attention of the House to some of the excellent measures the Budget takes for the future well-being of Victoria. Pay-roll tax was mentioned early in the Treasurer’s speech. For several consecutive years there has been an increase in the level of exemption and this year the exemption level has been lifted by 27 per cent, which will give approximately 12,000 additional small businesses an exemption from the payment of pay-roll tax. Up to this time those businesses were paying the tax. Of course, all honorable members will be well aware of the contribution made by small businesses to the well-being of Victoria. Small business is the primary employer of labour and, as such, exemption from pay-roll tax will be of great benefit. From the feedback I have received from the Westernport electorate and from speaking to other honorable members, this aspect of the Treasurer’s Budget has been particularly welcomed.

Since 1973 approved decentralized industries in Victoria have received pay-roll tax rebates of approximately $23 million. Approved decentralized industries are now an integral part of the economy of Victoria and their continued assistance by the Government is vital. Once again, through this Budget, the Government will be helping their very existence.

Probate duty may not seem to be an issue of great significance to some people, but it can have a particularly devastating effect in the rural sector of the economy because of the transfer of family properties after the death of the owners. Some time ago the Victorian Government abolished probate duty on the transfer of a property from a parent to a child and in this Budget the Treasurer has been able to extend the exemption to cover a transfer to grandchildren. Many properties in rural Victoria will be affected beneficially during this financial year because the Treasurer has been able to incorporate that provision in the Budget.

The registration of motor vehicles has occasioned quite a few remarks during recent debates, but the Budget is designed to end those discussions. As was promised prior to the recent election, there will be a 50 per cent reduction in the charges paid by eligible pensioners. Once again, to a lot of people that might not seem a great deal, but I am sure that to pensioners generally it will be very pleasing.

Such things as the free registration of caravans and trailers owned by incapacitated ex-service personnel have also been included in the Budget and, like many other provisions, although the actual cost will be small, the benefit will be of great importance to the people who are affected.

Education has been a major point of debate, particularly by members of the Opposition. Education receives by far the largest share of the State’s outlay in this financial year, with a total provision of $1384.9 million. Most of that money will be spent on salaries, which is obvious, but capital works and services will receive $153.8 million. The Government has been prepared to take the lead in this area and I refer particularly to the core-plus concept. This has been done because the Government is attempting to obtain extra value for every dollar it spends in this area. The honorable member for Forest Hill made an important contribution to this debate and pointed out that this House is not debating the finances of members of Parliament, it is debating the finances of the taxpayers of Victoria. In that context the Liberal Party is not a party of big government. It believes, and I support the concept, that it is not necessarily valuable to continually increase taxes, as was proposed by the Opposition. I understand the Opposition suggested the borrowing of $200 million to increase various programmes, one of which was the school building programme.

The core-plus concept means that the Government is building approximately one-third more school space for the same amount of money that was being spent two years ago. An additional advantage, as well as the additional school buildings, is the fact that in future, in the light of changing school
populations, it will be possible to relocate school buildings in areas that have the need for them.

Mr Fordham—What about Wonthaggi North?

Mr Brown—I take up the interjection of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am glad Wonthaggi North is one of the new schools to be built this year. Had it not been for the core-plus concept, the Wonthaggi North school would have cost a great deal more than it will cost. The fact is that that community, like many others, will this year be receiving a new school under the core-plus concept. I reiterate that this is a concept which will allow buildings in areas where schools are no longer required to be relocated in areas that have a requirement at that time.

I now refer to the allocation made to the Police Force. In their contributions to the debate members of the Opposition have skipped over the problems facing the Police Force, as I understand them. This year the total allocation is $183.8 million, which is 4.1 per cent of the total Budget. The citizens of Victoria support increased expenditure by the Police Force. It is acknowledged that the members of the force do an excellent job, but to continue to do that job the force needs more staff and more people out in the field. That requires additional funds and the Budget has been able to provide those funds.

Mr Jasper—It requires more buildings, too.

Mr Brown—I take up that interjection and point out to the honorable member for Murray Valley that Hastings, which is in the Westernport electorate, will have a new police station this year.

Mr Fogarty—Where?

Mr Brown—Hastings, and I am pleased to say that the new police station will undoubtedly be well accepted in the community. It could perhaps be regarded as a necessity. The strength of the Victoria Police Force this year will rise to almost 8000. Last year the strength reached 7470 and this year there will be a further intake of 500 recruits. That is a significant increase and the community will be happy about it and will be prepared to accept the increased allocation. In addition to the new police station I mentioned at Hastings, two other towns, Cranbourne and Mount Beauty, will obtain new police stations.

Another area that has occasioned discussion during this debate, particularly from one member of the Opposition, has been health. Health is a significant area of the State's expenditure and involves a large amount of funds. I admit that I would have liked more money to have gone to health, but the Government must be realistic. It is necessary to understand that the resources of the State are not a bottomless pit and funds must be expended on the basis that the Government obtains value for money. The expenditure on health in this financial year is estimated to be $652 million, which is an increase of $54 million or almost 9 per cent on last year. In real terms that is a significant increase for the Treasurer to have been able to provide and once again I compliment the honorable gentleman on the fact that he has increased the Government's commitment to health care.

There has been a considerable increase in the amounts allocated to public transport for the upgrading of the facilities. Many millions of dollars will be spent on the provision of new stainless steel, air-conditioned trains. Buses and trams will also be catered for by the Budget and an expenditure of $21.6 million will be used for vehicle replacement. The new contract for the supply of diesel-powered buses will cover 130 vehicles and it is expected that 60 buses will be delivered during 1979–80.

Mr Fordham—What about the Wonthaggi bus?

Mr Brown—The town of Wonthaggi, which is in the electorate I represent, has only one bus and that is adequate for the numbers that travel. It goes from Inverloch to Dandnong and is what is known as a category "A" bus, and it is more luxurious than
the car I drive. I am pleased with the service it provides and I would say, without reservation, that the majority of people in the electorate are also pleased with that service. The people of Inverloch are particularly beneficial recipients of the new service because the train that used to service the area stopped at Wonthaggi. It is not possible for a train to travel along a line that does not have tracks and Inverloch is some distance beyond Wonthaggi. The Government extended the service to Inverloch and the town now has a return service direct to Melbourne twice daily.

I shall now deal with water resources. An amount of almost $90 million has been provided for water supply and sewerage programmes, mainly in rural Victoria. This is another important area in which the State Government is involved and these projects will be developed for the benefit of the community. The allocation for the Mornington Peninsula system is $5.3 million.

I am also interested in State development, decentralization and tourism, particularly as I come from a primarily rural electorate. That area has also received an increased allocation. This year its total Budget allocation is $42.7 million and of that amount $26 million has been provided for capital works and services.

The Victorian Development Corporation is an organization well known to many rural industries because many of those organizations have come into existence because of the lending programme of that organization, which will continue. An amount of $3.5 million from the Works and Services Account is being made available to the corporation and its borrowing capacity has been augmented by a further $1.2 million.

Local government has also been the recipient of considerable assistance from the Treasurer and this, coupled with the Grants Commission money from the Federal Government this year, will assist local government in providing services to ratepayers in all municipalities throughout the State.

Mr Brown

The area of housing, which again was touched on by one or two members of the Opposition, has overall been adequately catered for in the Budget by the Treasurer.

I was involved in the building trade, and I, like many other people, would like more money to be put into housing in Victoria, because the building industry is such a dominant employer of labour. If a person builds a house it means that people are employed at brick works making bricks and at tile works making tiles, and one could go on in that vein. In addition the furniture trade benefits; people who manufacture and lay carpets benefit, as do all areas when the building trade is buoyant. The building trade could boom if increased activity occurred, and that activity must be generated through the injection of funds.

I am particularly pleased to note the provision in the Budget of $10 million through the State Bank to be used to assist the continuation and servicing of co-operative housing society loans. That is a significant stimulus and will aid primarily low income-earners. Again, the Government is vitally concerned in that area of assistance. People who earn high incomes can usually afford to pay higher interest than that charged by co-operative housing societies, so I am pleased to note the Government's contribution in that area.

In the Budget speech the Treasurer also indicated that estimated State funds available for housing this year would total $86 million, an increase on the previous year of 8.9 per cent. There are other areas in which I would like increased expenditure to be provided, as I am sure all honorable members would. However, one must be realistic, and, as I said before, the amount of money allocated is not as important as the care with which it is allocated and spent. I believe that areas such as housing, health and welfare have been adequately covered by the Treasurer, considering the reserves that were available for him to distribute.
I mentioned that, as part of its election platform, the Labor Party stated that it planned, if elected to Government, to borrow about $200 million. In some ways that sounds good, but in reality, as everybody knows, if one borrows money, one must pay it back. In view of the high interest rates that prevail today, I do not think it would be good housekeeping to borrow $200 million, because the interest on that amount would exceed $200 million over ten or twenty years. That is being realistic.

The Treasurer must be commended on the Budget that he handed down. Accordingly, I join with honorable members, particularly of the Liberal Party, but also of the National Party, in commending the Treasurer on what I consider to be his excellent first Budget.

Mr HOCKLEY (Bentleigh)—An area of the Budget which has caused serious concern in the electorate that I represent is the reduction in real terms of the subsidies towards free municipal libraries of about 8 per cent. The current Budget increased the grants to free municipal libraries from $11.2 million in 1978–79 to $11.4 million in 1979–80. That is an increase of $240,000 throughout Victoria. In percentage terms, the increase is a mere 2.1 per cent. With inflation running at about 10 per cent, this is an effective cutback of about 8 per cent. That is a savage reduction, in anyone's language, in an important cultural area.

The library which is of special concern to me is the Moorabbin Central Library. The approximate annual running cost of this library and its regional services is about $730,000. The only way in which services can be maintained at the 1978–79 level is for the Moorabbin City Council to meet the shortfall from its revenue. This would mean a substantial increase in rates, but perhaps that is the real motive behind the Government's squeeze on library grants—to force councils with extensive library services to meet the rising costs by increasing rates.

Mr McGrath (Lowan)—The Moorabbin library service is the primary and often the only continuing source of education for many adults in the electorate that I represent. The number of people using library services has been increasing rapidly for several reasons. One is that the decline in the birth rate is causing an increase in the total adult population using library services. This fact, together with the rising unemployment rate, partly explains why the number of public library users has increased by 20 per cent in the past five years.

This is the first time in eight years that library subsidies have not been substantially increased. The reduction of 8 per cent in State Government support for library services comes at a time when books are costing considerably more and the salaries of library staffs can be expected to rise by about 9 per cent in a full year.

The Moorabbin Central Library is struggling to establish a range of multilingual books for four or five of the main ethnic groups in my electorate. These books are scarce and expensive. The Moorabbin City Council received a special purpose grant to purchase a home service vehicle to distribute books for the frail, the aged and the sick. This innovative model project has proved so successful in an electorate containing a large population of age pensioners that the loan vehicle can no longer meet the demand. The waiting list will never be met, particularly with only one vehicle. There is an immediate and pressing need for more such vehicles in the Moorabbin municipality. The severe cuts of about 8 per cent in library grants will inhibit the growth and service that can be provided to the aged, disadvantaged and critically ill people in the electorate I represent, and preclude the introduction of any new or innovative library programmes.

Mr McGrath (Lowan)—The National Party believes the Budget is reasonable, although some areas in the Budget speech need careful consideration. At page 29 of the printed Budget speech, in the section
on rural matters, the Treasurer stated that the Victorian production of grain in the year 1978–79 had broken the previous record by over 20 per cent. Barley production also increased by 29 per cent, and oat production by 74 per cent. I am rather critical of the Government in this area, because it expects to take increasing production from the ground every year, but does not realize that what is taken from the ground must be replaced.

Careful consideration should be given to the Treasurer’s cut in finance so that work on the proposed extensions to the Wheat Research Institute at Horsham may proceed. If more than 4 million tonnes of grain is to be produced in Victoria, institutes of this type must be developed for the cultivation of plant breeders for legumes such as clover, chick peas, lupins and similar types of crops that can return nitrogen to the soil, thus increasing soil fertility so that the crops can be reproduced. This cannot be done unless something is put back into the ground to make it capable of yielding a high production of grain crops.

Plant breeding research can be carried out in many areas. Over the years crops have failed because of attacks of rust, smut, Septoria and other diseases that affect grain crops. Scientists must be given the facilities and the opportunity of finding ways of overcoming these disasters, which can and will hit grain crops at any stage of their lives. Research could also be carried out in other related areas, including that of chemistry, at the Wheat Research Institute, which is to be established at Horsham in the heart of the Wimmera.

We must consider the protein content of our grain and its baking qualities, because it is no use producing a grain that lacks baking qualities. Protein qualities are needed to maintain high quality in flour-producing grain so that it will be acceptable to export markets.

I question the Treasurer on his priorities, because an article appeared in the Sun today stating that the Premier had announced that temporary finance of $2 million would be made available to allow the National Gallery to buy a collection of art of the Heidelberg school, yet the Government cannot allocate $1.5 million for wheat research building extensions. Where are the Government’s priorities? This project was scheduled to commence in 1976. At that time the estimated cost was $1.2 million, but today it is $1.7 million. What will happen when it is about $2 million? This matter is of concern to all honorable members.

Another area on which I congratulate the Treasurer is his claim that he will increase the strength of the Police Force by about 500 recruits in the coming year, and he hopes to increase the staff to about 9000 men. Recently I asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services whether the police officer stationed at Apsley would be transferred and not replaced. If the strength of the Police Force is to be increased, I hope small country towns around Victoria will not be left without resident policemen.

Another way in which country Victoria has been attacked rather heavily—and this applies throughout the State—is by the savage rise in the cost of motoring. A fuel tax was introduced to replace the road tax on trucks, and stamp duty was increased from 2.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent. If this money is being collected as revenue, all moneys collected from the fuel tax should be spent entirely on road development and improvement in the next three years.

The other area of the Budget of which I am somewhat critical is the allocation to the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation of $10.3 million compared with the allocation to the arts of $51.1 million. Statistics from overseas in past years indicate that where a nation encourages competition in sport, its people generally are much more healthy than those who do not compete in sport. I urge the Government to undertake a programme of sending physical training instructors to conduct programmes in schools throughout Victoria.
Physical education instructors are available at the larger schools but there are many small schools in Victoria without these facilities.

Mr Jona—Do you suggest that the money be taken from the library?

Mr McGrath—No, I was talking about the art collection. There are many areas in Victoria where sport should be developed at a better level. In recent years Harry Hopman, the tennis coach, Don Talbot, the swimming coach, and Heather McKay, the squash coach, accepted appointments overseas. Those people could be used to bring our young sportspeople to a pinnacle so that they could compete with overseas sportspeople.

July Forbes took the Bonny Belle tennis team to America and remarked that the fitness of the young girls she took to America was nowhere near that of their American counterparts; they were a long way behind. There are areas in our primary and high school systems where more extensive sporting programmes could be included.

I question the allocation of $10.3 million for youth, sport and recreation compared with an amount of $51.1 million to the arts.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this is a reasonable Budget, which the National Party supports. I hope the Treasurer will agree that we need an all-grains institute in Victoria and a more equitable distribution of funds to youth, sport and recreation. I know there is not a bottomless pit of money for this, that and the other, but I sometimes question the priorities used by the Government when allocating the funds available.

Mr Spyker (Heatherton)—Having read the Budget document, one can well understand the difficulty the Treasurer must face in putting the Budget together. Comments have been made that the Budget is a good or steady-as-it-goes Budget, but it ought to be called an appendix of the Federal Budget, which was brought down in August, because it does nothing to stimulate the Victorian economy. It is the Government's responsibility to stimulate the economy to ensure a growing and prosperous future for the State.

There are 1800 small factories in the electorate I represent. They are mainly Australian owned and rely on contracts from the Public Works Department to survive. Ninety per cent of the Public Works Department contracts go to small factories. Although the owners of those factories are happy with the reduction in pay-roll tax, they say that if they cannot get work a reduction in pay-roll tax is of no value to them. Assistance is given to them with one hand and taken away with the other. In the over-all scene, they do not win.

The Budget should make people confident in the future and set the manufacturing industry in Victoria on the road to recovery. A State cannot be economically viable unless its manufacturing industry is fully employed.

Another matter I raise concerns a large section of the population in the electorate I represent. Many elderly people are severely affected by the large increase in Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and council rates and increasing charges for electricity and gas. Admittedly, pensioners who hold medical cards receive a 50 per cent subsidy, but when the rates average $300 they still have to pay $150, or $300 for two accounts. It is virtually impossible for a pensioner to pay that amount. After all, they are the Australians who started this country and they are entitled to a roof over their head and some security in their old age.
is not what is happening. This Government is helping the Federal Government to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. That concerns me. The people I represent want a fair share for their taxation dollar. The money is taken out of their wages and they have no say on how it is spent.

I shall now refer to schools. A large part of the electorate I represent was settled just after the war and some of the old schools are an absolute disgrace. No cyclic maintenance has been done for eight or ten years and the schools are falling down. One school has been promised an assembly and all-purpose hall since 1963, but it is still waiting.

The Frankston regional list came out last week and of the 21 schools in the Heatherton electorate work has been done on only one.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! I again appeal to the House to listen to the honorable member in the silence to which he is entitled. I draw the attention of the members of the Opposition to the noise which is coming from cross-conversations on the Opposition side of the House. One would expect members of the Opposition to give their own member more respect. I ask the honorable member for Geelong West to resume his seat and not carry on a conversation in the aisle.

Mr SPYKER—One of the major concerns of the people of the Heatherton electorate is the vast increase in the price of food. The Government is doing very little about these increases. The record of the Government is also not good with respect to the Arbitration Commission. When the consumer price index figures are published the Government opposes wage indexation or agrees to an increase of only 1 per cent or 2 per cent, which means that the standard of living of the people who live in the electorate I represent is gradually reduced.

Another matter which was highlighted by the honorable member for Oakleigh is the state of hospital services in the area. The Queen Victoria Medical Centre should have been built and the third stage of the Moorabbin Hospital should have been built to provide an adequate service. People now have to ring up a locum and hope he will come before it is too late.

Some of the roads in the newly developing areas are in a bad condition. A lot of money needs to be spent to update roads and also to provide traffic lights, which reduce the number of traffic accidents.

A matter which has been brought to my attention is the attitude adopted by people, because of the high unemployment, to women in the work force. There is a tendency at the moment to tell women that they are wanted on an on-and-off basis when the work is available, but when it is not they should go back to the kitchen where they belong. I deplore that attitude. If women wish to work they should be given the opportunity of doing so.

The Government has stated that there will be an increase in the strength of the Police Force. I support that proposal whole-heartedly, but I suggest that the Government should look at the state of police stations in the Heatherton electorate and around Victoria. The working conditions of members of the Police Force are deplorable. If the Government is so concerned about police morale why has the wage case been stalled since May last year? Obviously morale in the Police Force will not improve if there is a long delay in finalizing applications for wage increases.

On the matter of community welfare services, economic difficulties place families under great pressure. In the Budget, the Government makes much of decentralization of community welfare services. The fact is that sufficient welfare officers are not available to consider the needs of a family which runs into difficulties and needs counselling. Families reach a stage of breaking up before action can be taken or assistance supplied. It costs the State $120 a week to maintain a child who is a ward of the State. Surely it would be better to keep the family unit together than to allow
it to break up, but assistance is not available in this regard. Recently I rang the regional office and was told that staff was not available so I should either sort it out myself or let it go. That is a deplorable attitude.

The Budget fails to assist young people. Unemployment among young people is high and the Government does not appear to be considering the needs of young people. Obviously, over the years the attitude and tastes of young people change and it appears that the Government is catering for a certain section of people who enjoy competitive sport and very little else is available in local communities for people who do not participate in competitive sport. As a result, there is confusion on why vandalism has increased. I am seriously concerned that vandalism has increased and that police statistics show that most offenders are between 18 and 25 years of age. Responsible members of Parliament should examine the needs of young people, what should be done for them, and how to tackle the problem. All honorable members should reach agreement on that problem without political bias. Funds have not been made available in the Budget for any inquiry to be conducted into the needs of young people. That is one of the major issues in my electorate.

Newspaper reports have expressed concern that, although great play is made of the need to conserve fuel, fuel consumption is still increasing regardless of the increase in the price of fuel. That is hardly surprising when the public transport system in the electorate I represent is such that at noon on Saturdays the private bus service stops running and no transport moves again until Monday morning.

If people are to be encouraged to use public transport, railway stations must be manned so that people are not frightened to use trains. A good rail service needs to be provided. No one would want to wait more than an hour for a train to arrive. Trains and buses should be co-ordinated so that people changing from train to bus are not alighting from the train and waiting another 20 minutes for a bus. If foresight is used in upgrading public transport facilities, which the Government is doing extremely slowly, a co-ordinated rail, tram and bus system would encourage more people to use public transport, particularly when increased costs are such that families can no longer afford to run two cars and have to rely on one car. Many women with small children are trapped in their homes because they cannot get out. Everything possible should be done to alleviate the situation.

Mr MACKINNON (Box Hill)—I join with other honorable members in congratulating the Treasurer on his first Budget. It shows the workmanlike approach that one would expect of an experienced Minister. Furthermore, honorable members should recognize that the Treasurer has had extensive experience over the years in the handling of Treasury affairs in his capacity as one of Victoria’s representatives on the Australian Loan Council.

I mention the Loan Council because comments have been made on the impact of the Budget on the economy of the State. The State Budget can act as a support to the endeavours of the Federal Government and how the Australian economy is being handled, but in itself it cannot have a major effect because the State cannot operate on a financial deficit. Therefore, deficit financing should be fully discussed at meetings of the Loan Council.

The council should be the annual economic forum in Australia at which the States and Commonwealth Governments plan the future expenditure on capital works and the raising of loans. How, then, can the Victorian Budget be handled? It is a $3931 million Budget. The manner in which revenue is raised should be examined and so also should the allocation of resources between the competing claims for these funds.

Public opinion understandably regards taxation as an imposition which is unavoidable, and which is associated with the existence of a Government
but which should be kept to a minimum. The unpopularity of taxation springs from several factors. Essentially, it relates to a concern that Government expenditure is excessive, that there is a lack of awareness of the benefits received from Government expenditure or a deep-rooted suspicion that Governments always waste money. There is concern about the degree of equity as between those in the same situation and whether they are bearing the same burden.

From those thoughts, much discussion on reform stems. At all times, it should be recognized that people bear taxes and pay all the taxes. Some of the taxes are indirect and are paid through higher prices on goods purchased and others result from higher incomes due to effort and investment, and they are personal income tax, company taxes and so on. Whatever the form, the tax is paid by the people.

Another aspect is that high tax rates, the usual complaint about taxes, do more than hit some payer's heart. Differences in the level of rates introduce a distorting element in the operation of the market economy. There may be different opinions on the levels that would be regarded as high. One might regard a tax of 50 per cent on personal income as being too high and certainly Australians hold the view that too much emphasis is placed on personal income tax as a source of revenue. That in itself produces certain inefficiencies in that tax avoidance is becoming a big business. Equally, a pay-roll tax of 20 per cent would be too high, so that the concern is not the existence of the tax; it is the height of the tax. Each tax needs to be reviewed in the light of current circumstances, the effect of the tax on the economy and on the efficiency with which the particular tax is being raised. That is important in the totality of taxes.

Revenue raised by the State falls into definite categories of which State taxation is but a part. State taxation represents $1333 million. Income from other State sources represents $620 million. The railways have an operating income of $220 million. Commonwealth payments at $1400 million represent the other major source of income. Commonwealth payments are in effect derived from taxation paid to the Commonwealth but they are not a direct tax imposed by the State and they are not taxes over which the States have any say on the level or the manner in which it is imposed. Of the three main taxes—pay-roll, probate and land tax—pay-roll tax remains the major State tax that is levied. It brings in approximately $556 million in revenue. It is a reasonable tax to impose but the level is too high.

Mr Roper—"Incidence" not "height".

Mr Mackinnon—The height is at such a level that it will create a distorting effect on the economy. The effect of reducing—and I use the word, "incidence"—of the tax will always remain debatable.

Mr Roper—That is the word used by economists, taxation officials and almost everyone else—even senior officials in Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd.

Mr Mackinnon—The question is whether, as a result, more people will be employed or whether the share of the revenue will disappear with increasing inflation and higher wages.

One can make the same queries in relation to land tax. There is a good reason for having land tax, and if it were to be suddenly removed it would distort the value of land. There is no doubt that with a progressive land tax scale, such as exists, one can question whether some people are affected unduly. That matter should always be subject to review. The view has always been taken that land tax should not be imposed on the domestic home and that is sensible. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that tax is not levied on imputed income through owning a home. This does have a distorting effect, but in this case it is set against the desirable feature of encouraging people to own their own homes.

Mr Mackinnon
I turn to other sources of revenue and look at the gaming taxes. They do not bring in a large proportion of tax revenue, but it is a useful proportion of tax revenue. A new developing area of taxation is the business franchises, and the business franchises will now be bringing in close to $112 million. This is the trend that one would expect today; there is an emphasis of moving away from personal income tax to one where direct taxation pays a greater part. If the State is to continue to get its fair share of taxation, it can be expected to play an increasing role in levying tax in the direct taxation field. This State has been enterprising, and no doubt is anticipating, to some extent, the gradual reduction of revenue from the Commonwealth Government in the personal income tax field.

I will move on to other aspects of revenue. We are a mixed economy and have a number of mixed enterprises. They are bringing in $45 million from the contributions by public authorities; the sum of $15 million from the State Insurance office, and from the State Savings Bank close to $18 million. This underscores the importance that the State gives to State enterprises being run in a businesslike fashion.

The final source of revenue to the State is from an area one might describe as State resources, and this is a contribution that continues quietly, but at times we fail to realize its importance. There are petroleum royalties of $88 million, and royalties from the Forests Commission of about $18 million, and this area of revenue is close to the contribution made by business franchises.

It is important to reflect on the manner in which the revenues are accrued to the State, and pay attention to the manner in which revenues are expended, because these are moneys from the people of the State, and it is right and proper that they are expended so that the people get value for the dollar.

It is in that sense that we become concerned, first of all, with the allocation of resources; in what way funds should be allocated to broad areas such as health, education, public transport, housing and the like. Equally, we should be concerned with the allocation of resources within those areas to different programmes, and we should be concerned with the inter-relationship between the various programmes and the effects on the community at large. We need also to be concerned with the effectiveness with which revenues are spent. It is in this sense that I welcome the emphasis in the Budget on the manner in which expenditures are carried out. An expenditure review committee is to be established, and a Budget review committee, to examine all expenditures across the board.

In this State there has been financial scrutiny by Parliament to date on the basis of financial compliance, and that has been the job of the Public Accounts Committee. We should take it further and scrutinize the efficiency by which moneys are expended. We need also to concern ourselves with the appropriateness and effectiveness of the various programmes. I venture to say that the initial thrust should be on efficiency, because that in itself is a difficult enough task and one which will require the co-operation of such agencies as the Auditor-General, with appropriate staff, and again one needs to develop a suitable yardstick for measuring standards of efficiency. I am talking of efficiency as compared with effectiveness.

The Budget sets out amounts to be spent in various areas. It shows not only the revenues to be gained, but also the various exemptions to be applied. There are exemptions that are new, and changes, but when one looks at the new thrusts by the various departments, this is not easy to glean from the Budget Papers.

I congratulate the Treasurer on increasing the range of Budget Papers available to honorable members. The more information that is made available to honorable members, the more useful and productive their contributions will be to Parliament, the better informed they will be in their discussions in the electorates, and the better
informed will be those who are interested in what is happening within Parliament. The public will have a better understanding of the factors involved.

It would be useful if a series of Ministerial statements accompanied the Budget so that one had a good appreciation of the various thrusts that Parliament has in mind which underscore the changes in the Budget. I congratulate the Assistant Minister of Education on his statement on the school building programme. That is a useful document and illustrates the progress made in that field.

The Government has a thorough and on-going review of its objectives, and in this sense the intention of the Minister of Education to have a study of educational objectives is to be commended. I believe his statement will ensure that the right background is there before the Government makes a new departure or reviews the situation.

Mr Roper—What about the Box Hill and District Hospital? Do you think that should be reviewed as well?

Mr MACKINNON—I am coming to that. I wish to speak on health. I have just been reading the address by the Minister of Health on the occasion of the annual general meetings of the Austin Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital.

Mr Roper—Where did you get it from? He would not release it to me.

Mr MACKINNON—Some of the Minister's comments in connection with health are worthy of note. First of all, there are unavoidable needs for expansion and the development of new services. The most obvious area of need is mental retardation. The Government is committed to the establishment of a new division within the Health Commission and to new programmes in the current year. That provides some underscoring of the provisions in the Budget relating to health. For example, the policy of net zero growth of beds, staff and real expenditure will be pursued in Victoria. That is sensible. This in itself alters the Government's planning. For this reason, the strategy for the years ahead involves a large-scale review of our capital works programme. The Government should always be prepared to alter its strategy in accordance with circumstances.

Mr Roper—You have written off $3 million for the architects.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! The honorable member for Brunswick will have plenty of opportunity to make his own contribution.

Mr Roper—Unfortunately, I will not.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I remind the honorable member for Brunswick that interjections are acceptable, but continual banter while another member is speaking, and cross-fire with another member on the other side of the House, even with a member on his own side, are not acceptable. I ask that the honorable member for Brunswick give the same respect to the honorable member for Box Hill that he would expect when making his contribution.

Mr MACKINNON—I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Minister of Health, in his address relating to the planning period, especially for large projects which have long lead times, said, firstly, that only as many new projects will be scheduled as can be completed without delay. Secondly, that approvals will be confined within the total of amounts likely to be available during the succeeding three years. Thirdly, explicit consideration will be given to the impact of capital projects on maintenance costs in subsequent years. That suggests planning is to be made with real thought of future costs arising from work undertaken in the initial years. The intention of this policy is to eliminate much of the uncertainty now attaching to hospital planning. For some time the Board of Management of the Box Hill and District Hospital has been endeavouring to plan its next stage of development but it has experienced difficulty in appreciating the framework within which it should be planning.
Equally, the policy will mean that a new programme may involve the cancellation of a number of projects which have received approval over the years, but that must be a fact of life. What seemed reasonable five years ago may today prove to be totally unreasonable, just as what may have been desirable two years ago may today prove to be extremely desirable and necessary. Nevertheless, these are long lead times and careful planning is required.

I refer to public transport and once again the community has witnessed a healthy review of the manner in which the Ministry of Transport handles the various related authorities such as the Country Roads Board, the Victorian Railways and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. The community is now noticing a healthier coordination of the activities of these bodies by the Ministry of Transport, which is acting as a strong co-ordinator.

Innovative action has been taken to develop new organizations within the transport field, such as the Railways Property and Construction Board, to tackle the public transport programme in the most efficient manner.

Mr Simpson—How much will the Box Hill modal interchange cost?

Mr Maclellan—$37 million.

Mr MACKINNON—I have been closely involved in the planning of the Box Hill transport centre and with the Surrey Hills overpass where a review of the needs of the area has shown that an overpass is no longer required. That review was properly followed up with new traffic management arrangements for the intersections of Warrigal, Union and Canterbury roads, and the proposal should go a long way towards overcoming the problems.

On the one hand long-standing proposals are being reviewed promptly and on the other hand existing problems are being answered equally promptly. It is that type of approach which is a hallmark of the present Government's innovation and effectiveness which is illustrated in the Budget.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—It is instructive to take part in the discussions on the Budget towards the end of the debate. It provides one with the opportunity of seeing how the battle lines are arrayed and understanding the responses offered from each side of the Chamber to the arguments which have been advanced.

When one examines the Budget, one does not find much difference in its form of presentation from what has been put to the Parliament during the past 20 years, or perhaps for as long as anyone can remember. What is most instructive is that the Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Dandenong in particular made it clear that the Parliament should not accept a Budget which does not properly explain or put the relevant matters before the people of this State.

The main arguments advanced by members of the Opposition on the Budget total four in number. First of all, the Opposition has stated that the State Budget is a mirror of the sterile rhetoric in the Federal Budget. Secondly, the Government does not advance any economic plan for this State. Thirdly, it imposes additional taxes upon low-income earners, and lastly, many of the problems not solved in this Budget result from an acceptance by the Government, some four or five years ago, of the so-called new federalism. That decision was a surrender to a philosophical strait-jacket into which the Liberal Party had got itself and which it now thoroughly regrets. Those are the four areas of argument put by members of the Opposition on the Budget presented by the Treasurer.

It has been stated in this Chamber and in other places that the Federal Budget is designed to slow down economic growth. It is clear that it will accelerate unemployment and on any view it means that the living standards of ordinary people will decline as it increases taxes in various forms.

The Opposition claims that in its Budget the Government is following the same dogma and line as the Federal Government. It has been argued that the States cannot do anything, in economic matters, there are some things a State Government can do if it has the will. This Government does not have the will and is
content to run in tandem with the Federal Government and assist it as much as it can.

The Budget can be characterized by indicating that it is simply complementary to the Federal Budget. If the Federal Government desires to stagnate the economy, with its preoccupation of defeating inflation no matter what the cost to other areas, the Victorian Government will go along with that desire.

We have reached the stage where the people of this country, not just Victorians, are no longer able to believe what the Federal Government, and in particular the Prime Minister, have to say. The people do not believe the Prime Minister any more.

As I understand it, the Federal Budget is premised on two basic propositions, that weekly earnings will increase because of inflation to the tune of between 9 and 9.5 per cent in the current financial year and that prices will increase by the order of 10 per cent. In other words, so far as Federal Government thinking is concerned, there will be a decline in real income.

Another feature of the Federal Budget which has been repeated in Victoria is that all forms of taxation will increase and insidious charges which a Government can make, such as health costs, will also increase.

I submit that the State Budget mirrors the Federal Budget in precisely those terms. The Government is increasing State taxes and is hitting the low-income earner, the person who has to spend his income each week to survive. Worst of all, the Government offers no economic plan or strategy. In not one of the Budget Papers can one find any attempt by the Government to show what it is about, so far as the State of Victoria and its economy are concerned. There is no plan for the future and the reason for that is simple. The Government has no plan or philosophy. It has no ideas except to stay in office. The Government is acting in an ad hoc manner month after month, year after year, and this is occurring at a time when Victoria is crying out for direction, guidance and leadership. The Budget is the sterile explanation received from the Government.

The tragedy is that it is occurring in a State, compared with the other States of the Commonwealth, which somebody has said ought to be the greatest. Victoria should be as it has everything going for it. It is the most closely settled of all States. It is the easiest to service in the provision of facilities which the people expect, so far as roads and transport are concerned, and it is rich in energy resources.

Victoria is a State which historically has had an economy founded on a large manufacturing base, with manufacturing industries primarily concerned in the finished goods area, not the capital goods area, with consumer goods such as clothing, footwear and leather goods predominating. It is those areas which have been most affected by the increased level of imports allowed in recent years.

The progressive decline in this area of activity in the State's economy has been absolute, and in relative terms, that decline has affected other aspects or features of our economic climate. The decline has caused and is continuing to cause concern, as our economic activity in those areas diminishes, but no attempt has been made in the Budget to enunciate what Victoria should be doing to fill the void that is occurring. No response is offered by the Government to overcome those areas of concern. There is no plan, strategy or attempt made to articulate what this State's role ought to be in the Commonwealth or what role the people of this State can play in today's changing society. The State is just left by the Government to drift along.

This policy is in stark contrast to what is occurring in the most populous State of the Commonwealth and our immediate neighbour to the north, New South Wales. If one examines the Budget Papers presented by the New South Wales Treasurer, one finds that the amount allocated for capital works in the current financial year has increased by 17 per cent over last year. What is going on? What is the difference between New South Wales and

Mr Cain
Victoria? Why is economic activity being generated in New South Wales? Where is New South Wales going that we are not?

In this State we have a Budget which can only be characterized as a Budget conceived in gloom, despair and pessimism by a Government bereft of ideas or philosophy for the future well-being of the State.

More particularly the Budget does nothing to help the economy of the State but rather takes positive steps to reduce the share of this world's riches from those most in need. The hardest hit continue to be those who are least able to pay and it goes without saying that the unemployed are not a matter of concern to the Government.

The Budget seeks to raise additional revenue from a traditional Liberal source—the people least able to pay, the people who spend their income to survive, who are generally the low-income earner. Those earners have a higher marginal propensity to consume than have the high income-earners and that is an economic truism which cannot be disputed. As the low income earners' disposable income continues to fall, the consumption rate will fall, and it is because of the taxation policies that the Government is pursuing.

Let me specifically examine the areas of State taxes and charges which have been affected by this Budget. I do not want to compare this State with New South Wales; I want to talk about Victoria. The stamp duty on the registration and transfer of motor vehicles has risen by 80 per cent and is calculated to earn about $40 million in a full year; the third-party levy has risen by about 104 per cent, to provide a total this year of $8.2 million; the tobacco licence fee has risen by 24 per cent, to provide a total of $7 million this year; and the petroleum tax, a new tax, is estimated to earn in one full year about $50 million; Tattersall's duty has risen by 14.2 per cent to provide a total in this financial year of $12.2 million; stamp duty on cheques, a relatively small item, has been increased by 20 per cent from 10 cents to 12 cents a cheque, to yield some $340,000 this year; and public authorities' charges are up some 54 per cent. They are charges that the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission are required to pay. The State Electricity Commission has said that it will pass on the charges to the consumer. All of these additional State taxes, which affect the people about whom I spoke earlier and about whom members of the Opposition are concerned, although the Government is not, are regressive and undesirable from the point of view of equity and on economic grounds.

What concessions or reductions—one might say what carrots—are offered in return for these additional impositions? There are not many. In each case the same philosophy can be seen. The land tax exemption that was mentioned by the honorable member for Box Hill assists people who have large homes. The exemption now extends to those who have a considerable investment in the home. It is a benefit only for those of considerable wealth.

The other two features are the continuing desire to give relatives of deceased persons a consolation prize. I refer to the continuing abandonment of probate duties of all types. I realize that there is a philosophical difference between members of the Opposition and members of the Government party. It may be a major difference, and members of the Opposition have enunciated their views from time to time.

However, if the practice continues of fewer and fewer estates paying probate duty, the money must be obtained from somewhere else. That is what the Government is doing on this occasion. It is taking the money from people who have to spend to live. The Government is not taking money from the remote beneficiaries of large estates, and the community will have to pay for it. I am not in the business of ensuring that the Lang Hancocks or other multi-millionaires' relatives receive a consolation prize. Members of the Opposition have no compunction in saying that where hardship exists, provision should be made for those concerned—for instance,
when there is a desire to keep a small business or a farm. There is no difficulty in accommodating that situation.

Hand in hand with probate duty goes gift duty. The Government has done a similar thing. In the Budget it has raised the exemptions for gift duty. Money is being given back to the wealthy. Some members of the Government party are saying "Hear, hear". Perhaps that reflects the philosophy of the Government.

The only contribution in the Budget towards a positive economic initiative is the sum spent on direct aid to improve the unemployment situation—$6.7 million. The Government rejects the whole notion of public spending. One could accept that, although one may not agree with it, if the Government was attempting to stimulate private spending to make up for the diminution of public spending, but that is not occurring. The Government is taking away from that section of the community that can boost the private spending the capacity to do so.

I come to the last point—the question of the financial relationships between the States and the Commonwealth. Members of the Opposition believe a large part of the problem of the States is caused by the subservience that this Government has displayed to the Fraser notion of Commonwealth-State relationships. Victoria has been driven into its present situation by what occurred in 1975 and 1976. What occurred had its genesis in the notorious meeting at the Windsor Hotel in about September 1975 when the Constitutional Convention was being held in this city. It will be recalled that the Liberal Party chose to boycott that conference. It had its own meeting and met to devise a federalism policy. This, I suppose, was the inevitable result of its passionate wish for less Government involvement. In the long and the short term it was out to trim the spending of Government.

Only three and a half years ago, the Premier of Victoria came home from a special Premiers Conference proclaiming to the world that there had been a new breakthrough as far as the Federal system was concerned. At last Victoria had access to a growth tax. Income tax, the growth tax of them all, was to be available to Victoria. In the years ahead the State would receive a fixed proportion of income tax. It was suggested that in the future there would be greater freedom in Victoria's activities. At the 1976 Premiers Conference the Premier of Victoria said, in discussions at the conference table, speaking to the Prime Minister:

"I want you to know that from Victoria's point of view we support wholeheartedly in every way these initiatives on federalism that you have taken."

The Premier was embracing the new federalism proposition that had been put to him. It is now clear that on that occasion the Prime Minister put over this State his own ideas in relation to financial arrangements. All that is saving this State from additional and graver financial problems is the fallback on the guarantees of payments introduced by the Whitlam Government.

This State has been brought to the brink of having to introduce a State income tax to make up the difference, and that is what the Federal Government wants. In the past few years tax collections from personal income tax have diminished dramatically. The result is that this State has a diminishing share of tax collections overall, because other sources of tax are increasing and providing more Federal revenue than income tax, in relative terms.

The other features have been that specific grants have been phased out. The States have been squeezed. Year after year Australian Loan Council allocations have decreased, and while all that has been going on, the Commonwealth has been increasing indirect taxes or taxes from other sources. They are not reflected in the reimbursement that Victoria and the other States receive.

The Federal Government has set about reducing the share that this State receives from loan funds. The consequences of this can be pinpointed in five ways. The notion of additional financial freedom for the States is a myth. The Commonwealth has resorted
to, and will continue to resort to, indirect taxes and such things as its reduced contribution to medical funds. State Budgets will become more uncertain in the future and it will not be known what funds are available. A State income tax remains a looming threat to all States and, worst of all, perhaps, competition between States for resources has been increasing.

The basic services that the States provide have been cut. Sewerage, roads, transport, schools and housing are all areas of activity in which a contribution from Federal sources was expected. The State is in a financial strait-jacket simply because of the subservience of this Government to the Federal Government during the years 1975 to 1976, simply to satisfy a political and philosophical view about the Federal relationships in this country. The time is not far away when those arrangements will have to be changed if this State is to survive financially. The Government has not even recognized that that will be the case. The Budget has been couched on that financial basis and for that reason the Treasurer is in difficulties in presenting to the State a Budget which is viable and which enables the State to make the best use of its resources.

On the motion of Mr KENNETT (Burwood), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hospital for Broadmeadows—Air Force Association—Wik Industries Pty Ltd—Recreation area in Clayton—Child maltreatment study—Annual reports of friendly societies and benefit associations—Springvale level crossing—Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Co. Ltd—“Z” class trams—Tabling of reports—Welfare housing—Merrilands High School

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr CULPIN (Glenroy)—I raise with the Minister of Health the matter of the proposed public hospital to serve the City of Broadmeadows. As the Minister is probably aware, several thousand signatures have been obtained on petitions to have this necessary facility in the City of Broadmeadows, but it is regretted that at this stage nothing has been done to give the residents, the council and the hospital society some faith in the Government.

Prior to the State election the Government ran advertisements featuring the Premier's photograph and stating that if returned it would do its utmost to raise the priority of the proposed hospital in Broadmeadows. It is not a political issue but rather a responsible issue for any government to provide such a service within a city which is the size of Geelong.

I asked a question on notice about correspondence that has been sent to the Commonwealth because the previous Minister indicated to those concerned in the City of Broadmeadows that negotiations were taking place with the Commonwealth in relation to land at Camp Road, Broadmeadows. Discussions with the local Federal member of Parliament indicate that there has been no correspondence. The question has been placed on notice purely to determine what correspondence has been submitted to the Commonwealth. It is imperative that the people know exactly what the department and the Minister are doing because members of the public, of all political affiliations, are doing their utmost to achieve this service for the municipality. If the information that has been obtained from the local Federal member is correct, this Government will be embarrassed because it could have been conning the people there for years. I sincerely request that the information and all correspondence that has been forwarded to the Commonwealth Government—if there has been correspondence in reference to the land in Camp Road—be made available to the House.

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—I raise a matter with the Minister who represents the Minister for Local Government. It concerns the rating position
of the Air Force Association (Victorian Division) in Cromwell Road, South Yarra. The Local Government Act provides exemption from the payment of rates to the Returned Services League but that exemption does not apply to the Air Force Association. I respectfully request the Minister to take up this anomalous situation.

Representations were made to Mr Hunt by that association when he was the responsible Minister. I ask the Minister to consider this question as a matter of considerable urgency.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I raise with the Minister of Labour and Industry a matter of double standards which the Government practises in regard to the way in which employers and employees are treated by the Government. One need only look at the way the Government bashes employees and their unions on the least possible excuse and the way the Government refuses to defend workers in the face of the most blatant maltreatment by employers.

An example I use is Wik Industries which manufactures Cedel products in Doherty's Road, Laverton North. I have raised problems with the Minister relating to safety matters on the shop floor in that factory. I received an encouraging reply from the Minister, but my concern is that performance in this area does not confirm the encouragement which was implicit in the Minister's letter. Safety measures are legally required in this factory. It is now alleged that the managing director, Mr Stuart Southwick, has told workers at the plant that the company cannot afford to implement the safety measures. One must look at this problem carefully. The managing director's statement is nonsense because the cosmetics industry is one industry in Australia which makes a good profit. It is absolute nonsense that workers' rights should be compromised. That is the flimsy excuse.

The second aspect is the apparent wrongful dismissal of an employee of this firm and the denial to him of moneys owing to him. One can only interpret that as virtual robbery and theft.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—On a point of order, I understood that on matters raised on the motion for the adjournment of the sitting members were entitled to raise only one matter of Government administration. It appears that the honorable member for Werribee has already raised one matter and although his subsequent remarks relate to the same firm he is now definitely raising another matter. This matter is concerned with employment and the first matter is concerned with safety. Mr Deputy Speaker, I request you to rule the honorable member out of order.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—On the point of order, breaches of the law relating to a factory or management are matters relating to the one Minister. The same inspection that results in action being taken on one problem should result in action being taken on the other. Presumably, if the Minister of Labour and Industry were fair dinkum and sent out an inspector to inspect this factory, that inspector would submit a joint report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—I consider that the honorable member for Brunswick is straying from the point of order. The honorable member's time has expired.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton) I raise a matter of urgency with the Minister who represents the Minister for Local Government regarding land known as
The Grange in Dunlop Road, Clayton. The Oakleigh council has been negotiating with the Board of Works for fifteen months regarding purchase of the property. The council is concerned about the possibility of the property falling into neglect because of the negotiations being so drawn out. The matter is of some concern. Because of increased population in the area, there is no area available, other than this area, for a playing ground and recreation facilities. The other important aspect is that residents believe the large remaining area of the natural Cheltenham heath land should be maintained at all costs. Because negotiations have been drawn out between the Board of Works and the council, no-one is actually responsible for the area and it is in a state of neglect. Negotiations should be speedily settled so that the land can be purchased for the use of the people.

Mrs TONER (Greensborough)—I draw the attention of the Assistant Minister of Health to the annual report of the Mental Health Authority of Victoria, for the year ended 31 December 1977 which, strangely, seems to have been published in 1979.

On page 21 of the report, a section entitled “Child Maltreatment Study” refers to the activities of the department. It talks about a survey carried out in co-operation with the Royal Children's Hospital which was completed and that the report on the maltreatment of children in Victoria was forwarded to the Government Printer for publication. The Mental Health Research Institute was involved in the design of the study and the processing and analysis of the data.

In recent months, I have telephoned the Health Commission on a number of occasions asking about this report but have received no satisfaction. I was told that the commission would refer the matter back to me. I understand from discussions with the honorable member for Brunswick that the same situation has occurred in respect of his office.

I ask for the report on the maltreatment of children in Victoria. It may not be important to the honorable member for Burwood, who is intercepting, but it is important to the people of Victoria that such a report of statistical details is available. I should be happy if the Minister would examine the situation to ascertain whether the report has now been printed as it was referred to in the annual report for 1977.

If the report has not been printed, can the Minister provide a photostat copy to the Opposition, which could be tabled, so that the Opposition could refer to the statistical details referred to in the report.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I direct to the attention of the Minister for Property and Services a matter concerning friendly societies. Under an Act of Parliament a report concerning benefit societies is supposed to be tabled in Parliament every year as soon as the Minister receives it. Some $100 million of public moneys are involved and hundreds of thousands, probably millions, of Victorians are affected. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be surprised to note that the last report to Parliament on this substantial organization throughout Victoria is for the year 1976-77.

During the last sessional period I asked the Chief Secretary who, at that stage, was responsible for this area, to ensure that the reports were presented to Parliament and that the figures were made available to Parliament as soon as possible.

On 12 July, in reply to question on notice No. 468, I received the following reply:

The details sought by the honorable member are still outstanding from the small number of societies. Because the office of the Government statistician and actuary is now within the administration of my colleague the Minister for Property and Services I have referred the matter to him for consideration and reply in due course.

That answer was received by me by mail and by the Papers Room but it has never been actually delivered to
Parliament. Following that, because I wanted the information, as did many other people, I asked the Minister for Property and Services when those figures would be available and I was advised today by the Minister:

I advised the member for Brunswick by letter dated 21 September that whilst the office of the Government Statistician and the Actuary falls within my administration and did so as from 1 July 1979 the honorable Attorney-General is responsible for the administration of the Friendly Societies Act 1958. I understand that the honorable Attorney-General will be providing an answer to question No. 468 in the normal way.

The matter I particularly wish to raise is that two Ministers clearly provide contradictory answers to Parliament and to members of Parliament. It is not clear who is responsible for what in relation to friendly societies and benefit associations.

One could present a good argument on why the Minister of Health should be responsible for these organizations.

These organizations concerned range from the Hospital Benefits Association to the Ancient Order of Foresters—large and small organizations—responsibility for which at the moment is divided between the Minister for Property and Services and the Attorney-General because, when the Chief Secretary's Department was abolished and its functions, properly in the view of the Opposition, were transferred to other departments, no clear decision was made as to who would be responsible for those organizations.

I hope the Minister can straighten out the two separate answers that I have received on this matter and possibly tell the House when the information that I seek will be made available.

Mr KING (Springvale)—I raise with the Minister of Transport a matter concerning the railway level crossing at the intersection of Corrigan and Lightwood roads between Springvale and Noble Park. There are only flashing lights and bells at this level crossing. With the summer days lengthening, people travelling south in cars with the radio switched on may not hear the bells and, in the late afternoon sunshine, they may not see the flashing lights. This is a dangerous level crossing. People have been killed and other serious accidents have occurred.

I ask the Minister to use his good offices to ensure that boom gates or better warning signs are installed before further accidents occur or other lives are lost.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—I raise a matter with the Minister of Housing. I refer to question No. 500 on the present Notice Paper. This question was asked on 6 June 1979 and, because of a motion, of which notice was given today, the answer to this question would have been quite relevant to that question which reads:

I have not had any further word from the Minister in reply to that question and I will be pleased if he will provide me with an answer before tomorrow morning.

Dr VAUGHAN (Glenhuntly)—I represent the people of the suburb of Carnegie in this Parliament. I bring a matter to the attention of the Minister of Transport. The people of Carnegie have been under attack in a play called Marsupials by Barry Oakley, which is presently showing in Melbourne. That is one attack on the people of Carnegie and Carnegie as a place in which to live.

Recently I put a question on notice to the Minister of Transport which reads:

The Minister advised me this evening that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board has no immediate proposal to operate Z class trams on the
Carnegie route. However, in an answer to a similar question to the one I asked of the Minister of Transport, from the honorable member for Coburg, the Minister replied:

It is expected that Z class trams will be operating on the North Coburg–Sydney Road tram route within a few months.

I realize the people of Coburg are not always well served by public transport. However, I ask the Minister of Transport what is the basis of this decision whereby the people on the Carnegie tram route are deprived of these trams yet the people of Coburg are soon to get this new tram? Are the commuters of Melbourne who live along the Carnegie tram route being discriminated against?

Mr AMOS (Morwell)—I raise a matter with the Minister for Minerals and Energy, which is somewhat akin to that raised by my colleague, the honorable member for Brunswick, in relation to the tabling of annual reports. I refer to the provisions for the tabling of the annual report of the Inspector of Explosives and the Inspector of Inflammable Liquids, as well as the annual report of the Department of Minerals and Energy. I remind this House that it has not received an annual report from the Department of Minerals and Energy since that department was established.

This House used to receive the annual report of the Mines Department even though sometimes it was many years late in being presented, but not since 1976 has a copy been received of the report of the Department of Minerals and Energy, even though the provision mentioned is still contained in the principal Act.

Similarly, the other two reports of the two inspectors under the Minister’s portfolio, specifically the report of the Inspector of Explosives, has not been presented to this Parliament. A report would provide members with an insight into the investigation of the inspectors since 1976. The 1976-77 report was tabled earlier this year but Parliament knows nothing of the activities of that inspector since that time, even though the requirement under the principal Act states that the report has to be tabled within the next calendar year.

At a time when this Government in particular is encouraging the use of liquefied petroleum gas, we see that eleven years have elapsed since the Liquefied Gases Act was framed. There are no safety standards or regulations governing the transportation of liquefied gases in this State as a result. Yet the last report of the Inspector of Explosives mentioned a considerable number of liquefied petroleum gas tanker accidents. This Parliament deserves far better information and treatment than it has so far received from the Department of Minerals and Energy.

In view of the increasing use of liquefied petroleum gas, the increasing concern about the safe conduct and transportation of that gas throughout Victoria and the very real role the Inspector of Explosives plays in informing the public of the possible dangers and hazards relating to the transportation of that gas, the Opposition calls upon the Minister to ensure that his department complies with the provisions of the principal Act to ensure a report is tabled in this Parliament in the not too distant future, so that from now on this Parliament receives a report, as the principal Act states, every twelve months and not every three or four years as the whim of the Minister dictates.

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—The Housing Commission recently lifted the earning rate for people eligible for welfare housing. I have a document which requires applicants for welfare housing to provide the commission with a statement from their employer of total gross income from all categories of employment, including shift penalties, bonuses and commissions, and so on, excluding overtime.
Some employers classify shift penalties as overtime. The State Government as an employer itself in certain circumstances categorizes shift penalties as overtime. Therefore, persons on the maximum wage of $200, earning $20 in shift penalties, would be eligible for welfare housing. Some employers would categorize it as overtime and it would not be taken into consideration when looking at the maximum rate of earnings.

However, other employers do not exclude shift penalties from the gross earnings. Therefore, if a person is on $200 plus the shift penalty, that person could be excluded from welfare housing.

Mr Ross-Edwards—They might only be on it for a temporary period.

Mr Rowe—That is right. A good example is the Commonwealth Government. Trans-Australia Airlines employs many people, most of whom live in my electorate. They do shift work, yet they are penalized by their employer’s actions. An anomaly exists. I am not blaming the Government or the Minister, but there is an anomaly in defining who is eligible for welfare housing.

People could be eligible depending upon who their employer is and how the employer classifies their earnings, particularly shift penalties. I ask the Minister of Housing to examine this matter as it does affect many people in my electorate who work at both Essendon Airport and Tullamarine.

Mr Simmonds (Reservoir)—I ask the Premier if he can respond, in the absence of the Assistant Minister of Education and the Treasurer, to a question in respect of the Merrilands High School which has been the subject of a fire which destroyed two staff rooms, the library and the store room in May of last year. The school authorities have been staggered to learn that the funds allocated for reconstruction are not available and, as a result, the school has been without proper facilities since last July. I ask the Premier to investigate the circumstances in which proposals to commence reconstruction, advised in May of this year, have been shelved. Can the Premier indicate when finance will be available for work to commence on this urgent reconstruction?

Mr Balfour (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The honorable member for Prahran asked a question regarding the remission of rates for the Air Force Association. I will be happy to take up that matter with the Minister for Local Government and ask him to advise the honorable member of the position.

The honorable member for Heatherton asked a question of the purchase of land by a council and some involvement of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. I am not sure whether this will be a matter for the Minister for Local Government or the Minister of Water Supply, who is the Minister responsible for the Board of Works. However, I will take up the matter with whoever is the relevant Minister in an attempt to have the situation rectified.

The honorable member for Morwell raised a question concerning the production of reports by the Department of Minerals and Energy. I make no excuses, but it is difficult to have these reports compiled. I will investigate the current situation and ensure that the reports can be made available to members of Parliament as soon as possible.

Mr Ramsay (Minister of Labour and Industry)—The honorable member for Werribee raised two matters concerning a business in the electorate he represents. It seemed to me, however, that the honorable member was more concerned to be seen to be trying to make the point that the Department of Labour and Industry and the Government are less than even-handed in their dealings with employers and employees. That is a charge which I vehemently deny.
The honorable member has, in fact, been of some assistance to the department in that he has set himself up as an assistant inspector for the department and has brought to its attention matters that might be of concern to it. In fact, the honorable member has gone a step further and has had these matters featuring on the front page of the local press. He is doing very well with his publicity. It may be just a coincidence that the only factory he has brought to the department's attention so far is owned by an individual who happened to be the honorable member's opponent at the last election. As I say, that might be purely coincidental, but in the absence of any other reports from the Werribee area, I would suggest that the allegations indicate that the lack of even-handedness might be on the part of the honorable member for Werribee rather than on the part of the department.

The Department of Labour and Industry has carried out inspections at the factory and the factory has been instructed that the required safety standards of the department are to be instituted and errors are to be corrected. So far as the allegation of wrongful dismissal of an employee is concerned, I point out that any citizen who is subject to what he believes is wrongful dismissal has the inalienable right to approach the Department of Labour and Industry and the matter will be investigated.

Mr AUSTIN (Minister for Property and Services)—The honorable member for Brunswick raised a matter in relation to friendly societies and the question he had earlier placed on notice, which I recently answered. This is a fairly difficult area and I am sure the House was confused by the matter raised. As the matter of friendly societies comes within the jurisdiction of the Attorney-General, I would suggest that the honorable member takes up the question with the Attorney-General or, if he is not satisfied with the answer I gave on notice, he might care to place another question on notice. Otherwise, I should be quite happy to receive any information in writing that he believes requires clarification.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The honorable member for Springvale spoke about boom gates or additional protection for the intersection of Lightwood Road and another street in the electorate he represents. I will have the matter investigated.

The honorable member for Glenhuntly suggested the deprived south-east is somehow being treated differently from the deprived west or the deprived north. That is not true. The reason why the answer given to the honorable member for Coburg suggested that the new trams would be available there and would not be available for the Carnegie route was that the trams are being introduced in a sensible pattern, through which they can best serve the tramways and meet the needs of the people who are the board's best customers.

If the honorable member would like a more technical answer, I should be pleased to ask the board to give it to him, but there are requirements for the trams to be introduced near depots, in the first instance, and, secondly, as the trams operate to regenerate electricity as they brake, they are best used on highly-trafficked lines so that the trams following them are able to take most advantage of the regeneration of electricity. If the honorable member wishes to address another question to me, either personally or on notice, I shall be delighted to obtain an answer for him. The department does not dislike the people at Carnegie. It would like to see more of them travelling on its trams.

The honorable member for Glenroy raised a matter for the Minister of Health concerning a public hospital for Broadmeadows and the requirement, as he sees it, for the correspondence
between the State instrumentalities—I presume he was referring to the Health Commission and the Commonwealth—to be made available. I will direct the attention of the Minister of Health to this matter and ask him to provide the honorable member with an answer.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Assistant Minister of Health)—In reply to the honorable member for Greensborough, I believe the report to which she referred is important and I am anxious to make it available to honorable members and to the public. I am at present appraising it and also examining other matters connected with my particular responsibility for early childhood development, with an emphasis on preventative treatment. In the context of that appraisal I will be releasing the report and at the same time releasing details of the various activities of the early childhood development programme in the preventative programme.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—In answer to the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the National Party, I point out that the report was delivered to the Registrar of Co-operative Societies in the week ending 13 October. Therefore, it would not seem to me that the investigations were completed in March. At this stage the report will not be made available to honorable members although ultimately it will be.

I point out to the honorable member for Essendon that when constituents of mine have come to my electorate office in St Kilda raising the question of possible anomalies, I have been able to have their problems sorted out by officers of the Housing Commission to the satisfaction of my constituents.

If there is any anomaly which the honorable member would like to have specifically investigated, I will be pleased to have that done. If there is an anomaly which simply depends on the way in which an individual employer classifies shift penalty rates or overtime rates, I will have that matter investigated and clarified.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I will be glad to draw the attention of the Minister of Education the matter of the Merrilands High School raised by the honorable member for Reservoir. I will ask the Minister to give an answer direct to the honorable member.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.16 pm.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

MULGRAVE FREEWAY
(Question No. 144)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister of Transport:

On what dates and at what points counts of traffic using the Mulgrave Freeway have been carried out, and what (a) was the result in each case; and (b) the relationship to traffic projections prepared prior to construction of the freeway?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

(a) and (b). Permanent traffic counters have been installed by the Country Roads Board at various locations on the Mulgrave Freeway enabling traffic volumes to be monitored continuously.

The following table sets out the average daily traffic figures obtained from the traffic counters at points immediately east of the listed interchanges for the periods shown together with the corresponding traffic predictions prepared in 1974 prior to the opening of the freeway west of Stud Road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of traffic counter</th>
<th>Average daily traffic in 1977</th>
<th>Average daily traffic in 1979</th>
<th>Traffic predictions in 1974 for 1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heatherton Road...</td>
<td>21 800</td>
<td>27 300</td>
<td>25 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington Road...</td>
<td>31 000</td>
<td>42 200</td>
<td>35 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springvale Road...</td>
<td>29 800</td>
<td>38 900</td>
<td>33 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn Road...</td>
<td>18 500</td>
<td>30 000</td>
<td>25 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24 October 1979] Questions on Notice 3753

LEVEL CROSSINGS
(Question No. 675)

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Transport:

What is the annual cost of manning and maintaining each of the ten level crossings between Merri and Ruthven stations on the Epping railway line?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of protection</th>
<th>Approximate manning cost</th>
<th>Average maintenance cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Street</td>
<td>Interlocked gates</td>
<td>$2,028</td>
<td>$2,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthurton Road</td>
<td>Interlocked gates</td>
<td>$2,028</td>
<td>$2,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beavers Road</td>
<td>Hand gates</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolton Avenue</td>
<td>Hand gates</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normanby Avenue</td>
<td>Hand gates</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutton Street</td>
<td>Interlocked gates</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakover Road</td>
<td>Hand gates</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Street</td>
<td>Boom barriers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer Street</td>
<td>Boom barriers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Road</td>
<td>Boom barriers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regent Street</td>
<td>Boom barriers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>Boom barriers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$3,985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not possible to accurately assess the cost of manning interlocked gates as these are operated by staff in conjunction with signalling and other safeworking duties.

HOUSE BUILDERS' LIABILITY
(Question No. 688)

Mr MATHEWS (Oakleigh) asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Minister for Local Government:

1. Whether the Housing Industry Association has advised its members on behalf of the Housing Builders' Association Ltd, an approved guarantor pursuant to the house builders' liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958, how to avoid the provisions of the Act; if so—(a) what was the nature of this advice and when it was first made; (b) when it was brought to the attention of the Minister of his predecessor; and (c) whether it has been the subject of review by the advisory committee set up to advise the Minister upon amendments and improvements to the Act by his predecessor?

2. Whether Mr M. K. Pinnock of the Housing Industry Association—Housing Builders Association Ltd is a member of the advisory committee?

3. Who are the members of this and any other committee reporting on the house builders' liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958, indicating the date of appointment, the qualifications and any building industry affiliation and background in each case?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The answer is:

The Victorian Railways Board has advised me that there are twelve level crossings between Merri and Ruthven stations on the Epping line. The annual manning and maintenance costs are as follows:

Mr BALFOUR (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is:

1. I am informed by Housing Builders' Association Ltd that to the best of its knowledge it has never advised members how to avoid provisions of the Local Government Act.

2. Mr M. K. Pinnock was a member of the advisory committee established by my predecessor to review the house builders’ liability legislation. That committee has now been disbanded.

3. I have requested the Master Builders' Housing Fund Ltd and the Housing Builders' Association Ltd to form a committee to make submissions and suggestions from time to time on the operation of the house builders' liability provisions of the Local Government Act 1958. Submissions from this source will be considered, together with any other submissions received.

PROPERTY PURCHASES
(Question No. 1078)

Mr SIMPSON (Niddrie) asked the Minister for Property and Services:

How many purchases of $100,000 and over, monitored by the newly appointed Department of Property and Services since it was established in November 1978 have been above the Valuer-General's valuation, indicate in each case—

(a) the amount paid by the particular Department and the Valuer-General's valuation;

(b) the date of the purchases;
Mr AUSTIN (Minister for Property and Services)—The answer is:

I advised the member for Brunswick by letter dated 21 September 1979 in regard to question No. 468 asked of the Chief Secretary on 6 June 1979 that whilst the Office of the Government Statist and Actuary falls within my administration and did so as from 1 July 1979, the Attorney-General is responsible for the administration of the Friendly Societies Act 1958.

I understand that the Attorney-General will be providing the answer to question No. 468 in the normal way.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS
(Question No. 1374)

Dr COGHLI (Werribee) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Forests:

In respect of each building in the central business district and nearby inner-suburban areas of Melbourne partly or wholly occupied by a State Government Department or Instrumentality for which the Minister is responsible but not owned by the Victorian Government—(a) what is the address; (b) what is the floor area; (c) what is the form of tenancy; (d) when the tenancy commenced; (e) when the tenancy was last extended; (f) when the tenancy agreement is next subject to renewal, extension or termination; and (g) who are the occupants including the name of the section or sections of the department or instrumentality, specifying the number of personnel accommodated and the type of use of the area occupied?

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Forests is:

The Forests Commission Victoria does not occupy any building in the central business district or nearby inner suburban areas of Melbourne that is not owned by the Victorian Government.
He is in Western Australia on Government business. I also have to announce that the Minister for Planning will be 15 minutes late for question time.

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**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**STATE INSURANCE OFFICE**

Mr Wilkes (Leader of the Opposition)—Can the Treasurer indicate the extent of the loss suffered by the State Insurance Office as a result of a broker going into liquidation in 1978-79? Can he name the broker who went into liquidation, thus causing this loss? In view of the fact that the Insurance Commissioner has volunteered, in his report, a detailed scheme for the regulation of insurance brokers, does the Government intend to accept that suggestion, as a matter of urgency, to protect the Victorian public?

Mr Thompson (Treasurer)—That is a detailed, multi-pronged question and I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition put it on notice.

**RIVER MURRAY AGREEMENT**

Mr Ross-Edwards (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Premier to recent criticism of the Victorian Government by the Federal Minister for National Development concerning the delay in the signing of the River Murray Agreement, particularly the delay by the Victorian Government in submitting to the administration proposals for a Ministerial council. Can the Premier advise the House what steps the Victorian Government is taking to finalize this matter?

Mr Hamer (Premier)—The view that the Victorian Government has taken is that, if the functions of the River Murray Commission are to be enlarged so that that commission has greater control and a greater regard for water quality in the River Murray, for anti-salinity measures and so on, then those functions are sufficiently important to warrant Ministerial supervision.

It would be wrong and embarrassing for the officers concerned to be expected to make political decisions or decisions that bind disciplines and departments other than their own. One does not have to cast the net very wide to see that, in addition to State Rivers and Water Supply Commission officers, what is required to be done will involve the Ministry of Conservation, the Lands Department, the Treasury and many other departments.

Some months ago the Victorian Government asked that a conference of Ministers be convened to discuss Victoria's proposal. The Government was not anxious to delay in any way the development of more comprehensive control of the Murray.

Mr Jasper—that is holding it up.

Mr Hamer—The Government did not seek that. The Government is in favour of greater control and of more comprehensive measures than have already been taken on these questions. Victoria requested a meeting of Ministers to discuss the proposal that there be a Ministerial council. Ministerial councils have been appointed in a number of areas—the Australian Transport Advisory Council, the Albury-Wodonga Ministerial Council and many others—and the Victorian Government believed that this matter was sufficiently important to warrant the appointment of a Ministerial council in this case also so that decisions could be made which would be binding on the respective Governments and which would ensure effective action. That meeting unfortunately was not held until this week. There has been a delay but I assure the House that it is not the making of the Victorian Government. Now apparently the other two States and
the Commonwealth are not prepared to have a Ministerial council of the sort envisaged by Victoria. They are prepared to have a meeting of Ministers from time to time to supervise action taken along the Murray Valley.

Mr Ross-Edwards—And to confirm action, presumably?

Mr HAMER—It is not very clear. Certainly they are prepared to have Ministers meet, but as we point out, that is not quite the same as having a Ministerial council in charge.

Mr Jasper—It is a stalemate.

Mr HAMER—No, it is not a stalemate. Victoria is anxious to have action on the matter, and will go ahead. We will agree to have an enlargement of the powers of the River Murray Commission, but we will make sure the Ministers are called together at regular intervals and that decisions are not merely left to a group of specialists who will necessarily have to involve other disciplines in many of those decisions.

**CO-OPERATIVE FARMERS AND GRAZIERS DIRECT MEAT SUPPLY LTD**

Mr McKELLAR (Portland)—Does the Minister of Housing have further advice from the Solicitor-General in regard to the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd, and if so, will he now table the report?

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—

Through the courtesy of the Attorney-General I have received a memorandum of advice from the Solicitor-General which I believe is extremely important. I wish to quote from two parts of this advice. The report deals with the affairs of the co-operative, particularly between 1968 and 1975.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—I raise a point of order. On today's Notice Paper there is a notice of motion which deals with this important matter. In those circumstances I ask your ruling, Mr Speaker, on whether it would be appropriate for the Minister to go into this matter now in any detail. Perhaps you could advise both sides of the House in advance on this matter.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—

On the point of order, the question that I was asked deals with advice from the Solicitor-General. I propose to answer the question concerning the advice from the Solicitor-General, and I believe that matter, although it is of concern to the motion, is a different matter.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The Notice of Motion on the Notice Paper may or may not go ahead as it is the responsibility of the honorable member who introduced it. The Chair does not know in advance whether the Leader of the Opposition intends to proceed. Therefore, questions on this subject are permissible.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—

Firstly, the Solicitor-General's report deals with the affairs of the co-operative, particularly between 1968 and 1975. Secondly, I believe the report ought not to be tabled. The publicity which would follow the tabling of the report and the debate upon its contents would be likely to produce an atmosphere which would prejudice a fair trial.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I raise a point of order. I ask whether the Minister is prepared to identify the document from which he is quoting. Will he also indicate whether he is prepared to table that document?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Will the Minister make the document available to the House?

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—

Do you intend to rule on the point of order, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER—The point of order raised was: Will the Minister identify the document from which he is quoting and make it available to the House? I ask the Minister to do so.

Mr DIXON—In deference to your question to me, Sir, I should think that that is not a point of order. The document has been identified as a report of the Solicitor-General which I received by the courtesy of the Attorney-General. My answer to the tabling of the document is, "No". I am prepared to make the report of the Solicitor-General available to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party, as I
have already done with the opinion of the Crown Solicitor. The report should not be tabled. Upon the advice of——

Honorable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I am trying very hard to hear the reply of the Minister and I ask honorable members to listen in silence.

Mr DIXON—The document should not be tabled because, upon the advice of the Solicitor-General to me——

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—On a point of order——

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I ask the honorable member for Broadmeadows to resume his place.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—The tabling of the document would prejudice a fair trial of a person who is at present committed. The procedure I am taking in enabling the House to be aware of the substantive part of the advice without adverturing to other parts of the advice which would prejudice a fair trial of the person is in the best interests of the knowledge of the House and of the fair trial. I should be allowed to proceed with the answer to the question.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—On a point of order, it had been my intention to wait until the Minister had finished to make the same point of order that the honorable member for Broadmeadows attempted to make. It is the practice of the House that when a Minister or an honorable member quotes from a document and an honorable member requests that the document be made available, the Chair has invariably indicated that the Minister or honorable member concerned must do so. I refer to the current edition of May at page 431, which deals with the citing of documents not before the House. It states, *inter alia:*

A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he be prepared to lay it upon the table.

On other occasions, the Speaker has made it clear to Ministers that if they wish to quote selectively from a document, they should bring into the House only the selective parts. The Minister of Housing should be aware of that; it has been the practice of the House over many years. In accordance with that practice, as indicated by the latest edition of *May,* the Minister, in response to the point of order, should be required to lay the paper upon the table when he has finished quoting from it.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The Minister has indicated that laying the paper on the table may prejudice judicial proceedings. I will not rule on this point now. I wish to consider previous rulings and the procedure that is documented in *May.* I shall do so when the time for questions without notice has expired.

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—On a further point of order, in those circumstances I suggest that it is improper for the Minister to continue quoting from the document selectively until you, Sir, have determined the point of order. The Minister should be requested not to continue quoting.

The SPEAKER—Order! I uphold the point of order. I shall give the Minister the opportunity of pursuing the answer to his question later, pending the result of a ruling on the previous point of order.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—I shall no longer quote from the document but I wish to make these points. The Solicitor-General has made it abundantly clear to me that a fair trial would be prejudiced if this matter is made public—not only the report, but also his comments. Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish honorable members of this House would have some regard for the judiciary and the fair trial of the people concerned and not just be concerned with making political points.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—On a point of order, the honorable member for Portland asked the Minister of Housing if he had received any further reports from the Solicitor-General in regard to the report of the inquiry into the Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd. I suggest that
the Minister is now debating the matter and that, in that regard, the honorable gentleman is out of order.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—On the point of order, because of the various points of order that have been raised in this House I have scarcely had time to refer to the actual question. I suggest that that point of order ought not to be upheld.

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The question asked by the honorable member for Portland was in two parts and related to the report on Co-operative Farmers and Graziers Direct Meat Supply Ltd and referred to advice. Mr Deputy Speaker, I put it to you that the Minister has not had a proper opportunity of relating his remarks to the question, so there is no point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—I understand from the Speaker's comments to the House prior to his leaving the chair that he will give the Minister the opportunity of speaking further on the document which the Minister presented as the first part of his reply to the honorable member for Portland. I, therefore, suggest that the Minister should confine his remarks purely to answering the honorable member for Portland or alternatively, provided that he can leave his remarks to a later stage, to make them later.

Mr DIXON (Minister of Housing)—My remarks are confined to the question asked by the honorable member for Portland. The advice is that there should be no tabling of the report because any part of it could prejudice a fair trial. The report relates to matters that occurred up until 1975 and, in my view, the motion proposed to be moved by the Leader of the Opposition should be withdrawn, otherwise this Parliament will degenerate in the same way that the New South Wales Parliament has degenerated.

Honorable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! I believe that the Minister has answered the question to this stage, so until the Speaker presents his ruling to the House we will go on to the next question.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD

Mr TREZISE (Geelong North)—I ask a question of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, but before he answers I ask him to think carefully about the answer. I am not being sarcastic.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—Order! Question time is a valuable time for all members of this House and when an honorable member rises to his feet to ask a question I do not want him to preface it by remarks other than the substance of the question. I ask the honorable member for Geelong North to ask his question without any side comments.

Mr TREZISE—I asked the Minister to think about his answer. I was not being sarcastic about any previous questions. The question relates to the Minister's reported statement this morning that apart from the Taxation Department no other body is given information about a person's betting transactions with the Totalizator Agency Board.

Does the Minister again emphatically deny that other bodies, such as the Police Department, solicitors for the Family Court, and others which gather information, are given information from the telephone accounts of private citizens? If the Minister finds that they are given such information, what action will he take? Will he follow the lead given by the New South Wales Totalizator Agency Board that when the Taxation Department is given information, the bettor himself is automatically notified. I ask that the honorable gentleman think carefully about his answer.

Mr DIXON (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—I will think carefully about my answer. The honorable member has obviously not read my press statement; he ought to do so and he ought to read the answers to the questions which he has asked.

Mr Trezise—Where are they?

Mr DIXON—They should have been delivered to the honorable member this morning. The answers to the questions are seen in the press statement. There are bodies which have received information from the Totalizator Agency
Board. That is made perfectly clear in the press statement. For the entire list of all the people who have received information, I refer the honorable member to the press statement. Concerning the notification of bettors, I believe that it ought in fact be taking place, and the Totalizator Agency Board, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Taxation Department is exploring ways and means of dealing with that legal requirement.

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—On a point of order, the Minister has referred at length to his press statement. I do not know whether he actually quoted from it. I ask him if he would be prepared to table the press release.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr A. T. Evans)—There is no point of order. The Minister did not quote from the press release.

RIVER MURRAY COMMISSION

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—I direct my question to the Premier. It follows from a question asked by the Leader of the National Party in relation to the comments made by the Minister for National Development, Mr Newman, about the operation of the River Murray Commission. Is it correct that the attitude of the Victorian Government to changes to the River Murray Commission charter, in relation to water quality only, is holding up the operation and the extension of the River Murray Commission in dealing with the problems of the river?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The answer to the honorable member is, “No”. I have explained exactly what the attitude of the Victorian Government is. The Government wants better control over water quality in the River Murray. It wants more effective action taken to cut down salinity, and it wants more effective action to preserve the areas along the river, including the wildlife, timber, and everything else. Therefore, the Government has not held up the agreement unnecessarily. A Ministerial council has been sought and the Government still wants Ministers to meet as often as possible and to make sure that what is done about the River Murray is effective and that all Governments participate, not just through their representatives on the River Murray Commission, but throughout their relevant departments.

ROAD LAW FOR CYCLISTS

Mr COX (Mitcham)—I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to give consideration to the incorporation of the requirements for cyclists in the guide on Victorian road law that is made available to new drivers or to people seeking licences. At the moment this is not incorporated in the booklet and, with the increase of cyclists on the roads, I should like the Minister to give consideration to having this information for cyclists included in the booklet.

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Strangely enough, I was discussing this matter this morning with officers of the departments. We were discussing what the code booklet should contain. It is intended to issue the booklet for all licensed drivers and it will be a summary of the main provisions of the road code. It is our intention to revise the booklet to cover aspects such as those mentioned by the honorable member for Mitcham. In future, many more bikes will be seen on our roads. It is essential that cyclists are fully familiar with the road code. The honorable members suggestion is an excellent one and the Government will ensure that the inclusion takes place.

THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—What action does the Treasurer intend taking with respect to the recommendation of the Insurance Commissioner that third-party insurance premiums be increased, on average, by $32?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—The Government will give careful consideration to this report before implementing it "verbatim". The increase suggested is a large one because of a trend observed over the last five months with regard to the payment of accident premiums and accident claims. Prior to this period the trend had been in the opposite direction.
Therefore, the Government will wait to ensure that this trend is maintained. The Government will examine the other operations of the State Insurance Office and take into account profit from other forms of insurance before making any decisions in relation to third-party premiums alone.

HEROIN

Mr McARTHUR (Ringwood)—I refer to a press statement this week by the senior psychiatrist for Pentridge Prison and Fairlea Female Prison that the dangers of heroin have been over-stated and opiate drugs are not as dangerous as the media would have society believe. In view of the contrary opinions from various authorities in the community, could the Minister for Community Welfare Services clarify his department’s policy on this issue?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—I have not seen that statement by the psychiatrist concerned. However, that psychiatrist is an officer of the Health Commission which is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health. I will be happy to discuss the statement with my colleague. The honorable member will be advised of the outcome of that discussion.

MOTOR REGISTRATION BRANCH

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—Will the Treasurer take up the recommendation of the Insurance Commissioner to reduce administrative expenses by ensuring that all compulsory third-party insurance is transacted through the Motor Registration Branch?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—The Government is examining all the recommendations. At the moment all third-party insurance is transacted through the State Insurance Office and if there can be some savings, as indicated by the State Insurance Office, the Government will react favourably to the recommendation.

MAN BUSES

Mr CRELLIN (Sandringham)—Can the Minister of Transport advise the House of the current situation in relation to the production of the new MAN buses for the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board? Can the honorable gentleman also advise whether any of the new buses have yet gone into service; and, if so, whether he has had any opportunity of obtaining public reaction?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I have not received any passenger reaction to the new buses. I believe some of them have been delivered but I will have to check that with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. It is expected that 60 buses will be delivered during the course of this financial year as part of a continuing order under the contract. However, I will obtain details and advise the honorable member accordingly.

TABLING OF REPORT

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! In relation to the point of order raised in connection with the tabling by the Minister of Housing of a document from which he quoted, on 30 June I ruled that a Minister quoting from any document must be prepared to table the document in full. One of my predecessors, Mr Speaker Christie, on 28 March 1973 made a similar ruling. On that occasion he ruled that if a Minister were not prepared to table a document of a confidential nature he should not quote from it. However, the situation is complicated by the sub judice rule, about which May says that a document that has been cited ought to be laid upon the table of the House if it can be done without injury to the public interest. I would assume that the public interest would include the sub judice convention and the rights of an individual who is either currently being tried or has been committed for trial.

The sub judice convention states that matters awaiting or under adjudication in a criminal court or a court martial should not be referred to in any motion, debate or question to a Minister, including supplementary questions. I have read in full the statement from which the Minister was quoting in part and it is clear that the publication of the document might well be prejudicial to
the trial of an individual who has already been committed for trial on two counts relating to a transaction.

The Minister made a statement about which I am not entirely clear. I ask the honorable gentleman whether he stated that he had or would make the full document available to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party.

Mr Dixon—I will.

The SPEAKER—I then rule, under the sub judice convention, that it would be undesirable for the document to be made a public document but that the Minister of Housing should make it available to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Leader of the National Party, so that the two parties can consider the document without it becoming public property. If that were done, it would be a private document between the Minister and the parties. In that case, the National Party and the Opposition will have the opportunity of studying it.

Mr Dixon (Minister of Housing)—May I address you on your ruling, Sir?

The SPEAKER—Yes.

Mr Dixon—the point I wish to make—and I believe the House must be grateful for your ruling, Sir—is that the Leader of the National Party—

Mr Wilton (Broadmeadows)—I raise a point of order. Mr Speaker, you have just ruled that in the interests of affording persons who are to appear before the courts the opportunity of unprejudiced trials, the document should be made available to the Leaders of the National Party and the Opposition, and in making that ruling you relied on the convention of sub judice.

My understanding of the situation is that it is necessary for a trial date to be set down before the sub judice rule can have any application. However, if that is the case, and I accept your ruling, Mr Speaker, I respectfully submit that it would be out of order for the Minister of Housing to be now discussing the matter any further as he would be taking an advantage which is denied to other honorable members because of your ruling.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! On the question of the sub judice rule, in the case of criminal cases, in law courts, including courts martial, from the moment a law is set in motion, by a charge being laid, the sub judice principle applies. As charges have been laid and the individual concerned has been committed, the sub judice rule would apply.

As to the Minister of Housing addressing me on the subject, it may be more appropriate for the Minister to address me in my chambers. Finally, I should add that I think Ministers, particularly, must take heed of this particular case. No question should be asked of a Minister which requests a Minister to quote from a document which cannot be tabled because of the sub judice principle. Such a question would be circumventing the rules of the House, and I advise Ministers to have regard to that in future.

Mr Cain (Bundoora)—On a point of order, Mr Speaker, you are, in fact, ruling that there can be no discussion on matters which may be referred to in a document tabled by a Minister, and under the sub judice rule the matters cannot be referred to in any debate on these proceedings. This document, the opinion, may well contain reference or a comment by the Solicitor-General not to discuss the matter, but it may make no reference to the actual matters subject to his consideration, and that is the difference.

The sub judice rule provides that there shall be no discussion on the substance of a matter before a court but all this document does is to say that the Solicitor-General believes certain matters ought not be raised. The opinion does not necessarily raise the substance of these matters but the sub judice rule provides that it is the subject of the charge that shall not be discussed, not the reference to it.

Mr Wilkes (Leader of the Opposition)—On the point of order, Mr Speaker, you may recall a similar situation existed when the CRISP computer matter was being discussed. On that occasion the Minister trotted out an opinion from the then Crown Solicitor...
suggesting the same argument, that perhaps it would not be advisable for the matter to be debated in the House. There was no suggestion that it might infringe on the rule of sub judice and indeed the House permitted the discussion to go on.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—On the point of order, I assume that the honorable member for Bundoora has not read the document.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—No, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER—Then the honorable member is presuming what is in it. I advise the honorable member that I have seen the document and there are certain matters in it which certainly fall within the sub judice rule. Under those conditions I rule that the document should not be made a public document. The Minister of Housing has agreed to make the document available to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party.

PETITIONS

Abortion

Mr McGrath (Lowan) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that action be taken to protect unborn children by prohibiting abortion in Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 44 signatures.

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

Animal welfare

Mr Matthea (Oakleigh) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria praying that the House take action to initiate an open inquiry into animal welfare and the structure, finance and activities of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in the State of Victoria. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 74 signatures.

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

PAPERS

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

Country Roads Board—Report for the year 1978-79—Ordered to be printed.

Victorian Development Corporation—Report for the year 1978-79—Ordered to be printed.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) 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 Racing (Financial Provisions) Bill.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! Before I call on Notices of Motion, General Business, No. 1, I point out that the document that is being made available to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party regarding the sub judice question complicates the issue somewhat in that the sub judice rule will, in some way, inhibit debate on this motion.

Does the Leader of the Opposition feel that he has had sufficient time to study this document, would he like to delay consideration of his motion until after item No. 2 has been discussed to enable him to look at the document and then proceed with his motion, or does he wish to proceed forthwith?

The Chair would have to make a statement regarding the scope of the debate, which it would prefer to do after the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party have considered the document.

Mr Wilkes (Leader of the Opposition)—I do not propose to infringe any rule of sub judice in the debate on my motion. I regard it as despicable that a Minister can come into this Chamber on the morning that a debate is to take place and attempt to prevent that debate by quoting from a statement which he claims to be the opinion of the Solicitor-General.