Legislative Council
Thursday, 30 April 1981

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 11.4 a.m. and read the prayer.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING AUTHORITY BILL

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply), was read a first time.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education) - The Minister for Local Government is absent today at a municipal conference and will not be present during question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BLUE RANGE CREEK

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province) - Can the Minister of Forests inform the House whether a substantial area of native hardwood forests along the Blue Range Creek in the Mansfield area is to be demolished to make way for softwood planting? If that is so, can the Minister confirm whether such action is in direct contravention of the recommendations for the Land Conservation Council for the land in question?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Forests) - I cannot answer the question at this stage; I would have to make inquiries. However, I doubt whether such action would be in contravention of the recommendations of the Land Conservation Council for the land in question.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) - Order! I point out to honourable members that they may not ask Ministers for a legal opinion on any matter.

AMALGAMATION OF WATER AND SEWERAGE TRUSTS

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) - I refer the Minister of Water Supply to an opinion that presently exists in the community that it is unlikely that more water or sewerage trusts will be formed, particularly in small centres throughout Victoria. Obviously those services will increasingly be extended to small communities. Can the Minister explain whether separate trusts will, in the future, be formed for such services or whether they will be combined in some way either with other existing trusts or with municipalities? Does the Government have a policy on this issue?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply) - The Government does not believe small water trusts should be formed if it is at all possible to incorporate them in larger trusts for administrative purposes. The Government is withholding any formation of small water and sewerage trusts until the Public Bodies Review Committee has reported on water trusts and sewerage authorities.

NOTICES OF DISRUPTION TO WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR (Boronia Province) - Can the Minister of Water Supply inform the House what procedures the Board of Works adopts with regard to the interruption to water supply? It has come to my notice that a very unsatisfactory process exists when water mains burst and residents are left without water. These people have no idea of how long they will have to wait before the water supply is reconnected. What procedure does the Board of Works adopt to inform residents when there is an interruption to the water supply?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply) - When a water main bursts, the Board of Works usually advises the residents affected on how long the water supply will be unavailable. The Board of Works does endeavour to repair any burst water mains as quickly as possible.

KILMORE WATERWORKS TRUST

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province) - Can the Minister of Water Supply inform the House whether the Kilmore Waterworks Trust urgently
needs to use the Sunday Creek to provide water to the Kilmore township and is the Minister prepared to make funds available out of the trust's depreciation fund amounting to $132,000 to assist in that process and to assist in the upgrading, improving and replacement of water mains for the Kilmore township?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I met a deputation from the Kilmore Waterworks Trust only recently and I was amazed to learn that the trust had not taken up the $65,000 allocation of loan funds that have been made available to the trust for this year. I informed the deputation that the trust should proceed with the works it had planned for the reticulation of water for the area. As far as the water supply of the Sunday Creek is concerned, that situation is being monitored for Kilmore, for Broadford and for people who have diversion permits and riparian rights. A report on that monitoring will be known within a few months. I would be quite agreeable to the Kilmore Waterworks Trust using its depreciation funds for capital works, and I have suggested this to the trust. However, the trust has stated that some of its funds are invested in long-term deposits and are not immediately available.

TEACHER TRAVELLING EXPENSES

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—Can the Minister of Education advise whether it is a fact that the Technical Schools Division has fully expended its allocation for travelling allowances to technical teachers who must travel to various schools within their region to provide technical education? Is the honourable gentleman aware of the fact that some teachers have not been paid for travelling incurred as early as the commencement of this term? What action is the Minister taking to overcome the situation to ensure that teachers are paid as early as possible?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Recently I became aware that there were problems in paying travelling allowances in both the Secondary Schools Division and the Technical Schools Division. I called for an immediate investigation of the facts and sought a report on why this had occurred and whether there were any changes in the circumstances which justified the position, and provided grounds upon which I could make an application to Treasury for further funds. In both divisions there had been substantial over-expenditure if the rate provided for in the Budget had been adhered to. In both divisions this was partly attributable to the fact that each division had carry-overs of payments from the previous financial year. That is not an ideal way of budgeting. Budgeting ought to be for the year in question and funds ought to be readily available to meet promptly all commitments incurred within the Budget. Money available to meet legitimate claims for travel has unfortunately been adversely affected by this fact, but divisions must live within their budgets.

In the case of the Secondary Schools Division I have received a report which does indicate certain changes in circumstances which justify a submission to Treasury, and that submission has been made.

In the case of the Technical Schools Division the submission made to me does not show a change in circumstances sufficient at this stage, to enable a successful submission to Treasury, and I have sought further information.

My objective will certainly be to ensure that teachers who have incurred travelling expenses are paid as promptly as possible, but I must also seek to ensure in the future that all divisions and sections of the department learn to live within their budgets.

MONITORING OF EMISSIONS TO AIR

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—Is the Minister for Conservation aware of claims that the B. F. Goodrich Chemical Ltd plant operating within the petro-chemical complex at Altona is one of the largest producers of PVC in the world and also produces a substance known as vinyl chloride which is a chemical known as one of the most dangerous
causes of cancer? Is the Minister aware that it was discovered recently overseas that levels of 5 parts per million of air were causing cancer and that the Australian standard was still set at 50 parts per million? Can the Minister advise the House what action has been taken to monitor emissions to the air from this plant in Altona and can honourable members have an assurance that the well-being of both the workers at the factory and the residents of the surrounding area is fully protected?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—That is a very good question. The State environment protection policy on air pollution is in the final stages of examination by Cabinet. Vinyl chloride emissions are classified as class 3 indicators and the policy provides this about class 3 indicators—I just happen to have a copy with me—it states:

The emissions of any class 3 indicator is reduced to the maximum extent achievable by technology or prohibited if it is considered by the authority to constitute a significant threat to public health or to the air environment.

In other words, there is no objective standard set on this issue; it has to be reduced to the maximum possible technical means available or prohibited altogether if it is a danger to health.

ENGLISH MIGRANT TEACHERS

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I ask the Minister of Education whether, in view of the importance to students from non-English speaking backgrounds being provided with adequate instruction in spoken and written English, the Minister will take urgent steps to rectify the acute shortage of teachers of English as a second language as revealed in the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association survey of December 1980 which indicated that in 1979, 105,983 ethnic students were enrolled in Victorian schools—there are, for example children from at least ten nationalities attending some schools in the electorate I represent. In addition immigration is expected to rise from 80,000 persons a year to more than 100,000 persons after 1985.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Both the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government are fully aware of the need for adequate assistance for children for whom English is a second language. The honourable member will be aware that the Commonwealth Government has accepted a number of recommendations of the Galbally report on the subject. The matter will be dealt with in co-operation between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.

TITLES OFFICE

The Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern Province)—Can the Attorney-General inform the House what stage has been reached with plans to bring the Titles Office into the computer age?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Honourable members will remember that last year I indicated that Treasury had agreed to provide funds for the first stage of bringing the Titles Office into the computer age, namely, the computerization of unregistered dealings. There are more than 80,000 unregistered dealings at any one time in the Titles Office and a good deal of the time spent on searching titles is taken up trying to track down the unregistered dealings and then search them.

The Titles Office has advertised for and is in the process of appointing within the next week or so a consultant who will be able to assist and advise on the installation of that system, which I hope will be able to come into operation within about two or two and a half years. It takes that long because there has to be a staged introduction through the system. The development after that will be a matter for the Treasurer of the day, but the eventual aim will be to have all the records of the Titles Office on computer so it will be easier to have examinations made of the various documents.

LABELLING OF MEAT PRODUCTS

The Hon. J. W. S. RADFORD (Bendigo Province)—I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Conservation representing the Minister
of Health. I draw his attention to recent comments by the Sheep Meat Council of Australia regarding accurate and truthful labelling and advertising of meat products. The Sheep Meat Council of Australia is concerned that many products sold, including meat pies, sausages, hamburgers and many manufactured meats, could contain large quantities of vegetable protein as a meat substitute and maybe sold under a meat label. Can the Minister indicate what steps are being taken to protect consumers in Victoria from the possible sale of such meat substitutes falsely labelled as meat?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The requirement for meat in a meat pie—I am not sure about sausages—is that it should be 25 per cent of the weight of the product, including the pastry. The policing of this is in the hands of the Health Commission and local health inspectors and prosecutions are undertaken for those persons who do not comply with the requirement.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I ask the Minister of Education whether he is aware of advice from the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission to the Tertiary Education Commission that Rusden State College should severely cut student intake in the 1982-84 triennium? If so, would the Minister not agree that if the recommendations of the Tertiary Education Commission are implemented there will be a significant loss of tertiary educational opportunities in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—It is very easy to hide one's head in the sand and to refuse to face facts. The facts are that the number of openings for teachers has declined. That situation has not arisen from declining enrolments or a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratios, but from a substantial drop in the resignation rates of teachers. When economic times are good and favourable and jobs are available, many teachers take jobs outside the service, knowing that they can return to teaching jobs at a later stage.

Few alternative jobs are available now and in any event teachers fear that if they take on other jobs no positions will be available if and when they desire to return to the Teaching Service. The decline in enrolments has also caused fears on the part of teachers for the future. Over the past few years the resignation rate in the Teaching Service has dropped from 14 per cent to 6 per cent and that has meant a reduction of 4000 teacher opportunities per annum. That is a factor that teaching institutions could not have foreseen. It is a change in habit patterns. However, it has now happened and it would be absolutely irresponsible to train thousands of prospective teachers for jobs that do not exist.

The Hon. D. R. White—you did it for years.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT—Mr White obviously was not listening when I gave the facts a moment ago. If he had listened he would realize that the changes in the resignation rates of teachers have vastly reduced opportunities for those wishing to enter the profession.

The Tertiary Education Commission has indicated that the number of places for student teachers must be reduced by 2000. However, places for students in certain other facilities will be increased. Victoria must face the fact that fewer teacher places will be available and that the Commonwealth will fund fewer places. In these circumstances hard decisions must be made by the Government. The decisions will be announced next week. The way in which this is done must ensure the best and most equitable opportunities for young people throughout Victoria who desire to undertake tertiary courses within the constraints of the Commonwealth's financial limitation.

It is not possible to think only of the interests of a single area. One must consider the long-term interests of Victorian students and Victorian education in a balanced and proper way, and that is what will be done.
APPRENTICE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—My question to the Minister of Education relates to the training of apprentices, particularly plumbing apprentices. Last year, a new scheme was introduced by the Government in four technical colleges in Melbourne. The Minister has visited some of the colleges and has seen how successful the programme is. The programme will provide trained tradesmen shortly and it could be extended to train apprentices fully. In view of the value in the programme at the four colleges in Melbourne, which the Government supports, does the Minister have any plans to set up a similar programme in Geelong, and, if not, why not?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The Minister for Employment and Training and I, together with the Technical and Further Education Board and the Industrial Training Commission are examining ways and means of extending the block release programme training for apprentices in suitable fields as widely and as quickly as possible.

PAPER

The following paper, pursuant to the direction of an Act of Parliament, was laid on the table by the Clerk:


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

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (CLEAN AIR) BILL

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

Assembly's amendments:
1. Clause 1, line 7, omit "1980" and insert "1981".
2. Clause 4, lines 9–12, omit the words and expressions on these lines and insert "any waste (being waste in respect of which an Order is in force under section 20 (11) exempting the occupier of the premises or a class of persons including the occupier of the premises from all or any of the provisions of Part III. with respect to the holding of licences) is or is likely to be discharged or emitted into the atmosphere".
3. Clause 4, line 16, omit "(c)" and insert "(a) fails to comply or".
4. Clause 4, line 21, omit "(d)" and Insert "(b)".
5. Clause 4, line 23, omit "(e)" and insert "(c)".
6. Clause 4, line 25, omit "(f)" and insert "(d)".
7. Clause 4, line 27, omit "an" and insert "a preliminary".
8. Clause 4, line 28, omit "owner or".
9. Clause 4, line 29, omit "An" and insert "The preliminary".
10. Clause 4, line 30, omit "may contain" and insert "that an air pollution abatement notice containing".
11. Clause 4, page 3, line 8, after this line insert—

"shall be served upon the occupier by the authority unless the occupier requests a conference pursuant to sub-section (3) within 30 days from the service of the preliminary air pollution abatement notice.

(3) An occupier who receives a preliminary air pollution abatement notice may, within 30 days from the date of service of the notice, request by application in writing to the Authority a conference to discuss the contents of the preliminary notice and to state any grounds of objection to the notice, and request the Authority to consider proposals to achieve the objectives of the notice by other means.

(4) The Authority may, within 60 days from the service of a preliminary air pollution abatement notice, appoint any person (whether a member of the Authority or not) to convene a conference between the occupier and such other persons as the Authority thinks fit.

(5) A person who has convened a conference pursuant to sub-section (4) shall report the results of the conference to the Authority, and may make such recommendations to the Authority as he thinks fit.

(6) After considering any stated grounds of objection and the report of any person who has convened a conference under sub-section (4), the Authority shall—

(a) confirm its preliminary air pollution abatement notice with or without modifications, and serve an air pollution abatement notice on the occupier; or
(b) cancel its preliminary air pollution abatement notice.

(7) Where the Authority fails to receive a request for a conference pursuant to sub-section (3) from an occupier served with a preliminary air pollution abatement notice, the Authority shall, after 30 days and not...
more than 60 days from the service of the preliminary air pollution abatement notice, serve an air pollution abatement notice on that occupier.

(8) An air pollution abatement notice may require the occupier—

(a) to ensure that the emission or discharge to which the notice relates is reduced by an amount or to a level specified in the notice or otherwise in accordance with the notice (the emission or discharge being measured at such points inside or outside the premises as are specified in the notice);

(b) to submit to the Authority such information (including plans and specifications for plant or equipment) in relation to the means whereby the emission or discharge to which the notice relates may be reduced or controlled, as is specified in the notice;

(c) to install, alter, maintain or operate (as the case requires) apparatus, plant or structures to prevent or control the emission or discharge to which the notice relates; or

(d) to do any two or more of the acts or things mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c)."


13. Clause 4. page 3. line 11. at the end of line insert "and may specify a period within which the requirement is to be complied with".


15. Clause 4. page 3. lines 17-20. omit the words and expressions on these lines and insert—

"(11) Where an air pollution abatement notice has been served pursuant to this section, the Authority may by notice in writing served on the person on whom the first-mentioned notice was served—

(a) extend the period (if any) for compliance with a requirement of the notice, if it is satisfied that the circumstances of the case justify an extension of that period; and

(b) revoke or vary any requirement of the first-mentioned notice."


17. Clause 4. page 3. line 27. omit "(7)" and insert "(13)".

18. Clause 4. page 3. line 44. omit "Environment Protection Appeal Board" and insert "Planning Appeals Board".

19. Clause 4. page 4. line 10. after this line insert—

"(4) Where at the date of commencement of this section, section 2 (1) of the Planning Appeals Board Act 1980 has not yet come into operation, a reference in this section to the Planning Appeals Board shall, from the date of commencement of this section until the date of commencement of section 2 (1) of the Planning Appeals Board Act 1980, be read and construed as if it were a reference to the Environment Protection Appeal Board.

(5) Any reference in section 32 (1) (b) of the Planning Appeals Board Act 1980 to section 32A (1) of this Act shall on and from the date of commencement of this section be read and construed as if it included a reference to sub-section (1) of this section."

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—Before moving that the amendments be agreed to, I indicate to the House that the principal amendments to this Bill made by the Lower House were to insert the same procedures for air pollution as for noise pollution in the Bill. In other words, the amendments will provide procedures that involve a preliminary notice and conference with the Environment Protection Authority and the provisions under legislation relating to noise pollution will apply to this Bill.

This Bill has been debated in the House, but the Assembly thought it proper to change it in that respect and the amendments made in the Lower House should produce the result I have indicated. I shall propose further amendments to the amendments made in the Assembly. The effects of the further amendment are to remove a problem perceived by some people in relation to the occupier and to provide that the basis was an appeal should be objective grounds, not subjective grounds. In other words, I will seek to insert words to amend the amendments made in the Lower House. It is rather complicated, but the ultimate effect is reasonably simple. Therefore, I move:

That amendments Nos. 1 to 10 be agreed to.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—Late last night, the Minister gave me a copy of the amendments. However, I have not had a chance to peruse them fully. I suggest that debate on these matters be adjourned to give the Opposition the chance to examine the amendments. I am not prepared to proceed with the debate immediately. I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.
The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until later this day.

SUPPLY (1981-82, No. 1) BILL

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—I expected Mr Landeryou to speak on the second-reading motion but, because he has not done so, I shall make a few comments at this stage. It is difficult to deal in detail with a Supply Bill because it is very much a Committee type of Bill. I suppose that would be Mr Landeryou's reason for not speaking now, that he would prefer to deal with the measure part by part. The House is debating Supply at a time when the finances of this State are under a heavy cloud, due to the discussions that are taking place in Canberra and to the funding arrangements and changes to those funding arrangements between the Commonwealth and the State. Those matters will have a significant bearing on the period during which Supply is sought under the Bill, from July to November. It is difficult, therefore, to draw conclusions and it must be an extremely difficult position for the State Government.

The razor gang is at work and I understand it will present its proposals today. In addition, during the past day or two, significant alterations have occurred in the financing arrangements for hospitals. The States—Victoria, in particular—are awaiting the outcome of consideration of tax sharing arrangements with the Commonwealth. The whole of the financial arrangements between this State and the Commonwealth are under a cloud and it is a most uncertain time. That creates difficulties for the Government in drawing conclusions.

The National Party has, for some time, been concerned about the way Victoria is progressing and the way in which the Government allocates funds. Members of my party have consistently advanced the view that emphasis should be placed on expenditure of State funds where they will achieve increased productivity and initiate new confidence and new development. During the Budget debate last year I raised the point that the State was relatively stagnant, so far as development and progress were concerned, and that much development is occurring in other parts of Australia as a result of that. The figures clearly indicated that Queensland, Western Australia and some of the other States were benefiting significantly to the detriment of Victoria. The Government has taken a long time to realize that. It should have recognized the situation, but did not.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—The Government could not even make a submission to the Grants Commission and get it right.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Mr Landeryou is correct. For years, the State Government has blamed the Federal Government. The fact was that the Victorian Government failed to provide the leadership and initiative necessary to get the State moving and to infuse into it the sort of confidence that is necessary to progress, development and jobs.

I doubt whether the new directions of the Government will achieve the result being sought, but it would be negative for me to criticize those directions without allowing time to see whether they will produce the desired effect. I wish the programmes well. It is unfortunate that Victoria had to grind almost to a halt before those changes were implemented.

Much of the Government's present programme is, at this stage, little more than a publicity measure. Mr Knowles expresses some surprise at that remark. Members of the National Party are not surprised. At this stage, the programmes really are only publicity. Little else has occurred about new directions.

The Hon. H. G. Baylor—Two new Ministries have been created as a result of the Government's new directions.
The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Two new Ministries will cost the people of this State more money unless they prove to be effective Ministries, and that will only be shown in time. There has been the big publicity build-up about the new directions but it is faltering somewhat. Those new directions must be carried through into real and significant action.

The National Party is particularly interested in the new directions as they affect agriculture and the 25 per cent productivity increase that was suggested by the former Minister of Agriculture shortly before he departed from that portfolio. I see no real evidence of what the Government is doing to achieve that 25 per cent increase in agricultural productivity. Those sorts of programmes must be met with a real commitment by the Government, or the State will continue to flounder, to be stagnant and to lack the boost that the Government desires and the National Party wants to see.

Honourable members all realize that the 25 per cent increase in agricultural production will not be achieved in the short term. Primary producers in this State have struggled for years to improve their lot, to keep afloat and to remain economic in the difficult situation in which they find themselves. We have had a couple of good seasons and farming industries are looking good. However, Mr President, you would know as well as anyone that that situation can change in the space of a year from the boom situation to a bust. It frightens me to consider the sort of structure that is behind farmers because the boom has run forward in agriculture. It has run ahead of itself and I am concerned as to the structure behind farmers to prop up the situation and to assist if the boom turns into a bust.

I have made the point to various primary producer organizations that, during a boom period, people tend to become complacent and to forget about the difficulties they experienced in marketing and selling meat in the beef crash and to forget about other difficulties concerning reconstruction, carry on finance and so on. It is good, when things are good, to reflect on this and to provide some sort of structure for propping up the situation when things go bad, as they inevitably will, seasonally or otherwise. I hope that at least some of the Government's new direction in agriculture will be devoted not just towards spurring on the boom.

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain—Towards helping to make it rain!

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—Helping to make it rain would be a good start, but I hope some of the new directions will be directed towards providing a structure which will follow the relative prosperity of the present day and provide something for farmers to fall back to when things turn bad.

I see difficulties ahead for the State in its budgeting. There is the new arrangement by the Federal Government in relation to hospital finance. We have not yet had the opportunity of seeing the recommendations of the so-called razor gang. One thing is clear: That the States will be asked to carry much more responsibility in their budgets and in their budgetary control. They will be asked to carry much more of the burden themselves. Substantial cuts will affect the operation of State Government right across the board. Clearly, the States face a difficult year or two ahead.

It will no longer be necessary or possible to blame the Commonwealth Government. The Government has to come to grips with the fact that the Federal Government has to prune its spending. Inflation has started to move upwards again, which has been shown by the figures. The Federal Government will have to prune expenditure and Victoria will have to do likewise.

The Government has made great play in the Supply Bill over the fact that it has reduced the number of people on the Government pay-roll by 1232 in three years. I do not think that is particularly significant. It is a reasonable suggestion, but I should like to know what sort of figures the Attorney-General and the Government include when discussing people on the Government pay-roll. Do they include railway personnel and people involved in construction?
The Hon. Haddon Storey—I believe the figures relate to public servants, not statutory authorities.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I do not know whether that is spelled out.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—I believe the Bill means departmental officers.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Therefore, I presume it excludes people involved in railways and construction and so on. Perhaps in the light of that the figure is more significant.

I have a number of other points to raise about the Bill, but I shall do so during the Committee stage. I have made a few general comments but the Bill is not a Budget Bill and honourable members will have the opportunity of debating that measure later this year. The forthcoming Budget Bill will be a whole new ball game because significant changes will take place between now and then and Victoria will have to be prepared to accept its responsibility for budgetary control instead of doing as it has done over the years, crying poor and blaming the Federal Government for its deficiencies.

The Hon. Robert Lawson (Higinbotham Province)—The most striking feature of the Bill is the bottom line, which totals $1,494,566,900 or approximately $1.5 billion. Mr Kent has just interjected. I always think of the honourable member as the oracle of the Labor benches. Honourable members will recall that in ancient times, the oracle, like Mr Kent, spoke little but when it did speak nobody knew what the hell it was talking about.

However, I shall refer to the Bill and not allow myself to become distracted. The sum of $1.5 billion is an enormous amount of money whichever way one considers it. I remember reading that just before the war that Mr Menzies—as he was then—as Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia had introduced a Budget for 100 million pounds, which was considered an extraordinary sum. Australia really thought it was in the big league in those days. Now honourable members see this sum foreshadowed in the Victorian Budget.

I am somewhat disturbed about the lack of information the Supply Bill provides for honourable members. The Legislative Council is a House of review and should exercise functions of a body of review. However, there is very little information in the document that honourable members can review. The second page of the explanatory memorandum of the Bill quotes a number of figures relating to Community Welfare Services. I do not know about other honourable members, but I can make little of them. For instance, under Community Welfare Services, $1,086,000 is allocated for salaries, $977,000 is allocated for general expenses and $22,140,000 is allocated for other services. I may be expressing my ignorance, but I do not know the difference between "general expenses" and "other services".

I do not know whether other honourable members know the difference and what is entailed in these figures. In future years the House of review should be given more information about the Supply Bill. Honourable members should know something about what we are doing because the Bill will no doubt be passed today as it is the policy of the Opposition not to oppose Supply. Therefore, 44 honourable members will today be voting on a figure of $1.5 billion, about which little is known.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—Don’t you trust the Treasurer?

The Hon. Robert Lawson—I trust the Treasurer, but I believe honourable members should know more about what they are doing.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—Is the Treasurer an oracle and because of that you cannot understand him?

The Hon. Robert Lawson—If Mr Kent were Treasurer honourable members would know even less. The point I wish to make is that the Legislative Council is a House of review and should have more information on the subject of the Supply Bill before it makes a considered judgment on the matters under discussion.
The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—I direct the attention of the House—and I hope of the Government—to what I consider to be perhaps a potential crime that we are about to commit against future generations in the State of Victoria. I refer to the Government allocation through the Ministry for the Arts for the State Library.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! The honourable member is dealing with a particular item which would be more appropriately dealt with during the Committee stage. If the honourable member refers to the matter in passing and develops a more general argument, I shall allow him to continue.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—I take your point, Mr President. I want to talk about that particular item but I do not care when I talk about it so long as I can do so at some stage.

The Hon. V. T. HAUSER (Nunawading Province)—I should like to take over where Mr Dunn left off so far as his remarks about the financial difficulties facing the Victorian Government are concerned. For that matter, the same applies to other State Governments and will apply to the Commonwealth Government over the next year or two. The current fashion in most Western democratic countries seems to be for people to begin to criticize the vastness of Government expenditure. I suppose we can say that Government expenditure, politics, politicians and people become matters of personal interest and selfishness and greed can take over whenever Government expenditure is possible or mooted. Politicians receive many applications and suggestions for the expenditure of money in their constituencies.

I am quite convinced that with a little thought and a little courage politicians could draw up their own priority lists in the electorates they represent and sometimes we should have the courage to say to our constituents that for certain purposes money should not be spent at all or the total should be greatly reduced.

We should continually bring home to our electorates the fact that money does not grow on trees and that single issue interests can cause wasteful expenditures that do not assist the common cause. If these views were consistently and continually preached to the electorate, people would eventually realize that Government expenditure would be reduced and that the community would gain by paying less in taxation.

It is the Socialist ethic and the competition from the Socialist ethic as against the free enterprise ethic that causes more public money to be spent in the first place. In this day and age, all Governments wish to look after and protect the poor and the distressed, but the lazy, the wily and those who take advantage of the system should not be assisted. We all know from experience that there are many people in the community who attempt to get away with all the advantages that the system can give them. They accept Government help illegally when they should not receive it or do not need it in the first place.

I suggest that a little courage displayed by us politicians might help to reduce Government expenditure in various areas, and the resulting savings could then be used more effectively for the benefit of the community as a whole.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Issue out of Consolidated Fund $1 494 566 900)

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—The first item to which I refer is Division 187, which concerns police and emergency services. In the Premier's policy speeches from one election year to the next, he has promised that the strength of the Police Force would be increased. In the 1979 policy speech the Premier informed the public of Victoria that by 1980 Victoria would have a police strength of about 8000 members. This has not occurred, and
the public is well aware of the need for additional police throughout Victoria. The population, particularly in the outer areas of Melbourne, is growing daily. I shall refer to police stations in the province which I represent.

The Reservoir police station which is situated almost in the centre of Reservoir, until recently was operating from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. It now operates for 24 hours a day. Because of the large population of Reservoir a 24-hour-a-day police station was needed. The Minister and the Government have deceived the people of Victoria by continually promising to increase the strength of the Police Force and provide protection to the public. This applies particularly in the electorate which I represent.

I asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services a question about the number of serious assaults that occurred in the Reservoir district in 1979, and I received the ridiculous answer that eleven serious assaults had occurred in that twelve months. When I forwarded a copy of the reply to the sergeant at Reservoir police station I promptly received a telephone call from him asking me who supplied this “so-and-so” answer. When I informed the sergeant that the Minister had done so, as he could read from the answer to the question, I had to refer the matter again to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The answer was corrected and the number should have been over 100, whereas the Minister had originally stated that eleven serious assaults had occurred. That is in only one area.

Since I have been a member of Parliament I have been endeavouring to have the Government provide a 24-hour-a-day police station in the Shire of Whittlesea. When I first went there the shire had a population of approximately 30,000. It has now increased to well over 70,000 people. An additional three officers have now been appointed, which permits the station to open for 24 hours a day with one man in the station and two out in a divisional van which has to cover the whole of the Shire of Whittlesea from practically the Hume Highway across to Plenty Road and up as far as Kinglake. A number of serious crimes have taken place in the shire, including assaults, thefts and burglaries. Recently I reported in the Chamber that 24 household robberies had occurred in one week-end. It is only natural that where there is a lack of police protection, the people responsible for break-ins are well aware of where the divisional van will be situated. If the van is up in the Whittlesea area, the robberies take place in the Thomastown–Lalor part of the shire.

The Epping police station, of which I have spoken on many occasions, has been operating only from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. four days a week and until 11 p.m. on the remaining three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, provided that sufficient staff is available. The same thing happens at the Whittlesea police station. The Whittlesea police station is open from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. on five days a week, and until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday if sufficient staff is available.

The point I make is that the Premier continually promised in his policy speeches that the strength of the Police Force would be increased to 8000 by 1980. At the moment there are barely 7000 members of the Victoria Police Force. They are overworked in their efforts to protect the people who live in both the metropolitan and country areas of Victoria.

The Opposition was astounded to learn that the Government has abolished the police cadet training scheme. That will further endanger the people of Victoria. In the past, cadets began training at 16 years of age and were ready to become active police officers at the age of 18. This opportunity no longer exists. That is another promise that the Government has broken.

Broadmeadows has only one police station which is manned for 24 hours a day. The building is small and overcrowded by a staff which has to cover an extremely large area. It is impossible for those members of the Police Force at Broadmeadows to carry out their duties effectively and protect the public when they have to cover an area with places as far apart as Tullamarine and Craigieburn. That is asking too much
of those men. The public expects proper protection from the police but the Government has broken its promises to increase the strength of the Police Force.

I now refer to education and I direct a number of matters to the Minister with the request that something be done. Promises have been made regarding cyclic maintenance of schools. Last night we heard Mr Mackenzie talk about the neglect of cyclic maintenance at schools within the Geelong region.

On many occasions schools in the City of Preston were promised that cyclic maintenance works would be carried out. For example, the Preston East High School building is now in its fifteenth year but it has not even received one coat of paint since the day it was constructed. Many applications have been made seeking approval from the Education Department, through the Public Works Department, to have cyclic maintenance works carried out at a number of schools within the City of Preston alone. Those applications have been made in writing and by me in this House.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—The department is broke.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—It has been broke for the past 25 years. Within the Shire of Whittlesea, the Thomastown High School which has been operating for ten years has been promised an ecacentre. That building has been promised for approximately seven years. That matter was raised by the school council, the principal and myself in correspondence and again in this House. Prior to Christmas we had a deputation to the Minister of Educational Services and referred this promise to him. We conferred with shire officers last month to try to obtain the use of the Shire of Whittlesea sports centre which is in Main Street, Thomastown, for the Thomastown High School. Naturally, the sports centre is hired out from day to day by a number of sporting clubs. The Minister of Educational Services called on the shire officers to make the sports centre available to the school each day of the week but that is not possible. Promises have been made to build an ecacentre, a structure which has been part of secondary schools for some time and which should have been built when the school was constructed.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—They won't give them to schools with under 400 students.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—The Thomastown High School accommodates approximately 850 students. I ask the Attorney-General to refer this matter once again to the Minister of Educational Services. I can inform him that the shire council will not approve of the wishes of the Minister to allocate the sports centre to the school each day of the week when they already have bookings from other sporting bodies.

The Lalor North High School began as an annexe to the Lalor High School which at one stage had 1500 students. That is why the department set up what was then known as an annexe in relocatable class-rooms. It is a disgrace in this day and age that students who attend secondary school to complete their courses from first form to sixth form higher school certificate level should have to work in temporary accommodation. Those students complete their entire secondary education course in relocatable buildings. This is happening mainly in the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne. It is not good enough. Last year promises were made that the Whittlesea Technical–High School would receive 11 new relocatables, the Lalor North High School would receive 6 new relocatables and the Epping High School would receive 11 relocatables for the commencement of the 1981 school year. During the Christmas period I visited each of those schools to ascertain what progress was being made in respect of the relocatables. I was there as late as ANA day. I found that at Whittlesea Technical–High School only 5 relocatables had arrived, at Epping High School only 5 had arrived and at Lalor North only 3 had arrived. It is now almost the end of the first term of the 1981 school year and the only one of those schools in the Shire of Whittlesea that has received its requirements is the Whittlesea Technical–High School.
The Epping High School is still waiting for gas and electricity to be connected and for woodwork benches to be installed. Lalor North High School is in a similar situation. The roof of the general purpose room of one of its relocatables leaks. Fortunately this year there has not been much rain. Repairs are required to a wall of one room which was knocked about during transport from Ballarat to Melbourne. The money spent on building relocatables and transporting them throughout the State could have been applied more efficiently to building new schools. The Government stands condemned for the neglect it has shown in this matter.

The Speaker in another place, a member of the Government party, will agree with my statement that the Whittlesea Technical-High School and the Epping High School have been sadly neglected. Promises have been made not only by the department but by the northern metropolitan regional branch. I feel sorry for that branch. The officer there has endeavoured to answer inquiries by stating that everything will be in readiness for the opening of the school year. However, as I have already stated, the schools are still awaiting many of these buildings and facilities.

On several occasions in this place I have referred to the Minister of Water Supply the problems of the Yan Yean Primary School, which, although it has only 36 students, must exist on tank water although the Yan Yean dam is approximately 1 kilometre away. I asked the Minister to have the water connected from the dam to the school and this was done only last week. However, the pipes were connected from the dam to the school tank only and not to the school itself or to the home of the principal which is adjacent. This means that once the tank is full, the water cuts off; there is no direct water. The principal has been seriously ill, probably because of worry about the water supply of the school running out and about having to send children home because the tanks were dry during summer months. In the past, teachers have had to bucket water to the toilets.

Members of the Government party have repeatedly abused teachers for certain things, and not much praise has been given to teachers for their efforts in schools. I consider teachers to be the salt of the earth. No honourable members would be here if it were not for them and members of the Education Department.

I now refer some items to the Attorney-General, particularly the matter of court houses within the Thomastown Province. The court house in the City of Broadmeadows is not large enough and extremely overcrowded, as the Attorney-General is aware. It is only natural that in a city the size of Broadmeadows another police station and court house are required, farther north. I direct the attention of the Attorney-General to this serious problem. If one visits the court house on a day when the court is sitting, one sees people standing out in the streets. Someone who is listed to appear before the court may be out in the street and not hear the call. That has happened on occasions in the City of Broadmeadows. The Shire of Whittlesea does not have a court house at all.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! Mr Eddy has dealt with court houses, education and now he has returned to court houses.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—I spoke about police and emergency services and mentioned police stations. Now I am dealing with the item relating to the Law Department. That deals with court houses.

The CHAIRMAN—I should like to know when Mr Eddy stopped discussing the Education Department.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY—When I finished discussing education, I indicated that I would refer to the Law Department.

As I was saying, the Thomastown Province, which includes the Shire of Whittlesea, has a population of nearly 80 000. If a person is apprehended and required to appear before a court, he or she must go to the Preston Court to have the case heard.
The Hon. Haddon Storey—Broadmeadows would be a suitable area for a regional court covering four or five different areas, such as the Prahran court.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy—I agree wholeheartedly. The Prahran court house is a wonderful building and the cases heard there cover many surrounding municipalities. That would be just what is required for the City of Broadmeadows. I am glad to hear that the Minister realizes what is needed.

I shall now deal with Division 620, health. This is a serious problem area in the Thomastown Province. The province has been applying to the Minister of Health and the Government for a hospital to be built in the City of Broadmeadows. The Commonwealth Government has provided Commonwealth land for construction of the hospital in Camp Road, Glenroy. However, the State Government has not seen its way clear to provide finance to construct the hospital on this land.

The City of Broadmeadows has a population of more than 120 000 persons. One can go as far north as Craigieburn where the population is increasing daily. If one needs to attend a hospital, one must go to the city to attend the Royal Children's Hospital, the Royal Melbourne Hospital or St Vincent's Hospital. The nearest hospitals to residents of the City of Broadmeadows are the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital and the Austin Hospital for those in the Shire of Whittlesea.

It is vitally necessary for people who reside in the Thomastown Province to have access to a hospital. The Government should provide finance to commence construction of a hospital in the City of Broadmeadows, because the Commonwealth Government has made the land available for this purpose. I am concerned when I consider the dangers that exist to people in those areas. Many people have heart attacks and have to be rushed from Broadmeadows or Craigieburn into the Royal Melbourne Hospital or from Mernda and South Morang in Whittlesea to the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital. The lives of those people are endangered because the Government is not able to provide finance to construct a hospital. Housing developments are taking place in those areas and Melbourne is expanding further into the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne.

I shall deal with railway construction. I draw to the Minister's attention the Shire of Whittlesea railway line on which trains traverse to Whittlesea from Princes Bridge. For some reason, the Government decided to stop this service beyond Epping. The line from Epping northwards has been dismantled, and with the expansion that is taking place from Epping northwards, I ask the Minister to have the line restored and made available again to extend the service to Whittlesea.

I know what is happening to the Upfield line, which goes through the City of Broadmeadows. That line will be closed down and I am probably asking the Minister to do something that he has no good intentions of doing, when he is already cutting out services in one area. Transport services are being slashed in one area and I am requesting that they be extended in another area. The Upfield railway line should be retained and the Whittlesea railway line should be reactivated so that residents in that area can avail themselves of public transport.

Approximately three years ago the Public Works Committee recommended the extension of the East Preston tramline in Plenty Road from Tyler Street to McLeans Road, or just over Settlement Road, Bundoora. The extension of that tramline would have assisted many people in the area, including those students who attend La Trobe University and patients who attend the psychiatric hospitals and the repatriation hospital in Plenty Road, and Parade College. The residents of a large residential estate known as Mill Park would also benefit from the extension of that tramline.

The Government has not acted on the recommendations of the Public Works Committee. However, it has asked the committee to conduct an inquiry into the feasibility of extending the tramline from Bakers Road, North Coburg, to Barry Road along the Hume Highway.
to overcome the transport problems that will occur when the Upfield railway line is closed.

The Government approved the extension of the tramline from Warrigal Road to Middleborough Road, East Burwood. That decision proves that the Government is prepared to extend public transport services only within areas represented by members of the Liberal Party. The extension of the tramline from Warrigal Road to Middleborough Road has provided a paying service, and there can be no doubt that if the Government acted upon the earlier recommendation of the Public Works Committee and extended the tramline along Plenty Road, that service, too, would be a paying proposition.

I request the Attorney-General to refer this matter to the Minister of Transport and urge the Minister to adopt the recommendations of the Public Works Committee which conducted an inquiry that cost the taxpayers a great deal of money. If those recommendations were acted upon, the residents of areas not serviced by public transport would be immensely assisted.

In the Shire of Whittlesea, a private bus service operates every hour on Sundays and every half hour on other days, but that is not good enough. The residents of the Shire of Whittlesea and the City of Broadmeadows have been denied the use of public transport. I urge the Government to take action to alleviate the problems of transport, police, education and health in the interests of the people who reside in the outer areas of Melbourne and whose needs have been sadly neglected by the Government over the years.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK (Nunawading Province)—I raise with the Government a situation which is potentially tragic not only for the present population but also for future generations of Victorians. I refer to Division 656, the allocation for the State Library.

Yesterday, with a committee of my party, I had the privilege of touring the State Library under the guidance of Miss Marjorie Ramsay. The party was taken into nooks and crannies that one would have found hard to believe could exist in a modern age. I discovered that the State Library possesses one of the greatest collections of books in the world. It has been compiled since the establishment of the library in the mid-1800s.

That collection has been added to over the years and now forms a collection of immense importance. The collection is a legacy which society has a duty to preserve and to pass on to future generations. Society has been handed a wonderful gift by our predecessors and it is the unquestioned duty of the Government and of Parliament to ensure that that collection is not only preserved but also added to for use by future generations.

The Government is providing inadequate funds to cope with the workings of the library. The amount allocated reflects the current set of priorities that concern Victoria. When the emphasis in society was on the quality of life many fine improvements were proposed for the State Library and the National Museum. A magnificent building was proposed for the Queen Victoria Market site which would rehouse the State Library and the Natural History Museum administration.

The matter has been dragging on for years. The boards of these projects are enormously frustrated by the lack of progress, the lack of follow-up, the lack of money and the lack of adherence to promises that have been made by past Governments and by past Ministers. That is understandable when one considers the financial constraints. Victoria needs convention centres, trade centres, bridges, roads and railways. Further, jobs must be created. Sporting stadiums are also important. However, I consider nothing more important than the intellectual legacy passed on from generation to generation. It is this intellectual legacy that is being ignored by the Government at present and influences me to make this criticism.

Yesterday, I went to the State Library, and I was horrified. It is a magnificent and aesthetically pleasing building with great galleries and domed roofed reading rooms in which one can enjoy a pleasing environment. For its capacity to deal with problems of
storing books and servicing book users, the building can be described only as antiquated and potentially tragic.

The electrical wiring of the building must be seen to be believed. Amongst the stacks of books, stored in various warren-type parts of the building, one trails with one a naked light bulb attached to a piece of worn out flex. If one survives that experience without being electrocuted and if one forgets to turn off the light, one may well leave behind a conflagration because this is the greatest fire hazard I have seen. The electrical wiring runs up and down stacks of books and it would need only a short circuit in the wiring for the whole library to erupt in flames, destroying valuable collections of books.

It may relieve the minds of honourable members to know that the most valuable possession in the State Library is an ancient artifact that would probably survive a fire. It is a 4000 year old clay tablet with hieroglyphic inscriptions from Mesopotamia. In a fire, that would probably be baked and everything else would go. Indeed, that is not to mention the danger to the lives of library staff. Spiral staircases wind up and down the book stocks around the reading room and if a fire occurred in the State Library, it would result in a great loss of life.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Do you not speak to the Treasurer in the Party room?

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—I am first and foremost a member of Parliament and I am speaking on the matter in the House. If Mr Landeryou objects to my bringing matters before Parliament, he has misjudged the use of this place. I should have thought he would have supported my remarks.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—I am surprised at your insincerity because you always vote with the Government Party.

The Hon. P. D. BLOCK—Of course, I do, and I am using a time-honoured privilege of making a mild criticism of the Government. The potential fire hazard is a great sword of Damocles.

The irreparable damage being done to the book and journal stock of the State Library is vandalism. It is impossible to introduce an artificial environment to storage areas of books because the windows and doors must be open to provide ventilation for the staff. The corner of Latrobe and Swanston streets is certainly a huge chemical trap. Books are deteriorating so that some are not able to be repaired simply because the money is not being made available to keep the leathers oiled, nor to provide a controlled environment—and the building is not conducive to a controlled environment.

As a result, enormous vandalism is being done to the valuable legacy of which Parliament and the Government are trustees. Tears will come to the eyes of anyone loving books as much as I do at the immense irreparable damage to valuable books whose bindings are falling off and pages crumbling as a result of chemical smog, dust and grime. The State Library must be housed in a new building because there is no way to care for the valuable book stock by modern methods in its present building. The Government should provide a further allocation to ensure that the books that can be repaired are attended to before they reach further stages of disrepair.

The State Library is unable to provide many modern facilities for readers such as visual display boards to show some of the sections of works that have recently been microprocessed, simply because the wiring system is so inadequate that one cannot get enough three-point plugs in for the display board. The building is ancient and it needs urgent upgrading. Although one would want the building preserved because of its architectural features, it is not designed for the modern techniques of storing books and for modern librarianship. Now, in modern reading rooms library staff are intermixed with readers but, because of the acoustic problems in the reading room of the State Library, the librarians are placed on the outer circumference, which hampers the staff in providing services that readers and researchers require.
The State Library lacks money to establish a data retrieval system when, for a mere, miserable $40,000 a year, the State Library could hook into a world-wide system of giving clients, including the Parliamentary Library, access to the Library of Congress. With the new computer system, one can punch on a question to, say, the Library of Congress and within seconds the visual display will light up with a complete bibliography and research material on any subject one is researching plus the latest writings on the subject. Under the present system, one is unlikely to obtain the information within a year. Readers and researchers should be provided with that service. The State Library is considering providing the $40,000 a year from its grant, small as it is, and as a result run down other services.

I commend the Minister for the Arts for initiating a management research team to investigate an upgrading of the service, but in the final analysis that will be a patch-up job. The State Library needs a new building. It should be a priority of the Government to provide that and to deal with the intellectual legacy which it has an absolute duty to pass on to future generations.

I have advised the Minister of what I consider to be a magnificent idea presented to me by Mr Daryl Jackson, a prominent architect, who considered it would be a superb use of the Jolimont railway yards to roof them and build a magnificent library there. The building would be in harmony with the new Victorian Arts Centre nearby. I saw to it that Mr Jackson’s idea was presented to the Premier and I do not know what stage has been reached but I commend it to the Government because it is outstanding. I urge the Government to make a complete reappraisal of its priorities and give the State Library a high priority.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I wish to deal with Division 270, youth, sport and recreation, and explain to those members whose capacity to understand is not high that the item authorizes expenditure extending to 30 November. However, it gives honourable members the opportunity of discussing the activities of certain Government departments.

The Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is a high profile public relations department that consumes a tremendous amount of newsprint in informing members of the public of the grants that it makes and of the studies it is undertaking into youth and community needs. There are two distinct sides to this expenditure. One aspect is whereby provision is made for a large number of small grants, something like $30 to $50 to practically every small youth group, church youth club, or things like that. There is no doubt that this department provides effective propaganda for the Government, although it does little to contribute to the real recreational needs of the community.

The other aspect that I criticize is the tendency to allocate a lot of this money, which is supposedly designed for the promotion of participation in sport in the community, not only active sport but passive recreation—I will not define what passive recreation is but it is claimed that the emphasis of this department is participation—and spreading that throughout the community and trying to eliminate “Norm” from our society.

There seems to be a growing concentration on the development of facilities for professional sport. Frequently, that is an aid to big business sponsors, and it is contributing to that greed. Mr Hauser is not in the Chamber, but he spends quite a bit of his private time developing that sort of greed in the profession in which he practises, and catering for it. There has been concern, as honourable members would know, amongst municipalities who have a genuine concern for providing sporting facilities in which the community can participate.

The area that I represent has a large number of golf clubs, for instance. Many of them are top class clubs that would be eminently suitable for membership for members of the Liberal Party, and
there is concern that a growing number of people who desire and are able to participate through early retirement, through leisure which is available to them, in active sports such as golf and tennis, are not being catered for in that fund provided by the Government. The resources that are being provided through the Government and municipalities tend to a greater degree to be controlled by clubs. That is destroying the basic reason why community funds have been justified for this provision.

There are areas where the demand for sport facilities is growing rapidly to meet a great need amongst people of all ages. I have referred to the older people who have leisure time and need to be engaged in something to take them away from morbid contemplation of the decadence in society that has been generated by this Government. At the other end of the scale there are young people in large numbers who have not got a job, but are somehow supposed to keep off the streets and quietly amuse themselves in harmless ways. I suggest that one of the tragedies is that those people are not getting the opportunity to participate in sport at any level.

If it is socially desirable that bowling clubs and other clubs be fostered so that pensioners can lead a quiet life, surely it is desirable that those young people, who through no fault of their own are unable to obtain jobs, should be directed to a satisfying and healthy way of filling in their time rather than being left to spend their time in a fruitless search for employment that does not exist because the Government is not prepared to provide the facilities to train them or to provide real alternative job opportunities.

I now refer to Division 450, Crown Lands Administration. One has the support of the National Party in deploring the fact that the Government has tended to reduce the extent of its services in control and protection of Crown lands, and in the vermin and noxious weeds area particularly. It is fair to say that the Government has asked landowners to accept the responsibility—which has always been there, but which the Government has carried forth in recent years—of keeping free of noxious weeds half of the roadside that adjoins their properties. That is of concern, but it is not the major item. The most serious failure on the part of the department is the neglect to control vermin and noxious weeds on Crown lands in general, and particularly where they border agricultural and pastoral lands. The effect is on the whole community, and it increases the difficulties that people have in endeavouring to make a living out of their properties because of the uncontrolled and insufficiently controlled spread of vermin, particularly in the form of noxious weeds such as blackberries and ragwort, and those that are prone to grow in particular areas.

It is important that the State should preserve as much of the land that it owns for the benefit of the people, but there is a tendency to reduce the necessary services that are needed for the protection of that land. This land not only contributes to the general welfare of the nation, it also contributes directly to the economic betterment of those people who happen to be engaged in agricultural pursuits on land adjoining that property.

The sitting was suspended at 1 p.m. until 2.4 p.m.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—Before the suspension of the sitting, I was referring to Division 570 under the heading of agriculture. The Department of Agriculture carries out an excellent job within the wide range of services which it provides to the farming community in Victoria. The extension services which it has developed have been of benefit to many primary industries. With the change in the farming population, which has been drastically reduced, those people who now operate farms tend to be not only much more receptive to the knowledge and advice which is available from the Department of Agriculture, but also they are very much more willing to seek that advice, and in that direction the department does an excellent job.
However, the department is severely disadvantaged if it is to play a part in what is supposedly to be an increase in stimulus in agricultural production in Victoria under the so-called new directions policy.

The real situation is that the number of farmers naturally has declined very considerably in Victoria and in some areas and some primary industries that has had no effect on production but in other areas, for reasons outside the control of the Department of Agriculture but certainly as a result of the policies of the Government, and more particularly the Federal Government, there has been a serious downturn in production.

Recently the Department of Agriculture undertook a survey which revealed that within six municipalities in west Gippsland, there had been a decline of something like 42,000 since 1976 in the dairy cow population and a decline of approximately 50,000 in the numbers of beef cattle. That may seem amazing, but honourable members should examine the reasons which have brought this about.

One of the reasons has been the general income policy of this country and the availability and opportunity for people who are investors, or who are classified as hobby farmers, to acquire land. In many cases, the land is highly productive and had previously been used in the production of vegetable crops, dairy farming or beef production. The survey implies that there will be difficulties if the Department of Agriculture is to play a real part in contributing to the proposed 25 per cent increase in agriculture production which is said to be the aim of the Government.

The Government must look at ways of controlling the use of land which formerly used to be highly productive. Perhaps the Government should also keep in mind that it is desirable to find ways of encouraging more farming and useful agriculture activities on these large areas of land, which have been subdivided into smaller allotments, but which have virtually gone out of real primary production.

Mr Ward, who is interjecting, may wonder what has become of this land. For instance, even if it is pastoral land it grows grass whether or not cows are using that land, but the simple fact is that much of the land to which I am referring—Mr Ward would be aware of this fact as he is the representative for the area—in recent years—has been subdivided into small farms. The land is capable of high production, but it is not producing any primary produce at the moment. We are rapidly reaching a situation where we may have to declare horse meat as a primary product because if there has been a decline of something like 90,000 in cattle numbers, then obviously there must be a replacement. It is also visually obvious that they must have been replaced by horses. I am a horse lover, and I do not care particularly whether they are fast or slow, quick or dead. Many of these horses are not even being used for pleasure. They are just contributing to a surplus which is being developed and wasting valuable, highly productive land.

I come now to the contradictions and the arguments which are frequently put by our absent colleagues of the National Party, that the Government should provide forms of financial assistance so that people can go on the land. Most honourable members would support that principle but some of us could not support it without a system of control of the use of that land. People should not have a right to acquire good land and take it completely out of production. One cannot expect the community to allow the exploitation of valuable resources and at the same time to be willing to finance those who want to go in and produce. Although the Department of Agriculture is doing a splendid job, some important issues must be faced if agricultural productivity in Victoria is to be increased.

I turn now to forests. One feels some sympathy for a Minister who has to administer such a body as the Forests Commission, because it is difficult to provide policies which are politically attractive and which are designed to popularize Governments or Oppositions
for an election. Responsible forestry programmes demand preparation and sowing of something which will not produce a return for the present generation and, in many cases, not even for the next generation.

The importance of forestry is similar to the importance which I attach to the preservation of our natural resources, such as Crown lands, and all of those things which contribute, not only to the economic development and stability of the future, but also to the preservation of a proper environment. The Australian environment has been severely damaged over the years. That is now accepted generally by the community and by the Government. Over recent years, steps have been taken to encourage recompense for that sort of damage. Honourable members will be aware of the encouragement of tree planting in farming and urban areas for the environmental benefit of both of those areas. These sorts of things are crucial to the betterment of the environment as well as to the ultimate economic development of the areas concerned.

The salinity problem is important. I think every party and every member in this House supported the introduction of the tree planting scheme last year. That has now been initiated. The nature of that scheme indicates that, if many of the real issues with which this State is confronted are to be properly handled, it is necessary that initiatives in planning and finance need to come from the Government. One should never forget that that sort of initiative in many respects stimulates activity by those people who have such a love for private enterprise and who somehow believe taxpayers are separate from other people. It must be acknowledged that the community pays for everything. It pays for the expenditure of Government and it also pays for the profits of speculators and manipulators on the stock exchange over whom the community has no control and over whom the Government does not seek to have control.

Another aspect of tree planting schemes which do not have a commercial benefit is that they preserve a heritage for future generations, and that is important. They can compensate for some of the damage that has been caused, particularly in irrigation areas, where the community, through the Government, has provided water rights at concessional rates to farmers, but has not exercised adequate control over usage. It has provided the water which has been used to excess and has thus created a problem which the Government is then expected to alleviate. If honourable members are to adopt a responsible attitude to the use of funds, we must ensure that free enterprise is not allowed to exploit the community at Government expense and then expect to be compensated for the damage it has caused.

Another aspect of forest management makes it important that increasing funds should be provided to service and develop the forest areas of Victoria. Forestry creates employment. In addition, it produces income and economic activity in both public and private sectors. Surely it is an activity which ought to be seen as having every desirable feature and should be supported by a responsible Government. I acknowledge that there has been an increase in tree and forest planting both by way of regeneration of hardwood forests and by expansion of softwood forests. Softwood forests are important because they will ease the pressure of exploitation of hardwood forests which, in many cases, should not be harvested prematurely and, in many instances, should perhaps not be harvested at all.

Those sorts of services should be provided. As I said earlier, they offer no political reward in the short term. However, with Government initiative they provide immediate employment opportunities and a guarantee of continuing economic activity and continuing decentralization of employment while protecting the environment for the future. These are the matters which the Supply Bill provides an opportunity for honourable members to discuss. I emphasize that I, and the Labor Party, believe that for any real economic development there has to be a stimulus from the Government by initiatives of
Government expenditure and Government direction. Then the responsibility is to ensure that those people whose economic activity has been stimulated are not allowed to exploit the community at large as they tend to do.

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR (Boronia Province)—I refer to Division 246, family and adolescent services, mentioned under community welfare services in the Supply Bill.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Which Division?

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR—Division 246 under community welfare services. However, as other honourable members have mentioned, it is difficult to know whether the matter to which I refer is actually included in that amount. I am simply guessing.

The CHAIRMAN—Just assume that it is.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—If it is not, it ought to be.

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR—Perhaps it would be better still if it were not there and I would not have anything to say! This is a perennial complaint in my experience in this place. Honourable members ought to have received some response from the Treasurer. This does not seem to be forthcoming because honourable members face the same debate with the Supply Bill as they did last year. One wonders how long such a situation will continue.

I shall address my remarks to one particular component of Family and Adolescent Services, which comes under the heading of youth accommodation services. I recall that in the last Budget the appropriation for provision of emergency accommodation for young people was doubled and that the amount provided in the last Budget, in round figures was $600 000. The year before the figure was approximately $300 000. The figures represent an indictment on society today. A large number of young people are homeless today and this bears no relationship to the area in which they live. The so-called "affluent" society is a spurious term to use because there are not so much affluent and non-affluent areas.

The Hon. D. E. Kent—Wake up!

The Hon. H. G. BAYLOR—I am about to point out that the need for youth accommodation occurs quite often in what people commonly term as the affluent suburbs just as much as it occurs in other suburbs. The problem of youth accommodation is common to all strata of society. It is sad that young people are placed in this predicament. I am not convinced that the appropriation of large sums of money to provide youth accommodation is necessarily the answer.

The reason for the problem is the large one of unemployment, which all honourable members recognize and find totally unacceptable. This Government, along with its past reputation of doing the utmost to alleviate that problem, is certainly now stepping up the task with its new direction policy. The problem has arisen also because many teenagers who are unable to find a job stay at home. Often, the mother and father are both out working and the pressures on the teenager becomes quite intolerable. Often the attitude of the parent is that the young person is not trying hard enough and aggressively enough to find a job.

From that point the position becomes intolerable, and, of their own volition the young person may opt to leave home even though he or she has no job or home to go to. Sometimes parents take the view that because their children have been brought up in relative comfort in a material sense in a so-called affluent family, the children have never known what it is to be cold or hungry or to have holes in their shoes. A whole generation of children have grown up with that background and do not understand the ethos of "my generation which was brought up by parents who weathered the last depression.

It is hard for these young people to realize the difficulties they may face in the world outside until they reach the point of leaving school and finding a job. Many parents admit that they have literally turfed out their young in an effort to make them face up to the realities of the world. These parents
are probably guilt ridden but nonetheless they do so in the guise of saying that it is for the good of the young person.

One has to examine closely the education system. The Prime Minister has said—and I think he is right—that, to a large extent, the Education Department has failed our young people. Young people are leaving school today with little idea of the reality and demands that are to be put upon them and are certainly not equipped with the necessary skills in order to obtain jobs. How often do honourable members hear an employer say that he or she cannot employ a young person because he does not know how to fill in a form and apply for a job?

That reflects greatly on the conditioning and attitude and the whole education system in Australia. Therefore society is faced, for the number of reasons I have outlined, with a sizeable group of young people who are virtually homeless. Of course agencies of church groups, municipalities and other concerned groups are assisting with the problem and representations have been made to the Government to provide hostel accommodation for these young people.

The Government has made a response to the tune of approximately $600 000 for the current year. Funds are provided to house young people, who leave empty beds at home and who are going through a difficult period on the threshold of their lives and need the stability, guidance and counselling of their families. To be thrust out suddenly from their homes is sad and I think it is sad that this is the way some people view the solution. I think this has a detrimental effect on young people.

I am aware that the Minister for Community Welfare Services has increasing pressures placed upon him to increase the funds for this purpose. However, the more money that is made available for that purpose the more this deep-seated social problem is escalated. I concede that one has to provide a certain amount of funding for this purpose for cases that are insoluble. However, I would far rather see the money diverted to conselling of the family and parents as a whole when they consider that they can no longer tolerate their own teenage children in the home. In this way one would obtain value for money. If the money were spent in that direction, the Government would get much closer to the root of the problem and to solving it. That is why I raise that point.

I refer next to Division 625, public health, for which $34.221 million is being provided. The expenditure to which I shall refer is included in this amount, but again it is the same old point. Along with all the demands that are now placed on the Government to provide services to meet the needs of the community and the plethora of services provided, either directly or indirectly by the Government. There is a need to rationalize all these services and to carry out a cost-benefit analysis of them. I am not sure that the Government is receiving the best value for money with a number of services which it currently provides. It is becoming more and more apparent in the community, as rates and taxes rise constantly, that people are beginning to ask, firstly, whether they want the service and, secondly, whether they can afford it.

The Hon. C. J. Kennedy—Who is asking that?

The Hon. H. G. Baylor—Many constituents in the electorate I represent are beginning to question it and to say, "This is too much of a burden on me. Why should I be paying for a specialized service or some other service that only a few people might be going to use? Why should a component be levelled on my rates and taxes for that?" A cost-benefit analysis should be carefully examined in terms of the level of rating and taxing in the community. I do not suggest that the services should be cut out or reduced, necessarily, but they should be rationalized, because since I have represented the electorate of Boronia, it has come to my attention that an enormous overlap of services occurs. Similar
services are provided in various areas, and people can go to this one or that one.

While speaking on the item dealing with public health, I refer particularly to the early childhood development programme. That is a fairly costly programme, and it must be so because it employs highly specialized and qualified people. The idea of the programme is to provide early intervention to pick up cases of children from early infancy to pre-school age to determine whether they have or are likely to have learning difficulties when they go to school. No one would argue against the value of that scheme.

It is a good concept to have these highly trained and skilled people going out into the community as they do and endeavouring to isolate children with potential difficulties so that when they reach school age they will be able to take their places along with their fellow students in school and continue to develop at a normal rate. Unfortunately, that is not happening. In the Knox region, which is part of the province I represent, the first early childhood development programme was set up five years ago. The children who were being seen in the first year of operation would now be up to ten years of age, yet no mitigation of the need for remedial teaching is seen in the schools. There are more and more demands for remedial teachers, even in primary schools. That is why I say that a cost-benefit analysis is necessary. Surely it would stand to reason that if a fully integrated programme of early childhood development exists, the benefit of it will be seen at the other end of the scale and there will be a lessening or complete abolition of remedial teaching, because presumably the children who need remedial teaching will have been identified and their problems rectified long before they reach the stage where a teacher says that they need remedial teaching.

It is unrealistic and naive to suggest that one programme will eliminate the need for remedial teaching. Perhaps another component is involved there and something is lacking in the teaching system. This is an extremely costly item, but to date no monitoring of the programme has been done. I was horrified when I visited the Knox early childhood development centre recently and asked for some monitoring figures. I asked how many children had been seen by specialist staff, including audiologists, dental specialists and others. Figures were available for the number of dental examinations, but not for other specialist consultations. I asked what had been the rate of progress in isolating and treating the problems of the children, and was told that no figures were available.

If money is to be expended on these programmes, qualitative research ought to be done on the matter so that the programme can be monitored and it can be decided whether these services are needed and should be expanded, because there are demands for expansion of this programme. I do not denigrate the programme, but I will not support its expansion until I am satisfied that some benefit is being obtained from it in meeting other requests and filling other needs. There are competing needs in the community, and it comes down to a question of priorities.

Many of these programmes call for specialized services and programmes for, perhaps, a small number of children. If that is the case, a system of "user pays" should be adopted. Let the person who is receiving the direct benefit from the service pay a component towards it. It is a truism that if a person has to pay for something, he tends to value it much more. There is an overuse of many free services for which the whole community must pay, and this has now reached the point where the Government cannot afford to continue in that direction. If people want a specialized service, they must be prepared to pay something for it.

Under the same heading, the State Government has made a firm policy commitment to fund pre-school education for every child in the State for one year. It has come to my attention that some children are having up to three years of pre-school education before they go to school. Pity help those poor
children! It is a disgrace and totally unnecessary for that to occur. The Government has no place to fund three years of pre-school education for anybody. Similarly, it has no place to fund toddler groups, and these are being funded by the Health Commission.

Two schools of thought exist about toddler groups. A child psychologist will tell one that toddler groups can be harmful for very young children. The groups are for children about eighteen months old and upwards. Their mothers take them to a place like a kindergarten where a Government paid supervisor looks after them. Young children in that situation would be better in a home environment where they would certainly not be isolated, but if they wished to do so, they could gain a lot from interaction and play with other little children of the same age in a small group and in a different atmosphere from that of a pre-school centre or school-type situation.

I am not convinced, by any means, that toddler groups, in the formal sense of a set programme in any municipality, is a good thing. We are told the State Government is not honouring its commitments on subsidy money for pre-schools and the provision of necessary staff for them. I believe money is being wrongly diverted to other things—optional extras. If mothers want to place young children in toddler groups they should be able to do so but they should have to pay for it. It should not be a commitment of Government.

Honourable members are aware of money constraints but I am sure they are aware that Victoria is not suddenly going to get a bonanza from Canberra, so it is therefore necessary to look carefully at getting value for the taxpayers' money.

I draw those matters to the attention of the House in the hope that they will be considered in the next Budget.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I propose to make comments on a number of items in this Bill. The first relates to Division 120—The Department of the Premier. Over the years, many questions have been asked in this House and in another place in an effort to ascertain how many people work in the public relations section of the Department of the Premier on propaganda for the Liberal Party. No one has ever been able to obtain that information. Most fair-minded people would say there is a shocking waste of public funds and one often wonders if there are enough journalists left to work on the daily newspapers, and for the television and radio news services.

I turn to Division 270, Youth, Sport and Recreation. The Government contributes fairly handsomely to some sports and not so handsomely to others. It spends a lot of money on sport. One matter that concerns me relates to our State religion—Australian rules football. Our children naturally learn this great game from very early in life. However, they see bad examples every Saturday of the football season such as when the smallest rover in the league, Dale Weightman, was assaulted and flattened—

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I will not allow a member to make a farce of the Supply Bill. Mr Kennedy should refer to things pertinent to the Government and not the irrelevancies he is carrying on with at the moment.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Division 301 relates to education, and I raise a matter that concerns me, many people in the electorate I represent, and many thousands of people throughout Victoria. I certainly do not share the view of the previous speaker who said too much is spent on education and too many people are getting an education. I cannot accept that proposition.

I refer in particular to a fine educational institution in the electorate I represent—Rusden State College—whose staff and students are concerned that its future may not be as bright as it ought to be. Rusden State College is a successful educational institution, with a constant demand for services well above the State average. Its graduates have high employment rates. Its courses are highly regarded by employers and its subjects are sought by
some of the best students in Victoria. It has many good things going for it. It is a medium-sized institution—not excessively large—and many families in the area regard it as an asset. It is a much more friendly place than the larger institutions. Its staff have a high standard and it is a strong contributor to public inquiries, such as that which resulted in the Williams report.

Rusden State College is acknowledged throughout Australia as a centre of excellence. It provides wonderful opportunities for advanced education which ought not to be reduced. It is by far the most easterly located college in Melbourne and if its operations were affected in any way residents of the eastern suburbs would have to travel a longer distance to receive education to which they are entitled. Rusden State College already has the resources to provide courses other than teacher education at a negligible cost. I add that it is basically a teacher education centre but it has diversified into other areas. That is why it has such a high standing in the academic world throughout the country.

Rusden has the necessary laboratories and facilities to conduct courses in the performing arts and the resources to enter into other fields at a negligible cost. It has a student and staff population in excess of 2000. It also plays a great part in the business of the area. I put in a plug for Rusden State College. It deserves to be congratulated and built up rather than dragged down by the Government. I say this from the bottom of my heart.

I now move to Division 500, Property and Services, and refer to the State Electoral Office and the Commonwealth Electoral Office which compile a joint electoral roll. There should be an automatic enrolment system for migrants when they become naturalized. It is deplorable that when people become citizens they are not automatically placed on the electoral roll. If that can happen in municipalities there is no reason why it cannot happen at State and Federal Government level. I hope that the Minister for Property and Services will consider this situation and do something about it. Automatic enrolment would save an enormous expense to the State and Commonwealth Electoral Offices which have to share the costs of the exercise.

I turn now to the subject of health, Division 620. I am filled with disgust that last year Waverley City Council had one of the finest garbage collection services in this country.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—What does the garbage collection service of Waverley City Council have to do with health? I thought that was a matter for local government.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—It falls within Division 510, local government, and comes under the 1958 Health Act. Garbage collection is a basic responsibility of local government and must be provided under the various health Acts. At no time during the course of the eighteen weeks’ strike last year was the council able to produce one letter of complaint—

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I have a strong suspicion that Mr Kennedy raised this matter during a debate on a motion for the adjournment of the House during this current session. If that is so, Mr Kennedy may not canvass precisely those matters again in the Supply Bill.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—On a point of order, at Waverley new circumstances exist in respect of the collection of garbage. I understand my colleague is about to begin canvassing them. They involve a breach of the Health Act, and funds are provided in this measure for that department.

The CHAIRMAN—I remind Mr Kennedy that if he proceeds along those lines, he will be out of order. However, if he proceeds along the lines suggested by Mr Landeryou, he may be in order.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I refer to a new industrial dispute, not the previous one, in the City of Waverley. Through the wilful
stupidity of the Waverley City Council every week garbage is not being collected from some 30 000 homes. In the backyards of homes right throughout the City of Waverley there are piles of stinking rotting rubbish in plastic bags with the smell oozing out. Next to a select residential area, in High Street Road, Glen Waverley, in which a number of families live in pleasant brick villas, there is a rubbish dump 30 metres long, 10 metres high and 10 metres wide, packed with rubbish, under which are the usual things connected with rubbish. Included amongst those are snakes, rats, and even maggots which look something like this!

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Did Mr Kennedy ask permission to bring that into the House?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I did not know that I needed to do so, Sir. I ask you now.

The CHAIRMAN—Mr Kennedy should have asked before. If this should happen again, something will be done about it, Mr Kennedy is starting to test my patience.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—Next time I will ask you, Sir, I would not want to test your patience.

Ratepayers of the City of Waverley, of whom I am one, had a good rubbish collection service. Since the new service was introduced, many complaints have been made to the council about bins being left on nature strips, orange peelings lying on footpaths and so forth. It is a matter of deep regret that these things happen in such a pleasant city as Waverley.

The Hon. ROBERT LAWSON (Higinbotham Province)—The House has experienced a chequered debate on the debate on the subject of the Supply Bill today. Honourable members are gradually recovering from the stream of cloudy eloquence from the Thomas-town parish pump. That was followed by a lively contribution by Mr Block on the subject of the State Library. Mr Kent then did his well-known sleepwalking-while-making-a-speech routine. That was followed by Mrs Baylor who spoke eloquently on the subject of social services. During the last three quarters of an hour of Mr Eddy's speech, he seemed to be addressing the Attorney-General and me exclusively, because all other members had become either comatose or indifferent.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Will Mr Lawson be dealing with any other services?

The Hon. ROBERT LAWSON—I support Mr Block in his remarks about the State Library. He mentioned that the Arts Committee, of which I am a member, visited the State Library yesterday and looked at the inadequacies there which are so clearly visible on close inspection. A severe problem exists in the library. The treasure in the archives of this State is of significance to the whole of Australia. These records, books, newspapers and so on are not adequately protected, and the fire risk is high.

Mr Block described the lighting system as archaic. Amongst what they called the stacked shelves, are old-fashioned globes and they are suspended by wires. When one wants to move the light up or down, one slides it on the wire. We had to stop Mr Block from playing with the light because we thought we might lose him. That would have been of regret, not only to the Liberal Party, but also to the Labor Party. In any event, no tragedy ensued while we were there, but it is likely that one will occur some day.

The librarian took us around the building and the same situation prevailed everywhere—decay and neglect. The library is desperately in need of conservators, modern equipment and the $40 000 per annum, of which Mr Block was speaking, to install computer terminals so that the library can link up with other libraries, including the United States of America Library of Congress and our own Library. This is a matter of importance and I recommend to the Treasurer that funds be granted so that the national treasure in our State library be maintained and not subjected to further deterioration.

If one enters the tombs of the library, one finds the most complete collection of Australian provincial newspapers in the world. One may wonder
why the library would store the West Wyalong "Gazette" for 150 years or so, but it could be important to historians in the future. It has the complete records of the *Listener in T.V.*, for instance, which covers the 1950s, 1960s and so forth. These records will be of importance to historians and they should be preserved. The library has many valuable volumes and they moulder away because they are in urgent need of the attention of conservators.

Having made this point about the State Library, I will now work the parish pump. I wish to speak to Division 720, which relates to the Ministry of Transport. The Nepean Highway is one of the arterial roads of Victoria and is integral to the over-all road plan of the City of Melbourne. In recent months, the work of widening, improving and extending the highway has slowed down considerably because of lack of funds. I do not intend to criticize the Country Roads Board. I congratulate the board for the work that has been done, the quality of work, the design of the highway and the way in which the board has acquired adjacent properties. The section of the Country Roads Board works to which I am referring runs right through the Higinbotham Province. Virtually no complaints have been received on the acquisition of these properties. The properties were acquired on generous terms with the full agreement of both vendors and purchasers.

The highway work was proceeding until a few months ago, but the board has apparently run out of money for it and work has slowed down. At present, works are continuing underneath the Gardenvale railway bridge but the work on the highway is not proceeding as it should. For the benefit of anyone who is worried about the Sandringham railway line closing down, I indicate that the Ministry of Transport spent about $3 million on the railway bridge to which I have just referred. If anyone believes that the Ministry of Transport, after having spent $3 million on a railway bridge, will close the railway line, he is very much mistaken. That is one of the arguments I raise when people tell me that the Sandringham railway line is in danger of being closed.

As I said, work on the Nepean Highway has slowed down and I trust that this money that is being made available for other services under Division 720—of $20·1 million and $40 000 on general expenses—will be applied towards the Nepean Highway. I make this plea, not for any parochial purpose, but because the Nepean Highway is so important to the general economy of this State and the Mornington Peninsula in particular.

**The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie** (Geelong Province)—I shall speak only briefly on some items concerning Geelong, because most matters were canvassed last night. I shall deal with Division 240, Community Welfare Services Administration, which is a field I have mentioned on numerous occasions. Because of increasing demands, that area must be provided with sufficient funds. That is for many reasons, but mainly because most of the cut-backs that have been introduced, for one reason or another, have unfortunately affected these points at which the general public has the first contact with the bureaucracy or State Government departments.

It is important that this contact is established in the various public areas, especially in social welfare, where people have been kicked around by circumstances beyond their control, are suffering hardships, and are in need of understanding and sympathy. This Government department must operate in an effective and humane way. This is one area which the Government should be considering. According to the newspapers today, an additional 10 000 people are expected to be out of work due to the "razor gang" cuts. This will increase the demands that will be placed on the Department of Community Welfare Services.

Another item in the Bill on regional centres, Division 244, also deals with general expenses. A very important service has been conducted in the Geelong region, namely, the budgetary
advice service. That service has been particularly important and useful. A single officer is employed by the department and the officer is in charge of 30 volunteers. The volunteers do a course in their own time on how to advise people on budgetary problems. It is not only low income families who need the service. The area in which this service operates is quite a salubrious part of Geelong. People are on fairly high incomes and many are two income families. However, because of commitments they have entered into, they often find that they cannot keep up with debts and get into all sorts of difficulties and pressures which affect their family lives.

The budgetary advice service helps people to organize themselves and their finances. It is able to relieve them of many of their worries. The service is often able to hold families together. Funding needs to be made available for the continuation of this work. It would be a tragedy if the service closed down.

Division 286, rent control, allocates $90 000. The Residential Tenancies Bill was recently debated in this House for a considerable time, as honourable members will recall. The Opposition moved more than one hundred amendments to that Bill and, even though the Opposition is not happy with the final composition of the Bill, the Labor Party is of the opinion that the Bill does represent an advance over those tenancy controls that previously existed. Although the Bill has been passed, it has not yet been proclaimed. Therefore, the hardships that the Bill was supposed to eliminate are continuing because of the Government's failure to proclaim the Bill. I ask the Government to ensure that the Bill be proclaimed so that the tribunals established under the Bill can proceed.

I turn to Division 301, education administration. There is an urgent need for the Government to provide clerical assistants for primary school principals. However, the Government has failed to act and that inaction is costing Victoria money. A primary school principal on a salary in excess of $20 000 is forced to undertake tasks that could be performed by an office girl. Many primary school principals are forced to type letters and perform minor administration work that would be best carried out by a junior office girl.

In the area of secondary education, the Government's devolution process has imposed many demands and an enormous work load on clerical assistants in schools. However, the Government has done nothing to provide the necessary back-up services that are so badly needed. Those people who are involved in clerical assistance work in secondary schools are suffering a high incidence of health breakdowns because they cannot cope with the stress that has been imposed upon them by the various measures introduced by the Government and for that reason many resign. The Opposition does not disagree with those measures which, in most cases, have been of assistance and are in line with Labor Party policy. However, if the Government is to introduce such measures, it should give more thought as to how those measures will be administered.

Under Division 308, special education, the Government has let the people of Victoria down. The Government promised to provide additional staff and help in the area of special education, but that staff and help have not been forthcoming and it does not appear as if they ever will.

I turn to Division 435, the Ministry for Conservation. The Labor Party approved the establishment of the Environment Protection Authority. The Minister for Conservation is aware of the staff shortages. It is almost impossible for officers in the various conservation departments to conduct their important work. If those officers cannot properly conduct their work, the Government will face an enormous cost burden to clear up the mess that will be left behind in years to come. The Government must scrutinize the future implications of financial cutbacks in the area of conservation.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie
The Fisheries and Wildlife Division does not employ enough officers to properly police this area of conservation. In many cases the law is broken by people flagrantly disregarding the fisheries and wildlife regulations because they know there are not enough officers to protect the various wildlife species.

Under Division 480, public works, the Government could be spending the taxpayers' money more efficiently. The Public Works Department is not operating efficiently. The Opposition has received many complaints from people, who have claimed that contractors' accounts are not being processed. I cite the example of a contractor who, last week, carried out work on a particular project for the Public Works Department in Geelong. The contractor completed the work and had it approved by the inspector and, when he approached the accounts department to be paid, he was told there was no money available and he would have to wait. That is a terrible state of affairs. A Government department is having work undertaken for which it cannot pay. One wonders how widespread this is and how long people will have to wait for their money.

This matter is even more disturbing when one notes that the Minister for Local Government, only yesterday, indicated that there is no problem with the payment of accounts. It is obvious that the Minister does not understand what is happening in his department. Contractors are being refused payment because of a lack of funds. It may not be the Government's fault; it may be due to inefficiency within the department. However, some inquiries should be made into the matter. A great deal of money is spent by the Public Works Department. I cite the recent example of the purchase of a $7 million computer to assist in the payment of moneys to contractors. Yet, contractors face long delays in being paid for their work. In New South Wales, the Public Works Department covers a much wider area and includes responsibility for the construction of hospitals and water supply. That department does not possess a computer for the payment of accounts and yet contractors are paid within 28 days.

It is all very well for the Government to say that it does not have the money to pay. The Government should examine other ways of using available funds.

I turn to Division 502, the Public Record Office. Last year the Auditor-General in his annual report criticized the Government for wasting money by storing many records in high rental office accommodation in the city when those records could be stored at Laverton. The report recommended that the Public Record Office be regionalized. The Government should seriously examine that recommendation because the establishment of public record offices in regional centres would be more convenient for country people. The establishment of a Public Record Office would be much more convenient for a provincial city like Geelong, where people have to travel to Laverton to obtain access to records. Such an office would save money because staff from local government authorities would not have to travel to Laverton and work through the huge files.

I turn to Division 620, that of health administration. This is causing much concern in the area that I represent. I cite the provision of staff for the Shannon Park Spastic Centre. A large contribution to the funds for the project has been made by the people of Geelong. To its credit, the Government also agreed to provide a grant and the organization had the money in hand. The contracts were let to provide for quite a large extension of the set-up at Shannon Park only to find that, after the contract had been let, the organization was in the embarrassing situation of having to withdraw because the Government said that project could not proceed because it could not finance additional staff.

Because of the amount of money the public had contributed this situation caused embarrassment. The people concerned are now in a position of not knowing whether to return the money or whether the Government will pro-
vide the staff. This is a shameful occurrence. Parts of the building did not require additional staff. The project provided for the building of a swimming pool for therapy purposes which did not require additional staff. That stage could have been completed. However, the Government would not listen to that idea and the job is being held up.

I support Mr Block and Mr Lawson in their remarks about the arts, and especially the art gallery in Geelong, which is a poorly designed building and lets in an excessive amount of ultraviolet light. Many of the valuable paintings cannot be exhibited and must be stored because of design problems. A great deal of work needs to be undertaken and, once again, a staff problem exists. The art gallery cannot function as it should and provide services to the people of Geelong.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON (Higinbotham Province)—The Bill provides honourable members with an opportunity of priming the parish pump and for honourable members of the Opposition to advocate the spending of money without any consideration of accountability and, for those of us who have the privilege of sitting on the Government side, to try to approach the matter a little more responsibly and examine not only the needs of the electorates we represent, but also the needs of the community as a whole.

Before I develop one or two matters, I ask the Attorney-General whether he would press the Government to revert to a system which was the practice some years ago under which honourable members' requests were considered by the appropriate Ministry and a member received an acknowledgement, and often some encouragement to develop a suggestion he had made.

Of recent years I have been quite certain that honourable members speak, shall we say, to a brick wall. Nobody takes any notice, least of all the Government, and any reasonable suggestions and requests made by honourable members in any part of the House are totally ignored. By way of example, some years ago I put up the suggestion that, in cases of some offences against the motor car licensing regulations, cars of offenders be forfeited to the Crown.

Within a matter of weeks I received an acknowledgement of that matter from the then Chief Secretary's Department advising me that the matter was under investigation. Some months later the Chief Secretary wrote and said that they were unable to develop the matter further because of certain difficulties. Honourable members' contributions to this debate in particular have some merit and value and it would be appreciated by all honourable members if the Government would indicate that at least somebody examined their contributions and advised the honourable member of the outcome. The Government has slipped badly in this way and the time has come for it to reinstate the position as it was some years ago.

I shall deal firstly with the Department of the Premier. I suppose most honourable members recently received a whole series of what I would call propaganda literature dealing with women, which was published by the Women's Advisory Bureau. I thought the whole object of that organization was to avoid discrimination. However, every one of those publications was discriminatory. I do not believe that the department is fulfilling its purpose of providing equal opportunity. It is pushing the barrow of women and discriminates against men, so much so that yesterday I received in the mail a publication from a well-known public company which informs me that it has awarded scholarships to women graduates.

I realize that the question of education is excluded under the Equal Opportunity Act but I point out that it is contrary to the spirit of that Act that men should not be equally admissible to those scholarships. The point I wish to emphasize is the danger of the pendulum swinging too far—the danger in this type of legislation.

The second matter I wish to emphasize is that, although the legislation relates to equal opportunity and is intended to prevent discrimination between men and women, in introducing
the legislation the Attorney-General told the House that the Government was opposed to discrimination of all types, on the grounds of sex, religion and age. Within our community the greatest form of discrimination is probably discrimination on the grounds of age.

If honourable members examine advertisements for positions published in the daily papers, time and time again they will find that the applicants are restricted to people aged between 25 or 35 or whatever it might be. This disadvantages the over-40 age group which is becoming the hardest group within the community to place in employment. If the Government's philosophy in avoiding discrimination of any kind is carried to its logical conclusion, the Government must take action to avoid discrimination on the grounds of age. I ask the Minister to note this and take the appropriate action.

I turn to Division 150, economic development. It has become fashionable for the Opposition to do its best, for political purposes, to knock the economic development of Victoria. Every project involving economic development that is brought forward—and I emphasize there have been some pretty hefty ones over the past couple of years—has been knocked by the Opposition on any grounds it can dredge up.

Anything the Opposition can do to prevent the development of the State, it does. That the establishment of the Ministry for Economic Development will be invaluable to the State is apparent to anyone making even a cursory examination of its charter. If Mr. Mackenzie studied the developments of the State and opened both eyes instead of one, he would realize that Victoria is developing at a steady rate despite his attempts to prevent it. Employment in Victoria is growing. Despite every effort of Mr. Mackenzie to stop economic growth in Victoria and to encourage unemployment, the State is beating him and increasing employment and economic development of Victoria is proceeding despite the efforts of his party.

Only recently an announcement was made of a large project to build engines for a Japanese company. Exciting developments are occurring in the Latrobe Valley. For instance, a substance, carbon fibre, will be of great value to the industrial growth of the State. Yet, what happens? As soon as the preliminary moves are made to develop industrial undertakings, the Opposition knocks them. I can almost visualize members of the Opposition getting their heads together to ask: How can we prevent this; will we claim that it is being built on an Aboriginal sacred site, that it will pollute the atmosphere in Timbucktoo, or what?

The Hon. B. A. Chamberlain—Or it might provide a profit to a transnational company.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—The whole State participates in profit; the benefit does not reach only a limited number of people. Development projects have given advantages that are spread throughout the community. Gas has been discovered in the Otway Basin and undoubtedly that will form the basis for future development in the western areas of the State. Victoria is developing brown coal resources rapidly in the eastern part of the State, to everyone's benefit. Oil and gas resources in Bass Strait are being developed. All of these are exciting developments that compare favourably with developments in the north and west of Australia. It has been said that Victoria is falling behind and that the exciting States are Queensland and Western Australia. Do not believe it! The opportunities are in Victoria and they are developing rapidly. The new Ministry for Economic Development, which I commend, will be of advantage to Victoria—and I am aware that Mrs. Coxsedge would be happy if these developments were stillborn.

I refer to Division 252, correctional services. The community is deeply disturbed to read recent reports that prisoners classified as dangerous, some of whom apparently have an unenviable record of violence, have been incarcerated in minimum security institutions from which they break out almost at
The deep disquiet of the community has been expressed to me on many occasions in the constituency I represent where I am being asked why the State cannot provide proper and secure accommodation for violent prisoners instead of patting them on the back as so often occurs and allowing them to continue on their merry way. Not for a moment do I advocate that all persons should be locked up and treated as harshly as prisoners of the last century, but I do believe an offender with a record of violence and anti-social behaviour ought to be confined in such a way that he is not able to break out and once again threaten the rest of the community.

I refer also to the Attorney-General's section and to recent press reports that of the ten most wanted criminals sought by the Police Force, nine have absconded while on bail. That is a deplorable record.

The Hon. Haddon Storey—That will continue to be so while there are at least nine persons who have absconded from bail.

The Hon. H. M. HAMILTON—I am aware of a recent attempt to tighten the granting of bail but I wonder whether it has been effective and whether the fault may lie with the magistrate granting the bail or with the legislation under which bail is granted. I hope the Attorney-General will review the matter because the community is concerned and questions why nine out of ten of the most wanted criminals in the State should be absconders from bail.

I refer next to the item for the Treasurer. I do not know why but there appear to be numerous reasons for increasing interest rates but never a good reason supplied for reducing them. Surplus funds are pouring into the country and the growth of money supply is causing the Federal Treasurer a lot of worry although interest rates continue to rise. This matter, which is mainly within the purview of the Federal Treasurer, is of vital concern also to the State Treasurer.

I have a theory that the economy is locked into a high interest rate structure, that money is borrowed at high rates by all the fringe financial institutions, that to reduce interest rates substantially when money becomes more freely available, as it does from time to time, puts those fringe institutions in jeopardy so that there is a strong inbuilt resistance to reduce interest rates.

If the community is to continue to prosper, if business is to be stimulated and if home building is to be encouraged, interest rates should be lowered. The present high rates are a threat to economic development. I urge the Treasurer to discuss the matter with the Federal Government at the first opportunity to work out a method by which interest rates can be progressively reduced. Despite what people might say, money is freely available in the community: It is a question of whether one is able to pay for it. It does not add up to me to read that the Commonwealth authorities are concerned at the surplus liquidity in the community when interest rates rise once more. It is one of the millstones around our neck, and I firmly believe one of the great problems is that we are locked into this high interest rate structure and we have to break out of it.

I now turn briefly to the section dealing with health. Announcements in the press this morning indicated that the States will face reduced allocations from the Commonwealth Government for health purposes. I have not read the fine print, but it appears that the Commonwealth proposes to thrust more of the burden of maintaining health services onto the States. This is precisely what happened in Canada where they had this marvellous health scheme until they found out that the Government of Canada could no longer sustain it; so they washed their hands substantially of it and said that the Provinces could underwrite it. Our Commonwealth Government has had a habit of doing that.

I have quoted circumstances in this House previously where schemes were introduced by the Commonwealth, to
be funded by the Commonwealth, and within a few years the Commonwealth turned around and said to the States, "You can pick up the tab from now on". The resources of the States are limited. The States do not have access to the funds, or to the potential funds, that the Commonwealth has. Moreover, the allocations to the States are for salaries, and maintenance of permanent services, things of that nature, and the surplus left to provide for additional needs is minimal. In those circumstances there is a need to examine closely what is going on.

Some years ago when the Whitlam Government was in Canberra, the Treasury was plundered and money was spent as though it was going out of fashion. Expectations throughout the community were raised in all sorts of directions, not the least of which was in the building of hospitals and health centres. In the heart of the electorate I represent a centre was begun by the Whitlam Government, and the Commonwealth was going to provide the funds for it—the Bentleigh Health Centre. However, despite repeated requests, pleas and implorings to the Federal Government to provide those funds, they have never been provided. In bringing this up, I am guilty of priming the parish pump, but I do not apologize for it. It is time that the Federal Government honoured its obligation and the Premier pressed it to do so.

I conclude by saying this: The problems of budgeting for a State are ever growing, and the only possible way that a State can provide for its individual needs is to build a firm economic foundation within the State. I wish the new Department of Economic Development well because in that department lies the future of Victoria.

The basis of my submission is that, with the complexity of Government, there is a major problem for members of Parliament in acquiring a sufficient knowledge for contribution to the Parliament of policy development, as well as reviewing Executive action. The problem is not so much the availability of information, because I believe it is possible to obtain information if one is persistent enough, but the problem is basically that of analysing the information and putting it into a meaningful form.

This problem is not new and, in fact, it has been faced up to by many Parliaments in the world, but I am sad to say that we have not faced up to it here. The solution is quite clear, that is, to provide an information analysis facility within the Parliamentary Library similar to the House of Commons. This facility means getting together a small group of people who become specialists in their particular area. Some of these people would be permanent members of the staff, and others would be experts who are brought in from time to time. For example, a contract may be let on a sessional basis for an expert to spend a certain number of hours a day while the House is sitting, perhaps four or five hours a day, starting in the late afternoon and going through to the evening. The advantage of the second course of action, the contract system, is that it is possible to bring in people working in their own expert field, who are thus able to bring with them the most up-to-date and expert knowledge in those areas.

The almost fundamental thing that members need is background briefing papers on matters of vital interest. These may not be great in number. There may only be 5, 6 or 7, during a sessional period, but they are papers that would provide members of Parliament in a concise but comprehensive form with information so that they could make a meaningful contribution in debates. Also, the papers would provide a range of options or a range of opinions on the matter.
The last thing honourable members would want is for this information analysis system to provide recommendations or propose a course of action. We do not want to get ourselves into the situation that has occurred in Canberra, where the research service is writing speeches for members of Parliament, so one man is writing a speech for a member on one side of politics, and another is writing a speech for a member on the other side of politics. What honourable members need is the background information in a comprehensible form. This is not available to honourable members at present.

I do not want in any way to denigrate the work of the reference service in the Library. They are an enthusiastic and enterprising group, and an energetic group, but they are over-worked and have inadequate resources. Probably all of us have had the experience of going into the Library and saying “I want to make a speech on this topic or subject, what can you provide me with as background?”. They are only able to give you a manila folder, filled with newspaper cuttings, which fall out when you open it. That is not the type of thing one can use very effectively.

A great deal of interest is occurring in this area, and a great deal of activity is occurring in other Parliaments in the Commonwealth, notably the Federal and the Queensland Parliaments. It is undesirable and unnecessary that each Parliament should set up independent services without some degree of inter-relationship, because to be effective a computer based information reference service is needed. The complexity of Government activities is such that it is necessary for the researcher to have available to him the assistance of a computer system that would quickly bring to his attention and make available to him all the references on a particular matter. With the activities that are occurring, particularly in Queensland, and in the Commonwealth sphere, it is critical that a uniform approach is adopted with compatibility of equipment. It would be foolish to set up duplicate data bases in all Parliaments. It is better for some of the Parliaments to specialize in some areas and have a link through a computer system.

The State Library was mentioned today. It is very desirable to also have a link with overseas Parliaments such as New Zealand, or with Congress in the United States of America.

I move on to Division 246, family and adolescent services. I speak particularly about emergency youth accommodation. Mrs Baylor has already covered this area well today but I refer to a particular situation in the south-eastern area of Melbourne. At present there is a desperate need for emergency youth accommodation in that area, and no provision has been made for this by the department. Fortunately, the community in the Prahran and Malvern areas has taken action and a proposal has come forward under which an emergency accommodation facility will be established in Prahran, which will be supplemented and linked with another facility in Malvern where there will be medium term accommodation. Young people who do not have a roof over their heads will be taken care of in Prahran for a limited period and then will be able to move on to Malvern.

This is a community effort. At present there is a major move, backed by the Rotary clubs in the area and the local newspaper, the Southern Cross, to gain support for the scheme by the public and contributions for the project. It will be impossible to raise all the funds by donation and it is important for the Government to recognize this as a pilot community effort providing more personal and human assistance than is available through departmental institutions.

One of the prime objectives, besides providing immediate emergency accommodation, is to locate suitable ongoing accommodation for young people within the community and to help them into employment. The scheme deserves support and the Government should make provision for this support in the next Budget.
Finally, I refer briefly to the Australian College of Entertainers Co Ltd. Most members of Parliament have received a letter about this matter. This undertaking trains people in the light entertainment field which is an industry in itself. Until this time the college has not received any substantive assistance from the Government. In the last day or so, discussion has occurred about Government assistance for the Victorian College of the Arts. The Australian College of Entertainers Pty Ltd is a real job training facility which requires assistance, and the Government should also pay attention to it in considerations for the next Budget.

The Hon. RALPH HOWARD (Templestowe Province)—It can be fairly said that only a foolish person would claim to be perfect, and the same remark applies to organizations and even Governments. Consequently, I feel free, arguing on that basis, to mention one or two matters which can be suitably contemplated at this time. Division 102 deals with the House Committee of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, and I should like to make a point which I have not mentioned in this sessional period, although I have mentioned it on several occasions in the past. I try to rationalize my remarks on such matters so as not to draw your disapproval, Mr Chairman.

I realize that preparations are being made to introduce a paging system but I point out that at present no adequate paging system operates within the Parliament. It may well be installed tomorrow, but it is not here at present. I make that comment and leave it at that.

Mr Hayward referred to the Parliamentary Library. I endorse everything that he said; it makes much sense. I cannot help observing that our Library, and many others, although not all others, tend to be print media based and, in an age in which electronic media are becoming more important, this is totally inadequate. I cannot imagine that within the provisions of this Bill, there is appropriate allowance for the present course to be changed. I am aware of the fact that our Librarian would like to change the course in that regard and I endorse any attention in that direction.

That leads on fairly naturally to the opportunity of making brief mention of a subject which has already been mentioned today—the State Library—and, in association with that, a mention of the National Museum. Some little time ago I was given the opportunity of making an inspection of the National Museum and, having done so, I decided that any plan which might be contemplated to build within the central business district a replacement for the National Museum which included provision for the storage of the entire range of artefacts in the archives would be an irresponsible act, for a couple of reasons. From the spatial point of view, to accommodate that collection adequately with ease of access would require an enormous building and I know of no reason why a building of those dimensions should be built in the central business district—a palace of a warehouse.

I therefore suggested a division of the activities of the museum into, on the one hand, education and display and, on the other hand, functions of storage and research. I suggested that the public contacts activity should be conducted in the central city area in a suitable building which could afford to be as splendid as possible under the circumstances, the best that could be built at the time, and the other function should be located on a green field site where one could take advantage of the possibility of modular storage which could provide two advantages—a tremendous improvement in loss prevention and greater climatic control over various sections of the collection. Similar remarks apply to the State Library.

I now comment on the divisions dealing with planning and transport. My remarks arise from a publication that has been brought to my attention and that of other honourable members in the last day or so—a booklet entitled, "Metropolitan Strategy Implementation", published by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. It deals
in particular with amendment No. 150 to the Metropolitan Planning Scheme. I draw particular attention to the provision that it makes by contemplation of district centre zones, with particular emphasis on one notable omission. Here I could be accused of giving the parish a little jerk. The notable omission is Doncaster. Within the City of Doncaster and Templestowe, Doncaster has been almost self-selecting as a distinct centre zone. It was the topic of my maiden speech in this House when I talked about the way I could foresee that area growing into a decentralized central business district as time went by.

As one looks at the mode of selection of these district centre zones, it becomes immediately apparent that the major factor which has been considered in identifying them is that they are located almost entirely on the current radial transport fixed rail system. They are related to railway stations; sadly, Doncaster is not currently related to a railway station. This fact probably should hasten our thoughts, and we are given reason to think about this from time to time when we see railway estimates and we occasionally make provision for the contemplation of construction of the eastern railway.

I should like to make a further plea for contemplation of an outer circumferential underground rail link in Melbourne. I have suggested a route before, so I will not be tedious and repeat that. However, mentioning the eastern side of it, I suggest that it should link areas such as Frankston, Dandenong, VFL Park, Box Hill, Doncaster and then, being an underground link, it would go under the river at Greensborough and so move on through the other side of the city via Tullamarine and Werribee. I understand that there was recently an abandonment of the provision for linking of the Diamond Creek and Ringwood locations of the outer ring road planning scheme. With the abandonment of that scheme, the need for contemplation of a public transport system of this type—underground, following essentially arterial roads, working on an open-cut and fill system to minimize land acquisition costs—would have tremendous benefit to the city. A centre such as Doncaster would then have the opportunity of reaching its full potential, if one looked far enough ahead.

As a small boy, I can remember when Doncaster was a place of orchards and country farm houses. It is now very different from that. Box Hill was not much different in those days when I was a pupil at the Box Hill High School and travelled daily through that area for a time. Ultimately, those two centres will probably coalesce into a much larger decentralized central business district.

I believe that is the way the community should be moving. Our ultimate transport aim should be to reduce the need of individuals to travel in the enjoyment of their daily life, and I see a new reason for the existence of the current central business district as a perpetual home for major national organizations. Melbourne regards itself as the financial centre of Australia. When one looks at an aerial map of Melbourne, and one identifies the ownership of major buildings, especially at the western end of the city, it is easy to believe that. Melbourne will play an increasingly important part as the focal point of tourism in Victoria. That is one major thrust of the new directions about which the Government is currently talking. With the development of tourism to its full potential, Melbourne will become tremendously important. Changes in administration will be necessary to allow for the full development of Melbourne as an attractive international termination point for people flying into Australia. For example, Melbourne has Australia's only 24-hour international airport, and that is an important advantage. I regard Melbourne as the pivot point of tourism in Australia. It is well placed and is well provided with facilities which warrant its being accorded the ultimate title of the pivot point of tourism in Australia.

Before leaving the matter of economic development, I wish to make one other point. Many speakers who have
commented on the Government's plans with regard to economic development seem to have missed the point that there are two major areas of thrust. One is the area of tourism which has an enormous potential for occupying people in gainful employment to the considerable benefit of the entire community; the other is the identification of the rich natural heritage of power resources which can be used to add value to raw materials before they leave Australia to satisfy the requirements of world markets in their own right with enormous production runs suited to world markets rather than inefficient production runs suited to 14 million people in Australia, which very often require tariff protection.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation) — I suggest that progress be reported.

Progress was reported.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (CLEAN AIR) BILL

The message from the Assembly relating to the amendments in this Bill was further considered.

Discussion was resumed of the Assembly's amendments Nos. 1 to 10:

1. Clause 1, line 7, omit "1980" and insert "1981".
2. Clause 4, lines 9-12, omit the words and expressions on these lines and insert "any waste (being waste in respect of which an Order is in force under section 20(11) exempting the occupier of the premises or a class of persons including the occupier of the premises from all or any of the provisions of Part III. with respect to the holding of licences) is or is likely to be discharged or emitted into the atmosphere".
3. Clause 4, line 16, omit "(c)" and insert "(a) fails to comply or".
4. Clause 4, line 21, omit "(d)" and insert "(b)".
5. Clause 4, line 23, omit "(e)" and insert "(c)".
6. Clause 4, line 25, omit "(f)" and insert "(d)".
7. Clause 4, line 27, omit "an" and insert "a preliminary".
8. Clause 4, line 28, omit "owner or".
9. Clause 4, line 29, omit "An" and insert "The preliminary".
10. Clause 4, line 30, omit "may contain" and insert "that an air pollution abatement notice containing".

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Mr Walker sought the adjournment of the debate on the motion that amendments Nos. 1 to 10 made by the Legislative Assembly be agreed to.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province) — I defer to the Minister for any comments he may wish to make.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation) — The necessary comments on the amendments were probably made this morning. The amendments are fairly complex. It needs to be understood that the Bill was passed by this House, sent to the Lower House and amended, at least in one clause, in a rather substantial way, so that the procedures for the issue of a preliminary abatement notice which are followed in the Bill dealing with noise pollution are also followed in this Bill which relates to clear air. That was the reason for the extensive amendments of clause 4, and most of the other amendments are consequential to that. In addition, I have to propose two additional amendments to the amendments and I understand that Mr Walker has an amendment which he proposes to move.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province) — My party does not oppose the amendments, having followed with interest the course of the Bill through both Houses. It is now back in this House with a substantial number of amendments, but they considerably improve the Bill which was before the House previously. I have been through the amendments carefully. Many comments could be made, but I do not intend to raise any opposition or move any amendments to the Assembly's amendments Nos. 1 to 10.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) — The National Party supports the amendments as proposed by the Minister. When the original debate took place in this House last year, my party expressed concern at certain aspects of the Bill but was heartened at that time by an assurance that it was similar to the Bill dealing with noise abatement and that
the clauses of that Bill were working effectively. We were assured that the Bill before the House was a direct transposition from the former Clean Air Act to the Environment Protection Act. I believe we were dealing with a similar Bill, but that proved to be not completely accurate. The result was a very real concern in industry as to the effects of the provisions of the new Bill and as to the possible effect on future development of industry in Victoria.

Strong submissions were made to the Government following the presentation of the Bill to the House. To my mind, the end result is somewhat embarrassing to the Minister in this House in the sense that the amendments that have been moved in another place following its passage through this place and during the drafting of the Bill. Those are rather stringent and caustic comments. They are made quite deliberately because I do not want to see such a situation arise again, nor do I think other honourable members would wish that to happen. The lesson is that more consultation needs to take place. It has taken place belatedly and the House now has what, in the view of the majority of people, is a better and more adequate piece of legislation.

The National Party supports the amendments because they achieve that objective, but regrets that consultation did not occur earlier.

The motion was agreed to.

**The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON** (Minister for Conservation)—The Assembly has amended clause 4 as set out in amendment No. 11. I propose to move that the House agree to this amendment but with further amendments. I now move:

Omit “shall be served” at the beginning of the proposed insertion and insert “and shall, if having regard to the matters mentioned in sub-section (1) it is reasonable to serve an air pollution abatement notice, be served”.

That will allow for an appeal against a subjective assessment of an officer of the Environment Protection Authority.

**The Hon. E. H. WALKER** (Melbourne Province)—The Minister for Conservation has been good enough to discuss this new amendment with me and I have no cause to oppose it at all. It is a reasonable amendment.

**The Hon. D. M. EVANS** (North Eastern Province)—The National Party is happy with the amendment because it does bring about the opportunity for a conference. Industry is of the view that prior consultation should certainly be introduced in the initial stages.

The amendment will give the Environment Protection Authority some opportunity to perceive advance problems that may arise and take some action to ensure that they do not arise. That action will need to be used with a good deal of wisdom. It is an area that would need to be subject to sensible control to ensure that finicky matters are not raised from time to time or that the person who has the opportunity or the responsibility of issuing notices really knows what he is about and acts in a responsible manner.

I have no doubt that the officers will act in a responsible manner, but there is a real opportunity there for a person without a due sense of responsibility to become somewhat of a nuisance. It is to be hoped that that does not happen.

The motion was agreed to.

**The Hon. E. H. WALKER** (Melbourne Province)—I propose an amendment to the amendment made by the Assembly. Therefore, I move:

In the proposed new sub-section (5) to be inserted, after “shall” insert “within 60 days from the date of his appointment under sub-section (4)”

That provision would then read:

A person who has convened a conference pursuant to sub-section (4) shall within 60 days from the date of his appointment under sub-section (4) report the results of the conference.

Sub-clause (4) is the key sub-clause. In reading the debate in another place, I noted that there was some confusion and misunderstanding about this proposal. A colleague of mine in another place moved the amendment and, unfortunately, the Minister having the carriage of the Bill did not quite under-
stand it and thought that the time clause would be applied in compliance with an abatement notice, and that was not the intention at all. The time clause is simply to call for a report to ensure that the report comes back within 60 days.

I could not imagine too many occasions when more than 60 days would be required. The amendment will allow for 120 days. Sub-section (4) indicates that the authority may, within 60 days from the service of a preliminary air pollution abatement notice, appoint any person to do a certain report. In any event, 60 days is allowed and the amendment will allow for another 60 days in which a report can be made when an authority has served a preliminary air pollution abatement notice. The amendment will also cover the situation in which undue delay could occur outside the Environment Protection Authority's control where a person, having been asked to report, might be tardy and simply not submit the report. A time limit is reasonable. It is not a limit on compliance; it is simply a time limit on reporting and I commend the amendment to the House.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The Government accepts the amendment. It is appropriate that a time limit ought to be placed on it.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—The National Party agrees with the amendment, which is reasonable and sensible.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I now move as a further amendment to amendment No. 11:

Proposed new sub-section (7) to be inserted, before “serve” insert “if having regard to the matters mentioned in sub-section (1) it is reasonable to serve an air pollution abatement notice”.

The reasons for the amendment are the same as those I have stated on a previous occasion.

The motion was agreed to, and the amendment made by the Assembly, as amended, was adopted.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I move:

That amendments Nos. 12 to 19 be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that the Bill be returned to the Assembly with a message intimating the decision of the House.

TRANSPORT REGULATION (ASSIGNMENT OF LICENCES) BILL

For the Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government), the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister of Education)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Transport Regulation Act so that a person holding a licence to operate a taxi may, with the approval of the Transport Regulation Board, assign the rights to operate a taxi to another person.

Control of Victoria's taxi industry is administered by the Transport Regulation Board and, as I am sure many honourable members can attest, the very high standards maintained by the industry make it one of the best in any country.

This is not a matter of coincidence—it reflects the sensible administration and operation of the industry and the measure now before the House, although compassionate in nature, will further assist the industry.

As honourable members will know, the taxi industry consists mainly of small businesses with a majority of the vehicle fleet operated by owner-drivers. At present taxi fleet numbers some 3467 vehicles operated by 2314
owners. As in any small business, circumstances can arise in a taxi business where the owner-operator becomes unable through illness, infirmity or death to continue to run the business. At present where an owner or his widow faces difficulty from these causes the business may be continued by employing drivers and a manager, or a sale of the business may be negotiated. Under existing legislation it is not possible to provide for those cases where an owner or his widow are unable to continue the business, yet wish to retain an interest in it and have it as a source of income.

The amendments provided in the Bill would allow the board to give the owner or his widow the alternative of being able to lease the business under proper arrangements without having to manage the day-to-day operation of a taxi-cab. In addition to allowing sensible arrangements for people who may be in some difficulties, assignments of licences could improve taxi services for the public by allowing the management and operation of some taxis to be taken over by operators with the incentive, enterprise and time to run the business more productively.

The main provisions of the Bill are contained in clause 2 which seeks the addition of a new section 27B to the Transport Regulation Act. The new section deals with the assignment of operating rights of taxi-cabs and provides certain safeguards. These include a requirement for authority to assign to be obtained from the Transport Regulation Board, for agreements to be completed by the parties, and for the attachment of conditions to assignments.

Honourable members will notice that the necessary powers are to be given to the board to properly control the assignment of taxi licences. The board will be able to consider the circumstances of each particular case and exercise discretion accordingly.

The measure makes better provision for dealing with circumstances of a compassionate nature that can arise in the taxi industry and should to some degree allow greater use of vehicles.

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 later this day.

VICTORIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BILL

For the Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government), the Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister of Education)—

I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Before embarking upon explaining the reasons for the Bill I should like to mention the form in which the Bill comes before the House. Firstly, I thank Mr Landeryou and Mr Dunn for agreeing to the procedure of the reading of the Bill being undertaken with what is known as a fair copy. Numerous amendments were made to the Bill as presented in another place, and these have occasioned some delay to the Government Printer. Accordingly, the Clerk of the House arranged with the Clerk of the Papers, to avoid undue delay to the House, for copies of the relevant sections of the original Bill and the typed amendments to be melded together, and a limited number of documents is available now to place before the House.

I particularly thank the Clerk of the Papers for his work in undertaking this somewhat delicate and difficult task. It has enabled the House to have the Bill today, and it will, of course, have ample copies of the Bill printed when the matter is debated next week, but at least the House has the Bill as amended and more time will be available for preparation by honourable members. With your permission, Mr President, I ask the Clerk to convey our appreciation to all concerned.

I might say, as a matter of historical interest, that in the early days of Parliament there was only one Bill before the Parliament. Most of the members in those days in Great Britain could not read. One Bill was available and it was read out in full by the Clerk.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Aloud!
The Hon. A. J. HUNT—I have never heard a Presidential interjection before! As the President said in an aside, the Clerk read the Bill aloud for the first time and for the second and third times, which is, of course the origin of the three readings of a Bill. With only six fair copies of this Bill available, we are going back to something akin to that practice, but I assure honourable members that when the discussion is resumed, proper printed copies of the Bill will be provided.

The Bill provides for the creation of a new corporation which will play a key role in implementing the Government's strategy for the eighties. The new corporation forms part of the rationalization of functions of the new Ministry for Economic Development as it combines the functions of the Victoria Promotion Committee and of the Victorian Development Corporation, which have been operating independently and in some measure duplicating each other's functions.

The Victoria Promotion Committee was established in 1956 under the sponsorship of the Victorian Government. Its objectives were to publicize Victoria overseas and to encourage new industrial investment and other development of benefit to Victoria. Its overseas offices in London, Paris, Munich, Milan and New York, led by experienced nationals in those countries, have provided strong representation and support and have initiated a considerable number of successful investments in Victoria. In future these and any other overseas and interstate offices will be responsible to the corporation.

The Victorian Development Corporation was formed in 1973 to encourage further development in country Victoria by providing a specialist statutory body able to raise funds for onlending to country industry and tourist projects.

The corporation was also given power to provide guarantees to assist businesses raise funds which would otherwise not be available.

The corporation's Act was later extended to allow the Treasurer to issue guarantees and to promote investment into Victoria and exports of Victorian goods and services. The new corporation will have the power to provide assistance to attract high technology and export oriented industries to Victoria.

The Government recognizes that, to maintain vigorous economic growth and to provide jobs from growth, it is essential to attract new technology and to improve existing technology throughout Victoria. At the same time, the Government is making a determined effort to cut red tape and encourage and facilitate development.

Victoria's economy is on the path of recovery, reflecting the flow-on effects of general growth in business. Given more help and encouragement at Government level, there are many investors who are prepared to go ahead with projects.

The new corporation will have a board of up to ten part-time members appointed by the Governor in Council, each being a person with experience in industry, trade or commerce. Initial board members will be drawn from the two existing bodies to ensure continuity of experience gained in those two organizations, supplemented by persons drawn from a wide cross section of industry and commerce.

The objects of the corporation are outlined in clause 11 (1) and its powers under 11 (2). It should be noted that Government support for country industry and tourism is in no way diminished. The corporation will have three funds—a decentralization fund, a preferred industry fund and a general fund. A preferred industry is defined as industry employing advanced technology or manufacturing or processing wholly or partly for export and can be located anywhere in Victoria.

Provision for guarantees issued by the corporation or by the Treasurer are outlined in clauses 11, 12 and 13 and remain in the form previously contained in the Victorian Development Corporation Act. However, it is proposed that more emphasis will be placed on the provision of guarantees than previously so that more funds can be made available for development.
Part II of the Bill provides the mechanism for the amalgamation of the Victorian Development Corporation and the Victorian Promotion Committee and the necessary continuity of functions and obligations.

Part III of the Bill relates to the administration of the Act by the corporation subject to the general direction and control of the Minister.

Clause 19 provides authority for employing corporation staff who will be largely drawn from those currently employed by both organizations, supplemented by recruitment of skills and experience necessary to carry out the wide-ranging functions of the new organization.

The financial arrangements for the corporation are contained in Part IV of the Bill. While the maximum interest rate charged by the corporation for loans shall be determined by the Treasurer from time to time under clause 22, the corporation has flexibility to determine rates appropriate to applicants requiring special consideration.

Clause 24 provides for the establishment of a general fund and sets out the application of moneys in that fund. The funding of the corporation will be by way of advances from the Works and Services Account and deposits and loans obtained with the approval of the Treasurer as outlined in clauses 25 and 26.

Clause 27 makes provision for the issue of debentures and stock by the corporation to secure borrowings. The total capital liability of the corporation shall not exceed such sum as is approved from time to time by the Treasurer as outlined in clause 33.

Clause 36 sets out penalties applying to members or employees of the corporation taking fees or rewards from applicants for assistance from the corporation. The clause also determines the upper limits of allowable shareholdings of members or employees of the corporation in public or private companies, seeking assistance from the corporation, without those members or employees incurring penalties under the Act. The increasing involvement of all sections of the community in the share market and in equity investments is recognized in the provisions of this clause.

Clause 38 provides for the establishment of a special decentralization fund which is to be used solely for assistance to country industry as defined.

Clause 39 provides for the preferred industry fund to be used to promote advanced technology and to encourage more Victorian export industries. This new initiative provides a positive incentive from the Government and the corporation will be very active in seeking new technology overseas to assist our local industries. The fund will also greatly assist technology of Australian and Victorian origin establish operations in Victoria.

The remaining clauses of the Bill relate to audit requirements and the preparation of annual reports and financial statements.

Schedule 1 to the Bill provides details of prescribed forms for debentures and stock issued in support of loans to the corporation.

Schedule 2 to the Bill makes provision for amendments to Acts relating to the new Ministry for Economic Development and for the repeal of the State Development, Decentralization and Tourism Act 1978.

Mr President, this Bill establishes a very important key organization in the Ministry for Economic Development, embracing the functions of two existing bodies promoting the development of the State and also broadens the scope of Government support over the whole of Victoria in special fields of industrial activity of importance to the State. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 5.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING AUTHORITY BILL

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.
INTRODUCTION

This Bill proposes a significant development in the provision of Government employee accommodation in Victoria.

An important aspect of providing appropriate conditions of employment of Government employees and of ensuring that Government services are available in all the areas of the State, is the provision of residential accommodation for Government employees in those areas where the housing market is unable to provide suitable accommodation based on criteria of reasonable price, location or standard.

The provision of accommodation in remote areas early in the history of the State was considered to be necessary by employers whether the employer was the Crown or a private individual. It was seen as an essential part of the employment contract. While our social infrastructure and our community have developed tremendously since those early pioneering days, there still remains a need for the special provision of employee accommodation in rural Victoria. The Government meets this need in respect of its employees by the provision of in excess of 7000 houses or flats throughout Victoria.

Prior to 1970 all Government employee housing was provided through the particular Government department or public statutory authority requiring the accommodation. With some Government departments, such as the Law Department and the Chief Secretary's Department, accommodation was arranged through the Public Works Department as one of its many functions.

In 1970 there was a fundamental change to this process with the setting up of an authority for teacher accommodation under the Teacher Housing Act 1970. This legislation introduced a new approach to Government employee housing which involved the constitution of a statutory authority with the sole task of accommodation provision for members of the teaching service from specific State Government funds set aside for this purpose. The authority was also required to report annually to Parliament on its operations and to provide financial information. In the result, Parliament and the community were able to ascertain precisely what the cost of the provision of accommodation to members of the teaching service was in any particular year and how funds made available for teacher accommodation were being spent.

A further development took place in 1976 with the authority being empowered to fix rents on its properties. In addition, membership of the authority was expanded to include a person with substantial experience in the housing industry and also a representative of the teacher organizations. The inclusion of the teacher representative is cogent evidence of the Government's willingness to involve employees in the decision-making process in regard to their accommodation. It is employees' participation in management in the fullest sense.

When the Teacher Housing Bill 1970 was being debated in Parliament, the then Minister of Education, the Honourable L. H. Thompson, cited the favourable reports made by a Victorian Government-appointed committee on the operation since 1964 of the Western Australian Government Employee Housing Authority. The committee had thoroughly investigated the Western Australian scheme and recommended that the scheme should be applied to teachers initially in Victoria and that, at a later stage, it could be extended to housing for other public servants.

The ultimate goal of the Government is to have all Government employee housing controlled and managed from one central point. This will not only make the administration of Government employee housing more flexible, it will also enable greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

While experience both in Victoria and in other States shows the ultimate goal will be difficult to achieve and, being realistic, will only be achievable in the long term, this Bill is seen as a significant development in a consistent series of developments by the Government towards this desirable goal. In particular, the Bill is seen as a
development of the Teacher Housing Authority concept and also as a development of the Government's desire for employee participation in management decisions.

As there are detailed clause notes circulated with the Bill, I will concentrate only on its principal features.

Clause 3 of the Bill establishes a Government Employee Housing Authority with four principal functions. These particular functions were developed as a result of the Government report on the Teacher Housing Programme. This report did not specifically recommend that a Government Employee Housing Authority be set up as to do so would have been outside its terms of reference. However, it became clear from the consideration of the recommendations of the report by the Government that a central body such as a Government Employee Housing Authority is both logical and appropriate.

DIRECT PROVISION

The first function set out in clause 3 of the Bill is that the proposed authority provide accommodation for Government employees in participating departments. The parameters of this function are set out in clause 13 (5) and (6).

Sub-clause (5) requires that the authority shall not let a house to a Government employee unless it is satisfied that the person is, or will be, unable to obtain private housing accommodation that is of reasonable location and available at a reasonable rent.

This requirement is qualified by sub-clause (6). A permanent head of a participating department may certify to the authority that the special nature of an office in a participating department makes it necessary for the Government employee holding that office to reside in a particular residence even though the requirements of sub-clause (5) cannot be met.

The provisions in the Bill to enable this function to be performed are similar to the provisions contained in the Teacher Housing Act 1970 which will be repealed by the measure. There will be an authority with various machinery provisions to enable the appointment of deputies, a prescription of allowances, a regulation of meeting procedures, a delegation power and a power enabling the appointment of officers.

Clause 11 of the Bill provides that all assets and liabilities of the Teacher Housing Authority are to vest in the Government Employee Housing Authority which is the successor of the Teacher Housing Authority.

Clause 12 enables the Governor in Council to declare a department of the Public Service, or a public statutory authority, to be a participatory department and provides for the transfer of land and buildings to the authority. The clause also provides for the payment of compensation for the transfer. In addition clause 12 provides that the Education Department is deemed to be a participating department.

It is anticipated that as the new authority establishes itself and demonstrates efficiency, effectiveness and economy in its direct provision role, the various departments and public statutory authorities directly managing housing stock for their employees may become participating departments if they so request. Ultimately the new authority will manage all Government employee residential accommodation stock.

Initially the authority is to manage all stock formerly managed by the Teacher Housing Authority. The Teacher Housing Authority manages more Government employee housing stock than any other Government agency and at present owns approximately 2000 units. In addition, the authority will manage all Ministry of Housing Government employee housing stock.

To facilitate an annual accommodation provision programme and to assist in forward planning, permanent heads of participating departments may each establish an advisory committee to make recommendations to the authority concerning the provision of housing for employees in that participating...
department. To ensure that the authority is involved in this process, clause 12 (5) requires that each advisory committee shall include at least one person nominated by the authority. As far as practicable, this will be the senior executive officer of the authority or his deputy.

Legislative powers enabling the Government Employee Housing Authority to provide housing are set out in clause 13. These provisions are very similar to those given to the Teacher Housing Authority. For example, the specific power enabling the authority to engage the Housing Commission as its agent is contained in clause 13 (7). In addition to the powers exercised by the Teacher Housing Authority, there is power in the clause to purchase Crown land with the consent of the Minister of Lands.

Part VI of the Bill deals with finance and clause 19 sets out the borrowing powers of the authority. Clause 20 deals with the obligation of the authority to establish a Government Employee Housing Authority Account into which shall be paid all money received by or on behalf of the authority including income from any investments of the authority.

Clause 21 requires the authority to submit an annual budget to the Minister for approval and prohibits the authority from varying the approved budget without Ministerial authorization.

Clause 22 requires the authority to keep proper accounts and records of its transactions and affairs. At the end of each financial year it is to prepare a statement of accounts which shall be audited by the Auditor-General.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSING REGISTER

The second function of the authority set out in clause 3 is to establish and maintain a register of Government employee housing. This register will be a significant step towards a rationalization of housing stock for all Government employees. It will also facilitate the optimum use of such accommodation over time. For example, housing no longer required by one department or statutory authority can be quickly made available to other departments or if no other department requires the accommodation for its employees, then the accommodation can be made available to the Housing Commission as additional stock for its public housing clients.

Clauses 14 and 15 contain provisions requiring that a Government Housing Accommodation Register be set up and enabling Government departments and public statutory authorities to search the register.

ADVISORY AND MONITORING ROLE

The third and fourth functions set out in clause 3 are to give advice to departments and to public statutory authorities concerning the provision of housing accommodation to Government employees and to keep under review the practices of departments and authorities concerning the provision of housing accommodation and, when requested to do so by the Minister, to report to him on aspects of those practices. These functions are dealt with in clauses 16 and 17.

Clause 16 entitles a permanent head of a department or public statutory authority to seek advice from the authority on accommodation provision.

Clause 17 requires the authority to keep under review, and on request from the Minister, to report on practices of departments or public statutory authorities in relation to the provision of housing accommodation for Government employees.

It is anticipated that this will involve the authority in the short term in providing policy and operational advice and assistance to any Government agency providing accommodation services to Government employees and, in particular, advice on the rational provision of maintenance and modernization services.

It is envisaged that in the longer term the authority will also be involved in:

(a) the development of eligibility criteria—what employees are entitled to assistance and in what circumstances;
(b) the development of accommodation provision scales (both numerically and geographically);

(c) the development of uniform accommodation standards;

(d) the formulation of three-year rolling indicative accommodation programmes for those Government agencies for whom it is responsible;

(e) with the assistance of the Housing Commission, the provision of advice on market trends and developments in housing;

(f) the provision of advice on charges to be levied for accommodation.

There are three other features of the Bill I would like to mention, the membership, power to form committees of the authority and its annual report.

MEMBERSHIP AND POWER TO FORM COMMITTEES

The authority set up by the Bill is to consist of seven members. The representation is the same as for the Teacher Housing Authority with two additions—one person who shall be nominated by the Minister of Public Works on the basis that the Public Works Department has a very significant involvement in Government employee housing at this stage, and one person to represent Government employees to whom the authority has let houses other than teachers.

To overcome the need for all members of the authority to participate in the consideration of matters relating to the actual provision of accommodation for employees in participating departments, clause 8 permits the authority from time to time to form and dissolve committees. For example, it is expected that the authority will form a committee comprising the same members as at present constitute the Teacher Housing Authority to deal with matters that are exclusively teacher accommodation matters. Broader policy issues will, of course, be dealt with by the full authority.

ANNUAL REPORT

Clause 23 requires the authority to submit to the Minister a report of its operations annually, which report will be laid before both Houses of Parliament. The Bill requires the report, together with an audited statement of accounts, to be prepared as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year and to be submitted to the Minister not later than the following 31 December.

CONCLUSION

As was stated in the recent Ministerial statement on teacher housing, the Teacher Housing Programme Review and the deliberations by the Government following that review are part of an over-all review process by the Government of housing in Victoria. The Government aim in these reviews is to ensure that Victoria's future housing policies and practices are efficient and capable of meeting changing community demands. This Bill is one result of that review process and sets the scene for Government employee housing for the 1980s in Victoria. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. W. A. Landeryou, for the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 5.

SUPPLY (1981–82, No. 1) BILL

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

Discussion was resumed of clause 2 (Issue out of Consolidated Fund)

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—I wish to speak briefly about taxes and qangos. I will refer those two topics, respectively, to matters, on the one hand, concerning economic development under Division 150, Treasury under Division 400, Taxation Office under Division 421 and stamp duties under Division 422, and, on the other hand,
I shall deal with Division 309, education special services and, more particularly, Division 650, Ministry for the Arts. Before talking about qangos, I briefly state that the Taxation Office or the Stamp Duties Office will shortly have to administer a pipeline tax. Victoria is not merely a manufacturing State; Victoria is a State which, for the rest of the 1980s, at any rate will be the most resource-rich State in Australia if one includes the Bass Strait oil as a Victorian resource. Bass Strait oil reaches and is conveyed over Victorian land by pipeline.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I find it hard to relate some form of taxation from an oil pipeline to the Supply Bill. I ask Mr Guest to relate his remarks to the Bill before the House.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—It is something which the Taxation Office, the Stamp Duties Office and Treasury will have to provide for.

The CHAIRMAN—The level of tax has nothing to do with Supply.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—They will need money in order to administer—

The CHAIRMAN—That is a Budget matter and the Bill before the House is a Supply Bill. Moneys have already been determined by Parliament and it is only a matter of distributing the money which has nothing to do with Mr Guest’s comments.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—with respect, this Bill actually provides for Treasury to issue a specific sum out of the Consolidated Fund—

The CHAIRMAN—The moneys have already been raised as a result of the last Budget.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—That is partly true, but honourable members must consider the Bill, as we considered the Appropriation Bill in the last sessional period, in order to ensure that moneys are being appropriated and applied for proper purposes and that money is not being applied to purposes to which it should not be applied.

The CHAIRMAN—Those comments relate to a Budget Bill or an Appropriation Bill. They do not relate to a Supply Bill because the money and source of money has already been determined.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—If that were so, there would be no point in having this debate at all.

The CHAIRMAN—You are disagreeing with me, are you?

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—with respect, I am saying that this is a Bill which determines the propriety of certain amounts being paid by Treasury to various departments.

The CHAIRMAN—Mr Guest is talking about how taxation should be used.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—I am pointing out that it would be necessary for the money to be provided for the departments in order to deal with some problems that cannot wait until November, or problems that will arise after Victoria’s share of the income tax reimbursement is known. It is apparent that these officers will have to acquire funds for the administration of a tax that will provide for Victoria’s needs. Victoria’s needs can be provided for out of a pipeline tax. That is what I was saying.

The CHAIRMAN—I am sorry, Mr Guest, but you have clarified quite clearly in my mind that your comments are out of order. You are dealing with moneys that you have said will be raised in the Budget. That has nothing to do with the Supply Bill. Unless you keep within the confines of the Supply Bill, in which money has already been raised and is only to be allocated, I am afraid you will not be allowed to continue.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—I have made the principal point I was intending to make. I will not elaborate on the reasons for it.

The other subject I wish to mention is the development of one particular qango. No doubt many qangos are surreptitiously being created and I have been curious to discover that at least one qango which is about to spend a considerable amount of public money is
not one that the Public Bodies Review Committee will be empowered to examine. When the list of 10,000 public bodies is made available next week, it will not include this qango which is in the course of formation. It will also not include other similar qangos which already exist. It will be created, if it has not already been created, as a limited company. It is ironical that an interest in the subject of children’s television should lead me to give the appearance of perhaps criticizing the first Minister in Australia who has done anything serious about the much neglected and vital area of children’s television.

The Hon. D. R. White—This is another speech by your wife.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—It is of interest, in following my wife’s interest in this area, that my attention was drawn to this particular organization. It illustrates something—

The Chairman—Order! Mr Guest, I regret to say that you are dealing with television, which should not be debated under a supply Bill. You are talking about television and children’s programmes.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—With respect, Mr Chairman, you are 100 per cent wrong because, as I have said, I am dealing—

The Chairman—I would like Mr Guest briefly to tell me why I am wrong.

The Hon. J. V. C. Guest—I was about to. It may be a little difficult for me to utter a word over the noise of the Opposition. The matters to which I have referred relate to educational services, and particularly to the Ministry for the Arts, which is to be provided with money for “Other Services”. This will include provision for payments to a children’s television foundation, which will be a company incorporated under the Companies Act.

As I said, it is ironical that, because of an original family connection, as Mr White indicated, I have come across a subject of general relevance to the Parliamentary process. It concerns the general subject of accountability of Government for public expenditure and indeed the accountability of all those who deal with public moneys and spend it on behalf of the public.

It is highly desirable that an organization be set up in order to increase the availability of funds for producing television suitable for children, but the proposed Children’s Television Foundation is being set up in such a way that it will not, as I have pointed out, be the subject of a Public Bodies Review Committee examination. It will not even necessarily be required that accounts be made available publicly through the Corporate Affairs Commission, because a private company may be set up as an exempt proprietary company, and not required to lodge its accounts if they are properly audited. The reporting, if there is any, will presumably consist of the annual report of the Victorian Council of the Arts. The last annual report produced by that council was for 1978–79, which means reports are a long time after the event. In little more than one line in the report bare mention is made of amounts of moneys paid under various headings such as “Government Contribution through Works and Services Account”. That is an example in relation to grants for films and there are other briefly noted amounts for salaries and expenses for the Victorian Film Corporation. No accounting of the type expected by shareholders of a proprietary company is evident. No accounting of the type one would expect of a public authority such as the State Electricity Commission or the Gas and Fuel Corporation, which Parliament could examine in good time, is provided. I use this as an example. Of course in other departments there are many other examples and in many cases far more money is likely to be spent. This organization happens to be one which is being created under the sponsorship—it is hard to find a precise word to cover this—of the Ministers for the Arts and Education throughout Australia.

It is not clear who is to pick up the bill for the organization which appears to have—although it has been kept rather quiet—a budget of $1.5 million for the first year. It appears that the Commonwealth will pay half that amount. Victoria’s share is quite uncer-
tain; it may be $200,000 or it may be $500,000. This Parliament will have no say in how much Victoria will contribute. It will depend upon the effectiveness of the people most concerned to set up this foundation in persuading Ministers of other States, particularly Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia, that they should contribute and that it is a worthwhile endeavour.

Although this is, as far as I am aware, not public knowledge and was not intended for public knowledge it appears that the budget of $1.5 million provides for a bureaucratic establishment to cost anything from $400,000 to $500,000 in the first year. When one knows that this sort of thing can happen in any department where the Minister has discretionary funds at his disposal and he has only to get a few like-minded or suitable people to set up a private corporation to allow him to then hand over money for the purposes for which they set up the corporation one realizes that there are great possibilities for moneys escaping from the scrutiny of any body which could be remotely called Parliamentary. It was interesting to note the contrast in the Victorian Economic Development Corporation Bill.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! I shall call a halt at this point. I think the honourable member is well aware that he is out of order because the debate on that measure has been adjourned until either later this day or next Tuesday. The honourable member knows it would be quite improper to discuss that Bill.

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST—I shall not discuss it. One would find in other Acts provisions which allow a corporation or property trust to be set up that, for example, the Governor in Council shall appoint the trustees or directors and the strict proviso that any activities carried out by the corporation or trust shall be in accordance with prescribed conditions. It is of some importance that we should examine carefully the kind of accountability that Ministerial expenditures of this kind are subject to because already today we have heard effective speeches made about the need for money for the Australian College of Entertainers, a body which has been trying to get money from the Ministry for the Arts for five or six years. One would also have to consider the needs of the State Library about which the Honourable Mr Block spoke so eloquently. That is another function of the Ministry for the Arts.

I am not here to assert that it is true that money is to be wasted on an overblown bureaucratic establishment, but if it were true that it was happening under the auspices of the Minister for the Arts that would be a matter about which the Parliament should be concerned.

Mr Saltmarsh, by interjection, reminds me that it appears from what one knows of the Budget that there is provision for the director to be paid a sum of $48,000 a year with, no doubt, the assistance of a secretary and other staff. The director will have four assistant directors, who will be paid between $32,000 and $38,000 a year. Here is a microcosm of the kind of issue on which the Parliament originally set out to tackle protection of the pocket of the ordinary man from the Executive. It should be concerning itself no less with such questions now. It is at any rate a case where an appropriate form of accountability should be pursued.

It does not make it any better to say, "Ah, but this body will be totally subject to the Minister and his officers' requirements". All Ministers are busy men. Suppose other priorities get in the way or somebody in the Minister's department advised him that the Childrens Television Foundation is not giving value for money. Suppose this person told the Minister that the budget should be cut from half a million dollars to a quarter of a million dollars and that the foundation should make more efficient use of that money.

There would be an almighty outcry because several people would have accepted positions in a company like that and would have left other positions elsewhere on the assurance that the Government would support this corporation while it established the good work that was intended. If it had a
name—and most bodies set up like this by the Government would have a good name, like the Children’s Television Foundation—it would be like taking money away from the Returned Services League. In fact, it would probably be worse. It would be extremely hard to do so.

I do not accept that accountability to a Minister or his departmental staff is sufficient. One has to say with great respect to the Ministry for the Arts that it is not the kind of department where one would expect the financial and administrative expertise to be so liberally spread about that they could provide the checks required on their sponsored organizations.

One might quite happily agree with the comments made by the Director in the sixth annual report of the Victorian Council of the Arts and Ministry for the Arts, 1978–79, when Mr Eric Westbrook stated apropos of making aesthetic judgments where the issues cannot be quantified:

Experienced professionals (and the staff of the Ministry for the Arts is made up of such people) can be trusted within the proper limits of human fallibility to make judgements which by comparison, discussion with and checking by their senior colleagues, and the Victorian Council of the Arts are, in the greater number of instances a sound basis for ministerial decision.

It would be hard to say that that would be true if their function was administrative or financial auditing of a loosely affiliated body. Nor is it an answer to say that it is difficult to provide for conventional accountability where the body is to be sponsored by the Commonwealth, Victoria, New South Wales to a limited extent, and possibly one or more of the other States.

One might rather ask: Which Parliament is to be the ultimate auditor of the books? It is hard to find an answer. Perhaps it is not really a good idea to have co-operative ventures between the States if they are set up on the basis that each is to be like a shareholder in a limited company. I do not intend to detract from the excellent work accomplished by the Minister for the Arts either in that Ministry or in his other portfolio. I strongly support his actions, indeed his commendably rapid moves, in the long neglected area of children’s television.

However, this is a classic case study in lack of accountability which should be taken seriously because of its general implications.

I commend the remarks of both Mr Hayward and Dr Howard on the Library and information services available to Parliamentarians. Proper support in the provision of information and analysis are vital to members of Parliament in enabling them to handle their many-sided jobs effectively. My remarks on the problems of scrutinizing the expenditure of public money reinforces the case for members of Parliament to be given every possible support so that little of their time is wasted.

The Hon. N. F. STACEY (Chelsea Province)—I refer to community welfare services, Division 240 and preface my remarks by stating that when the Committee is considering a Supply Bill, every honourable member must ensure that the money being set aside will be spent efficiently and effectively. That is the responsibility of every member of Parliament. If one suggests that there should be additional services, one should also suggest where the money is coming from. Merely to say that the Government should provide a service without suggesting where the money is to come from is an obverse statement that the taxpayer must pay.

The Department of Community Welfare Services does not fully recognize the work of voluntary organizations in the community such as Red Cross, benevolent societies, church groups and service groups. I was invited to the social welfare centre run by the City of Frankston. The centre employs 30 persons on a full-time and part-time basis to work in the community, including welfare sisters and others. It is a large number of persons and they have various expertise and knowledge in specific areas. Frankston has done very well by establishing these persons in one unit to meet a significant community need.
A group set up either by a department or municipality should relate and integrate with voluntary services. Too often, in caring for people, the neighbourly actions of other persons to assist those in trouble are ignored. One of the important tasks for community welfare services is to bring all municipalities within the ambit of social care and, further, to encourage municipalities to make greater use of voluntary workers. As an example, I refer to the work being done at Grassmere Centre, Doveton, to which a grant is made on a three-year basis to enable the committee to provide staff and to care for children who are habitual absentees from school—in other words, truants. Much useful work is being done at Grassmere Centre, Doveton and the adjacent institution attached to it. The organization is administered by volunteers, staffed by professionals, assisted by the Department of Community Welfare Service and illustrates the point I am making.

I urge the Minister to consider agreeing to requests I have made previously to establish a correctional services attendance centre in the Dandenong and Springvale area. This is another example of where the State can be assisted and taxpayers funds extended and supplemented by voluntary organizations assisting in providing the necessary support and encouragement for those persons sentenced to an attendance centre. There is a centre in Prahran and one should be established in the Dandenong-Springvale area. The community supports it and voluntary organizations are prepared to assist.

Another example I can use is a group in the Frankston area that is running a course for persons who will be qualified to offer financial advice for the citizens advice bureau. The programme is available to persons experienced in that field—perhaps retired bank managers, housewives and other persons aware of the needs of family budgeting—to receive some training and, as volunteers, pass that knowledge on to the community. On occasion, funding is made available for these purposes. There is an untapped reservoir of persons experienced in voluntary organizations as a means of making the taxpayers' dollars stretch further and I hope the Department of Community Welfare Service makes better use of voluntary organizations.

The clause was agreed to.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Sinking of the “Shark”—Rates for garbage collection in Waverley—Thomastown High School—Health insurance**

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I move:
That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, May 5, at a quarter-to-four o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I move:
That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I raise a matter with the Attorney-General regarding the sinking of the vessel Shark at Lakes Entrance on March 18, 1978. Has the Attorney-General or his department been requested by the Minister of Public Works to investigate produced documents indicating that certain evidence placed before the Marine Board of Inquiry into that event have been falsified? Will the Attorney-General inform the House what steps are proposed to be taken, and will members of the Parliament be kept informed of the Government's intentions in the matter? Can the Attorney-General tell the House whether the Government has removed the lien on the owners' insurance policy?

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—I raise a matter of considerable urgency with the Minister for Local Government. I preface my remarks by saying that hundreds of ratepayers have not paid, or have deducted from their rates for the current year, the amount they would normally have to pay in rates for the collection of rubbish in Waverley.
One lady telephoned me today and said that she had deducted $16 from her rates. She is a pensioner, and she strongly objects, as do many others, to having to pay for services that she did not receive, and she asked that I take this matter up with the Minister today.

The Hon. R. J. EDDY (Thomastown Province)—I refer the Minister of Education to a matter concerning the Thomastown High School. Two of the members of staff of that school will be going on long service leave at the beginning of the next term, one for the whole of the next term, and the other for the next two terms, that is for the remainder of the year. One teaches accountancy and the other teaches geography.

The principal of this school informs me that he has not been advised whether he will receive any replacements, and this is making it difficult to prepare the curriculum for the second term.

I would appreciate if the Minister could indicate whether the principal will be notified concerning these replacements prior to the end of this term.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I wish to raise a matter with the Minister representing the Minister of Health, but I am not sure that he is present in the House.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Perhaps Mrs Coxsedge could raise it with the Leader of the House.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—Thank you, Mr President. I wish to raise a disastrous situation facing the people of Victoria following the Federal Government's abandonment of two of its policies which helped win it an election in 1975, namely, to introduce full tax indexation in line with inflation, and, to quote the Prime Minister, "to maintain Medibank and to ensure that the standard of health care does not decline".

I believe the new health scheme will be welcomed only by the private health funds, the medical profession, and those on high incomes, but the future prospect for the health care of people is terrifying, as those in greatest need will be hit the hardest. It will be very hard on the people in the western suburbs.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! The honourable member should relate her remarks within the competence of the Victorian Government. I believe she has spent sufficient time on the preamble.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—in view of the fact that a vast number of my constituents are not insured, and they will have to find about $10 a week for health insurance, or undergo the humiliating experience of going to the Department of Social Security to be classified as disadvantaged, I ask the Leader of the House to tell me what new direction this State Liberal Government is going to find to protect the health of the Victorian people.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The answer to Mr Eddy's question is that replacements will be provided, without delay, for the teachers going on leave at Thomastown High School.

The answer to Mrs Coxsedge's question is that the Minister of Health will immediately examine the implications and advise the Victorian Government on the consequence of the procedures taken by the Federal Government.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General) — Mr Mackenzie raised a question concerning the aftermath of the sinking of the vessel the Shark that occurred some time ago. I have received a letter from the Minister of Public Works asking me to arrange to have counsel briefed to advise whether, in the light of allegations that have been made to the Minister, there is any case for referring the matter back to the Marine Court of Inquiry.

I will make arrangements for the Crown Solicitor to seek that advice. When it is received, I will forward it to the Minister of Public Works.

The other matters raised by Mr Mackenzie on this subject come within the administration of the Minister of Public Works. I can only provide this
further information to the honourable gentleman and ask him to provide the honourable member with a reply.

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—Mr Kennedy raised a matter, which he described as one of extreme urgency. He alluded to a constituent, who is a ratepayer of the City of Waverley, who objects to paying a component of her rates, to wit, $16, for a service which she is not being provided with.

As Mr Kennedy knows, and as most honourable members are aware, the only reason for the interruption in the garbage service provided through the City of Waverley by the contractor who currently has the contract is the current industrial dispute. The dispute is before arbitration and is capable of resolution if there is a reasonable approach on all sides. So far, the degree of reasonableness has not been apparent on the part of members of a certain union.

However, I am confident that this dispute will be resolved satisfactorily, and that the service, which the company has contracted for and which they are capable of performing in a sufficient manner, will resume.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.28 p.m. until Tuesday, May 5.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

USE OF X-RAYS
(Question No. 231)

The Hon. K. I. M. WRIGHT (North Western Province) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Health:

(a) Is the Minister of Health aware of the concern of doctors in small country towns that the preparation and use of x-rays will be restricted to radiographers in larger regional hospitals; if so, what action does he propose to take?

(b) Has the Radiation Safety Advisory Council made a recommendation regarding the use of x-rays in country areas; if so, what are the details?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Health is:

Yes. I have discussed these matters with representatives of the Australian Medical Association. The Consultative Council on Radiation Safety has recently forwarded to me a first report concerned with legislative control over the use of x-rays in medical radiology. The proposals do not envisage that medical radiological procedures in country areas will be restricted to radiographers in the larger regional hospitals, but do include possible legislative controls which could restrict medical practitioners both in the city and country to certain types of x-ray examinations, commensurate with the doctor's training in x-ray procedures and the limitations of the particular x-ray apparatus which he has at his disposal. The recommendations of the consultative council are currently under consideration.

WHEAT VARIETIES
(Question No. 293)

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister of Agriculture:

In view of the stated intention of the Australian Wheat Board to phase out egret wheat, what variety or varieties of wheat, particularly new varieties, will replace it in the north-east Victorian zone?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Agriculture is:

The wheat varieties recommended for sowing in north-eastern Victoria in 1981 for delivery to silos listed in Silo group E are olympic and kewell, while condor, oxley and avocet are all approved varieties.

Olympic has been a recommended variety in north-eastern Victoria since the mid 1950s while kewell was first included in 1977 on the basis of superior quality and yield especially in the north-east.

Condor, oxley and avocet were approved for the first time in 1981; it is anticipated that these varieties, but particularly condor and oxley, will replace much of the egret previously grown in north-eastern Victoria in the short term, but that higher yielding varieties will become available with quality equivalent to condor-oxley within five years.

The relative yields of condor, oxley and egret in north-eastern Victoria are comparable. All three are semi-dwarf wheats capable of very high yields under favourable conditions. Avocet is included as an approved variety for those growers who wish to take advantage of its resistance to current races of stem rust.
Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 30 April 1981

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 11.6 a.m. and read the prayer.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I have to announce that the Minister of Public Works will be absent from question time today.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

JOLIMONT RAIL YARDS

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—Has the Premier recently received from the Railway Construction Board an exhaustive and detailed report on the possible development of strategies for roofing the Jolimont rail yards? Can the honourable gentleman confirm that after briefly reading the report that was presented to him he told the Railway Construction and Property Board to go away and come back with yet another plan to roof the yards? Will the honourable gentleman agree to make available to the Parliament the Board’s report and all other reports pertinent to the subject?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—Not for the first time the Leader of the Opposition has the story entirely wrong. The board has been asked to produce a concept plan for the development of the Jolimont rail yards area, but not necessarily the roofing of it. Discussions have taken place and preliminary ideas have been produced. The board is now engaged in the preparation of a final concept plan.

Mr Willkes—To roof the yard.

Mr HAMER—Not to roof the yard. If the Leader of the Opposition would like to answer the question he can do so.

Mr Wilkes interjecting.

Mr HAMER—An over-all concept plan is obviously required with a time programme which will enable this valuable area to be better used for the sake of the people of Melbourne and, indeed, of all people in Victoria. That is the aim and that is what will be produced. The Leader of the Opposition will have every opportunity of examining the final report and concept plan as soon as it is prepared.

HAMSTERS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—I refer the Minister of Agriculture to the recent discovery in Australia of animals known as hamsters. Can the Minister advise the House how many of these animals have been discovered in Victoria, how seriously the Government is taking their importation into Australia and what steps are to be taken to control the importation of these animals?

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Agriculture)—A number of hamsters were brought into Queensland illegally. Unfortunately, they have got down to Victoria. At this stage we are not certain of the number that are here. On Tuesday five were retrieved during the afternoon, and by 6 o’clock that evening there were about fourteen in the Department of Agriculture. Yesterday twenty were retrieved, and I have not received a report of how many there are now in the Department of Agriculture building.

All the pet shops are being checked and anyone who has sighted one of these animals, knows where they are or has any clue about them, particularly anyone who has bought them from pet shops at a cost of $25 each, is asked to telephone the quarantine section of the Department of Agriculture and the department will send an officer out to collect the animals.

The big worry about these tailless animals is that, unlike guinea pigs, they burrow and therefore would always be difficult to control. They have a gestation period of fifteen days and have
litters of up to eight, so one can see that an explosion of hamsters could easily occur.

The department is deeply concerned about it and is taking all possible steps to try to retrieve every hamster in Victoria. Full co-operation is needed from anybody who knows anything about these animals, because although I had not seen one previously until yesterday, I know it is essential to do everything possible to have every single hamster destroyed.

LOGGING IN CATCHMENT AREAS

Mr RICHARDSON (Forest Hill)—The Premier would be aware of the concern that has been expressed in certain sections of the community at the proposal by some timber interests to carry out commercial logging in the Melbourne water catchment areas which are controlled by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. I ask the honourable gentleman whether the Government has considered these proposals for logging in the catchment areas, and, if so, what is the result of that consideration.

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The Government received and considered proposals from various timber interests to carry out commercial logging in the Melbourne water catchment areas which are controlled by the Board of Works. Those submissions were carefully considered in the light of the overriding requirement that no action be taken which would in any way jeopardize or adversely affect Melbourne’s water supply, which is acknowledged here and in many parts of the world to be one of the best and purest water supplies available and requiring the least treatment or filtration. The result of that examination is that there will be no logging in the Board of Works catchments.

On any study of the situation it is apparent that there would be a loss of water which would have to be made up in some other way, and that would require a capital commitment. There would be a requirement for filtration of the treatment plants, which would be very costly, and the net effect would be a substantial rise in Board of Works rates.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I have already reminded honourable members regarding imputations against other members. The honourable member for Broadmeadows should know that very well. I ask him to cease interjecting. The honourable member also knows about the rule of interjection.

Mr HAMER—These are the findings of a consulting group, and they are endorsed by the Board of Works. The Government, on its examination, fully approves and accepts what has been said on that matter, that there is not even any financial advantage to be gained in the proposal that it would present a considerable potential detriment to Melbourne’s water supply.

We are not prepared to take the risk, and there will be no commercial logging in Board of Works catchments.

PUBLIC HEALTH FINANCING

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Will the Treasurer advise the House of the effects that the decision of the Federal Government announced yesterday on major reductions in specific purpose grants to all States for health purposes of $250 million, of which more than $60 million would have come to Victoria had the present arrangements continued, will have on the State and whether the Victorian Treasury is willing to make up the difference so that public hospitals can continue to provide a full and comprehensive range of services?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—A detailed analysis is being carried out by Treasury this morning, after obtaining a copy of the speech. Early indications were that the total amount of money was to be reduced from $1270 million to $1250 million. Last year, the cost-sharing arrangements in the Budget accounted for $614 million of which $307 million came from the Commonwealth, and Victoria is anxious to ensure that, if the new system is introduced of the States taking an increasing measure of responsibility for the financing of hospitals, it starts from a
Questions without Notice

proper financial base. That is the concern of the Victorian Government at present.

DEREGULATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Will the Minister of Transport indicate what progress has been made with the amalgamation of the Transport Regulation Board and the Motor Registration Branch and with the deregulation of road transport that will be effective from 1 July this year? Will he indicate also when the new scale of fees for truck operators will be announced?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—Legislation passed by Parliament for the merger of the Transport Regulation Board and Motor Registration Branch became fully effective yesterday and, with the proclamation of the remaining parts of the Act, the honourable member would know that in remote areas and indeed in many areas the Police Force will continue to act as agents for the board in motor registrations until the establishment of civilian operations will release police officers for police work.

The amalgamation of the branch and the board has opened up the opportunity, together with deregulation, for a single charge for both the registration and licensing of trucks. From 1 July, licensing of trucks will no longer occur because, when a truck is registered, a fee combining those fees previously payable will be paid and the truck presented with a registration label but it will not require a transport regulation licence as well. The fees payable will be announced probably next week. Certainly, I have advised the Transport Regulation Board of the fees the Government believes are appropriate and it is now a matter for the board to make the announcements on those combined fees.

In some instances, there will be substantial increases. With deregulation, trucks are gaining the opportunity of operating throughout Victoria. In some instances there will be reductions largely associated with those going through the performance of registering the truck, licensing it and approaching the Transport Regulation Board for permits and paying permit fees. There could be reductions for those operators who have had a heavy permit fee payment in past years. In summary, there will be a mixture of increases, some substantial and reductions, some of which will also be substantial.

BENDIGO–SWAN HILL RAIL SERVICE

Mr EBERY (Midlands)—The Minister of Transport will be aware that VicRail has recommended that a number of substantial, and reductions, some of vice from Bendigo to Swan Hill will be closed. Can the honourable gentleman advise whether he has made a decision on those recommendations and, if not, whether he will ensure that the commuter rail service will stop at Diagee to service the East Loddon Year 12 school and other facilities in that vicinity?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I did hear the interjection also about Mitiamo. VicRail has had possibly five teams of officers discussing with municipalities and community groups in country areas a revised timetable of services for country passenger lines.

In nearly every instance the objective has been to increase the number of services and there have been proposals, for instance, for an additional train service to the Shepparton area, and many other areas are being, in effect, provided with additional services.

However, in an effort to speed up the movement of trains and to cut down travelling time, apart from the elimination of the compulsory food stops which had previously been a feature of railway travel in country areas, it has been proposed—I cannot say that it has been decided—that certain small country stations should no longer be stopping places and that every train should not always stop at another range of stations.

I have not approved of those changes and I have required VicRail to report to me on the consultations that those five teams have had on the various lines in
the areas concerned. I will then make a decision regarding the matter and I will take responsibility for whatever decision is made in regard to the matter. It is my hope that local members will be advised prior to any public announcement of the final decision regarding the matter.

However, the honourable member for Midlands makes representation, I take it, in regard to the Dingee station. I am not sure whether it is a significant stopping place or a place which services a large area or if there is a large gap in the proposed service of stops which means that people would have to travel a long way to get to an alternative station. If the honourable member gives me those details, I will have that matter specifically examined and reported on before any decision is made, and if the disorderly interjector in regard to Mitiamo likes to do the same I will make sure it is treated in the same way.

PUBLIC HEALTH FINANCING

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—In view of the disastrous health funding changes announced yesterday, can the Premier assure the people of Victoria that his Government will not exclude people from the State’s public hospitals because they do not have hospital and medical insurance and, in particular, will his Government make arrangements for special State funding of low income families who are not covered by the miserly Federal scheme in order that those families receive essential care? If the Government is not prepared to make this move, why not?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is asking for specific assurances based on what we have heard and know about the proposal by the Federal Government. There are many doubtful and obscure parts of the proposal, to say the least. One of the doubtful areas is: Who is to be covered by the category of disadvantaged persons? The next area, of course, is: What are to be the fees charged for ordinary beds and what is the estimate of the Federal Government as to the collection of those fees?

Those are all matters which it is hoped will be clarified to a large extent at a meeting of Ministers of Health with the Federal Minister of Health next week.

All I can say in answer to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is that in all our history of hospital treatment in Victoria the Government has tried to ensure that everybody is treated equitably and has an equal opportunity of being treated by the best available doctors, nursing staff and so on, irrespective of whether they can or cannot pay. That principle will continue. In other words, we would not expect a person to be excluded from the best hospital treatment we can manage by reason of inability to pay. That is as far as I can take it at the moment, but that was the principle of the Government before Medibank and it will be its principle in the future as well.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN’S TELEVISION FOUNDATION

Mrs PATRICK (Brighton)—I ask the Minister for the Arts: What contribution is Victoria making to the establishment of the Australian Children’s Television Foundation?

Mr LACY (Minister for the Arts)—At the conference of Ministers responsible for arts and cultural affairs on 6 February in Canberra, and with the Australian Education Council on 17 February in Hobart, the Governments of all States in the Commonwealth agreed to support the establishment of the Australian Children’s Television Foundation. Initially, the New South Wales and Victorian Governments agreed to finance the establishment of the foundation in the first interim period prior to the submission to Governments for a budget for that purpose.

The Victorian Government has available—it will not need to expend—$200,000 for that purpose. A consultant has been engaged in the person of Dr Patricia Edgar of the La Trobe University, to act on behalf of the Victorian Government in establishing a steering committee for the Australian Children’s Television Foundation. Representatives
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of the television industry, Governments, and persons with a concern for high quality children’s television pro-gramming are on that steering committee.

The steering committee has met and has approved of a budget for the 1981–82 year, and appropriate material has been produced for dissemination to Governments to obtain now a commitment financially to the establishment of the foundation. The objectives of the foundation—

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The Minister is now starting to debate the question. The question was simply: What assistance was Victoria giving to the foundation?

Mr LACY—The Victorian Government’s contribution will be directed to try to ensure that the foundation achieves, by co-operation with the television industry, with educationalists and others, a very high quality of children’s programming in this country and that a product is produced that is able to be sold overseas.

INCOME TAX REIMBURSEMENTS

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—Will the Treasurer confirm that under the existing personal income tax arrangements the State receives 9 cents for every $1 collected by the Commonwealth and, this being so, will the State lose $54 million arising out of personal income tax entitlements as a consequence of the recommended rebate for health insurance premiums. Given this major change in tax entitlements, was the Treasurer consulted on this matter and what views did the State Governments put to the Commonwealth?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—There was no specific consultation on that aspect. Victoria receives approximately 30 cents in every $1 of income tax paid by Victorians. The Government appreciates that the new health insurance rebate and a change in the method of applying money for health administration, together with abolition of tax indexation, can have an effect on the amount of money coming to Victoria, and to other States as well, through the tax reimbursement formula. This is what the Government is concerned about with the announcement yesterday of $1250 million to be distributed between the States for hospital administration purposes.

Early indications yet to be confirmed, by a careful analysis of a telex, are that in that total has been included the special purpose grant for dental health and community health. The original total received by the States last year was $1270 million, but that did not include those special purpose grants. That is another area giving cause for concern, as well as the one mentioned by the honourable member for Dandenong.

LOGGING IN CATCHMENT AREAS

Mr B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East)—Further to the question asked by the honourable member for Forest Hill, is the Premier aware that, in the past twenty years, two all-party Parliamentary committees have inquired into the question of logging in the Melbourne metropolitan catchment areas, and that both committees recommended that logging be permitted. Is the Premier also aware that the Land Conservation Council has recommended logging of the Melbourne catchment area and, if so, can he explain by what authority the committee to which he referred has been given more credibility than the committees set up by the Parliament and why recommendations by the Land Conservation Council for rural areas are adopted by the Government but those affecting the metropolitan area are rejected?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—This has been a matter of controversy for a long time. It is true that in the past there have been recommendations in favour of logging and that there have been strong protests and objections from other parties. In answer briefly to another question, I have explained the attitude that the Government took. I do not believe any honourable member representing the metropolitan area would quarrel with the principle that the fine water supply of Melbourne should not be jeopardized. Our inquiry indicated a distinct risk if there was commercial logging in the catchments and that is
why, in spite of some recommendations in the past that there should be logging, the Government has decided that it will not be permitted.

**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE**

Mr Mackinnon (Box Hill)—Has the Minister for Employment and Training considered the impact of technological change on the work force, particularly in the public sector and, if so, will the honourable gentleman inform the house of the results of his inquiry?

Mr Dixon (Minister for Employment and Training)—This is indeed an historic week for Victoria. Yesterday I was pleased to announce the Green Paper on the development of sport in Victoria. Today, there is another first for Australia with the development of guidelines for technological change in the State of Victoria, involving consultation with employees by employers. The Victorian Technological Advisory Committee has recommended that twelve steps of consultation should take place, based on the statement prepared by the employers, and this has been adopted by the Government through the Public Service Board and all of its statutory bodies.

The Premier has informed the Public Service Board and the bodies of the requirements associated with technological change. There is no doubt that technological change is vital to the future of Victoria and it is equally significant that the employees who will be affected by that change should be consulted and that they find themselves in agreement with it. The preparation of a statement which has been introduced by the Victorian Technological Advisory Committee is an important step forward and I congratulate Mr Ian Spicer, the chairman, and all the members of the Victorian Technological Advisory Committee for this forward-thinking move.

**PUBLIC HEALTH FINANCING**

Mr Cain (Bundoora)—I direct a question to the Treasurer. In view of the Premier’s failure to give the assurance sought by the honourable member for Keilor in his last question, and in view of yesterday’s announcement, can the Treasurer indicate whether he proposes to increase the charges for shared accommodation in public hospitals by some 40 per cent from $50 a day to $70 a day? If this is the case, does he not...
agree that that will have a devastating effect on present health insurance rates and on the cost-of-living index?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—The honourable member asks a matter of opinion of the Treasurer. He may rephrase his question.

Mr CAIN—I ask the Treasurer what will be the effect of an increase of that kind on the cost-of-living index and on the present health insurance premiums? Is it a fact that it will have a devastating consequence on health insurance rates and on the cost-of-living index?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—It would appear to be a matter of speculation. At this stage, all I can say is that the honourable member for Bundoora well knows that no off-the-cuff guarantees can be made of what charges may need to be raised in hospitals or any other areas for the coming financial year until it is known how much income we are going to receive from tax reimbursement or from Australian Loan Council allocations. That is, obviously so. Any other course of action would be totally irresponsible.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) presented a further report from the Auditor-General for the year 1979-80. It was ordered that the report be laid on the table, and be printed.

PAPERS

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

- Motor Accidents Board—Report for the year 1979-80—Ordered to be printed.
- Ombudsman—Report for the quarter ended 30 September, 1980—Ordered to be printed.
- Police Regulation Act 1958— Determination Nos. 330 to 337 of the Police Service Board. (8 papers.)
- Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
  - Chiropodists Act 1968—No. 149.
  - Dried Fruits Act 1958—No. 158.
  - Local Government Act 1958—No. 139.
  - Magistrates’ Court Act 1971—No. 144.
  - Marine Act 1958—No. 140.
  - Milk Pasteurization Act 1958—No. 156.
  - Physiotherapists Act 1978—No. 146.
  - Poisons Act 1962—Nos. 141, 147.
  - Police Offences Act 1958—No. 159.

PUBLIC HEALTH FINANCING

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I desire to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious adverse effect upon the State public hospital system which will result from the decision relating to health financing announced by the Commonwealth Government.

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in Standing Order No. 26 (b).

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Yesterday was a tragic day for Victoria’s public health services and it was equally tragic that the State Government was in no way consulted about the proposed changes and that today not one Government supporter asked a question about one of the greatest major threats to this State’s ability to deliver health services that it has seen for many years.

It is regrettable that the Minister of Health did not use the opportunity to make a Ministerial statement this morning. The honourable gentleman has had documents from Canberra since dinner time last night.

Mr Weideman—How long have you had them?

Mr ROPER—The honourable member for Frankston asks how long I have had the documents. I will come to that in a moment. Victoria’s health services will be severely and disastrously affected and Victoria and Australia will have a health system that will cost more but the people will receive less. That is the sad aspect of this fifth set of changes since Malcolm Fraser became Prime Minister.

The changes have been implemented without consultation. No one who listened to question time this morning
could have any other view but that the State Government should have been consulted and it was not consulted. The State Government was not consulted about income tax deductions, even though the State has a major responsibility and role to play in the sharing of income tax. The State Government was not consulted about the way in which funding would be organized. The State Government was consulted, only after much pressure, about the establishment of the Jamison committee of inquiry into hospital efficiency and administration, but the State Government was not consulted on the outcome of that inquiry when the Commonwealth Government made its decisions.

I agree with the statements made by the Minister of Health in Queensland, who said that it was disgraceful that he had to hear about the future of Queensland’s public hospitals from a Senator speaking on the radio. That was the notice that the Queensland Government received and, unfortunately, the Victorian Government did not even receive that notice because the Minister of Health had a deputation when the changes were announced on the radio, although the Minister’s staff naturally were listening.

Imagine an area, which is a major area of public responsibility, being drastically changed and the Leader of the Opposition in Canberra learns about the changes three hours before the documents are delivered to the Victorian Government. Imagine the Department of Agriculture in New South Wales receiving the full details of the changes in the health area two-and-a-half hours before the Victorian Government is notified of the changes. Imagine the situation where the shadow Minister of Health in Victoria receives the details of the changes two hours before the Victorian Government. There is a delay in each of these processes of transmission. However, it is not a matter of point scoring, it is a grave insult to the State of Victoria and a disaster for the States.

One can imagine that the State Government will be inviting the Prime Minister down to campaign in the Latrobe Valley for the Morwell by-election. After this exercise, the Opposition is sure that the Prime Minister will be an immense vote winner for the Labor Party. The Prime Minister will probably be told to stay at the River Murray border during the by-election because no matter what action the Prime Minister takes, be it in the areas of health, housing, education or any other area, he increases the Opposition’s chances and certainty of becoming the Government next year.

Mr Kennett—You have to get someone else to do the work for you; you would not do it on your own.

Mr ROPER—As least I would not suggest I would not pay legitimate and legally binding debts, as the Minister of Housing did before he went off to New Zealand.

The report of the Jamison committee last year was an important one. Unfortunately, the Australian people were not treated to an examination of that report in the Ministerial statement made in Canberra yesterday. The Federal Government chose only those aspects that it favoured and ignored those aspects that could improve health services throughout Australia. For instance, there were detailed suggestions by the Jamison committee on the funding of psychiatric services and on the way in which nurse training should occur. Neither of those matters were addressed yesterday in Canberra. The Federal Government wanted to reduce the amount of money it was paid and therefore concentrated on reducing its commitments to this State and every other State’s health services.

That particular statement emanated from the same man who, in 1975, said that he would improve and expand medibank and that he would institute a better system of health insurance rather than a lesser system of health insurance. That statement was made by the same man who, during the last Federal election campaign, spoke about improving Australia’s hospital services. That man I refer to is the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser. It is no wonder that he treats the States in the same way as he treats his Cabinet colleagues. He
Public Health Financing
does not consult with them and all
honourable members heard chapter and
verse on that on Tuesday.

I turn now to the main changes in
health services that will occur. The first
and most important change, as far as
Victoria is concerned, is that the
Federal Government has terminated
the cost-sharing agreement. That agree­
ment has been the cornerstone of a
far more orderly and better system of
running hospitals throughout Australia
for the past six years. Unfortunately,
the Treasurer did not know that.
Everyone feared the worst, but no one
told the Government that the worst
had occurred.

That is a significant decision by the
Federal Government. The Federal Gov­
ernment extended that agreement for
another twelve months until after the
Federal election campaign was out of
the way. At no time did the Federal
Government have any intention of pro­
viding the States with the necessary
funds for public hospitals. However,
the Commonwealth Government's
action will affect not only public
hospitals but also public health ser­
vices. Victoria had the first community
health centre at Queenscliff. That
centre was a pioneer in the area of
community health centres. The former
Chairman of the Hospitals and Charities
Commission, Dr Wilder, and his pre­c ed­
ecors were strong supporters of
the community health programme. They
were not always able to obtain the
support from the Government that they
would have wished for, but Victoria
did commence a community health
programme. That particular item, as
with the School Dental Service, has
now been submerged under a general
health funding. There has been a direct
assault not only on public hospitals
but also on all public health services.

Within two years health funding is
to be absorbed into the general tax­
sharing arrangements, which the Treas­
surer reminds everyone with regularity
weighs heavily against Victoria. During
the speech by the Federal Minister for
Aboriginal Affairs, the honourable
gentleman said that as a result of these
reforms the Federal Government next

year will spend or provide to the States
$1250 million for health purposes.

Leaving aside inflation and cost in­
creases, the States will get $100 million
less next year than they received this
year. Estimates of inflation and cost
rises vary. The bottom figure suggested
is 10 per cent for the next financial
year. For many reasons, health expendi­
ture may rise at a higher rate than the
consumer price index—the actual health
rise may be 13 per cent and, to main­
tain the Commonwealth's existing fund­
ing, between $1485 million and $1525
million would be required. Recurrent
funds to the States are therefore re­
duced by between $235 million and
$275 million. Victoria receives 24.3 per
cent of existing grants and if this
percentage remains, and there has been
no suggestion by the Commonwealth
that Victoria will receive a higher per­
centage, it will receive between $57
million and $69 million less from the
Commonwealth for health purposes
next year than it received last year.

Mr Wilkes—Is that in addition to
the $100 million?

Mr Roper—That is what the State
will lose as opposed to other States.

Mr Birrell—$100 million all over the
Commonwealth.

Mr Roper—Allowing for cost in­
creases, it will be higher. There is no
chance that this year's $20 million hos­
pital deficits will be either paid for
or reimbursed under the existing
arrangement. The Minister of Health
states that he does not know that
but he knows there was a meeting in
Canberra the week before Easter at­
tended by the States when the Fed-
eral Health Department and Minister were sympathetic but the Federal Treasury was not sympathetic and these matters are being organized by the Federal Treasury. If that is the case, and I believe it is, as other States are increasingly believing it is, the States will receive much less from the Commonwealth Government. This morning, Sir Charles Court was doubtful that the States will even get what little was promised last night.

The Minister of Health and I now differ by $3 million on deficits which at least means that he has moved some distance from last November. As $10 million would have come from the Commonwealth and $10 million from the State, hospitals will enter the next financial year $20 million in the red. Even if State Treasury finds the extra $10 million, which is not certain because when the Treasurer was asked that question the week before Easter he was non-committal as he was today about what would occur, there will be between $62 million and $79 million less from Canberra than its share under the cost-sharing arrangement would have been.

South Australia and Tasmania may retain the cost-sharing arrangement if that is to their advantage and I am sure those States will find that it is. South Australia is having two bob each way. It can do its sums to get a far higher amount per head. It already gets more from income tax reimbursements and it can gain more under cost sharing. It has it both ways. It gets more under income tax and more under cost sharing and is better off than Victoria. It also has a legal protection for another four years.

By using inflated revenue estimates and controlling health insurance rates, the Commonwealth Government can further adversely affect the State. It can tell the Minister and his senior officers that they will have to put their bed day charges up by a certain amount as the State will receive a certain revenue and must therefore increase those charges and, by over-estimating the revenue, the Commonwealth Government will further reduce its commitment and make the commitment of the States higher. The Commonwealth Government controls health insurance rates and, even though it is supposedly freeing itself from hospitals, it will still control them through health insurance rates.

Health insurance becomes a key matter. The State is almost like the hamster's tail—it is not there when it comes to making important decisions. The State will have to cope as best it can. By varying the health insurance system—and it has shown over the past six years with its five changes that it is keen to do this—the Commonwealth Government can make the State's job in funding and planning hospitals and other health services even more difficult than at present.

The loss and shortfall can be made up only by increasing revenue from bed charges and outpatients or by cutting services, and both will occur. This morning, the Opposition asked for an assurance about means tests and bed charges and a definite answer was received that there would not be any assurances. The people of Victoria should know from that and from the announcement yesterday that there will be a major increase in bed charges, particularly for the shared accommodation or intermediate classification which means not that a patient has a special room but that he is classified as insured. Any non-pensioner will now have to pay whatever the State sets as the bed charge and I shall refer later to that effect.

If the State is to maintain the present level or a slightly reduced level of services, there will be an increase in the intermediate or shared accommodation cost of approximately 40 per cent from $50 a day to $70 a day. In addition, patients will need to pay all medical costs, and pathology and radiology which at present, for many persons, is covered under a general arrangement with the hospital. Now, as the Commonwealth controls these charges, doctors will be able to levy a charge against any non-pensioner patient and the sys-
tem will provide input to private pathology and radiology, costing the public more.

The State was not consulted about the income tax charge. Yesterday's Herald reported a big benefit to everyone because insurance premiums would be tax deductible. However, the Commonwealth is paying for that by abolishing the Commonwealth medical benefit for non-insured persons, introduced by a former Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton, in the late 1960s. If one is not insured now and requires major surgery, one will have to pay the full cost of that surgery and all related costs. It will be quite possible for persons to run up bills of $10,000 or more because of the abolition of the Commonwealth medical benefit and increased patient charges.

Let me examine what will happen to the State under this arrangement. Victoria, like all other States, depends for the bulk of its revenue on the income tax sharing arrangements. If the Commonwealth increases its income tax take, being on the coat tails, this State increases its income, and if the Commonwealth—and this happens more often—reduces the income tax take, this State's income drops significantly. It kind of drops off the coat. It is like a flea that is being brushed aside.

The Commonwealth Treasury has estimated that the loss to taxation revenue will be $600 million, and normally from every one of these dollars Victoria would receive 9 cents. The Treasurer did not quite comprehend the question of my colleague, the shadow Treasurer, on that matter this morning. That means that the State, in its taxation reimbursements—if the present taxation formula were to continue, and there is every chance that there will be a worse formula—will lose $54 million as a result of that decision yesterday. Mr Fraser is giving tax deductions throughout Australia, and the State Treasuries are paying 40 per cent of that cost without any credit to the States at all. It is the kind of situation where the Commonwealth gets all the credit and the States get all the problems.

The important areas where the States were moving to economize in the health fields will be lost. The Minister will be aware that in most of our medium sized, and larger type community hospitals, like Frankston, Moorabbin, the country-based hospitals, and even hospitals of the size of Colac and Benalla, in many disciplines it is a lot cheaper to have persons paid on a sessional basis. The Minister nods in agreement to that. He gave me an answer about the Frankston Community Hospital which indicated that if the hospital moved to a sessional basis, the payments to doctors at that hospital would decrease from $850,000 to $350,000, and there would be a saving, not just to the State but to the community, of $500,000.

The nation is now moving back to a fee for service system for everyone who virtually is not a pensioner. That will mean a huge rise in doctors' incomes, because savings that have been possible by good administration over the past few years will be eliminated. There will now be a fee for service arrangement, and the same will apply at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and elsewhere. There will now be the re-introduction of fee for service medicine.

The Federal Ministers talked about reforms yesterday and that there would be discussions with the States, but they pointed out to the Victorian Government, and to the people of Victoria, that if a State does not agree to levy higher charges, and charge the non-pensioner population—referring particularly to Queensland—the Commonwealth will reduce its contribution. Either the State introduces what is a means test, or it loses those Commonwealth funds that would otherwise come its way. What is proposed is a means test. The only people who will not have to pay fees are those in receipt of a pensioner medical card, or those who are unemployed or special beneficiaries and would be eligible for a pensioner medical card—and that is

Mr Roper
not many of the unemployed—or migrants and refugees for the first six months.

Hundreds of thousands of Victorians who cannot afford health insurance, those who were the chief beneficiaries of the original Medibank proposal, will now have to pay bed fees, outpatient fees, hospital charges and doctors fees when they attend one of the public hospitals. That is what the Commonwealth has made very clear, and that is why the Queensland Minister in particular was so outraged, last night and again this morning, at what is being proposed.

Low income families will suffer the most severely. The Commonwealth medical benefit now will be available only to the insured, so if a person is not insured and requires an operation, he will have to find the money to pay all the doctors fees. People will have to insure because of that. I am in favour of getting money in from all those who can afford to pay. I have been very critical of the last lot of Fraser changes which meant that many people who could afford to pay were not contributing to health costs. It was the most crazy system that the Prime Minister introduced. He keeps on introducing crazy situations. Having said that, the Government has to ensure that people who cannot afford the amount will not have to pay.

Many Victorians are on $150 a week or less, and attempting to support a family. They will now have to pay $10 a week for private insurance, less their tax rebate, which is not worth that much.

Mr Whiting—Which one?

Mr ROPER—The 32 cents in the $1, or these people will have to take a risk. To those people that risk will be enormous. They will have to pay for doctors charges. If one of their children developed appendicitis they would have to pay the surgeon $250 out of their $150 less tax per week. They will also have to pay the hospital for its bed charges, whether it be $60 or $70 a day. They will also have to pay for pathology and radiology services. Those families either will be forced to the wall by having to pay an unrealistic amount of their after-tax earnings for private health insurance, or be forced to the wall if they are unfortunate enough to be ill.

They will be paying, in effect, $520 less 32 cents in the $1—a approximately $350 for health care. That is, 5 per cent of their weekly wage, and more than 5 per cent of their after-tax wage, will have to go on health insurance. Whereas for me, the Minister, or any member of this place, and people in the outside community whose incomes are larger than ours, we will pay less than 1 per cent of our actual incomes for that same level of cover. What a marvellous system! The poor will be squeezed hard indeed and the well-off amongst us will escape comparatively cheaply. The problem is that that will affect public services, and, whether the Government likes it or not, it will run up bad debts. Hospitals will have to hunt up those bad debts and use agencies and other methods to collect them. The alternative will be to reduce services—all because of what the Commonwealth Government has done.

The holding of a pensioner medical card will assume greater importance. I do not have to remind honourable members what it means to a pensioner to have that card. If a couple have an income of $68 a week, apart from a social security pension which is reduced anyway, they are not eligible for a pensioner medical card. If a person is single and has an income of $40 a week, he does not get a pensioner medical card. Hundreds of thousands of people throughout Australia have saved throughout their lives, or have paid into superannuation funds throughout their lives and, as a result receive $70, $80, or $90 a week in superannuation, and they now will have to pay $10 a week for health insurance. We are back to the pre-Nimmo times of the 1960s. It is an ineffective and expensive system where money will be wasted and, at the same time, the system will develop public squalor and difficulties. It is the reverse
of what every other country in the world is doing, and the reverse of what Victoria should be doing.

The Opposition believes that this House should pass this motion to show its discontent and annoyance at what is being done to Victoria, and what is being done to Victorians.

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—In the past year I imagine that there has been one thing that most people in this country have not been aware of and that is the real working or the operation of the health system. I have stated in the House before. Nobody has been happy with the system which has existed since the last change occurred when—I think the honourable member for Brunswick supports this view—there was introduced a positive inducement for the improvident rather than the provident.

A system was operating under which people who could well afford to make some contribution towards their health costs were able to get out from making a contribution but were still able to obtain treatment or total health care at no cost to themselves.

In my view an insured person, and that encompasses at least 60 per cent of the Australian population, was paying twice. An insured person received absolutely no assistance or inducement under the system that existed. We had a position where a person could be paying $8 or $9 a week in insurance costs and at the same time paying the normal taxation scale. His neighbour, receiving a similar income, could choose not to make any contribution for health insurance for himself or his family and could walk into any hospital and obtain any service for free.

Honourable members often fail to take into consideration that not only elsewhere in Australia but also in this State, something like 24 per cent to 28 per cent of the beds available in hospital health care——

Mr Simpson—Mr Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

A quorum was formed.

Mr BORTHWICK—The point I was making was that frequently, in discussing health care in this country, we often fail to take into account that on the average, about 25 per cent of the beds provided in hospitals for health care are in the private system. The beds are not necessarily provided for profit; a high proportion of them, particularly in the notable hospitals in this State, are provided not for profit, but in the private system those hospitals have provided an extraordinarily good service to the total community over many years.

The position had deteriorated to the stage where those hospitals were positively at risk. That was because of the negative inducement of the old system whereby the improvident were encouraged not to ensure; where there was no positive inducement to insure there was a movement away from the private sector to the public sector. Hospital after hospital, and I can think of Bethesda, Bethlehem, the hospital in Moreland and many others, were verging on bankruptcy for the simple reason that they could not attract patients because of the inducement against insurance. The system provided an inducement against insurance without any positive inducement to insure. The provision of health care services in Australia resulted in absolute chaos and the situation has continued.

Honourable members may not be aware that not all of the 60 per cent of the community who are insured are well-to-do people. Many pensioners continue to be insured and they do that of their own accord because they want the right to choose their doctor and their form of hospital treatment. They do not want to unnecessarily sit in a long queue waiting to be treated. There are many other people who fall into this category. The assumption of the Opposition that only the wealthy in-
sure is a stupid assumption, for just as working people vote for the Liberal Party, so working people on low incomes take out health insurance. However, under the old system they were given no inducement and no assistance whatsoever and that was the effect of the system.

The public hospital system in Australia was in danger of going down the drain with the enormous increases in public hospital costs. Honourable members can have philosophical arguments, but I know one absolute truth: There is no such thing as a free lunch. The point I make is that nobody is able to provide health services without money; somebody has to pay for them. Philosophical arguments can occur over the matter, but that is the end result.

The Commonwealth Government made its decision without consulting the States. I remind the honourable member for Brunswick that the States did state, and they stated it unanimously, that if the Commonwealth was to embark on a scheme such as this, and which led to increased health care charges, with the people given more responsibility for their own health costs, it had to be done in such a way that it would give the States a much greater say regarding health insurance. That proposition has been rejected.

The States also suggested that the scheme should be introduced in such a way that the States are not required to undertake a means test of all people at the door of the hospital.

I do consider that the honourable member for Brunswick has consistently interpreted the speech of the Federal Minister for Health in a manner suitable to himself, but the scheme is not yet clearly defined.

Mr Fordham—He is an optimist.

Mr BORTHWICK—I will give honourable members one example; it is on the question of who are to be regarded as disadvantaged. The honourable member for Brunswick conveniently left out one important segment.

Mr Roper—What was that?

Mr BORTHWICK—I will quote from the speech of the Federal Minister for Health:

The Government believes that the following groups in the community should be regarded as disadvantaged:

All migrants and refugees in their first six months in Australia.

Current unemployment and special beneficiaries who meet the pensioner health benefit income test, and

Other persons who meet a specified income test.

The honourable member refused to quote that last category. He omitted it because one can interpret it in any way one likes, and that is one of the problems and a reason why the conference in Canberra is essential. No State knows how to interpret that. Nobody can make firm pronouncements yet as to how this will be implemented. One of my criticisms, which are not along the lines of those of the honourable member for Brunswick who will go on preaching a lie, is that it will send every private hospital in this State broke and will disadvantage all uninsured.

Several things need to be known. From Victoria's point of view, we need to know how quickly the Federal Government will refer to the Grants Commission the inequalities between Australians on the reimbursement of health funds to the States. We ought to be unanimous in discussing that basic question in this place because a Victorian is a disadvantaged Australian in respect to health funds. Victorians make up 27 per cent of the Australian population but Victoria gets 24 per cent of health funds. Is a heart attack any less expensive here than in South Australia or Western Australia? The inequities in the old scheme are highlighted by the Jamison report itself which the honourable member failed to mention. I invite honourable members to listen to what that commission stated:

"... the cost-sharing agreements have rewarded the expensive and punished the efficient and have perpetuated rather than solved some of the main problems in Australia's health system". This State, by any comparison, has been, with Queensland, the most disadvantaged under the Jamison scheme. In talking of the interests of Victoria, we should be requiring a reappraisal of the base figures on which the funds are provided.
Mr Wilkes—Why don’t you tell the Premiers Conference?

Mr BORTHWICK—We will be telling the Premiers Conference. I have said repeatedly that that is what is needed.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Wilton) —Order! The Leader of the Opposition will have his opportunity.

Mr BORTHWICK—The Opposition took this opportunity not to place before the people of Victoria a realistic appraisal of health arrangements. The honourable member opened up the debate on trite political remarks that were a disgrace to the Opposition and to the people of Victoria. The Government will work to the utmost on 8 May to get the best possible deal for all Victorians and at the same time will welcome a move to encourage the provident rather than the improvident, and to provide the best possible service, regardless of the financial position of people. We will be negotiating strongly on that aspect. The Government does not believe in a straight cut-off and then a maximum charge. Victoria will be seeking graded facilities, and I do not mean graded in quality. We will be negotiating at full strength on this matter.

The ACTING SPEAKER—The Minister’s time has expired.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—As usual, although the honourable member for Brunswick has many facts and figures at his disposal, he had failed to put forward a case that has convinced the members of my party that the House should adjourn on this question. That is basically because nobody yet knows all the ramifications of the new proposal.

Mr Wilkes—You have not heard other Opposition speakers.

Mr WHITING—I thought I gave ample opportunity for other members of the Opposition to rise in their places.

Mr Wilkes—The honourable member for Oakleigh rose in his place.

Mr WHITING—But he sat down.

Mr Wilkes—Only because you got the call.

Mr WHITING—I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that I was clearly giving the Opposition a chance to further prove the case that the House should adjourn. I hesitated for quite a long time, as the Leader of the Opposition knows. Naturally, when nobody else rose, I took the call.

Mr Wilkes—It was the National Party’s turn, and you know it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Wilton) —Order! May I suggest that the Deputy Leader of the National Party present his case in relation to the question before the House.

Mr WHITING—the National Party will not support the motion moved by the honourable member for Brunswick. Other members of the Opposition will have the opportunity of putting a case, if they so wish, on what will happen with regard to the new move by the Federal Government in respect of hospital funding. They are such geniuses!

Mr Simpson—Genii.

Mr WHITING—Genii, if the honourable member wants the plural. They are such genii that they would know all the ramifications of this case.

Mrs Toner—Why are the country people so pleased?

The ACTING SPEAKER—The honourable member for Greensborough will have her opportunity.

Mr WHITING—I support the Minister’s statement that those people who have, up to date, of their own volition taken out health insurance right throughout the period since the Medibank scheme first came into operation in this country and who have continued health insurance cover for their own personal benefit were definitely being charged twice for the privilege of having hospital treatment—by this State and also by the Commonwealth.

Mr Mathews—It is a matter of choice.

Mr WHITING—It is a matter of choice, and it is interesting that members of the Opposition are commenting that it was their choice. Surely an analogy would be the time when members of the Opposition were up in arms about State aid to private schools. Surely that situation is exactly the same.
The Opposition has changed its mind and now believes it is political to support private schools in this State.

Mr Wilkes—We are talking about hospitals.

Mr WHITING—The Leader of the Opposition is correct, but when State aid to private schools is thrown back at the Opposition it is a different story.

The situation is that those people who chose to continue their private health insurance and those who have since taken out health insurance following the changes in the Federal Government’s policy on the question of funding of hospitals have been paying twice for that privilege. It could be argued that that may continue for any length of time, and that would obviously be a good thing in the view of some people. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the people who have taken out private health insurance would be opposed to the view they should pay twice. However, that is not the point because I am quite certain that that will be possible given the threshold exemptions from the requirement to be covered for hospital treatment in the State.

The Minister has outlined those exemptions and some were quoted by the honourable member for Brunswick. One particular group was not. I do not know at this stage how that category will be defined, but obviously that is another point that has to be covered in the near future. Certainly I can understand the desire of the Opposition to discuss the motion today because it will probably be the last opportunity it will have to do so before the end of the sessional period.

That does not excuse the fact that it is still early in my view and in the view of the National Party—and the whole effect of these new proposals have yet to be evaluated—for people to know whether they will be worse off or better off in the long run. The honourable member for Brunswick claimed that low income earners will be paying 5 per cent of their income in health insurance premiums and that high income earners will be paying 1 per cent or less of their income. I believe it is within the province of the Federal Treasurer and the State Health Commission to alleviate that situation to some extent given that the Commonwealth Government has the ability to control the health insurance charges and alter the age pension situation which prevents those people who have other income from being eligible for pensioner medical benefits.

There are a number of options, provided the Federal Government is prepared to take them, that are available to ease the burden on low income earners. That answer is not available at the moment; nor are answers to many of the matters raised. Obviously these are matters that I hope the Minister and the Premier will take up with the Federal Treasurer in detail at the Premiers Conference next week. The National Party believes that the motion cannot be supported at this stage, but I suppose at some future date—

Mr Roper—Next week?

Mr WHITING—Certainly, if the honourable member is here. Given that certain threshold agreements can be arrived at and improvements made in that area to cover the people I have mentioned, it is possible for this scheme—using the words of the honourable member for Brunswick—to have a far less “serious adverse effect upon the State public hospital system” than there is now. I do not know whether or not the honourable member for Brunswick has a crystal ball.

An Honourable Member—he just reads it.

Mr WHITING—who writes what he reads? The honourable member for Brunswick claims that Victoria would be $79 million—

Mr Roper—Up to $79 million—

Mr WHITING—I thought the honourable member said $79 million. I will accept the honourable member for Brunswick’s explanation that it is a maximum of $79 million worse off than under the costs sharing agreement applicable now. That again is a projection on the part of the honourable member that may or may not be correct in the long term. It reinforces my argument that it is far too early to know whether
any serious disadvantage will flow to the hospital scheme or whether it may break even or be better off than it is at present.

Mr MATTHEWS (Oakleigh)—I would not have believed, until the Deputy Leader of the National Party spoke, that it would be possible for any member of this House to make a more irrelevant and inappropriate speech than that which was delivered this morning by the Minister of Health. At least one matter has been made clear this morning and that is that the people of Victoria have nothing to hope for from either of the conservative groups represented in this Chamber in relation to resistance against the most regressive and unjust changes in health finance that this country has ever seen.

I should have hoped that this morning the Minister, knowing what he does of the condition of health services in Victoria and the implications for deterioration of the services, which are both explicit and implicit in the measure announced yesterday by his Liberal Party colleague and opposite number in Canberra, would have been prepared to put behind him his narrow party loyalties and commitments and speak for Victoria. That did not happen. He did not speak for Victoria. The Minister knocked everyone in sight around the health field except the people who are primarily responsible for what is going on now.

What are the salient points of the position in which we find ourselves following the measures announced yesterday? I suggest that there are three primary requisites that any acceptable health scheme must possess. First of all it must provide universal cover. Everybody must be assured of access to health care service on the basis of need.

The scheme unveiled yesterday in Canberra failed on that first and primary test because, under these arrangements, vast numbers of Australians, who are caught in between the category of being disadvantaged and an income level adequate to enable them to meet the high cost of individual health insurance will be deprived of health insurance and will go without health insurance with enormous risk to themselves and their families.

As the honourable member for Brunswick correctly points out, the effect will be that these people will put off longer and longer consulting a doctor in the case of illness in households and consequently many illnesses which could, if treated at an early stage, be remedied will now go on to the point where they are incurable or curable at an increased cost. That is the first point on which the new arrangements from Canberra fail.

The second requisite of a good health scheme is that the payment for it should be related to the economic capacity of the contributors. There should be a sliding scale geared to the income that Australians receive. Again, the test of equity is failed by the new arrangements which were introduced in Canberra yesterday because everybody who insures, irrespective of the income he receives, will be obliged to contribute at a flat rate which, as the honourable member for Brunswick again correctly pointed out, will mean some people will pay as little as half of 1 per cent of their incomes in health insurance charges, and other will pay 5 per cent, 6 per cent, 7 per cent, 8 per cent and even higher percentages of their incomes on health insurance.

The third test of a good scheme is that it should hold down the rising cost of health care in the community and should provide disincentives to expenditure. Again, this scheme will have the opposite effect. Firstly, once people have taken out health insurance, they will be inclined to take the greatest possible advantage of the cover for which they have paid, and that means more services will be sought from doctors. Secondly, once doctors know that people are covered by insurance, they will be again on the road of dishing up their uncontrolled fees at every opportunity. You, Mr Acting Speaker, will have noticed that one significant omission from yesterday's arrangements was any proposal for the holding down of doctors' fees.
One would have expected that a Government which was concerned to reduce the cost of health care in this country would have had something to say about holding down doctors' fees and incomes as well as dragging Australians into health funds, but again, this test is failed.

Finally, on the matter of cost containment, I point out that under the Medibank arrangements which the Labor Government introduced there was a clear picture of the pattern of health expenditure throughout Australia. Under Medibank, thanks to the electronic data processing arrangements which were at the disposal of the Government the health authorities knew what was being spent on health care, who was receiving it, who was contributing to it and what it was being used for. All that data bank has now been sacrificed. There is now no means whereby that information can be collected. The health authorities are once again operating in the dark with the effect that the "wide boys" of the medical profession and the health profession will again be able to get away with financial murder. The Minister knows that is the case. Daily he has drawn to his notice the lurks that these people get up to in maximizing their already considerable returns from the public and private purse.

Why has all that been brought about? On one level people are told that it will save the country money. Nothing could be further from the truth. Honourable members would be aware that the idea that this is saving the country money is an accounting subterfuge. All that has happened is that one element of the constant cost of providing health service in this country has been transferred from the ledgers of the Australian Government in part to the ledgers of State Governments and in part to the ledgers of private health insurance funds. There has been no reduction in that cost whatsoever. That cost remains constant to the last cent.

An additional point that needs to be taken into account is that under the Medibank system, great administrative economies were obtained. The new arrangements throw us back into the dark ages prior to the Nimmo report of 1968. They return us to a time when those who ran the large operation health insurance funds in Australia, people to whom reference was once made as the opulent bureaucrats, will again be able to cream off 25 cents from every $1 that is collected in health insurance charges. Twenty-five cents in every $1 is the amount that the private health funds were in the custom of squandering or retaining prior to the introduction of Medibank. Fifteen cents in every $1 that they collected in health contributions was spent on administration costs, and they put away another 10 cents in every $1 in the bank as reserves. That represents a straight 25 per cent surcharge on the cost of providing health services in this country—a totally avoidable and unnecessary extravagance which the Government defends in the name of economy. It is unacceptable for the Minister to come into the House and defend that in the name of the economy.

Mr Birrell—Which Government are you talking about?

Mr MATHEWS—I am talking about the Victorian Government, this branch office of the Liberal Party of Australia; these people who sit cheek by jowl with their Federal colleagues at the State conference of the Liberal Party, at the State Executive of the Liberal Party and at the Federal Executive of the Liberal Party. They are part of one inseparable organization. What is being foisted on the people of Victoria is a conspiracy between State and Federal Liberals and State and Federal members of the National Party, who are riveting on this State arrangements for the financing of health care which are as indefensible in terms of economy as they are in terms of equity.

What will be the result of these changes? As I have already said, many low and medium income earners will not be able to afford the cost of health insurance. They will no longer be
covered by any disadvantaged persons scheme for health care, and they will turn up in increasing numbers on the doorsteps of public hospitals. From time to time the Minister of Health has deplored the length of the queues in casualty and outpatient departments in public hospitals.

Mr Miller—That is the only choice most people have.

Mr MATTHEWS—As the honourable member for Prahran correctly says, this is the only choice open to many members of the community. If the Minister thinks those queues have been long up until now, he has seen nothing yet, because more and more the observation of the honourable member for Prahran will be shown to be valid.

When these people turn up at the public hospitals where hitherto they have been entitled to receive free treatment, they will find that the Minister, speaking for the Liberal Party, acting at the behest of his bosses in Canberra, will have imposed means tests that effectively exclude them, or that there will be a letter of the law that excludes them and a practice that admits them and, having been admitted, they will thereafter perpetually be harassed by a legion of debt collectors which the public hospitals have been obliged to employ under these circumstances to avoid the prospect of being crippled by their deficits.

These are shameful things to have been allowed to develop in a community which, for a brief period, enjoyed a modern economic effective health scheme in the form of Medibank mark I.

As a result, people in this country now know what a good health scheme is like and they will not be fobbed off and conned with substitutes of this sort. I predict that they will rise up on the issue of health care and health insurance and that the Minister of Health and this Government will be swept away along with the Canberra elements of the Liberal Party.
along and be signatories to the agreement—they will acquiesce in the long term; there is no doubt about that.

The honourable member for Brunswick told this Parliament this morning in a tempered and precise way what would be the effect of the new health arrangements announced yesterday by the Commonwealth. He told us that the last one to know about it was the Government. I would like honourable members to consider that—everyone knew: the Leader of the Opposition in the Federal Parliament, the Minister for Health in the New South Wales Parliament and the shadow Minister of Health in the Victorian Parliament all knew what the extent of the cuts would be at least two hours before anybody on the Government knew anything about them.

Indeed, this morning the Treasurer said he would have to carefully examine the telex before he could answer any questions on this matter. The information was supplied to him by telex. The Federal Minister of Health did not have the courtesy to telephone the Victorian Treasurer or consult with the Victorian Minister of Health about what would happen as a result of his announcement yesterday.

That reflects on the credibility of the Government and, indeed, on its performance. The Victorian Government is treated with contempt by the Commonwealth Government. Is it any wonder that it is treated with contempt? The Federal Government does not even tell the Victorian Government what will happen—its members have to find out by telex.

The shadow Minister of Health was discussing the effects of the new health arrangements with the media before the Government knew about them. Is that how a responsible State Government should be treated by the Commonwealth? If it is treated that way by the Commonwealth Government why is that so? The answer is that that Government treats the Victorian Government with disrespect and disregards it. I would have thought that this morning the Minister of Health would have been prepared to inform the House about the changes and to answer some of the questions raised by the honourable member for Brunswick in relation to the effects of the cuts.

The Deputy Leader of the National Party says that the National Party has not made up its mind yet. We know, and the Minister of Health knows, that the maximum contribution to the States of $1276 million will be reduced to $1250 million and the effect that will have on hospital services, school dental services and more particularly community health services in this State. There can be no doubt that Victoria and the Minister of Health will have an amount of between $57 million and $69 million less than they had last year to spend on hospital services in this State. The Treasurer says that is not right. The Treasurer did not get into the debate to tell us the effects of the cuts. He has not examined the telex.

What honourable members know and what the honourable member for Brunswick knows is that this State has to increase its hospital charges, its bed charges, to make up for the short-fall. In other words, the people who are now paying for hospital services will be charged more for those hospital services because of the new arrangements. People who are not insured now will be forced to take out insurance; otherwise they will not be entitled to health benefits. That is a certainty. It cannot be refuted by either the Treasurer or the Minister of Health.

It was a sorry day for Victoria when these new arrangements were announced by Mr MacKellar and I regret we have had such a poor response by the Minister of Health and no indication from the Treasurer or Premier as to their dissatisfaction with the new arrangements.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes .. .. .. .. 31
Noes .. .. .. .. 45

Majority against the motion .. .. 14
TAXI LICENCES

Mr CRABB (Knox)—By leave, I move:

That this House, recognizing the ability of the Transport Regulation Board to exercise its absolute discretion in considering applications for the assignment of certain licences under the Transport Regulation Act 1958, records its opinion that this discretion be exercised to permit taxi owners the greatest possible freedom in the use of their licence asset, provided that—(a) no assignment application be approved where it is apparent that such approval would lead to a diminution of the benefit or condition of any employee or unduly disadvantage any third person; and (b) no such assignment should be approved except where the proposed assignee is a person with satisfactory experience in the taxi industry.

The moving of this motion is concomitant with the passing yesterday of the Transport Regulation (Assignment of Licences) Bill. This is the motion that all three parties in the House agreed was to be moved to express to the Transport Regulation Board the opinion of the House of the way in which the board should exercise its discretion, a matter found to be impossibly difficult to include as an amendment to the Bill. I ask the House to support the motion as agreed and I commend it to the House.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—The National Party supports the motion moved by leave by the honourable member for Knox. The discussions which took place on the amendments to the Bill were a step forward towards the best possible legislation being passed through this Parliament. I congratulate the Minister and thank him for his support in ensuring that the Labor Opposition, the National Party and representatives of the Transport Regulation Board were able to get together and discuss the amendments before the House. The National Party believes the board will use the greatest discretion possible in the regulation relating to the assignment of taxi licences. This motion makes clear what the Parliament means as to the discretion that the board should take in the transfer of taxi licences. However, I make the point that there may not have been any need for this type of motion because the Transport Regulation Board would have worked well, with the utmost discretion, under legislation that was passed in this House. Having said that, I indicate that the National Party supports the motion.

Mr CRELLIN (Sandringham)—I am particularly interested in this motion because I had the privilege, before coming to Parliament, of being the first full-time secretary of the Victorian Taxi Association. I inform the House that the industry always enjoyed a good relationship with the regulatory authority, the Transport Regulation Board, and the union involved, the Motor Transport and Chauffeurs Association.
I support the comments made by the honourable member for Murray Valley when he said that the Transport Regulation Board, in its normal approach to these types of problems, would adopt what is set out in the motion. That has been my experience with the Transport Regulation Board. I have the highest regard for its administrators, who always make decisions while keeping in mind the needs of the total industry and their responsibility to the public. I commend the motion, although it encompasses what the board would have achieved in any case.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—The Government recognizes the purpose of and supports the motion. I welcome the comments of honourable members and the expressions of confidence in the board. Honourable members could all expect that the board would adopt the approach that is set out in the motion. It stresses those facts and puts a public statement of the opinion of this House on the public record. It reassures those people who may have been concerned about the wide discretion given to the board by the Bill passed yesterday and will show that it is the opinion of the House and, I hope, of another place, that there will be sensible and discreet administration at the discretion of the board. One will realize the difficult and sensitive area that has been of concern to the industry, both those who want this and those who have been concerned for many years, that it should be safely put into the administration.

It may be appropriate in twelve months time to report back to the House on the working of the legislation so that honourable members may have some idea of its operation and make a number of assessments. Honourable members will doubtless become aware of any complaints, if there are any, and I will be happy to investigate them and discuss them with the board and provide access to the board for any honourable member who experiences a problem relating to its administration.

The motion was agreed to.
Victoria by developing programmes that will encourage their growth. The third part of the motion suggests that the Government should take positive measures to ensure that small business has greater access to financial assistance.

It is important to define what small business is. The Small Business Development Corporation Act provides a meaning of small business as, firstly, a business that has a relatively small share of the market in which it competes. Secondly, it is managed personally by the owner, owners or directors. Thirdly, it does not form part of a larger business or enterprise. Some people would go further than that and define small business for statistical purposes, saying that small businesses employ less than 100 employees in manufacturing and less than 10 employees in retail, wholesale and tertiary activities.

The importance of small business in the Victorian and Australian economies must be recognized. I shall quote figures contained in the Fourth Annual Report of the Small Business Development Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1980, which was tabled in Parliament on 9 December 1980. The figures indicate the number of small businesses in the total context of business in Victoria, that businesses that employ 1 to 99 people in Australia constitute 80 per cent of enterprises in Australia and that the total number of employees of small business employing 1 to 99 persons is 747,000. The number of businesses employing more than 100 persons is 4,000. Businesses employing from 1 to 99 persons comprises 99.5 per cent of all enterprises in Australia. The number of businesses actually employing more than 100 employees is only 0.5 per cent of enterprises operating in Australia.

Businesses employing less than 100 employees employ 61 per cent of the total work force and businesses employing more than 100 employees employ 39 per cent.

It is interesting to know in what areas small businesses operate. It is claimed that 97 per cent of small business is in manufacturing. It is further claimed that 99 per cent of retail business is carried out by businesses with less than $500,000 turnover. Therefore, small business plays an important role in the economy. The Government should recognize that small businesses are the best job creators in Australia. Those businesses are the most hardworking sector of the economy, the most productive and the most innovative. Small business needs more freedom and more assistance. Small business does not necessarily need subsidies, but small business certainly needs assistance.

The National Party has moved the motion because it believes that the Victorian economy is not operating as it should. The Government should provide further assistance for small business so as to get development moving again in Victoria and put Victoria to the forefront of the Australian economy. Victoria is a progressive State, but the population and unemployment statistics prove that at present Victoria is not moving forward as it should. I turn to an article—the first of three—that appeared in the Age on 25 March 1981. It states:

Over the past year, there has been a marked economic deterioration in Victoria compared to the nation, and to New South Wales. Consider these signs:

Victorian employment rose 0.9 per cent—well below the national growth of 2.1 per cent and New South Wales growth of 2.0 per cent.

Unemployment rose in Victoria, and fell nationally and in New South Wales;

It is worth reiterating that the level of unemployment rose in Victoria, but the level of unemployment fell on a national basis. The article continues:

The number of houses under construction was down 10 per cent in Victoria, up 4 per cent nationally and up 20 per cent in New South Wales;

Non-corporate bankruptcies rose 62 per cent in Victoria and 12 per cent in New South Wales; discharges from bankruptcy fell by a third in Victoria and rose by two-thirds in New South Wales;

Retail sales and car registrations were in harmony with this picture of a Victorian economy running well behind the national average.
That must be of concern to the Government. The article goes on to state that those figures should cause immense concern to Victorians.

However, all is not gloomy. Efforts are being made to stimulate the Victorian economy. People are showing confidence in Victoria’s future. Victoria does present attributes that, correctly used, will assist Victoria to become the most progressive State in Australia. Victoria has vast oil and gas reserves in Bass Strait and huge brown coal deposits in Gippsland. Victoria has the production potential to further develop its economy. Victoria possesses the strongest primary production area of Australia and that area can be further expanded. There has been much debate on that aspect.

The Corporate Affairs “Information Bulletin” issued on 4 September 1980 indicates that the number of business names and companies increased from 244,641 at 30 June 1979 to 260,510 as at end of June 1980, which is a net growth in the number of registered companies of 9,546, which is a percentage increase of 3.86 per cent. Those figures are significant in an assessment of the economy and an examination of what should be done to promote Victoria’s development. That development can be promoted through assistance for small businesses.

Those figures I have quoted from the Corporate Affairs “Information Bulletin” are signs of positive growth because in times of economic downturn people often say, “Things are not so good, let’s have a go”, and that partly explains the increase in the number of registered companies and the number of company names registered. However, confidence, more than anything else, is missing in Victoria’s economy. The Government would be well aware of that lack of confidence.

There is a need to analyse the reasons for the failure of small businesses, which in Australia and throughout the world face enormous problems. Professor Williams, who is head of the business management section of Newcastle University, conducted a study and discovered that of the number of small businesses that fail, 28 per cent fail in the first year; approximately 42 per cent fail after being in existence for five years and 78 per cent fail after being in existence for ten years. These figures are significant. I will detail the areas of small business failure.

In the thirteenth annual report of the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs on the operation of the Bankruptcy Act 1966, between 1 July 1979 and 30 June 1980, some interesting statistics are provided on the number of bankruptcies. In schedule 10 part A, it is stated that the total number of bankruptcies that occurred to the end of June 1980 was 2,530. The schedule analyses why those bankruptcies occurred. The highest number of small businesses that went bankrupt was 774. Those small businesses failed because of economic conditions affecting industry, including competition and price-cutting; credit restrictions; a fall in prices; increases in charges and other overhead expenses; the high cost of repairs and maintenance of equipment and changes in the character of business.

In the second area of bankruptcies, 609 small businesses went bankrupt due to a lack of business ability; business acumen; training or experience resulting in such matters as under-quoting mistakes in estimating; lack of supervision and failure to assess the potential of business or to detect misrepresentations. In other words, a lack of management skills. The third area of bankruptcies totals 609 and are due to a lack of sufficient initial working capital.

Those three areas of bankruptcy occurred in commerce, that is, in retail and service industries, in the building and construction industry and in the transport and storage industry—in other words, in the trucking operations. Those three areas are the predominant areas of bankruptcy. Those figures I have referred to highlight the immense problems that confront Victoria with small businesses and the inherent problems,
Another booklet I wish to refer to is a report by the staff of the School of Business at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education. The report states at page 37:

The problems facing small business in Tasmania, as perceived by the banking system can be summarized under the following headings.

- Capital
- Planning
- Management/Business ability
- Use of Advisers
- State of Economy

The article states further:

Problems under the heading of capital were probably the most important from the bankers point of view. They included such things as poor structure and capital, lack of initial equity capital, insufficient working capital, use of expensive working capital and the availability of security (or the lack of security) in obtaining capital.

Further, the bankers generally agreed that lack of business experience and management expertise affects many small businesses. Several banks commented on the state of the economy as being a cause of problems. Those problems have been created by the Government and I shall refer to those later.

The report stated also that accountants gave as reasons for business failure insufficient capital, both equity and working, no planning for tax, lack of control, poor costing and inattention to stocks. Those problems are relevant to Victorian businesses. I have tried to analyse the problem areas.

Small businesses are affected by actions of both the Federal and State Government and have to provide a massive amount of statistical data in returns to Government departments, which is a problem for small businesses employing perhaps three or four persons. In most cases, the returns need to be handled by the proprietor, which means that the time he spends on completing those returns is time out from running his business. Often the facts and figures needed for the returns involves guesswork. Whereas the larger companies would have a person employed specifically to ensure that returns to State and Federal Government are completed, the proprietors of small businesses must handle these themselves. The Australian Bureau of Statistics requires businesses to complete many statistical returns and taxation forms cause enormous problems to small businesses. The State Government requires many registrations and returns.

The fourth annual report of the Small Business Development Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1980 highlighted the amount of returns to be completed and Mr Nelson of the corporation has supplied me with further facts on the operation of a small business, using the example of a small milk bar. Licences required for a milk bar include: Shop registration licence from the Department of Labour and Industry, food shop licence from the local municipality, a poisons licence from the local health department if the business is selling disinfectants and cleaners, a milk bar licence, a licence to sell fireworks obtained from the explosives department and, if selling postage stamps, a licence for that purpose. Further, if a milk bar had a juke box or a television set operating, a licence must be obtained for those machines. If it has a pinball machine, a licence must be obtained from the local municipality. If a proprietor wishes to protect his business with the use of a guard dog, he must pay a dog registration fee also—that may appear funny to some honourable members, but it is an additional fee.

Can any honourable member suggest that small businesses do not have to apply for a multitude of licences and that it is not a problem for those businesses? It certainly is and the Government should try to cut down on the work it requires of small businesses in the numerous returns it must supply to both the Federal and State Governments. In addition, if the shop sells tobacco and cigarettes, it must have a retail tobacco licence. I shall be interested in the comments of the Minister whether all these returns are legitimate.

In the Government’s new directions policy for the 1980s, the Minister might be able to provide assistance from his staff in helping milk bar proprietors to fill in these forms so that they can pay more attention to their businesses, give better service to their customers, and can earn
more money, which is why they are in business. These forms are a great burden and cost on these small businesses and the situation should be analyzed thoroughly to determine what assistance can be provided.

The first part of the motion refers to the importance of small businesses to the Victorian economy. I have outlined problem areas for small businesses and I have proved that in some areas the Victorian economy is declining. The second part of the motion calls on the Government to provide a greater involvement of the Small Business Development Corporation in investigating matters of small businesses and to assist them in their further development.

Since its inception in 1976, the Small Business Development Corporation has enjoyed an enviable record in Victoria and Australia for its work. The National Party applauds the work done by the corporation. It is providing an outstanding service. I suggest to the House that many other services could be provided for assisting small businesses. At present, as detailed in its fourth annual report, the corporation has approximately 40 new inquiries a day from persons seeking assistance and it has eight counsellors to handle those inquiries. Since its inception the corporation has received 17,799 inquiries and in the last financial year it received 6,001 inquiries. That highlights the great call made on the corporation. Of the 6,001 inquiries, retail trade made 2,430 inquiries, manufacturing 1,014 and business services 1,006 inquiries.

The corporation is already involved in developing business education programmes, management expertise advice and counselling services to try to overcome the problems faced by small businesses. The report for the year ended 30 June 1980 is excellent and I suggest that any honourable member who has not read and examined it should do so and compare it with the three previous reports. In the area of education, it has developed package training programmes, audio-visual training, cassette tapes, free business workshops, and small business seminars throughout the State, together with many types of publications. The Small Business Development Corporation has been making an excellent contribution to the State of Victoria, but it has to go further. A lot more can be done if the corporation is given the expertise and further assistance, and if its functions were extended.

The Small Business Development Corporation Act deals with the functions of the corporation, which are: To establish an information and referral centre; to investigate the effects upon small business of policy of Government; to arrange training and educational programmes for small business; to publish and distribute information for the guidelines of small business; to arrange financial assistance to small business and to make recommendations to the corporation with respect to applications for Government guarantees under this Act. The National Party believes that the Act should be amended to extend the functions of the corporation and authorize it to investigate any matters—they need not necessarily relate to Government—affecting the interests of small business referred to it by the Minister. I hope the Minister will note these comments.

The Minister should investigate the problems of small business in purchasing supplies as compared with the big retailers who are able to purchase in volume. Criticisms have been made of General Motors-Holden's Ltd, but that is one company that distributes its motor vehicles on an equal discount basis to every motor dealer throughout Australia. If a small dealer, say, at Rutherglen, sells 4, 6 or 8 vehicles a month, that company is given the motor vehicles from General Motors-Holden's Ltd at the same discount as a large retailer selling between 200 and 400 General Motors products a month. General Motors-Holden's Ltd is setting a standard that should be followed by other areas of business, and the Small Business Development Corporation should assist small businesses to purchase supplies on a competitive basis.
Perhaps a small business tribunal should be set up. There is already the Small Claims Tribunal, and no one in this Parliament would be able to convince me that there are not consumers who are adept and prepared to take down a retailer if they can. I am not suggesting that all retailers are pure white, they are not. However, protection should be provided for people operating in small businesses and this is an area in which a small business tribunal could operate. I am sure that honourable members would be aware of areas where a small business tribunal could be utilized. I will be interested to hear the comments of the honourable member for Gippsland South later. He might disagree with many of my comments now that he is not a member of the National Party.

The third matter that the Minister could refer to is the Small Business Development Corporation is a reduction in the licensing requirements and the massive number of Government returns. Another function that could be added to the Small Business Development Corporation under the Act is for the corporation to make recommendations on matters that may be calculated to protect the interests of small businesses.

It has been suggested to me that clause 16 of the Act provides some avenue for the corporation, with the approval of the Minister to examine, to study and research areas to assist small business. The National Party believes the provision needs spelling out in greater detail. The functions of the corporation could be extended to pinpoint areas of concern, and to investigate those areas, where appropriate, and seek Government action.

People selling motor spirits throughout the State are faced with problems. There are great discrepancies in prices. People working in company-owned sites need protection from the large companies which, in many cases, use standover tactics against the operators of service stations on company-owned sites. The story is different for the business entrepreneur who owns his premises.

Mr Jasper

The Small Business Development Corporation could investigate and make recommendations on future Government policy in regard to shopping centres; whether there should be a further development of shopping centres in areas where there is an excess of business outlets already. By amending the Act to further extend the functions of the agency, the corporation would be in a position to further assist small business.

The State and Federal Governments should examine ways of assisting small business and this could be done by further extending pay-roll tax exemptions. The National Party supports the exemptions that have been made to date, but the Government should extend them further. This would be a great incentive to small business. A business employing eight employees has to pay pay-roll tax, and the amount paid in pay-roll tax is equivalent to one extra staff, yet this money is not providing any productivity.

The National Party also would like to see the establishment of a small business portfolio where one Minister handled small business specifically. In Canada this portfolio is handled by a single Minister and is called the Small Business Department. The Federal Government could provide assistance to small business by abolishing division 7 of the Federal Income Tax Assessment Act which compels a small businessman to pay both company tax and income tax. Small businesses and private companies are not allowed to retain their total profit. A public company can retain the profit made in a particular year, but small companies were allowed to retain 50 per cent; this was extended to 60 per cent by the Federal Government, and it is now 70 per cent. Even so, 30 per cent of the profit made by a company must be distributed to the shareholders. It should be left to the business to distribute funds as it sees fit or to retain 100 per cent of its profit in a particular year to enable it to expand. I am making the suggestion that there should be an exemption from the payment of provisional tax for those partnerships which are operating in
business. The deduction of superannuation contributions for self-employed persons should be further extended for income tax purposes and the Federal Government should be looking at stock revaluation for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers so that the provision can be fully indexed in line with appropriate national indexation policies.

These are areas which the Small Business Development Corporation could be investigating if the charter of that corporation was extended as I have suggested. Such a move would enable the corporation to give consideration to these other areas and if it could consider those further areas, from what has already been demonstrated in the operations of the Small Business Development Corporation to date and if there could be an extension of the staffing provisions, then this could be a valuable adjunct in getting Victoria on the go and assist in the development of the economy of Victoria.

The third part of the motion provides: that the Government take positive measures to ensure small businesses have greater access to financial assistance.

I submit that is a most vital area for consideration in this debate. The biggest problem facing small businesses is the lack of finance. There are many businesses which are under-capitalized. In part they are new businesses which do not have a track record to enable finance to be provided. Some of those businesses are very innovative and need special assistance. I suggest that the Government needs to be looking at the financial area and providing financial assistance to small businesses as that is the key to the future of small businesses in Victoria.

Last year the Act under which the State Bank operates was amended to enable the State Bank to provide further finance for small businesses. The provision was detailed fairly clearly in the Bill and indicated an extension into this area of activity so funds could be provided from the State Bank.

It is interesting to note that in the Sun of 18 November 1980 the Premier is reported as having told an international symposium on small business that legislation would be introduced into the Parliament to amend the State Savings Bank Act. The article further states:

The Act would be amended to:

- Make specific provision for financial assistance to small industrial business beginning or developing in Victoria.

- Give the bank specific power to provide advice and assistance on the efficient running of these business enterprises.

Although there has been an extension of the assistance that can be provided through the State Bank for small businesses, it does not go far enough. If the State Bank was given the same ability as other banks, to provide funds, there would still be a limitation on the funds that were being provided, mainly because the banks will not take risks that need to be accepted in the provision of funds for small businesses. Even if its charter were extended, the State Bank would still be operating under restrictions which are applicable to other banks.

Honourable members would be aware that loans from banks under $100,000 are provided at the overdraft interest rate of 12.5 per cent, but of course many banks are not interested in lending money at 12.5 per cent, and that is very restrictive on those people who are seeking loan funds.

I invite the Minister for Economic Development, who is interjecting, and the Leader of the Opposition, who is also interjecting, to listen further as they will have the same right as I have to make a contribution to the debate. In my view the provision of finance is the crux of the whole debate. I suggest to the Minister for Economic Development that if he can put into practice some of the suggestions that have been made, small business would be most appreciative. Honourable members will be watching with interest to see how the Government's new directions for the eighties policy comes into operation and I hope there will be action from the Minister for Economic Development. If honourable members accept the legislation that was passed by the House yesterday in relation to the economic development portfolio, then I am afraid of what will
Small Businesses Assistance

occur in the future. However, I hope honourable members will see something better achieved than what occurred yesterday.

The need for finance is important and this is highlighted in the 1980 report from the Small Business Development Corporation which revealed that it had received 3732 inquiries for finance. The report further revealed that $40 million per annum was required to provide financial assistance to small businesses throughout Australia—I presume it is Australia-wide.

The interesting part is that the Small Business Development Corporation has been restricted in the provision of funds to small businesses. The Treasurer has provided some guarantees but the report indicates that in the last financial year, only fifteen applications totalling $790,000 were approved for financial assistance. It is interesting to note that out of 3732 inquiries which had indicated a need for financial assistance, only fifteen applicants had received that financial assistance. That is an area that needs to be examined as it is an area where further financial assistance is required.

What is required is the provision of funds through the banking system or through Government guarantees. There is also a need to provide venture capital or what I call risk capital. This is a possible method by which the Government could provide finance for small businesses.

There are two methods of providing finance. Either the Government can consider the granting of loans or it can consider equity holding. Some people would be opposed to that but in England the Industrial and Commerce Finance Corporation has successfully operated that system for many years. That corporation provides funds, not only by means of loans but by equity holding. In other words, the corporation provides up to 25 per cent of the capital cost with the provision that the business pay it back. I am told that has been most profitable, for the English corporation, in the provision of finance for small businesses.

Mr Dunstan—It has been reduced in the past six months.

Mr Jasper—I have been speaking about what occurs in England, and I do not think the honourable member would be aware of what I am referring to. I am suggesting that the Government should be investigating risk capital or venture capital funding in Victoria. There is no financial institution in Australia which provides funds without some sort of equity or guarantee. What is probably needed is the provision of loan funds in the form of risk capital, but I suggest that consideration should also be given to equity holding.

The Meyers inquiry into technological change stressed the need for venture capital for innovative small businesses and that seems to be the area for which more finance could be provided.

In Victoria’s Strategy for the Eighties—Jobs from Growth, it has been mentioned that small business should be assisted. Private enterprise needs a stimulus, particularly small businesses. Further steps need to be taken to assist small businesses so they can move forward.

I commend the motion to honourable members. I have indicated many positive steps which could be taken and which would help economic growth in Victoria, particularly the last part of the motion which refers to the provision of finance for small businesses which experience difficulty in obtaining financial assistance in the present economic climate.

Mr Wilkes (Leader of the Opposition)—The Labor Party supports the motion moved by the honourable member for Murray Valley. If I were to move an amendment to strengthen the motion, I would merely suggest that the word “immediate” should be inserted after “the Government take positive measures”, but I assume that, if the motion is carried, the measures will be undertaken immediately.

The motion was very similar to the policy which was expounded by the Labor Party in its policy initiative prior to the last State election. The motion
is very much akin in every respect to the proposition advanced by the Labor Party on that occasion.

An examination of small businesses in Victoria suggests that about 183,000 small businesses are employing fewer than 100 employees. Those small businesses provide employment for 61 per cent of workers employed in private enterprise in this State.

Mr Dunstan—It is nearer 80 per cent.

Mr WILKES—I queried the figure, as does the honourable member for Dromana, but I am reliably informed that it represents about 61 per cent. There has been a decline in manufacturing industry in this State over the past four or five years. Given those figures, the Victorian Government’s allocation of $551,000 to the Small Business Development Corporation last year amounts to less than $3 for each small business in this State, so that it was not a significant contribution to small business.

Mr I. W. Smith—It keeps them small!

Mr WILKES—The Minister remarks that it keeps them small. I point out to him that small businesses do not always want to remain small but they are governed by a whole range of factors. Because of their size, they do not have the normal range of management and expertise that is available to larger businesses. The main cause of 90 per cent of small business failures in Victoria has been identified as lack of managerial experience. Seventy per cent of those small businesses had failed within five years of being established, and that failure was attributed in many instances to lack of managerial experience.

The Victorian Chamber of Manufactures gives an outstanding service to small business in Victoria through its service corps of retired executives. The Government should provide more support to that organization to enable it to expand that role. When talking about small business, one must talk about industry or manufacturing industry in general. The problems that confront manufacturing industry are usually the same problems that confront small business. As well as the traditional market pressures on industry in general, industry is facing a challenge in areas of markets and technology and in increasing export competition. For instance, in the past decade, exports from ASEAN countries to Australia have increased at double the rate that their exports as a whole have increased. The impact of that competition has been highlighted by a survey of member companies of the Metal Trades Industry Association which sought to establish precisely what restructuring was going on in Australian industry and how widespread that restructuring was.

The results of that survey were staggering. Of the companies involved in some restructuring, 23 per cent had reduced their product range; 22 per cent had begun importing parts or components; 21 per cent had begun importing the finished product; 14 per cent had diversified into non-manufacturing industries; a further 14 per cent had engaged in mergers and takeovers; 10 per cent had set up some degree of off-shore production. In other words, a massive 67 per cent of the restructuring involved moving out of the Australian manufacturing industry in some form or another. No one could feel confident of Victoria’s future industrial base in the face of those figures.

There is a need to describe similar sorts of problems being suffered by other industries such as the building and construction industry. I should have thought that the art is not to describe the problems but to develop solutions. I listened intently to the honourable member for Murray Valley who offered the House some solutions that could be taken up by the Government. The solutions he proposed would ease some of the restructuring problems in industry which must affect small business in the long term.

In developing solutions for the problems within Victoria, the Opposition would see as an urgent priority the need to create more jobs, in conjunction with the primary sector. The Minister
in charge of the area of jobs is at the table; I do not doubt that that would be his objective. The quickest and most effective way of creating jobs is through direct stimulus to the building and construction industry which is the major industry in Victoria today, and it needs that type of stimulus. The flow-on from any improvement in the building construction and manufacturing industry affects directly and indirectly a host of other industries. Government contracts, if let directly to the private sector, reap about five or six times the benefit of the actual amount spent within that sector. The multiplying effect of this benefit will create jobs in the construction industry and will also add a demand in a host of other industries that are also affected. This stimulus can be provided simply by more efficient use of existing State resources and the use of State reserves. That is something about which much has been said in this Parliament.

No business which does not want to see itself taken over or suffer a steady decline in its share prices would operate with the sorts of reserves with which many Victorian instrumentalities are obliged to operate. It is pointless to allow Victoria's financial reserves to depreciate to the extent that they have depreciated in many cases—they are now low interest deposits—while that stimulation is so urgently needed to boost industry.

The tight financial management of statutory authorities and departments that exists in Victoria should be the subject of examination by the Government to ascertain the areas in which that availability of finance and credit can be used for the purpose we are debating this afternoon.

The disincentives to employ which exist in some areas must also be removed and an investigation should be conducted of the present system whereby one extra employee is sufficient to bring an employer into the pay-roll tax net. Honourable members have said a lot about that. At a meeting with myself and the Leader of the National Party, the Premier discussed ways and means of overcoming that.

It is a disincentive and it will continue to be a disincentive. Allowing an employer to hire one extra staff member without altering his pay-roll tax exemption status would provide the sort of incentive to employment that Victoria needs and it would not affect Government revenue in any way.

Allied with all of those changes is the need to examine closely the whole Victorian tax structure. Those laws are riddled with anomalies and it is time that a review of the value, the purpose and the effect of Victorian taxes was undertaken. Such a review ought to be carried out as a matter of urgency.

The general approach to the debate will benefit the entire community. However, there is obviously a need for special measures to assist specific sections of secondary industry in this State. Small business, as the motion suggests, is one of those sectors. According to the Small Business Development Corporation, a very high percentage of small business failures are caused by factors which relate directly and, in some cases, indirectly to inexperience, and most of the remainder are associated with lack of capital.

We, as a party, regard it as a matter of high priority to reduce the colossal economic waste which arises from this enormous failure rate in small business in Victoria. I have been deeply impressed by the small business counselling services which the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures makes available to its corps of retired executives. It would be appropriate to make arrangements so that an expansion scheme could enhance the role and work of the Small Business Development Corporation. I am bound to say that I am less impressed generally with the level of enterprise which banks bring to meeting the capital requirements of small business. A Victorian Labor Government would be keen to provide small business with the equity and venture capital that is required, not only to sustain the operations of small businesses but also to encourage them to expand their operations.

Mr Wilkes
As suggested by the honourable member for Murray Valley, the Small Business Development Corporation should have direct funding powers. There is no doubt about that. We would see it as a responsibility to take those steps in the firm conviction that the economic health of Victoria depends largely, if not entirely, on small businesses which account for such a large part of the commercial activities of Victoria and which certainly provide the job opportunities in this State.

The Labor Party believes small business is of great significance for the whole of the Victorian economy. Unfortunately, too often the Government has ignored some of the basic needs of small business. It prefers to give millions of dollars in subsidies and handouts to large trans-national corporations rather than support the independent small business enterprise on which this State so largely depends. For instance, the Jackson committee on manufacturing industry said that small firms provide a counter need to the growing concentration of power within a few increasingly powerful and larger firms. That is becoming patently obvious. It is important that small business is sustained in its struggle for survival against these large companies because approximately 95 per cent of all enterprises are small businesses, and more than 40 per cent of the work force is employed in those small businesses. It was as high as 61 per cent and it ranges between 40 and 60 per cent, depending on how small business is classified in this State.

Mr Dixon—How many can afford to work a 35-hour week?

Mr WILKES—The Minister poses a good question. Honourable members know that his Government is directly opposed to any reduction in working hours. The agreements reached by the trade union movement and certain industries in this State on productivity bargaining will in fact prevail in the not-too-distant future.

Evidence of the low priority the Government gives to small business is revealed by the pathetic $551,000 allocated to the Small Business Development Corporation in the last Budget. The Government has refused to seriously address its mind to the problems of small business beyond that allocation.

Mr Jasper—Money does not cure everything.

Mr WILKES—Of course it does not, but it makes it a lot easier for small businesses which are enterprising enough to want the availability of additional capital to prevent a failure rate that is proportionally high in the State.

There should be a comprehensive and all-embracing inquiry into small business in Victoria. Until now there has not been that sort of inquiry other than the references made by the Jackson committee. There are obvious areas that need to be updated. We need to be aware of the problems, technological or otherwise, that exist in the small business sector of our industrial community. The need exists for co-operation, not only of the manufacturing industry itself and its organizations, but also of the trade union movement, and indeed, the Government. We believe that sort of inquiry should include the expansion of the role of the Small Business Development Corporation, and the provision of research capacity for the corporation.

There is a serious lack of research, data and statistics concerned with small business in Victoria. It is difficult to obtain concise information on small business development and the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures, the Employers Federation and the Chamber of Commerce all agree that although there are individual statistics, there are few collective statistics on the development of small businesses. Detailed information on a State and regional level is needed to allow the Small Business Development Corporation to join with
the relevant business associations and groups in identifying the short or long term needs and problems of small businesses. Also, the establishment by the Small Business Development Corporation in co-operation with small business associations of regional-based subsidized counselling and managerial support services is needed.

The discussions I have had with small businesses in metropolitan Melbourne and country Victoria, all suggest that if they have that sort of availability of expertise it makes it a lot easier for them and reduces the risk factor associated with their particular operation. The establishment of a pool of managerial staff located in each regional office to service small business in that region is essential. Review by the Small Business Development Corporation of existing State Government legislation affecting small businesses is long overdue.

The resolution of the financial problems of small businesses by providing equity and venture capital is something the Government should seriously consider if it wants its new directions policy to work in any way. I am sure the Minister will be anxious to provide the equity and venture capital to small business that is badly needed. If the role of the Small Business Development Corporation is to be expanded to include the co-ordination of small businesses, education and training are absolutely essential. The selective abolition of pay-roll tax and other State taxes would assist small businesses. We mouth a lot of platitudes about the abolition of pay-roll tax but until the revenue the State receives from pay-roll tax can be subsidized, the possibility of pay-roll tax being abolished is most unlikely.

Mr Dixon—What do you suggest.

Mr WILKES—We have suggested alternatives, as has the Premier, whose alternatives are very akin to ours. On the other hand, we believe it may be impracticable to abolish pay-roll tax because of the extent of the revenue to the Victorian Government but it is not impracticable or impossible to subsidize pay-roll tax to small businesses in certain directions.

The selective Government assistance with workers compensation payments and superannuation schemes is another way in which small business can be helped. These are only some of the questions to which the Government should address itself as a matter of urgency.

The Opposition believes small business in this State is vital. The Government should be aware that some of its intentions as expressed in proposed labour and industry and other types of legislation give little or no encouragement to small business in Victoria. I refer to the Government’s intention to play around with shop trading hours. Many people operating small businesses in Victoria dread the thought of any alteration being made to trading hours by the Government. I shall read a letter that was sent to the honourable member for Reservoir by the chamber of commerce in the East Boundary shopping centre in East Boundary Road, Bentleigh. That is a group of small businesses that has expressed concern about the intention of the Government and the two new directions Ministers, and they ought to heed what the chamber of commerce in that area said. The letter states:

We are appalled to hear that a so-called Government elected by the people, for the people, would even consider opening the door to something that would eventually lead to seven days a week trading, without having asked the people (i.e. referendum) what they want. After all, we are meant to live in a democratic society, aren’t we?

What has happened to the statement made on the 10th November, 1980, by the Minister for Labour and Industry pertaining that there would be no general extension of Victorian trading hours on Saturday and Sunday.

We believe from earlier correspondence between the VCCI and the Honourable R. J. Hamer that:

1. the Amendment Bill has been introduced less than 5 months after your Government’s policy statement on 10 November, 1980. That referred to extended shopping trading hours.
2. We hope that your Government realizes the stress and hardships that any extension of trading hours might cause to small retailers, their families and their employees.
Because, as you must see, these extensions will cause a certain rise in prices therefore causing the small retailer to find ways of cutting overheads, such as:
1. staff cutbacks, which leads to even higher unemployment.

If I may digress for a moment, in the United States of America, where monopoly business has taken over from small business following the extension of open hours trading, small businesses have been affected to the extent that thousands of employees have lost their jobs. It is to the credit of the East Bentleigh Chamber of Commerce that it is conscious of the need for the Government to take into consideration, if it is considering any change in trading hours, the effect of that change on the workforce and the possible bankruptcy that would occur in the future, because, as it is further stated in the letter:

...we will not be able to compete with the monopoly chain stores.

One only has to look at the extenuating circumstances caused by the 7 day a week trading in Britain and America. We certainly do not want Australia to follow in their footsteps.

We hope that you will seriously consider the consequences of the matter under discussion at the moment as it would be detrimental not only to the small businesses but to the whole of Australia.

That is a general view that has been proposed by many people who are interested in the direction and furtherance of small business in Victoria. I hope the two Ministers concerned with new directions in the field of labour and industry understand that any change in trading hours to allow monopoly traders in this State—and that is exactly what they are—to take over will seriously affect the small business which the Government purports to support.

Not only is it affecting small business, given the high failure rate of small businesses in Victoria, but it is also seriously affecting the employment rate. If those warnings from the various chambers of commerce, the people who are directly responsible for trading activities in local areas, are not heeded, the Government will be on a collision course and headed for disaster.

The motion moved by the honourable member for Murray Valley has given the Parliament and the House an opportunity of discussing some of the problems associated with small business. It is a pity that the debate could not have been extended under a different set of circumstances from those that are controlled by the Sessional Orders imposed on the Parliament by the Government, and that a full and more frank disclosure could not be made of how members of the Government view the problems of small business and some of the questions posed by the honourable member for Murray Valley and myself. This will not be the case, because honourable members have become accustomed to proposing measures to the Government over which in the past it has shown little concern.

I only hope, because of the nature of the problem and its relationship to the future development of Australia which should and does concern the new Minister for Economic Development, and because of the importance of small business, the effect it has on the community economy and the growth and productivity of Victoria, that the Government will examine some of the propositions that have been advanced in the debate in the interests of the future development of Victoria.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development)—The honourable member for Murray Valley has given the House an opportunity of discussing the Government's role in small business, which is an increasingly important role. Victoria has approximately 25 per cent of the small businesses of the nation, and they offer a tremendously wide and diverse range of opportunities. One of the good things about this State is its assets, from oil, natural gas, brown coal and other minerals to the agricultural assets which are unsurpassed anywhere else in Australia, and the manufacturing and service industries, where one finds a uniquely wide opportunity for the enterprising individual to start himself off, together with others, if need be, in a small busi-
ness venture. As a result, an amazing number of small businesses are commenced each financial year.

It is not surprising in our society that some of those businesses do not succeed. It is important to try to understand that whatever the Government did, there is no way that the majority of those failures could be rescued. Undoubtedly, as shown by the work done by the Small Business Development Corporation, many of those small businesses would be successful if a higher degree of skill were exercised by management and if that were supported by a greater access to money. They are the points to which the honourable member for Murray Valley and the Leader of the Opposition addressed themselves, and to which I shall also address myself later.

Once small business is established and starts to get involved in the web of trade unionism and Government, it runs into some of the classic difficulties that this country seems to specialize in which are more adverse than those in many other Western countries with which one may be familiar and in which small business survives and thrives.

One of the greatest single factors to affect the expansion, profitability and success of small business occurred during the Whitlam era when pressures were brought to bear on all types of businesses, particularly small businesses. Generally speaking, they did not have the capacity to pass on the tremendous escalation in costs caused by additional holidays combined with wage hikes, holiday pay loadings and all those sorts of things which perhaps gave stimulus to the employee, but caused enormous stress in many small businesses.

In the wake of that came classic problems of workers compensation which, of course, reflect the wages paid in the first place and the amount of claims in the second place.

The Government is perfectly aware of the effect of workers compensation but over the period and in the wake of Whitlamism there were the problems I have just mentioned. Tremendous strains were placed on existing small businesses which caused them, in many instances—particularly where higher risk factors were involved—to reduce their activities. For example, a plumber employing staff: Plumbers, generally speaking, are well paid and in an industry which seems to involve a risk element so far as workers compensation is concerned. The combined factors of additional wage increases and holiday pay, together with subsequent workers compensation problems caused an enormous amount of small businesses in the building and building service industries to reduce their activities with the consequent effect that that had on employment generally. It also centralizes some of the workforce in the larger business industries and results in the importation of more competitive goods from overseas.

One of the classic areas of success of this Government has been in the area of one of the original small businesses—agriculture. Over the lean times of the 1970s this Government spent more than any other State Government on successfully building up technology for the farming community. Victoria's farming community produces about one-third of the nation's food and fibre and in turn the food and fibre exported for the nation accounts for about 47 per cent of the total export earnings.

This sort of technology was stacked up and is now available to the farming community. It is provided at great expense to the taxpayer but subsequently to the advantage of the nation. It provides these primary producers with enormous technological backup which will continue to make our dairy industry retain its status as equal to the world's most efficient dairy industry, our grain producers ahead of any in the world in efficiency, and the sheep and wool industry ahead of anywhere in the world in efficiency.

If we are looking to increase the living standards of our society and at the same time reduce the hours of work of our people, there is only one way that we can be competitive in the world environment in which we trade; that is, by backing our man-
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power with increased trading in the hands of our colleague, the Minister for Employment and Training, and to back that trained manpower with more money.

It is there we run into the philosophical conflict of the extent to which the private sector provides the capital and the extent to which the public sector provides this capital. But given this vast quantity of small business, another classic area of Government interference, which would cause even the most Socialistically inclined person to hesitate about, is in the area of licensing and red tape.

In the well publicized "phone in" campaign which this Government instigated, many comments were received. I give the example of a sawmiller employing 43 people and, together with his son, running the sawmill. This man had to deal with eighteen different Government and semi-Government agencies which left in their wake forms to be filled in and work to be undertaken in some shape or form to the point where the principal of this small firm spent his entire working life servicing the agencies at the different levels of Government and had to leave his son to run the sawmill for a profit.

Another example is an abattoir which if registered for an export licence must deal with 25 different Government and semi-Government agencies. The burden of this sort of bureaucratic interference is not only time consuming but much worse than that, it has a dampening effect on the individual's enthusiasm and, in effect, puts the moz and kybosh on the individual so that he loses initiative and the urge to gain momentum in small business. That is the most critical problem that small business faces.

Government at three levels has to address itself to getting out of the way of small business and removing the enormous burden with all of its commensurate difficulties on all businesses, particularly businesses without the benefit of a corporate structure to service the requests of Government. The classic move in Australia is to say, "I am here from the Government—I am here to help you". How often does the businessman hear those words and his smile turns to gritted teeth and hours of wasted time.

The whole notion of new directions in the Ministry, for which I am responsible, is to come to grips with the problems I have outlined and to ensure that the Government takes action in order to overcome those problems. Fortunately, we have already taken such an initiative in the area of assisting business. I have already mentioned the establishment of the Small Business Development Corporation. For some time it has been providing a valuable and much needed service in counselling and advice. It never ceases to amaze me that an average of 40 calls a day are received by that organization from people who not only need advice but who when they receive it actually prosper.

There is no doubt that this service needs to be not only better promoted and publicized but also expanded and made more readily available. The people with expertise in the Small Business Development Corporation can then spread themselves more adequately around the State and address themselves to the need which is so clearly demonstrated to be in existence by the 40 calls a day they receive with the minimum publicity given to the fact that the organization exists.

The corporation also provides a tremendous amount of general information and for the past couple of months it has built up a bank of the information and resources that are needed by business, for example, in general management, financial control, marketing, the law, Government, education and training, trade associations and so on. The corporation makes this information available in the area of training and education and this will certainly complement what my colleague, the Minister for Employment and Training, is doing in this area.

Management skills and business know-how have consistently been some of the main reasons for the failure of...
small businesses, and the corporation has been very active in developing a training programme specifically designed to meet the needs of small businesses.

For example, the corporation and the National Training Council have produced a packaged training programme for planning and starting a new business, and that programme is now being made available through technical colleges and trade associations. Honourable members will be able to see from that how the corporation can obviously further extend its operations.

The corporation is continuing to work closely with both State and Commonwealth education authorities to improve the training available for people running small businesses. This information and educational programme will continue to be expanded. For example, just this week the chairman of the corporation, Mr Eugene Falk, and I, prepared the first series of radio segments on hints for small business operators. The segments will be aired by Fox FM radio station as a community service announcement. That is one small example of the many initiatives which the corporation will be taking in the immediate future.

It has been found that finance is one of the problems confronted by small business operators and in that respect the corporation, with approval from the Treasurer, has a guarantee programme which has enabled the provision of loans totalling nearly $3 million to be made to small business operators in this State since July 1979.

Finance is of major concern to the corporation and included in a submission to the Campbell inquiry into this country's financial institutions is a recommendation on improving access to financial assistance for small business operators. The recommendation that was made was that a national small business development corporation be established by the Commonwealth with private sector equity. Certainly it would be open to debate whether it would be conducted on a central, national basis, which the corporation thinks it should be or whether there would be agencies established in the States similar to the manner in which rural finance is made available to the farming community.

Mr Miller—More bureaucracy and more costs.

Mr I. W. Smith—And also more money. From my experience in representing a rural electorate, I have not met anybody who has received finance through the Rural Finance Commission and who has objected to that. On the contrary, they have always wanted more and, in my experience, and in the experience of the honourable member for Polwarth who has had a long experience in this area, they are always most grateful for that finance.

It is agreed that more finance should be injected into the area of small business and that appears to be a continuing need. It is the view of the corporation that the Federal Government, together with the States, should consider the problems confronting these industries as there is scope for tremendous improvement to be made in the services provided by the Government without creating any additional red tape.

While the community is still waiting recommendations from the Campbell inquiry, this Government is looking at ways of how it can further assist small businesses. A recent example is the concept of preferred industries which is contained in the Victorian Economic Development Corporation Bill, which is currently before the Parliament. Previously finance was available only to decentralized industries, but it is proposed that finance will be available to those industries which are export orientated or are high technology industries, and companies involved in those areas of activity will be able to avail themselves of these funds when the legislation is passed.

The honourable member for Murray Valley has provided an opportunity for honourable members to really join together because there can be no disagreement between the parties about recognition of the role played by small business in our society. There can also be no disagreement about the need for
additional assistance, and these needs are being met by the provision of advice and financial assistance through the Small Business Development Corporation.

The Government sees no problem in agreeing to the basic thrust of the motion, but I do have an amendment to which I will now address myself. The amendment deals with the fact that Government policy is to be very heavily involved in this field.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Wilton)—I suggest to the Minister for Economic Development that he move his amendment before he discusses its ramifications.

Mr I. W. SMITH—I move:

That the words “provide greater involvement by the Small Business Development Corporation in investigating matters of small business in Victoria by developing” be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words “continue to provide greater involvement by the Small Business Development Corporation in investigating matters of small business in Victoria by continuing to develop”.

The ACTING SPEAKER—Is the amendment seconded?

Mr BIRRELL (Geelong West)—I second the amendment.

The ACTING SPEAKER—I advise the House that honourable members speaking from this point on will be speaking to both the motion and the amendment.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, the amendment moved by the Minister for Economic Development is clearly designed to add the word “continue” in two places in the motion. I wonder whether that is a legitimate amendment which can be accepted by the Chair in the circumstances.

The ACTING SPEAKER—On the point of order raised by the Deputy Leader of the National Party, the amendment is somewhat unusual inasmuch as it is removing some words and immediately replacing those same words. However, in replacing those same words there are additional words and the Chair is assuming that the Minister for Economic Development is doing it this way to avoid the need to move two amendments as he would have to if he wanted to insert the word “continue” in two places. So far as I am aware there is no Standing Order which prevents the Minister for Economic Development from presenting his amendment in this way.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development)—Mr Acting Speaker, your assessment of my motive is entirely correct and the reason for doing it this way is that a casual observer may be led to believe that the Government was doing nothing for small business. Only yesterday I was reminded by the Leader of the National Party of the tremendous work that the Government was doing for decentralized industry, but that work needs to be improved and built upon.

Mr Ross-Edwards—You are destroying all the good we are trying to achieve.

Mr I. W. SMITH—The Government would not destroy that. Moving these additional words to the motion recognizes the work the Government has already been doing. The purpose of the motion is to urge the Government to do more and no one could dispute that. However, the whole purpose of the Government’s new directions policy is to define more clearly the role in this area for firms and businesses and try to encourage a greater impetus of business in the State for the purpose of providing jobs from growth.

Amongst other things, it is part of my responsibility to come to grips with what can be done within the means available to the State Government in assisting small business. I am carrying out a careful review of the functions that we have already undertaken and the needs of small business so that, in the not too distant future, the Government can complement what it has already been doing by giving additional assistance in the area of small business. To that extent, the Government commends the motion with the amendment.
It is disturbing to me that the Minister put forward such nonsense in his speech. The honourable member for Murray Valley was suggesting that the Government should provide increased involvement by the Small Business Development Corporation in investigating matters concerning small business in Victoria. The Minister has moved an amendment suggesting that the Government should provide for greater involvement by the corporation. That is a play of words and it is disappointing that the Minister, who has been given the major task of trying to provide unity, progress and expansion in the business community, particularly small business, should speak like that.

He has had a degree of co-operation from the National Party to assist him, and his amendment is just an exercise in words. I do not want to take up the time of people who want to make a contribution to the debate, but I am disappointed with the efforts of the Minister. I was disappointed last night because the Minister did not involve his staff and legal advisers who could have given him help, support and encouragement. He is being his usual stubborn and difficult self and carrying on with a play of words.

Mr REMINGTON (Melbourne)—The Opposition clearly rejects the amendment moved by the Government. It trivializes an important debate in this House and a motion which I thought all parties would have supported. It is absolute nonsense for the Minister to try to upstage the National Party with a play on words and take some verbal advantage out of the matter. The Minister seeks to achieve some status for the Government record. I shall seek leave of the House to incorporate a document on small business, which provides interesting figures. The Opposition rejects the Minister's amendment. One should consider the state of the Victorian economy at March 1981, and the annual percentage changes in the economy. The Minister has told the House that Victoria has had greater successes in small business.

Mr Spyker—Where?

Mr REMINGTON—in words. He has had a bad week and I expect to castigate him because he dropped some vital words that were contained in a Bill last night. That is gross inefficiency. The Minister was trying to prove that the Government has a wonderful record of achievement in small business. I shall deal with statistics showing what has happened in this State.

When one considers the total number of bankruptcies, one becomes aware that a vast number of small businessmen and businesswomen throughout the State have suffered the tragedy, loss and trauma, of bankruptcy. The Minister seeks to take advantage of that situation. In the whole of Australia, bankruptcies increased by 29.1 per cent. Bankruptcies in New South Wales increased by 12.2 per cent and in Victoria, with the Minister saying the Government has had wonderful successes and achievements in small business, bankruptcies increased by 61.7 per cent. The Minister encouraged the House to accept a trivial amendment that was a play on words. I have a document headed, "State of the Victorian Economy", which deals with all the downturns in commerce and business in this State.

Mr Dixon—What about dealing with the gross domestic product in Victoria?

Mr REMINGTON—the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation is a pseudo-economist. Honourable members would have expected to hear no more from him after his great debacle with the Olympic Games when the great economist said that it would cost $800 million, while his counterparts, the Fraserites in Canberra—I do not know whether the Minister is a Peacockite or a Fraserite—said it would cost about $1700 million. The Minister ought to stick to jogging and stay out of the field of economics.

I quote from a document produced from information supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Bureau of Consumer Affairs and the Housing Industry Association which indicates a downturn of business activity throughout the State that is unparalleled in the
nation and which indicates a worse situation in Victoria than in any other State of Australia. I seek leave to have the statistics incorporated in Hansard. Leave was granted, and the document was as follows:

STATE OF THE VICTORIAN ECONOMY

March 1981

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE CHANGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Indicator</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Year ended</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Persons</td>
<td>No.</td>
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<td>Unemployed Persons</td>
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<td>Overtime per Employee</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>31/12</td>
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<td>+7.2</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
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<td>Total Bankruptcies</td>
<td>No.</td>
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<td>+29.1</td>
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<td>Unpaid Bankruptcy Debts</td>
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<td>Dwellings Commenced</td>
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<td>Dwellings Completed</td>
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<td>+10.4</td>
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<td>Dwellings Under Construction</td>
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<td>Dwellings Approved</td>
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<td>Dwellings Financed</td>
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<td>House Building Firms</td>
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<td>Building and Construction Bankruptcies</td>
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<td>Retail Sales</td>
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<td>31/12</td>
<td>+7.9</td>
<td>+10.9</td>
<td>+1.3</td>
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* Includes A.C.T.


Mr REMINGTON—Notwithstanding difficulties that confront small businesses in Australia, I make it perfectly clear that the Opposition has the utmost respect and admiration for the magnificent contribution made to the economy and the well-being of society by small businesses. It is the last bulkhead of control of ownership of Australia's resources. The Industrial Assistance Commission report of two years ago shows a very sorry picture in this country.

The figures relate to a better situation than which exists today. They relate to 1975-76 and indicate that the ten largest firms controlled 100 per cent of tobacco product sales; 96 per cent of margarine, oil and fat sales; 96 per cent of confectionery and cocoa sales; 95 per cent of paint sales; 96 per cent of petroleum products and coal sales; 97 per cent of glass and glass product sales; and 95 per cent of rubber product sales. In essence, that leaves small business in Australia with only a small share of the market. It is certainly the highly profitable share of the market that these large ten conglomerates control.

Notwithstanding that, small businesses account for 40 per cent of Australia's factory production. When one considers the monitoring control by the ten largest firms in the area of commerce and retail sales, it is almost incredible that small business could nonetheless account for that percentage of Australia's factory production. The ten largest firms control 75 per cent of retail sales. Nine out of ten businesses are small businesses and small business provides up to 50 per cent of employment in the nation. That is an incredible record.

Small business is of significance to the Australian economy and provides the counterweight to the growing concentration of power within a few increasingly powerful large firms. If any area of Australian production has been neglected, it is certainly small business.
They are not represented by the Fraserites of Canberra. They are certainly not represented by the Hamers of this State. They are a neglected area that is suffering immensely. One of the greatest tragedies confronting small business, which must dissuade many people from being involved in small business, is its tragic failure rate. It is true that 26 per cent of all small businesses fail in their first year and, of the balance, in five years 65 per cent of all small businesses fail.

Today many honourable members have spoken of the problems of small business in obtaining finance. I suppose they look very hard at the private banking system in that regard but the problem is much greater than the mere provision of finance because what prudent person would make loans when there is a 65 per cent risk rate that the money will not be returned. There is a great reluctance by money lenders to venture money into small business because of the failure rate. It is not simply that small businesses need more capital.

I have had more than 30 years' experience with small businesses. I suppose 90 per cent of my business activities was not spent dealing with large business corporations but with small business people. There is certainly no 40-hour week for small business and no four weeks' leave with pay. That is a reality of life. Governments which purported to be free enterprise orientated Governments should be more concerned and deliver more meaningful assistance to small business. Small business people develop skills, whether as turners or fitters, in a milk bar or in whatever field of endeavour of small business they have experience, but in my experience they do not have the proper accounting skills, they do not understand cash flows, they do not understand the means by which a small business succeeds or fails. They certainly work hard. They do not know how to collect their debts because there is no training. It is all right for the pharmacist from Frankston to be concerned. As a dispenser of those commodities that pharmacists sell he was fortunate to have had a professional education before he went into that area. However, many people who go into small business in this State and throughout Australia have not had the benefit of an education which will better equip them to handle small business and help to reduce the tragic failure rate of 65 per cent of small businesses in the first five years.

Proper advice should be given to people who enter into a small business. Central resources should be made available to small businesses where their books can be checked for a more reasonable and efficient rate than the average small businessman has to pay to the local accountant in his area. The average small businessman does not know what a 40-hour week or four weeks paid leave is. We acknowledge that, but if he is given proper assistance he will have a much greater chance of succeeding and being rewarded for the additional contribution he makes to his own small industry, individually and collectively, and to Australia.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, establishments with less than 100 personnel constitute 90 per cent of all business establishments. They also provide 56 per cent of Australia's private sector employment. I am quoting from a document which was used in a recent Federal election. It was published by the Victorian Development Corporation. It states that 65 per cent of the retailing work force is employed in establishments with fewer than 50 employees. More than 40 per cent of factory production comes from small factories. Over 75 per cent of total Australian retail sales is contributed by stores with an annual turnover of below $500 000.

Today I went to the Small Business Development Corporation seeking up-to-date statistics on how businesses are progressing in the State. I was told that the corporation did not have those statistics available to it. How can the Small Business Development Corporation operate to its optimum if it does not have proper statistical resources available to it. I congratulate the Gov-

Mr Remington
ernment on its support for the Small Business Development Corporation. We are not being stupid. We recognize the role that the corporation has played. We are not here simply to attack the Government on every single item, but we certainly want a much better performance from the Government rather than a rhetorical performance.

We have a personal and perhaps almost a selfish interest in wanting the new Minister to succeed. We want the economy to be on the upturn when we take control of the Treasury benches next May. We do not want to take over the small business sector of this State with an ever-increasing percentage of bankruptcies. We want the State to flourish because we are certainly destined to be the Government. It does not matter who wins in Canberra, the Fraserites or the Peacockites, the Hamer Government in this State is destined for opposition. In fact, its future lies in opposition because it wants to be defeated and it will then go through the proper processes and produce some reasonable candidates who may more effectively represent the Liberal Party in Opposition and in that indirect way be of greater service to Victoria.

Another reason we are strong supporters of the small business sector of Australia is because we recognize that 98 per cent of all small businesses in this country are owned and controlled by Australians. The profit they make from their small business enterprises is returned to the nation itself. The small business people in the suburbs, the country towns, or the big cities, for that matter, make enormous contributions to the infrastructure of running the suburban and social systems. It is those people who work for the general welfare of the country towns and cities, unlike the people who hold executive positions in the vast multi-national corporations who are seeking escalation of their promotion, and are interested wholly and solely in their own corporation. The executives in a big foreign company do not have the same interest and concern for the welfare and well-being of the areas which they serve.

I gave the percentage figures for the small businesses and said that it was a counter balance of the foreign domination in Australian industry. Foreign corporations own 84 per cent of the value added of Australia's brown coal, crude oil and natural gas. They control 75 per cent of our silver, lead and zinc, and 62 per cent of our mineral sands.

Overseas corporations control industry such as petroleum refining motor vehicles and tobacco products. They own 35 per cent of our financial corporations and half of all our general insurance companies. Every third dollar of all income earned by all companies in Australia now goes overseas to foreign board rooms and foreign shareholders.

In retrospect I think history will look severely at Sir Robert Menzies because during his era we sold the farm. Sir John McEwen, the National Party politician and statesman, said that we were continually selling the farm. It was a national disadvantage that during the golden years of the Menzies era we had the opportunity of having Australian ownership and equity in the large profitable areas of this nation. However, they were sold out to the foreign companies. I therefore hope that the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth Government will give strong support to small business throughout Australia.

Mr McINNES (Gippsland South)—I shall be brief because most of the ground has already been covered. There is no basis for argument in much of what has been said. All honourable members recognize the importance of small business and this Government is committed to enhancing that role and removing some of the disabilities it has suffered. I shall address my remarks to some of these disabilities. There is an increasing rise in the level of wages for people who are relatively unskilled. In other words there is not a phase-in period in the gradation of wages disadvantaging those with acquired
skills in a retail or manufacturing area against someone entering the industry.

This has always been a problem, but trade unions have failed to recognize the relativities and we see tradesmen receiving, at least notionally, little more pay than trade assistants. If young people are to be given the opportunity of commencing employment wage relativities need reviewing. I commend some of the schemes that have contributed to overcoming these anomalies such as the National Employment and Training Scheme and the Special Youth Employment Training Programme. However, the question of employment is not the main function of this debate.

A further problem is the lag in catching up with the consumer price index adjustment. Most large companies have the ability to anticipate wage movements but, unfortunately, small firms do not have that capacity nor can they increase their charges in anticipation. The result is that every time the consumer price index increases there is an erosion on the profitability of the small firm. Inevitably the small firm falls further and further behind.

A high turnover of staff adversely affects small businesses in competition with large companies, which are capital intensive and have the ability to pay over award wages, overtime and other attractive conditions.

However small firms have advantages with an employee being more involved in the business rather than one would in the activities of a large organization. Nevertheless staff turnover is a real disadvantage and the cost of training new staff is a serious problem.

A small company may compete if it makes greater use of present technology, but the introduction of micro processors, computers and terminals provides an example of the sort of way in which the small company can even up some of the relative disadvantages. This is an area in which the new Department of Technology and the new guidelines outlined by the Minister for Employment and Training yesterday, have relevance.

Machine accounting and access to computer systems, which have been beyond the reach of most small businesses in the past, are rapidly reaching the point where they can economically be introduced and the Government should give assistance and advice. The Small Business Development Corporation, for example, could give advice to smaller firms. Modern equipment, as much as anything else, is an area that can retain the interest of employees and make a small firm competitive.

Mention has been made of the cost of licensing and the filling in of the inevitable forms. I shall not go over that point again. It is an unproductive exercise designed to provide information to economists like the honourable member for Dandenong. Frequently the information is not strictly correct and judgments are wrongly made because of that. There are also problems with rental agreements with shops. Most retail traders rent their premises and often there is insufficient protection in the legal agreements for these traders. A levy on turnover is laid down by some of the landlords and that is an unfair and nefarious practice which should be stopped. Honourable members should address themselves to those problems.

Planning is important. Often the viability of the central business district is put at risk because a large developer may establish a regional shopping centre outside town on cheaper land where adequate space for parking is available. In so doing the developer takes away a large proportion of business from the central business district and this imposes increased costs on taxpayers by the requirement for additional infrastructure to meet the demands of that new business.
The matter of income tax concessions is not one for this Government. However, the Victorian Government has an admirable record on pay-roll tax rebates. It is difficult to abolish pay-roll tax entirely because it is such an important component of the State's taxing pool. The most serious impediment to small businesses is one about which we are all familiar and unfortunately can do nothing about. I refer to telephone charges. As I mentioned earlier, the use of terminals and computers is often not attractive because lines into country areas are so expensive.

For example, the cost of a computer line into Sale, which is 126 miles from the General Post Office, costs approximately $8000. Any trader in that area, whether he is involved in the motor industry or the travel industry or anything else, faces that hurdle right from the start. A Sale trader is $8000 worse off than his fellow retailer in Melbourne or its suburbs or common telephone districts. This is a matter to which the Commonwealth Government has not addressed itself properly. I am pleased to see that the Victorian Government is making stronger representations to try to change the mind of the Federal Government and to ensure that justice is given to small traders.

Communications are vital in any industry or business and this is one area in which we shall not halt our relentless fight until we achieve fairness and parity.

The other point is bulk buying and it could be said that small firms should band together for their buying to protect themselves against price advantages and price cutting by larger firms. A formula on buying should be established without restricting private enterprise and the Small Business Development Corporation should direct its attention to that matter. Loan capital for small businesses is important, although not the most substantial component of small businesses, which is ordinary finance, and the present arrangements of $100 000 and under loaned at a lower rate of interest to small businesses should be examined and the State Bank asked to give preference to ensure that this finance is readily available to the small business borrower.

Should the small business sector fail, business contracts to fewer hands and it is just as true in business as in politics that a concentration of power corrupts. There have been examples recently of certain companies being able to make profits of millions of dollars in a paper exercise that has caused an upsurge of deep concern by the public.

The public must support small businesses, of which they are the clients. Unfortunately, people do buy from sources other than their local small businesses, which chops the ground from beneath the trader trying to make a living in an area to which he is providing a service that, if given a chance, will improve as his business prospers.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr I. W. Smith to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. S. J. Plowman in the chair).

Ayes .. . . . 35
Noes .. . . 37

Majority for the omission of the words .. 2

AYES
Mr Cain
Mr Cathie
Dr Coghill
Mr Crabb
Mr Culpin
Mr Edmunds
Mr Ernst
Mr Evans
Mr Fogarty
Mr Fordham
Mr Gavin
Mr Giafré
Mr Hann
Mr Jasper
Mr Jolly
Mr King
Mr Kirkwood
Mr Mathews

Mr Remington
Mr Roper
Mr Rowe
Mr Sidiropoulos
Mr Simmonds
Mr Simpson
Mr Spyker
Mr Stirling
Mrs Toner
Mr Trewin
Mr Trewise
Mr Walsh
Mr Whiting
Mr Wilkes
Mr Wilton

Tellers:
Mr Hockley
Mr Miller
PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

NOES

Mr Austin
Mr Balfour
Mr Birrell
Mr Borthwick
Mr Burgin
Mrs Chambers
Mr Coleman
Mr Collins
Mr Cox
Mr Crellin
Mr Dixon (South Barwon)
Mr Dunstan
Mr Ebery (Warrnambool)
Mr Hamer
Mr Hayes
Mr Kennett
Mr Lacy
Mr Lieberman
Mr McArthur
Mr McCance
Mr McClure
Mr Mclnnes
Mr McKellar
Mr Macelllan
Mr Reynolds
Mr Richardson
Mr Skeggs
Mr Smith
Mr Smith (South Barwon)
Mr Tanner
Mr Thompson
Mr Weideman
Mr Williams
Mr Brown
Mr Mackinnon

PAIRS

Mr McGrath
Mr Ross-Edwards
Dr Vaughan
Mr Wood
Mr Jona
Mr Templeton

The words proposed by Mr I. W. Smith to be inserted, were so inserted.

The motion, as amended, was agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Perhaps it is unusual, but at this stage I wish to make a personal explanation.

The Age newspaper of today's date claims that I, as Speaker, announced yesterday that the by-election for the seat of Morwell will be held on 27 June.

In fact, I made no public announcement to that effect and declined to advise the press on the matter yesterday when asked.

The true position is that yesterday, as a courtesy, I wrote to each of the three party Leaders advising them of a proposed time-table for the by-election. In fact I would consider it discourteous to the party Leaders if I were to make a press statement on the matter before consulting them.

The press announcement was not made with my authority.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I wish to make a personal explanation because I believe I may have inadvertently misled the House.

In my remarks on 12 March this year during the grievance debate, I referred from memory to a letter I had earlier received from the Minister of Education, and implied that the Minister had made an improper threat. I have since checked the correspondence and wish now to state that no threat was expressed or implied.

LEFROY MINERALS LTD AND NORTH DEBORAH MINING AND INDUSTRIAL LTD

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—I move:

That this House calls upon the Attorney-General, in the interests of investors and the public, to table reports received by him in April 1978 from Mr P. D. Cummins, Barrister, appointed as an Inspector under the Companies Act 1961 in October 1973 to inquire into the affairs of Lefroy Minerals Ltd and North Deborah Mining and Industrial Ltd and further, in view of the substantial sums in excess of $2 million invested in the companies by Victorians some eight or more years ago, expresses its disapproval at the unconscionable delay in proceeding to act upon the recommendations (if any) contained in the report or institute any criminal proceedings that may be justified.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Is the motion seconded?

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—Over the past four or five years, I have been a fairly critical commentator on the performance of the present Government in relation to corporate crime. I have said on a number of occasions in this place, and outside it, that the Government has been demonstrably soft on people who use the corporate shield and the corporate structure to steal from and cheat other people. The people who have suffered losses are of modest means, the elderly, the retired, and, in some ways, the gullible, and they are a very easy victim for the sharp and the greedy.

The two companies that are the subject of this motion received investment moneys from many Victorian people. The facts that I will reveal, in the short time I propose to take this afternoon, suggest that any chance of recovery of the whole or any part of that money is possibly lost because of the inordinate delay that has occurred because of the procrastination of the
Government, and in particular the Attorney-General. There has been a lack of action and desire by the Government to bring matters of this kind to a resolution by the responsible Minister. This sort of attitude, in some part, is responsible for the rampant corporate crime that has occurred in the State for many years.

These two matters surfaced as a result of the failure of the two companies in the 1970s. Some of the so-called corporate giants, recipients of Imperial honours, some revered in the business world, have been associated with quite spectacular failures. The people of this State are entitled to something better than they have had in the control and supervision of companies that have received vast amounts of public money.

The two companies that are the subject of the motion are known as Lefroy Minerals Ltd and North Deborah Mining and Industrial Ltd. A search of the companies' records indicates that in about 1972 or 1973 there were assets approximating $2.4 million in North Deborah Mining and Industrial Ltd. Things must have happened quickly, because in October 1973 an inspector was appointed by the then Attorney-General under the provisions of the Companies Act. Four-and-a-half years later, in April 1978, the Attorney-General received a report from the inspector.

I became concerned in these matters some time before that, in January or February 1978, and I wrote to the Attorney-General seeking information about the inspector's report. Correspondence was exchanged between the Attorney-General and me. In late July I received from the Attorney-General a letter dated 20 July, and also correspondence in regard to the two companies. I quote from paragraph 2 of the letter:

Since I wrote to you on 8 May, the inspector has delivered a separate report relating to criminal proceedings. As you may be aware, this separate report of the inspector is supplied under the former section 178(3) of the Companies Act 1961, which was inserted by Act No. 8185. I am advised by the Crown Solicitor that it appears that the intention of the legislation is that this report is for the purposes of deciding whether to undertake prosecutions for criminal offences, and it should not be released.

While I am concerned that the reports of the inspector dated 24 April be made public as soon as possible, you will appreciate that I am also concerned to ensure that the institution of criminal proceedings against any persons will not be prejudiced by the tabling.

I am still awaiting advice on this aspect of the matter, and will inform you of the position as soon as I am able to do so.

The reports of 24 April 1978 have not been published. Despite constant correspondence with the Attorney-General in the next three years, no action of a specific nature has been taken against any person associated with those companies, the subject of that report.

This is a case, on the face of it, of either gross incompetence or a cover-up of some proportions. I cannot say what is in the reports as I have not seen them. On behalf of people who have a direct interest because of commercial involvement, I have been trying for three years to have the reports made public.

My file indicates that over that period I have written on thirteen or fourteen occasions to the Attorney-General seeking the disclosure of the reports. It is eight years since this matter was first acted on in the public sense when the inspector was appointed under the provisions of the Companies Act, and still the public of this State and other States knows no more than it did eight years ago about what has happened to the vast sums of public money that were contributed to these companies.

From the correspondence I have had I believe the Victoria Police Fraud Squad has been involved in the matter. It is a disgrace to the Law Department, the officers in the Corporate Affairs Office, the police and those responsible for the work of those people that no decision has been made before this. To contemplate criminal proceedings at this stage, nine or ten years after the events have occurred, is absurd. The Attorney-General has said that criminal proceedings may be pending and that report cannot be made public. Last year, in a letter to me, he indicated that the matter was back in the hands
of the police. On the suggestion of the Attorney-General, I wrote to the Minister for Police and Emergency Service on 16 March indicating that for three years I had been corresponding with the Attorney-General about these matters. I stated that the Attorney-General had replied on 6 March that he was seeking information about when the criminal proceedings would be commenced. I stated that I would be grateful for the advice of the Minister.

I have not received a reply from the Minister except a formal note on 20 March that inquiries were being made and that I would be informed as soon as possible. That is where the matter rests.

For the past three years the Attorney-General has claimed that the reports were being kept secret until the criminal proceedings that had been proposed were completed. In effect, he has been saying that, despite what has occurred over the past eight years, he still cannot indicate whether proceedings are to be commenced.

If criminal proceedings were undertaken now, it would be unfair to the person charged. Witnesses would be asked to recall events of some nine or ten years ago and it would be difficult for a judge to impose a sentence, if the court decided that a person should be convicted, so long after the events have occurred. In addition, it is an outrage to the investors, large and small, who to this time have been prevented from learning about the disposal of their funds. Any prospects they may have had of recovering funds have been dissipated because of the denial of access to the reports.

It is difficult to prove criminal and civil charges in commercial matters after so long a period. The Commonwealth Banking Act provides that bank vouchers, cheques and pay-in slips should be retained by the bank for five years after transactions have been completed before being destroyed. Perhaps consideration should be given to approaching the Commonwealth with a request that this practice should not continue, if it inhibits civil and criminal proceedings in these sorts of matters.

At present the methods being used in Victoria in relation to the Corporate Affairs Office and the police are in need of an overhaul. It is apparent that it is not possible to meet the demands that society makes in relation to the prevention, detection and prosecution of such matters.

In this instance the inspector was appointed in 1973 and took four years and five months to present his report. In that time he would have been responsible to at least two Attorneys-General. That is absurd. If, after an individual has been charged with the onerous task of inspector under the Companies Act, it is necessary to wait more than four years for his report, one should forget about instituting proceedings. If a matter is of such consequence as to justify the appointment of an inspector, and it is realized that he will take an inordinate time to present a report, he must be given assistance to ensure that the job is done within a reasonable time. This could be a starting point in any procedure for the recovery of money lost or criminal charges. Resources must be devoted towards enabling a report to be prepared and tendered more quickly. There is something wrong with the Law Department and the Police Force which cannot make up its mind after eight years during which the matter has been under its joint notice.

It is suggested by some people that perhaps some of the money found its way into companies associated with the Bartons in New South Wales. Mr Csидеi was a director of Lefroy Minerals until 14 February 1953. His address was 53-55A Parriwi Road, Mosman, New South Wales, and his occupation was given as company director. I do not know what has occurred. Documents in the Bankruptcy Court, copies of which have been sent to me, show an application filed in that court and the moneys that came from those two companies.

Mr Cain
After a period of eight or nine years has elapsed, honourable members are entitled to know more about this matter than they do. White-collar crime in this town is rife. It has been a growth industry for some time, and the Law Department and the Police Force are powerless. They are inadequate to meet the demands placed on them. As at April of this year, according to the latest figures available, the total number of company registrations in Victoria was 132,719. As at 31 December 1980 the figure for New South Wales was 195,000, 60,000 more than in Victoria. The Victorian Corporate Affairs Office has 218 employees plus five temporary members of staff, to handle 132,000 company registrations. In New South Wales, 482 persons in the Corporate Affairs office are employed to handle 195,000 company registrations. In the collection of fees and charges, New South Wales collected $15.2 million for 1979-80 and Victoria collected $11.6 million. That is approximately the relative difference one would expect having regard to the registrations. On the side of expenditure, New South Wales spends $8.4 million in running its Corporate Affairs office; Victoria spends $3.14 million.

The honourable member for Forest Hill interjects from the back bench that the Government is making money. I hope that, when Hansard is published and he examines the figures in depth, he will realize that they indicate that, rather than making money, Victoria is losing money. If one is to use corporate affairs as a means of earning revenue, one should not come to this place or anywhere else and say that he is being serious about preventing and detecting corporate crime. Clearly, Victoria is not fulfilling its obligations in that regard.

The State has cast upon it obligations to carry out its duty under an agreement known as the Commonwealth-State Scheme for Co-operative Companies and Securities Regulation, which was formally entered into on 22 December 1978 between the Commonwealth and the State to which Victoria is a signatory. I shall quote to the House the provisions of clause 40 of that agreement and I hope that the honourable member for Forest Hill and his colleagues will appreciate that the Government they support is not fulfilling its obligations. Clause 40 provides:

40. Each party to this agreement will provide the funds and other resources necessary for its State or Territory administration to carry out the functions of that administration in accordance with the scheme established under this agreement.

This State is not fulfilling the terms of that agreement. It is not devoting the resources required by that agreement to ensure that the Corporate Affairs Office in this State functions adequately. That is apparent from the figures I have put to the House. As the honourable member for Forest Hill says, the Government is using this area as a revenue earner and it has no right to do that.

This House must demonstrate that the Government has a duty to the people of Victoria to ensure that this sort of thing does not continue. It has a duty to the people of this State to ensure that the terms of that agreement are honoured.

Finally, someone must decide the line of demarcation between the functions of the Corporate Affairs Office and those of the Company Fraud Squad. There is a grey area which is used as a method of buck-passing between those two organizations. A decision must be made as to which body is to be responsible for investigating and detecting corporate crime. However, at the moment, that grey area exists. Furthermore, both organizations are under-resourced; they have inadequate facilities and inadequate personnel to produce the results that Victoria is entitled to expect.

The Attorney-General has behaved badly in these matters. This House should call upon him, as the motion indicates, to make these reports public. The time has long since passed when, in good conscience, criminal proceedings can be brought against any person, for the reasons I have indicated. The sooner these reports are made public and the people...
whose money has been lost in those companies are able to obtain the information to which they are entitled, the better. I commend the motion to the House.

On the motion of Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport), the debate was adjourned.

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

MOTOR CAR (PENSIONER CONCESSIONS) BILL

Mr THOMPSON (Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a small but significant Bill for an important group of people in the community. Honourable members will recall that last year legislation was amended to allow a 50 per cent concession on third-party insurance premiums and motor registration fees to ex-servicemen. That concession applied only to those who had served in the Australian forces during wars in which Australia has been involved. A concession was granted to those who obtained a pension under section 5 of the Repatriation Act and who were holders of a TC 1 pension card. Those who served with other forces of the British Commonwealth are covered for pension purposes under section 5A of the Repatriation Act, and those who served with allied nations and who have been resident in Australia for a minimum period of ten years are covered under section 5B of the Repatriation Act.

Through the medium of this Bill, the concessions granted last year will now be extended to those other groups; namely, those who served in the forces of other Commonwealth nations during the war, and those who served with allied nations during the war and who have had a ten-year residential qualification period in Australia.

Mr Edmunds—What about the Vietnamese who are now here and who served in that war?

Mr THOMPSON—If they qualify under section 5B of the Repatriation Act and have a TC 1 pension card, it will apply to them, so some of them may be picked up in that way. Others will not be.

If approved by Parliament, the concession will mean a difference of some $85 in third-party premiums and motor registration for people living in the metropolitan area and a difference of about $70 for those living in country areas who already pay a lower third-party fee.

Although this concession was not promised at any stage, the Government believes a serious anomaly will exist unless action is taken. It is difficult to distinguish between somebody who served in the Royal Australian Air Force, is on a pension and has a TC 1 card and his neighbour who served in the Royal Air Force, is on a pension under the Repatriation Act and has a TC 1 card. This Bill will correct anomalies of this type which have been brought to the attention of members on both sides of the House and will provide an important financial concession to those who have served this nation well in time of war, whether in helping us as members of allied forces or as members of British Commonwealth forces. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 5.

CREDIT BILL, GOODS (SALES AND LEASES) BILL AND CHATTEL SECURITIES BILL

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That these Bills be now read a second time.

The three Bills represent the result of a long and difficult exercise designed to reform a body of law which regulates the granting and obtaining of credit, the giving and taking of security over goods, and the rights and liabilities of purchasers and sellers of goods.

The existing body of law has developed upon commercial principles based in the nineteenth century. In a community in which credit forms the basis
for a great many commercial transactions, both large and small, it is necessary to review even the basic principles of the existing legislation and to provide a legislative scheme which reflects modern day living.

Over the past 40 years credit laws have been under review, or changing in various parts of the Western World. The United States of America revised its laws in the 1950s and that trend has been followed in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

In this country the first major study was commissioned by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, when in 1966 Professor Rogerson of the Adelaide University Law School was appointed to head a committee to study the subject. That committee delivered its report in 1969.

It was as a result of the work done by the Rogerson committee that the committee which became known as the Molomby committee came into existence. Its objective was to consider the means by which the recommendations of the Rogerson committee could, and should be translated into a legislative form and to provide the instructions upon which such legislation might be drawn. The Molomby committee met first in February 1970 and delivered its initial report in January 1972. It delivered a supplementary report in December 1973. I would again like to pay tribute to the work of that committee and to Miss Rowena Armstrong who has continued that work by drafting the Bills.

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General retained an interest in the subject and made recommendations as to proposals for legislation. The original versions of the three Bills were introduced to the Parliament in May 1978, when the Government indicated its intention to allow the Bills to stand pending the receipt and assessment of submissions on the Bills. More than 80 substantial submissions were received from a wide range of interests within the community. The Bills now before the House reflect many of the points raised in those submissions and take into account agreement between Victoria and New South Wales on the need for consistent legislation across State borders. Whilst the exercise has been a long one I believe that the end result justifies the time and effort expended by a large number of people.

The broad principles underlying these Bills are as follows:

(a) To establish a qualified and effective administration to supervise the credit industry through an over-all licensing system for persons who provide credit under credit sales, or who make loans at rates exceeding 14 per cent, and to assist users of credit who may encounter difficulties or problems in the use of credit.

(b) To equate all the various forms under which credit may be provided so that the rules applicable will be essentially the same and will govern the substance rather than the form of the transaction.

(c) To apply in an extensive and sophisticated way the type of regulation and protection to all forms of credit.

(d) To make provision for the disclosure of the actual cost of credit in dollars and cents and in the form of a statutorily determined annual percentage rate. As the basis for determining that rate will be the same in respect of all forms of credit, it will be possible to compare the cost of credit no matter what form the offer of the credit takes.

(e) To make provision for security interests in goods to have effect as statutory charges, subject to certain provisions of the Property Law Act 1958, and defeasible only by the operation of clause 8 (bona fide purchase of goods for value by a person without notice of the security interest). Corresponding defeasibility provisions are made under clauses 9 and 10 in relation to interests of lessors, and owners under hire purchase agreements.

(f) To make special provision for protection under the Goods Act 1958 of what might roughly be described as
consumer transactions, that is, transactions involving goods and services of a value of not more than $15,000, by incorporating into such sales and leases new provisions relating to fitness and quality of the goods and services which cannot be excluded by the supplier.

The subject matter dealt with by the Credit Bill in particular is often complex in its application. The existing law is complicated and some commercial practices are highly technical and sophisticated. As a result the Credit Bill is not a simple piece of legislation. It covers a variety of commercial transactions and its provisions are sometimes detailed. However, it is believed that the Bill has been greatly improved as a result of the submissions received and will be effective in practice.

CREDIT BILL

One of the main objectives of the Credit Bill is to equate all forms in which credit may be provided, and to provide a consistent form of regulation no matter what form the provision of credit may take. The Bill is divided into parts which deal with sales, credit sales, continuing credit contracts, loans, property mortgages, contracts of insurance and contracts of guarantee. The existing controls imposed by the Money Lenders Act 1958 and the Hire Purchase Act 1959 will be replaced, giving rise to a repeal of the former Act, and the retention of the latter only insofar as it applies to agreements not covered by the Credit Bill. This intention, to bring together in the one Act all forms of credit control, is designed to resolve the most significant defect identified by the Molomby committee in the existing law.

TRANSACTIONS COVERED BY THE BILL—When introduced in 1978 the Bill applied to consumer transactions generally. In defining what was meant by a consumer transaction, clause 87 of the 1978 Bill made reference to contracts for goods or services where the cash price or amount lent was not more than $15,000, or more than $15,000 in the case of personal domestic or household goods. It is now accepted that while this definition is appropriate for the Goods (Sales and Leases) Bill the second limb of that definition is uncertain and the corresponding provision in the present Bill, clause 20, renders Part II of the Act applicable to a contract for the sale of goods and services where:

(a) the cash price or the amount lent is not more than $15,000; or

(b) whatever their value, the goods comprise a commercial vehicle or farm machinery.

The monetary limit of $15,000 can be amended by regulations which is provided for in clause 7.

The Bill applies to the rights and obligations of parties under a credit contract, a contract of guarantee, or a property mortgage; where the sale contract or mortgage is in writing and signed in Victoria by the buyer, debtor mortgagor; where the document is not in writing or is not signed in Victoria the Act will nonetheless apply if the goods or services are to be delivered in or supplied in Victoria, or if credit is to be provided in Victoria; or in the case of a property mortgage, if the property is in Victoria. In other words, if the subject-matter of the sale, contract or mortgage has a substantial nexus with this State that is provided for in clause 4.

ADMINISTRATION—Under the 1978 Bill there was to be a Credit Advisory Council, a Credit Commissioner and a Credit Tribunal to administer the Act. In the light of submissions received it has been decided that the functions which would have been performed by those bodies can more efficiently be performed without duplication and uncertainty by existing bodies within the Ministry for Consumer Affairs.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL—Whereas the Credit Advisory Council under the 1978 Bill was to be the body responsible for advising the Minister upon the administration of the Act, that function will now be performed by the existing Consumer Affairs Council.
However, the council will be reconstituted to represent a broader range of interests.

DIRECTOR OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS—The Director of Consumer Affairs will assume the functions originally to be performed by the Credit Commissioner. Those functions include the receipt and investigation of complaints from the public, and the provision of advice as to the application of the Act, which is provided for in clauses 164 to 169.

CREDIT TRIBUNAL—There will be a Credit Tribunal chaired by the President of the Market Court, and four other members, two possessing experience in the business of supplying credit or goods, and two persons representing the public.

The tribunal shall have an exclusive jurisdiction with respect to licensing under the Act. Licence applications will be made to the registrar of the tribunal, who may issue licences, or in the case where objections are received to the issue of licences, he shall refer the application and objection to the tribunal for determination. The tribunal has power, subject to the Act, to revoke or suspend a licence or to impose other sanctions upon a licence holder.

In addition to its exclusive licensing jurisdiction the tribunal shall have a concurrent jurisdiction with respect to licensing under the Act. Licence applications will be made to the registrar of the tribunal, who may issue licences, or in the case where objections are received to the issue of licences, he shall refer the application and objection to the tribunal for determination. The tribunal has power, subject to the Act, to revoke or suspend a licence or to impose other sanctions upon a licence holder.

The licensing provisions are to be found in Division 3 of Part X of the Bill. Clause 191 provides that no person shall carry on the business of providing credit unless he is the holder of a licence under the Act. Clause 192 exempts a number of bodies from the licensing provisions of the Bill, but not, of course, the other provisions. In general a licensing exemption has been provided for and will be granted where the body is already under other legislative control for example, exemptions have been granted to banks, insurance companies, building societies, pawnbrokers, friendly societies, credit societies, co-operative housing societies and the like. A general licensing exemption is granted to bodies which provide credit at an annual interest rate that does not exceed 14 per cent.

There will be two categories of licences. The general licence will be known as a credit provider's licence. However, a licensee may apply to the registrar for his licence to be endorsed, so as to authorize him to provide credit under a continuing credit contract, or by way of store credit certificates.

Licence applications will be made to the registrar of the tribunal who shall cause notice of the same to be published in a newspaper. Persons wishing to oppose the issue of a licence are required to notify the registrar in writing and the registrar must then refer the application and objections to the tribunal for assessment.

A licence issued under the Act has a continuous operation, subject to the payment of an annual fee, and subject to the power of the tribunal to suspend or revoke it, or the power of the licensee to surrender it. As I stated earlier, the Bill is divided into a number of Parts which include provisions applicable to that particular mode of providing credit.

SALES—Part II of the Bill deals with the sale of goods and services in which the cash price does not exceed $15 000,
or in the case of a commercial motor vehicle or farm machinery, even where the price exceeds that sum.

There is provision in clause 21 enabling a buyer to rescind a sale where he has made known to the seller that he requires credit, and is subsequently unable to obtain that credit.

There are two provisions dealing with the rights of the buyer against a linked credit provider, that is, a person other than the seller who provides the credit upon which the sale is made. First, the seller is prevented from insisting upon the buyer obtaining credit from a credit provider nominated by the seller. The second provision provides for the joint and several liability of the seller and linked credit provider where the buyer has a claim in relation to the sale. Where a buyer intends to proceed against a linked credit provider he must take proceedings against the seller, and he cannot enforce judgment against the linked credit provider unless he has made a demand upon the seller which has not been satisfied within 30 days.

REGULATED CREDIT CONTRACTS
—Part III of the Bill applies to credit contracts with the same monetary and other limits as is the case with sales. It also applies to loans where the amount financed is not more than $15,000 and where the interest charged annually exceeds 14 per cent.

The provisions of this Part require the credit provider to give statements setting out the financial obligations of the buyer or borrower. It requires that all credit sales or loans are to be made in writing and to include the statutory information, and requires the credit provider to give copies of contracts entered into to the buyer or borrower.

Clause 34 in conjunction with the Schedules 2 and 3 sets out the details of the statutory information required. A contract must specify the amount financed, the credit charge, the annual percentage rate of interest, and details of instalment payments.

The provisions of this Part impose sanctions upon credit providers who fail to comply with the disclosure provisions. Clause 47 renders it an offence if a credit sale or loan is made otherwise than in accordance with the Act, and clause 46 imposes a civil penalty in the form of a loss of credit charges in the event of failure to disclose prescribed information. Pursuant to a latter clause there is power in the Credit Tribunal to adjust the loss of credit charges if it sees fit.

CONTINUING CREDIT CONTRACTS
—Division 2 of Part III applies to continuing credit contracts—that is to say, contracts under which credit is provided on a running account basis. Such transactions as retail store charge accounts fall within the definition of a continuing credit contract.

The division applies only to continuing credit contracts where:

(a) the interest rate exceeds 14 per cent; or

(b) where a credit charge is made in respect of goods or services supplied; or

(c) the amount owing need not be paid within three months; or

(d) the amount owing may be paid by five or more instalments, or a deposit and four or more instalments.

The division makes similar provision for continuing credit contracts as was the case with other regulated contracts. The amount financed has to be calculated for each billing cycle, and the credit charge is derived from the application of the disclosed annual percentage rate to the amount financed.

Divisions 3 and 4 of Part III make some general provisions applicable to regulated contracts. For example, variation of credit contracts other than by way of consolidation, refinancing or deferral require the prior giving of notice. A debtor may by reason of illness, unemployment, or for other good reason apply to the Director of
Consumer Affairs for an extension of time in which to pay instalments. Clause 77 specifies the circumstances in which a default charge for late payment may be imposed.

PROPERTY MORTGAGES—Part IV applies to mortgages of goods or other property which secure the payment of debts or other obligations, under a regulated contract.

This Part requires a property mortgage to be in writing and renders void a provision in the mortgage which requires payments which exceed those set out in the contract for which the security is given, or which exceed those permitted by this Act. A mortgagee is prevented from entering upon premises for the purpose of repossessing goods without the permission of the mortgagor or an order of a court. A mortgagor is obliged to comply with a written request from the mortgagee seeking information as to the location of mortgaged goods, and power is given to a court upon the application of either party to determine the time and place for redelivery of goods. It will be an offence for a mortgagor or other person to dispose of mortgaged goods so as to defraud a mortgagee.

INSURANCE—Part VII makes a number of provisions regulating the insurance of goods that are the subject of regulated credit contracts or regulated property mortgages. As under the Hire Purchase Act 1959, a requirement may not be made that goods be insured with a particular insurer, or against risks that the credit or providing the credit would not insure against if he were paying the premiums. Clause 137 limits the circumstances in which a contract of insurance is void or unenforceable on the ground of a false or misleading statement contained in a proposal, and clause 138 restricts the circumstances in which an insurer can exclude its liability under a contract.

Insurance contracts must disclose details of the contract and statutory provisions are made for the payment of premiums to the insurer and of no claim bonuses to the debtor.

CONTRACTS OF GUARANTEE—Part VIII regulates contracts of guarantee with respect to regulated credit contracts. Such contracts must be in writing, or be entered into by way of acceptance of an offer in writing.

The liability of a guarantor is limited to an amount not exceeding that of the debtor, and reasonable costs. A credit provider cannot proceed against a guarantor unless he proceeds first against the debtor or jointly against the debtor and guarantor. A guarantor, like a debtor, must be given a copy of the contract of guarantee and a statement of his rights and obligations.

GENERAL PROVISIONS—Where a debtor requests from a credit provider a statement of the balance due under a regulated contract, the credit provider is required to provide such a statement. A debtor, having given notice to the credit provider may discharge a regulated contract by paying out the net balance.

A credit provider may institute proceedings or exercise rights under a contract if there has been a default by the debtor, and the debtor has failed to remedy that default after notice. The right of the credit provider to repossess goods where 75 per cent or more of the amount financed has been paid is dependent upon his first gaining approval of a court. The credit provider may obtain a court order for redelivery of goods. The provision of the Hire Purchase Act requiring a mortgagee who has repossessed goods to give notice to the mortgagor before selling such goods is reproduced in this Bill.

Relief from repossession and sale is also provided in the case of a farmer whose farm machinery is repossessed. In such a case, the farmer may apply to the court for restoration. In the case of other mortgagors, application may be made to the Director of Consumer Affairs or to a court for relief. A court is empowered to reopen a credit
contract or property mortgage where it appears to the court that the agreement is harsh or unconscionable.

Division 2 of Part IX of the Bill contains provisions designed to ensure that documents required under the Bill are presented in a legible and comprehensible form. To satisfy the test of legibility a document must either be in clear handwriting, or in print of a specified size. Where statutory documents are drawn to the attention of the Director of Consumer Affairs and in his opinion are presented in a language not readily comprehensible, or printed in a colour or style that detracts from their legibility he may direct the credit provider to cease using such documents. Credit providers may submit documentation to the director for his approval in advance so as to avoid unintentional breaches of these requirements. Where documents must be served under the Bill provision is made as to the means of service and the method for computing periods of time.

These provisions in conjunction with those as to the content of the statutory documents are designed to ensure that consumers have adequate, accurate and legible information as to their rights and obligations and the real cost of the goods, services or credit provided.


1. As mentioned earlier, the scope of the 1978 Bill was determined by a combination of a monetary level of $15,000, together with a limit imposed with respect to goods and services bought for personal domestic or household consumption. In the 1981 Bill the monetary limit alone applies, except in the case of commercial vehicles and farm machinery—compare clauses 87, 94 and 95 of the 1978 Bill with clauses 20 and 29 of the 1981 Bill.

2. The 1978 Bill extended the protection given by it to the granting of credit to corporations. The 1981 Bill by way of the definition of "credit sale" in clause 4 excludes corporations from its protection.

3. The provisions setting out the required form and content of documents applies only to personal loans and the type of transactions entered into by commercial credit providers. Unlike the 1978 Bill, it does not apply to all credit provided by banks.

4. The 1981 Bill exempts credit unions from its operation; see clause 19 (2). The 1978 Bill gave no such exemption and provision will be made in the Co-Operation Act 1958 with respect to such unions.

5. The 1978 Bill converted all leases with an option to purchase into credit sales; see clause 14 of the 1978 Bill. Clause 14 (2) of the 1981 Bill provides for the exclusion of genuine hirings with an option to purchase.

6. The 1981 Bill permits, subject to the provisions of clauses 40 to 44, the system of store currency which has been in practice for some time. The 1978 Bill had prevented the operation of that system.

7. Under the 1978 Bill, statements of account had to be sent within five days under continuing credit contracts; see clause 123 (2). It is accepted that such a requirement serves no worthwhile purpose and it is not required under the 1981 Bill.

8. Clause 24 of the 1981 Bill excludes credit granted by Bankcard and other credit card systems from the linked credit provider provisions, as it is accepted that such credit systems do not have responsibility for the quality of the goods provided.

9. The licensing requirements have been amended so as to apply only to persons carrying on the business of entering into regulated contracts. Changes have also been made as a result of a recent High Court decision on occupational licensing and section 92 of the Constitution.

10. Greater flexibility is given in permitting an alternative interest rate on loans bona fide secured on land so as
to permit a higher rate, which does not extend the acceptable rate by more than 2 per cent.

11. The documentation provisions have been extended so as to make provision for legibility, comprehensibility and presentation rather than just legibility.

12. The provision permitting relief by extending the date for the payment of instalments, due to hardship have been widened so as to take into account illness, unemployment and other good reasons.

13. The provision of Part VI of the 1978 Bill regulating leases has been omitted. Those provisions covered only some forms of leases and it is not intended that this Bill should apply to genuine hiring agreements.

14. The repossession provisions have been amended so as to require a credit provider to obtain the leave of a court before repossessing goods in respect of which 75 per cent of the amount financed has been paid.

15. Under the 1978 Bill, the two factors which primarily governed the operation of the Bill, that is the monetary limit and the interest rate, could only be changed by an amendment to the Act. The current Bill provides for the amendment of those levels by regulations.

16. Under the 1978 Bill the Hire Purchase Act 1959 was to be repealed. It is now proposed that it will be retained to apply to credit contracts not covered by this Bill.

17. The details of disclosure required in documents has been partially taken from the body of the Bill and set out in the Schedules.

I point out to honourable members that, in our desire to achieve uniform legislation on the law of credit throughout the Commonwealth, long and detailed discussions have taken place in the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, and more particularly with the Ministry for Consumer Affairs and the Ministry for Justice in New South Wales.

If the Credit Bill is passed by the Parliament it will be necessary to introduce a Bill which will make a number of consequential amendments to various other Acts.

GOODS (SALES AND LEASES) BILL

The Goods (Sales and Leases) Bill inserts a new Part IV in the Goods Act 1958 making provision for non-excludable terms to be implied in all sales of goods and services and certain leases of goods, where the value of the goods or services does not exceed $15 000 or, if it does exceed that amount, where the goods or services are for personal, domestic or household use or consumption. The monetary limit corresponds with the Credit Bill.

Following upon the introduction of the Bills in 1978, comments were made by the Federal Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs concerning inconsistencies between the provisions of that Bill and the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act 1974. In order to resolve such inconsistencies the relevant provisions have been changed and as a result the implied terms cannot now be excluded, and other changes have been made to bring the Bill into line with the Commonwealth Act.

SALES—Under the new part the following conditions will be implied in sales of goods:

(a) Right to sell—a condition that the seller has the right to sell the goods, that the goods are free from encumbrances and that the buyer will enjoy quiet possession of the goods. Those conditions are not implied if the seller intended to buy only a limited title and the buyer was aware of that fact.

(b) Sale by description—a condition that the goods will correspond with the description.

(c) Sale by sample—when goods are sold by sample there is an implied condition that the goods will cor-
respond with the sample, that there will be a reasonable opportunity to compare them with the sample, and that they will be merchantable.

(d) Sale in the course of business—where goods are sold in the course of a business there is an implied condition that they shall be of merchantable quality.

(e) Sale for particular purpose—Where the buyer makes known to the seller the purpose for which the goods are intended, there is an implied condition that they will be reasonably fit for that purpose.

SERVICES—

(a) In a sale of services there is an implied condition that the services will be provided with due care and skill, and further, that when the seller is in the business of providing services, a condition that the services will be fit for the purpose.

(b) Where the buyer makes known to the seller the purpose for which the services are intended, there is an implied condition that the services will be reasonably fit for that purpose.

(c) Where the seller demonstrates the services, there is an implied condition that the services will correspond with the demonstration, and be free of any defect rendering them unfit for the purpose intended.

GOODS AND SERVICES—In a sale of both goods and services the implied conditions applicable to each will apply.

LEASES—Conditions corresponding to the implied conditions applicable to the sale of goods apply to the lease of goods.

GENERAL—As I stated earlier, these conditions cannot be excluded. Any condition of a contract intended to exclude an implied condition is rendered void, unless it contains an undertaking to replace or make good defective goods.


1. In the 1978 Bill the application of the implied conditions to leases was determined by the rent of the goods. In the 1981 Bill it is determined by the value of the goods.

2. In the 1978 Bill clause 91 specifically excluded from the implied conditions the sale of second-hand motor cars to which the Motor Car Traders Act 1973 applied. That exclusion has been removed so that the sale of second-hand motor cars will be subject to the implied conditions of the Goods Act 1958 and the regulations of the Motor Car Traders Act 1973.

3. As in the case with the Credit Bill, the monetary limit, $15,000, may be varied by regulation as distinct from an amendment of the Act itself. Such was not the case in the 1978 Bill.

4. Under the current Bill liability for misrepresentation is imposed upon dealers who negotiate a sale but are not parties to the sale, the sale being entered into by the credit provider. This provision which is based upon section 6 of the Hire Purchase Act 1959 was not contained in the 1978 Bill.

CHATTEL SECURITIES BILL

One purpose of this Bill is to change the rules of the common law with respect to the separation and priority of interests in personal property. We are all too familiar with the situation where a family purchases a motor car only to find that in the dead of the night it has been repossessed by a person or company unknown to the purchaser.

That situation can arise under the present law because the person from whom the car was purchased may not have had a full title to the motor car, and could therefore not pass a good title to a subsequent purchaser. For
example, if A buys a new motor car, but because he cannot afford to pay cash, he enters into a hire purchase agreement, mortgage or lease of that motor car whereby B provides the finance for the purchase, B in those circumstances secures the legal title to the motor car and A, although he has possession of the car, has a lesser or equitable title. If A then sells the motor car to C whilst his obligations to re-pay B continue, C takes no better title to the motor car than that which A possessed, even though C may have paid the full purchase price. When B discovers this situation he repossesses the motor car as is his right as against A and C because his title is the legal or higher title to the vehicle.

This Bill would change the state of the law so that in the example given above, if the purchase price of the motor car was not more than $15,000 and if C was a bona fide purchaser for value from A, and had no notice of B’s interest in the vehicle, C would take a good title to the motor car free of B’s title. There are some qualifications to such a result depending upon particular facts which may arise, but generally such would be the result under this Bill.

The Bill only applies to personal property, as distinct from real property or land, which is the subject of a mortgage, lease or hire purchase agreement. Furthermore, it does not apply to property with a purchase price in excess of $15,000 unless it is a commercial vehicle or farm machinery. In other words, it applies to most goods which a private consumer might purchase, but might not be able to pay for in cash. The sum of $15,000 would, for example, include all bar the more expensive motor cars. However, there will be power given by the regulations to vary that figure.

The Bill applies where the goods at the time the mortgage, lease or hire purchase agreement was entered into are situated in Victoria, or at the time of the dispute are located in Victoria.

Where a vendor sells goods to which the Bill applies and secures his interest as an unpaid vendor by way of mortgage, lease or hire purchase agreement, he is given by clause 5 a security interest in the form of a statutory charge over the goods, even though he parts with possession and the legal title.

He may choose to insure his security interest as is often done in South Australia under similar legislation, or in the case of motor cars and some other vehicles, it is proposed to establish a procedure whereby the vendor can record his security interest with the Transport Regulation Board.

As against the purchaser from him, the vendor may exercise all the powers of a mortgage under the Property Law Act 1958 including a power to seize the goods and foreclose the agreement, subject of course to the express terms of the agreement.

However, in respect of a third party who has no real or constructive notice of the vendor’s security interest, and who purchases the goods for value and in good faith, the vendor’s security interest is extinguished and the purchaser takes a good title.

The onus is upon the purchaser in such a situation to establish that his purchase was for value and in good faith, that he had no notice of the security interest.

A purchaser will not take a good title if he is a member of the same household as the person from whom he purchases the goods, or if the sale of goods is between related companies,
or an officer of a company and the company which employs him. The object of such a provision is clearly designed to prevent persons of close relationship to each other from using the provisions of this Bill to defraud an unpaid vendor of his security interest. Nor will the provisions of this Bill protect a purchaser who is in the business or trade of dealing in goods, other than motor cars.

Offences are created by the Bill in addition to the criminal law, and apply to a mortgagor, lessee or hirer who unlawfully disposes of goods which are subject to a security interest. Other persons who attempt to defraud the security interest holder are equally liable to a penalty of not more than $5000 or imprisonment for one year. Thus, whilst the Bill does much to assist a bona fide purchaser for value it also imposes substantial sanctions upon persons who would seek to employ its provisions fraudulently.


1. Clauses 8, 9 and 10 of this Bill apply the same monetary limit as does the Credit Bill and the Goods (Sales and Leases) Bill, that is, a limit of $15,000. The 1978 Bill was unlimited in its operation.

2. The most significant change to this Bill is that contained in Part III wherein the machinery provisions for the recording of security interests in motor vehicles are to be found. Since a bona fide purchaser for value can only defeat the title of a security interest holder if he has no notice of such interest, these provisions will be extremely important in practice. To protect his interest the security interest holder will need to record that interest with the Transport Regulation Board.

Once the interest is recorded a purchaser is deemed to have notice of it whether or not he investigates its existence. On the other hand, a would-be-purchaser can check whether or not the vendor has an unencumbered title by a telephone call which can be confirmed by receipt of a computer print out, for a nominal fee. Whilst initially the system of registration will be confined to motor cars and to other vehicles, it is hoped that the same facility will be provided for other forms of personal property.

I might interpose and indicate that the computer capacity required to provide this service is the computer capacity which is being vacated by the fact there is no longer a need to licence trucks, and therefore, computer capacity is available to the Transport Regulation Board to take up this new capacity.

The Government considers that the enactment of these three Bills will not merely represent a reform of the existing credit law with respect to a significant number of credit transactions, but will do much to achieve a set of laws which are just to all parties concerned, the credit provider, the supplier and the consumer. I commend the three Bills to the House accordingly.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, May 14.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport) (By leave)—I have just become aware of a table which follows the second-reading notes, and I seek your indulgence, Mr Acting Speaker, to raise with the Speaker whether that table might be incorporated in Hansard. It is in a typewritten form and there are two schedules.
Leave was granted, and the schedules were as follows:

**CREDIT BILL**

**COMPARATIVE TABLE OF CLAUSES (1)**

Table comparing clauses in 1978 Bill with clauses in 1981 Bill

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# ASSEMBLY CREDIT BILL

## COMPARATIVE TABLE OF CLAUSES (2)

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
(CLEAN AIR) BILL

This Bill was returned from the Council with a message relating to amendments.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

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

Discussion was resumed of clause 10 (Duties of responsible bodies with respect to special projects) and of Mr Jolly's amendment:

Clause 10, lines 14 to 16, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert “responsible body to give priority to any special project in carrying out its functions in or in relation to the planning construction or operation of the special project”.

Mr WHITING (Mildura)—Progress was reported on this clause about 2.30 a.m. today, and I heard my Leader castigating the Minister in charge of the Bill for not having sufficient support present to avoid the problems that were arising. It is hoped that now that honourable members have had an opportunity of perusing the amendment before the Committee, they will fully understand its import and will make quicker progress than they did earlier in the debate.

The amendment was negatived.

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 10, after sub-clause (2) insert the following sub-clause—

“( ) Nothing in this section authorises the Minister to vary any time prescribed by or under any Act of the Parliament for the carrying out of any function by any relevant responsible body.”

Time has matured the consideration of this matter and, to put it beyond any doubt, I have sought the co-operation of other parties. I hope the amendment clears up the problems.

Mr JOLLY (Dandenong)—I have had the opportunity of examining the amendment moved in the Minister's name and I am satisfied that it provides the protection necessary to ensure that bodies involved in the planning process will fulfill their responsibilities and the Minister will not be able to shorten the time period as I indicated in the second-reading debate.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 11 and 12.

Clause 13 (Development Fund)

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

Clause 13, sub-clause (5), omit this sub-clause and insert the following sub-clauses:

“( ) For the purposes of this section “approved industry or business undertaking” means any industry or business undertaking—

(a) which is a special establishment within the meaning of the Decentralized Industry Incentive Payments Act 1972;

(b) which is a decentralized establishment within the meaning of the Decentralized Industry Incentive Payments Act 1972; or

(c) which the Minister by writing under his hand declares to be an approved industry or business undertaking for the purposes of this section.

( ) The Minister may by writing under his hand revoke the approval of any industry or business undertaking under sub-section (5) (c).”

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were the remaining clauses.

Schedule

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development)—I move:

At the end of the schedule insert the following:

In section 3 (2) for paragraph (v) there shall be substituted the following paragraph—

“(v) the Director-General for Economic Development or his nominee”. 7232 The Decentralization Advisory Committee Act 1964
In section 3 (1)

(a) in paragraph (a) the words “of State Development” shall be repealed; and

(b) in paragraph (b) for the words “Director of the Division of State Development” there shall be substituted the words “Director-General for Economic Development”.

The first part of the amendment simply adds the Director-General for Economic Development, or his nominee, and the second part of the amendment repeals the term “State Development” from the Decentralization Advisory Committee.
The substitution of the words, "Director-General for Economic Development" is obviously necessary in view of the title of the Ministry and title of the Director-General.

The amendment was agreed to, and the schedule, as amended, was adopted.

New clause

Mr I. W. SMITH (Minister for Economic Development) —I move:
Insert the following new clause to follow clause 17:

"AA. A reference in any Act, or in any proclamation Order in Council rule regulation order or document whatsoever to the Director of State Development Decentralization and Tourism, shall if not inconsistent with the context or subject-matter be deemed and taken to be a reference to the Director-General for Economic Development".

This clause is necessary because, although the many Acts of Parliament have been thoroughly checked and the Government considers that it has not missed this point, it wants to ensure that wherever else the Director of State Development Decentralization and Tourism is referred to, the wording will now refer to the Director-General for Economic Development. The clause provides for the eventuality that a provision was not covered or was not foreseen. In such a case there will be no need for the matter to come back to Parliament. It is a simple verbal amendment that does not mean very much.

The new clause was agreed to.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SHIRES OF MELTON AND BULLA) BILL

For Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Minerals and Energy, Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It authorizes the councils of the Shires of Melton and Bulla to exercise the powers conferred on rural municipalities by Part 40A of the Local Government Act 1958. Part 40A enables councils outside the metropolitan area within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning Act 1961 to promote or assist the development of decentralized industries within their districts. For this purpose they may acquire, sell or lease land, erect buildings, borrow and lend money and enter into arrangements with any person.

The Government has undertaken to grant to the Melton and Bulla shire councils the sum of $2.5 million annually for five years from 1 July, 1979 to be used for special projects in accordance with the Government's policy of promoting the development of the townships of Melton and Sunbury. The works to be undertaken during the current financial year include, in addition to normal municipal works, industrial development projects valued at $250,000 in each centre. The councils are to provide sites zoned and serviced for industrial purposes and have factoryettes constructed thereon. These unit factories will be available for persons prepared to establish businesses or industries in the township.

Councils in the metropolitan area do not have power to buy and sell land or erect buildings for industrial use or to enter into agreements with any person for such purposes. Municipalities are creatures of statute and may do only what the relevant statutes expressly provide or anything properly incidental thereto.

This Bill will enable the Melton and Bulla shire councils to exercise the powers provided by Part 40A of the Local Government Act in any case where the cost of the project undertaken by the councils is to be met wholly or partly from moneys appropriated for that purpose from the Consolidated Fund. It is a condition of the special financial assistance provided for Melton and Sunbury that any proposed works must be approved by the Ministry for Economic Development and the Department of Planning.

The Treasurer has agreed to carry forward to 1981-82 any portion of the $2.5 million allocation for approved projects which remains unexpended at 30 June, 1981. This will enable the councils to undertake and complete the factoryette project. I commend the Bill to the House and wish it a speedy passage.
Dr COGHILL (Werribee)—I move:
That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—On behalf of the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I suggest that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next. I indicate to the honourable member for Werribee that access will be made available for him to consult with officers of the Ministry, if that is sought. I understand he wishes to do that and I give him my undertaking on that matter.

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) (By leave)—That is acceptable to the Labor Party, on the understanding that if it needs an additional day's adjournment, that will be considered.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 5.

BUILDING SOCIETIES
(AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr KENNETT (Minister of Housing)—I move:
That this Bill be now read a second time. It proposes a relatively short but very important amendment to section 65 of the Building Societies Act 1976 with respect to reserves to be provided by permanent building societies.

Following a study of the published accounts of societies in respect of their operations during the 1979-80 financial year, concern was expressed by the Council of the Victorian Building Societies Association that the definition applied to the reserve account allows for the inclusion in that reserve of unrealized profits, such as an asset revaluation reserve created following revaluation of property owned by a society.

This situation has arisen because the section fails to specifically define "reserve account" and, as a consequence, has provided the opportunity for societies to misrepresent the strength of their reserves.

It is the view of the Victorian Building Societies Association and the Building Societies Advisory Committee that the only reserves which should be relevant, for the purpose of section 65 of the Act, are those which have actually been realized and not distributed to shareholders. Such reserves are normally derived from operating profits and, on occasion, from the profitable sale of fixed assets. Such reserves must be real to serve as a security buffer for funds invested in shares and deposits and held by the society.

The proposed additions to section 65 will ensure that reserves are correctly represented in the accounts of societies for the year ending 30 June 1981. Sub-clause (6) provides the source from which are derived any funds transferred to the reserve account. Sub-clause (7) defines those items regarded as not forming part of the accumulated surplus of a society.

It will be seen that the proposals are not onerous to a society, and are designed merely to ensure the correct representation of reserves in the accounts of a society. I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I move:
That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr KENNETT (Minister of Housing)—Having consulted with my colleague on the question of time, I suggest that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, on the understanding that, if the honourable member needs further time, I will accept that.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, May 6.

ADJOURNMENT

Aboriginal housing—Signs on Mornington Peninsula Freeway — Broadmeadows community health centre—Railway offence — Turkish film—Warnings on electric blankets—Use of vitamins—Housing loan guarantor—Bendigo Ordnance Factory

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—I move:
That the House do now adjourn.

Mr CATHIE (Carrum)—I wish to raise with the Minister of Housing a matter concerning the allocation of Federal funds for Aboriginal housing in Victoria. The allocation from the Federal Government for Aboriginal welfare housing is, I understand, $225
million. Claims have been made by the Dandenong and District Aboriginal Co-operative that houses which should have been purchased with those funds have not been purchased.

Perhaps the programme is similar to the spot purchase programme which has a budget to allow for the purchase of some 390 homes. However, with nearly three-quarters of the financial year gone, only some 100 houses have been purchased under the scheme. It may well be that the provision of funds for the purchase of Aboriginal housing faces that same sort of difficulty.

There seems to be conflict between statements made by the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the claims made by the Dandenong and District Aboriginal Co-operative. The Minister says that twelve houses will be bought at Dandenong, yet the co-operative claims it has received a letter from him saying that only five houses have been purchased at Dandenong and indicating that the amount spent until March was only $1.4 million.

I raise the matter not only because of the concern expressed by the co-operative at Dandenong, but also to obtain an assurance from the Minister that the balance of the money will be spent before the end of the current financial year.

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Transport and ask my colleague, the Minister of Housing, to bring it to his attention. I refer to requests over many years by the residents and the developers of the Patterson Lakes area, which borders Wells Road and the new Mornington Peninsula Freeway, to have directional signs placed on the freeway at either approach to the Thompson Road overpass denoting that Patterson Lakes is to the right or to the left, depending upon the direction in which one is travelling.

Mr Cathe—Signs have been erected directing traffic to Carrum.

Mr COLLINS—The honourable member for Carrum must have friends in high places. He has had signs erected on the freeway and on the approach and exit roads, pointing out that Carrum is to the right or, more appropriately, to the left, depending on which way one is travelling.

The residents of Patterson Lakes would like to be similarly recognized. It is an important matter because Patterson Lakes is a unique lakeside development. A new shopping centre has been opened there and, as with most new centres, the small traders face a difficult period in getting their act together. However, no matter how many requests are made or how detailed the submission to the Country Roads Board, it has refused to consider denoting the fact that Patterson Lakes exists.

I have advised the Minister of Transport that, in my capacity as the local member for the area, I have ordered the signs exactly as required. They are of the correct dimensions, the right colour scheme and everything else. The signs have been ordered. The residents association and the developers of the area are making further requests to the Country Roads Board. The Minister has been advised informally by me that, in the event that the Country Roads Board is unable to erect the signs that have been ordered, those signs will be erected in any event on Saturday, 23 May at 9 a.m.

I ask the Minister to join us for the formal cutting of the tape ceremony as the signs go up. I hope the Country Roads Board will see the wisdom of erecting the signs without the need for us to go to these lengths.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! I have to advise the honourable member for Noble Park that, although the information he gave was interesting and the invitation to the Minister to attend was of value to the Minister and perhaps to the honourable member himself, the adjournment debate is for the purpose of matters being raised by members seeking an urgent remedy on matters of Government business. I do not believe the honourable member’s request really comes within that ambit.
Mr COLLINS—I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER—Or a point of explanation?

Mr COLLINS—I think it is a point of order but I am prepared to make it a point of explanation.

The SPEAKER—Perhaps the honourable member had better speak to me later.

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—I wish to raise a matter which falls within the province of the Minister of Health. I refer to a joint press statement dated 18 April 1975, released by the then Federal Minister for Health, Dr Everingham, and the then Victorian Minister for Health, Mr Scanlan. In part, that press statement said:

The Australian Government is to finance the building of a community health centre at Broadmeadows, the Australian Minister for Health, Dr D. N. Everingham and the Victorian Minister for Health, Mr A. H. Scanlan said today that the Federal Grant of $133,950 had been approved for the project as part of the 1974/75

I wrote to the Minister of Health on 16 October 1980 asking him what had happened to the finance that was allocated according to the press statement issued in 1975? I have received only an acknowledgment from the Minister dated 20 October in which he indicated that he is having the matter examined and will advise me accordingly. I again wrote to the honourable gentleman on 13 March 1981 on the question and referred to my earlier correspondence which contained the quotation from the press statement and I have not yet received a further communication from the Minister. The honourable gentleman is not present in the Chamber and, therefore, I appeal to the Minister of Housing to draw his colleague's attention to my remarks on the matter.

Mr McCANCE (Bennettswood)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Transport. I refer to a letter that I have received from a constituent of mine who has complained of action taken by VicRail staff against a nine-year-old girl who left her term ticket at school. The constituent states:

My nine year old daughter, Miranda, has had a term ticket bought for her for the last couple of years, though she doesn't often use it. I usually drive her to school. After her ninth birthday last year we allowed her occasionally to travel home alone on the train. Miranda is very well mannered, every one of her teachers says so.

However one day in October last year she left her ticket at school, and in fear of the Railway Inspector, she tried to climb the railing at Mt. Waverley station. The Inspector caught her and told her to tell me to contact him. I tried on a number of occasions to do that, but it proved impossible, so I left an apology and an explanation with his office. Now, six months later this letter has arrived.

I refer to a letter the lady received from VicRail. That letter states:

Dear Madam,

It has been reported to me that on 9th October, 1980 your daughter Miranda travelled between Glen Iris and Mount Waverley without a ticket entitling her to the journey, and also left the platform in an unauthorized manner at Mount Waverley. This constitutes a breach of the Railway Act and/or By-Laws.

You can no doubt readily appreciate the risk of injury inherent in this kind of behaviour, and whilst laws are designed to deter this sort of conduct the co-operation of parents is of the utmost importance.

The letter goes on to invite the mother to take the daughter to a class held at 7.30 p.m. where she will be taught not to do this sort of thing again. It is the last paragraph of that letter which concerns me—and bear in mind that the matter concerns a nine-year-old girl. The letter states:

Unexplained failure to accept this invitation may be construed as a lack of interest on your part in which event it may be necessary to give consideration to other course of action in order to stress the seriousness of the matter. I shall be pleased to know on which date you will attend, presenting this letter on your arrival.

Mr Miller—When your Minister closes your railway line down you will not have to worry.

Mr McCANCE—I understand that, too. The bureaucrats in the railways could do better with their time than send this type of letter out to people when a nine-year-old girl is involved.

Mr SIDIROPOULOS (Richmond)—I bring a matter to the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Ser-
Adjournment

services. On Saturday 11 April Channel 0-28 showed a Turkish film, which, as I am informed, stirred up nationalism and religious sentiments as well as portraying Russia as the enemy of the Turkish people. This in itself is not dangerous, but within half an hour of the ending of the film, the Union of Turkish Workers headquarters in Brunswick was firebombed and that was followed by the firing of shotgun blasts through the windows of the Australian Turkish Cultural Association in Richmond. These organizations have previously had bricks thrown through the windows of their offices and the officials of the organizations have received death threats from so-called Turkish patriots who are members of right-wing organizations.

Indeed, an editorial in the extreme right-wing newspaper, Turkey, on 6 April—the editor’s wife works for the Turkish Consulate—incited readers against the two community organizations which were the subject of the attacks on early Sunday 12 April. Members of these organizations fear that if this pattern continues and follows the present pattern in Turkey, which is currently ruled by a right-wing militant junta, then people will be killed.

What action will the Minister take and what progress has been made in capturing the people responsible for this action and for these recent attacks? Has the Minister instructed the Victoria Police Force to check what type of films are being shown on ethnic television, not in order to stop them but to ensure that the recent bombings do not happen again?

Mr MILLER (Prahran)—I raise with the Minister of Consumer Affairs a matter which concerns electric blankets, a matter which all honourable members would like to know a little more about in the next few hours. The matter concerns safety warnings that are attached to electric blankets in Victoria. At present the only safety warnings that are attached to those blankets are in English. I would urge the Minister to investigate the matter with a view to having warnings put out in pamphlet form in a number of languages—perhaps Greek, Italian, Spanish, Yugoslav and the other major ethnic languages that are spoken in Victoria. For instance, if one examines the warning that is on the Heritage electric blanket, which is one of the better-known brands and freely available in most stores, it reads:

- Use as an under-blanket only. Do not allow blanket to fold when switched on. Ensure blanket is fully spread and tied firmly to mattress. Use AC only.

- Avoid use of pins—they may damage wiring. Unsuitable laundering may damage the blanket. Do not dry clean.

Given that this is an important safety warning, it is something that should be drawn to the attention of everybody in Australia who cannot necessarily read English. I urge the Minister to take up the matter as one of urgency, particularly with the advent of winter, and with the chill that the Government is giving to most people in Victoria, it may be the only cause of warmth they can get.

Mr WEIDEMAN (Frankston)—I raise for the attention of the Minister of Health an issue that has been brought to my attention by advertisements that have appeared in the newspapers on the nature and health foods promotion of vitamins. The National Health and Medical Research Council has put forward recommendations to the State Government on the labelling and packaging of vitamins. The council has suggested that more emphasis should be placed on the use of vitamins and the quantities of vitamins that can be used at any one time and the restrictions that should be placed to prevent anybody taking an overdose of any particular vitamin and the actual labelling of vitamins. The organizations have misread or misinterpreted those directions as meaning that it is a fait accompli that everybody will be required to go to a doctor and obtain a prescription to get their normal vitamin preparations. Obviously it is not the intention to test the public, for in advertising they mention alcohol, tobacco and the use of drugs.
If one reads the document it is obviously a nonsense letter. I do not know how any advertising agency or newspaper would ever allow such a letter to be printed because it does not make sense. The letter is beyond comprehension. I ask the Minister, in the interests of public safety and the people who take vitamin preparations and perhaps mothers who give vitamin preparations to their children, to publish a statement to clarify the situation. This sort of unwarranted advertising is causing concern and should be rationalized and used appropriately. A statement from the Minister would make everyone aware of the true facts.

Mr SPYKER (Heatherton)—I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister of Housing regarding the Government loan interest subsidy which is available through housing societies. I received a letter from one of my constituents who applied to the Statewide Building Society for a $35000 loan interest rate subsidy. Statewide was prepared to grant the loan and I shall quote the letter written to my constituent by the advances manager at the building society which stated:

We refer to the above and regret to advise that the society is unable to proceed as we cannot obtain mortgage guarantee insurance.

I find that alarming when a constituent has a $4000 deposit as well as having had a regular income for the past ten years and is in a regular job. The person concerned has qualified for the loan, but he is considered a borderline case and this is why he was rejected.

This matter is of concern to me and I am sure it will be also to the Minister, who is trying to reduce the waiting list in both the purchase and rental accommodation of the Housing Commission. These people acted on their own initiative to buy a home which would be ample for their needs. The building society agreed that the house was appropriate for them, but because the mortgage guarantee insurance was unavailable the loan could not be proceeded with. The person concerned had a deposit of $4000 and required a loan of $31350. That does not even represent the maximum amount. I spoke to the people at the Statewide Building Society who said that they were concerned and that the difficulty they would have is that the interest rate would initially be 8 per cent and would rise by half a per cent a year until it reached 12 per cent. That represents half a per cent over the home loan interest rate charged by the State Savings Bank. By the time the interest rate reaches that level in eight years' time, the people would have paid off a substantial part of their property. I cannot see that this would be a large risk.

I ask the Minister to consider the matter because it is in his interest to do so, as he is required to place as many people as possible in suitable accommodation. If mortgage guarantee insurance is not able to cover this matter the people concerned will suffer. The building society has admitted that it is a borderline case and that some other form of guarantee can be given to those people so that they can be housed as soon as possible.

Mr McCLURE (Bendigo)—This afternoon the Commonwealth Government announced some changes to certain Government operations including one which affects the Commonwealth Ordnance Factory at Bendigo.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! To whom does the honourable member wish to address the question?

Mr McCLURE—the Minister for Economic Development and the Minister for Employment and Training.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member may direct his question to only one Minister.

Mr McCLURE—I direct the question to the Minister for Economic Development. The proposal by the Commonwealth Government is to transfer the activities of the ordnance factory from Bendigo to Maribyrnong which would have the effect of a large number of skilled Bendigo people being transferred or having to find other work. The Commonwealth Government proposes to sell the ordnance factory to private enterprise. I ask whether the
Minister for Economic Development will use his best endeavours to ask whether the Commonwealth Government might reconsider its position and concentrate its ordnance activities at Bendigo rather than Maribyrnong.

However, if that is not to be the case and if the factory is to be sold, I ask the Minister to give whatever assistance the State can offer to private companies which would have the capacity to operate that factory. The ordnance factory is probably the finest heavy engineering workshop in Australia and I imagine it would be a valuable asset to private enterprise should that be the way it has to go.

Six hundred people are employed at the factory at the moment and it has the capacity to employ possibly up to 2000 people. I believe that in the right hands the factory could well become a much more valuable employer of labour than it is at present. The opportunity exists for an enterprising company in Victoria or any other State to earn itself a fine engineering workshop. The benefit to the State would be immense and I ask the Government to give the matter urgent consideration.

Mr KENNETT (Minister of Housing)—The matters raised by the honourable members for Noble Park, Broadmeadows, Bennettswood, Richmond and Frankston will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Minister next week. The honourable member for Heatherton raised a matter about mortgage guarantee insurance and I shall investigate it if the honourable member supplies the pertinent documents to me next Tuesday. The honourable member for Carrum raised a matter about the underspending in the Budget allocation to this stage for Aboriginal housing. That has been the case because of the difficulty in acquiring homes and the problems with the time delay with the office of the Valuer-General.

Mr Cathie—How long?

Mr KENNETT—Long enough to lose properties once they become available. I will obtain a more detailed answer next week. The honourable member also mentioned the spot purchase programme and I shall get a more detailed answer for him next week.

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Consumer Affairs)—The honourable member for Prahran raised the question of instructions attached to electric blankets and the difficulty that some of our migrants in the community may have in reading them. I will have the matter examined. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs concerns itself with care labelling and with the issuing of warnings about the safety of products. This is an area where there may be a real need because the use of electric blankets has grown widely in the community. Even an average family today makes use of this particular product.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.29 p.m. until Tuesday, May 5.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The following answers to questions on notice were circulated—

ELDERLY CITIZENS’ CLUB-ROOMS

(Question No. 594)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of the Commonwealth/State programme to provide funds for elderly citizens’ club-rooms, whether there is a priority list for this financial year and each of the next three financial years; if so, what is the order of the priority list?

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

Approval has been granted in the 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83 financial years for the construction of eighteen new senior citizens’ centres and extensions, improvements or equipment for 34 other centres.
5. Whether he will consider and review the powers, functions and membership of the tribunals, if not, why?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—The answer is:

1. The Town Planning Appeals Tribunal was set up under sections 12, 13, 14 and 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act No. 7676 and proclaimed to take effect on 3 February 1969.

2. List of tribunal members since 1969:

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TOWN PLANNING APPEALS TRIBUNAL

(Question No. 687)

Mr CULPIN (Glenroy) asked the Minister for Planning:

1. When the Town Planning Appeals Tribunals were first formed?

2. What is the name, address, age and qualifications of each past and present member of the tribunals?

3. What salary is or was paid to these members?

4. How many decisions have been upheld by the tribunals against all city and shire councils in Victoria, indicating how many decisions have been upheld against the City of Broadmeadows?

5. Whether he will consider and review the powers, functions and membership of the tribunals, if not, why?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—The answer is:

1. The Town Planning Appeals Tribunal was set up under sections 12, 13, 14 and 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act No. 7676 and proclaimed to take effect on 3 February 1969.

2. List of tribunal members since 1969:

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30 April 1981] Questions on Notice 8017

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3. Changes to the tribunal have been largely administrative:

Provision for appointing more than one part-time tribunal came into force on 8 April 1980 when section 1 (3) of the Town and Country Planning (Appeals Tribunal) Act 1970 was gazetted.

Second tribunal division appointed 8 April 1970.

Tribunal working on a full-time basis from 1 October 1972.

Third tribunal division constituted from 14 February 1973.

Tribunal transferred to the new Ministry for Planning from December 1974.

Fourth tribunal division established from 12 July 1978.

4. Records are not kept to enable an answer to this question.

5. The Planning Appeals Board Act recently passed by Parliament is the result of a comprehensive review of the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal.

“MANUFACTURING IN MELBOURNE”
(Question No. 756)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister for Planning:

In respect of the report “Manufacturing in Melbourne” submitted to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works by its Technical Advisory Committee on Manufacturing, what action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the report as they affect the Laverton North industrial area and other areas within the shires of Werribee and Melton, and the cities of Altona and Sunshine?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—The answer is:

The report “Manufacturing in Melbourne” was an advisory report designed to guide and assist in the future provision and development of manufacturing activities in the metropolitan area. The recommendations of that report as these apply to land use planning in particular, have been used to assist in the formulation of the recently published Metropolitan Strategy Report prepared by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Where applicable, proposals are being included in the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme Amendment No. 150 which, inter alia, will provide for statutory planning objectives to be included in the Metropolitan Planning Scheme. These objectives as provided for in the Town and Country Planning Act will provide a basis for the preparation of local development schemes by local councils. Councils will thus be in a position to take such initiatives as are necessary to support the specific recommendations in the report “Manufacturing in Melbourne”.

Metropolitan Board of Works by its Technical Advisory Committee on Manufacturing, what action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the report as they affect the Laverton North industrial area and other areas within the shires of Werribee and Melton, and the cities of Altona and Sunshine?
REZONING OF RESIDENTIAL AREA, GREENSBOROUGH
(Question No. 890)

Mrs TONER (Greensborough) asked the Minister for Planning:

Whether he is aware that the Shire of Diamond Valley has rejected a $4 million commercial development proposal, involving rezoning of a residential area (1.25 hectares) on Grimshaw Street, bounded by McDowell Street and Ester Street, half the size of the recently-completed Greensborough shopping centre; if so, in view of already excessive commercial development and traffic congestion in the area, whether he will give assurances that local opinion will be paramount in any consideration of rezoning?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—The answer is:

I am advised by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works that an application has been made to it to rezone the land from Residential C to Service Business zone. The board, as the responsible planning authority for the metropolitan area, is presently considering the application; it has made no decision on the application.

As part of its normal consultation with municipalities, the board sought the views of the council of the Shire of Diamond Valley. Council has written to me advising that it is concerned about the proposal because—

(a) there is no justification for additional commercial activities to be provided and the supportive evidence submitted with the application is not sufficiently substantiated to warrant rezoning in terms of the Ministerial guidelines for commercial rezoning;

(b) any further commercial development in Greensborough would have an adverse effect on the amenity and character of the areas;

(c) any further commercial development will aggravate existing traffic problems in the area;

(d) a previous feasibility study prepared for council by consultants recommended that commercial activity should not extend west of Safeways;

(e) the application is against council's previously stated policy of 'opposing any further rezoning which will result in any extension of ribbon/strip development in all business areas', which policy has again been confirmed following detailed examination of the present application and is in accordance with previous advice received from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works on the Greensborough Shopping Centre development."

The Board of Works is aware of these views and they will be given due weight by the board in its determination of the application.

Should the board decide to exhibit the amendment then interested parties will have the opportunity to make submissions to the board.

HOSPITAL DEFICITS
(Question No. 972)

Mr ROPER (Brunswick) asked the Minister of Health:

In respect of hospital deficits for 1979-80, what was the deficit/surplus situation at each hospital as at 30 June 1980, what adjustments were subsequently made and for what reasons, what additional moneys, if any, were paid to each hospital and what surpluses were recovered?

Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The answer is given in the following tabulations:

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### Hospitals—Metroplitan

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### Hospitals—Country

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### Total Cost Shared

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### Hospitals and Hospitals for the Aged

**Hospitals Sections**

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### Total Cost Shared

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Questions on Notice

Kyabram,
Latrobe Valley,
Lyndhurst,
McCulloch House,
Maffra,
Maldon,
Manxvanna,
Mansfield,
Maryborough,
Mildura,
Mount Eliza,
Mount Royal,
Nhill,
Ovens and Murray,
Queen Elizabeth Ballarat,
St Arnaud,
Swan Hill,
Seymour,
Wangaratta,
Stawell,
Williamstown,
Warracknabeal,
Winnemora,
West Gippsland,
Yarrawonga,
Wyndham.

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Total Non Cost Sharing: 1 096 316

Gross Deficit: (760 360)
Gross Surplus: 1 856 676

Legend:
A. Minor works deficit to be funded under the Minor Works Programme in 1980-81
B. Non cost-sharing payments subject to further adjustment
C. Expenditure not funded
D. Non cost-sharing receipts excluded.

USE OF PROSTAGLANDINS
(Question No. 1066)

Dr COGHILL (Werribee) asked the Minister of Health:

Further to the answer to question No. 854 given on 10 March 1981:
1. What monitoring of the sale and use of prostaglandins is carried out?
2. Whether there have been any allegations or evidence that prostaglandins have been sold or used in breach of schedule 7 to the Poisons Act 1962?
3. Whether the sale or use of any prostaglandins have been investigated; if so, whether any breaches of schedule 7 have been detected?
4. What action has been taken on any apparent breaches of schedule 7 in respect of prostaglandins?

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

1. Monitoring of prostaglandin sales in the sense of recording and overseeing of every sale is not carried out.
2. The Health Commission has evidence of one alleged breach of the Act in relation to prostaglandins. This occurred recently.
3. Prostaglandins are subject to the same "policing" by Poisons Control Inspectors as other substances scheduled under the Poisons Act, particularly Schedule 7.
4. This evidence is being studied. It is expected that sufficient admissible material will have been accumulated at the completion of the investigation to result in prosecution proceedings being instituted.

NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES PROGRAMME
(Question No. 1277)

Mr ERNST (Geelong East) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Water Supply:

What projects in Victoria have been approved in connection with the National Water Resources Programme?

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Agriculture) —The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is:

Allocations to Victoria under the National Water Resources Programme for 1980–81 financial year total $3 730 000, made up as follows:

- Water Resources Assessment: $1 250 000
- River Murray Valley Salinity and Drainage Projects: $1 473 000
- Flood Plain Management: $921 000
- Water Resource Studies: $86 000

Projects approved under this programme are:
(a) Surface Water Resources.
(b) Underground Water Resources.
2. River Murray Valley Salinity and Drainage Projects.
   (a) Mildura-Merbein Interception Works.
   (b) Woorinen Drainage Basin Remodelling.
   (c) Mineral Reserve Basins—Investigations.
   (d) Shepparton Groundwater Drainage, Phase A.
   (e) Shepparton Surface Drainage.
   (f) Research and Monitoring.
   (g) Salinity Laboratory, Tatura.
   (h) Pilot Desalination Study.
   (i) Evaluation and Procurement of Equipment and Services for Salinity Investigation and Works, Shepparton Region.
   (j) Saline Groundwater Re-use Group Project—Tongala.
   (k) Mineral Reserve Basins Scheme—Construction.
3. Flood Plain Management.
   (a) Studies and Investigation.
1. Investigations.
   To determine the cause, frequency and extent of flooding of urban and rural development in each study area and to prepare relevant structural and non-structural proposals aimed at alleviating present and future losses due to floods in the area.

Sale.
Seaspray.
Geelong.
Shepparton/Mooroopna.
Wangaratta.
Kerang—Lower Loddon.
Horsham.
Echuca.
Seymour.
Bendigo.
Traralgon.
Morwell.
Benalla.
River Murray Region (Torrumbarry, Mildura).
Harrietville.
Western District coastal towns (Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Peterborough).
Koo-Wee-Rup Flood Protection District.
Lara.
Werribee.

To determine the cause, frequency and extent of flooding in the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works' area (Yarra Valley) and to prepare flood plain management strategies for the area, aimed at alleviating present and future losses due to floods.

2. Surveys and Mapping
   To identify and provide maps of flood plains by analysis of data available, field surveys and and photogrammetry.
   (b) Works and Measures

1. Land Acquisition
   To acquire a number of properties which are subject to frequent flooding in the following flood-prone areas where unwise development has occurred.
   Echuca.
   Nhill.
   Lough Calvert.
   Merri Creek (Fyffe Street)
   Sale.
   Maribyrnong River.
   Dandenong Valley.
2. Works
   Echuca—levee construction.
   Nhill—protection works for town sewerage system.
   Lough—drainage and flood mitigation and improvement works.
   Nathalia—levee construction and adjustment of existing levees and irrigation works to improve the floodway.
   Kerang—upgrading existing levees.
   Lower Goulburn—repair and upgrading of flood control structures as part of a long term flood mitigation strategy.
   Seaspray—levee system construction, channel improvement and arrangements for monitoring creek flows.
   Sale—levee construction and minor river containment works.
3. Water Resources Studies
   Urban Water Services Financing.
   Water Quality Study—Thomson River Biota—Impact of Sediments.

(Question No. 1278)
Mr ERNST (Geelong East) asked the Minister of Agriculture, for the Minister of Water Supply:

In relation to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust project for the Gellibrand scheme:
1. Whether the scheme is part of the Victorian projects under the National Water Resources Programme?
2. Whether the project has been approved?
3. When funds will be made available?
4. What part of the project will be funded directly by the State Government?
5. What studies are being undertaken and funded by the State Government?

Mr AUSTIN (Minister of Agriculture)—The answer supplied by the Minister of Water Supply is:

Investigations in relation to underground waters of the Gellibrand River formed a project submitted for inclusion under the National Water Resources Programme, but the project was not agreed to by the Commonwealth. These investigations are proceeding by agreement between the Geelong Waterworks and
Sewerage Trust, State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the Department of Minerals and Energy.

Future decisions concerning the form of the project are the subject of inquiry by the Parliamentary Public Works Committee, and no decisions will be made as to methods of funding until the committee reports.

CHILD MINDING CENTRES

(Question No. 1291)

Mr CULPIN (Glenroy) asked the Minister of Health:

What is the number of registered private day care child minding centres within the metropolitan area, indicating the name and location of each?

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

271. See attached list.

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<th>Name and address</th>
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<td>Tiny Toddler's, 24 Sweetland Road, Box Hill</td>
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### Questions on Notice

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<td>In a Small World, 28 Holmes Road, Moonee Ponds</td>
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<td>Limnara Cottages, 154 Napier Street, Fitzroy</td>
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<td>E. M. Dauber Centre, 23 John Street, Fitzroy</td>
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<td>Footscray High School Creche, Wembly Avenue, Spotswood</td>
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<td>Mrs Cole's Nursery School, 110 Fortescue Avenue, Seaford</td>
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<td><strong>Melbourne</strong></td>
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[30 April 1981]
### Metropolitan area | Name and address
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Moorabbin | Finchlee Pre-School, Arthur Street, Bentleigh  
St James Lutheran Child Minding Centre, 416 South Road, Moorabbin  
South Oakleigh Uniting Church, Community Pre-School, Corner North and Mackie Roads, East Bentleigh  
Robin Hood Kindergarten, 364 McKinnon Road, East Bentleigh  
Young Child Care Centre Pty Ltd, 39 Isabella Street, Moorabbin  
Southland Child Care Centre, 1158 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham  
Snow White Child Minding Centre, 64 Mackie Road, East Bentleigh  
Goldilocks Day Nursery, 5 Cavalier Street, South Oakleigh  
Montene Park Child Minding Centre, 18 Acacia Avenue, Montone  
Friendship Square Child Care Centre, 35 Friendship Square, Cheltenham  
Dover Child Minding Centre, 32 Dover Street, East Bentleigh  
Mordialloc | Mordialloc North Pre-School Centre, Ceder Street, Mordialloc  
Playtime Day Nursery, Methodist Hall, Barkly Street, Mordialloc  
Montene Smallworld, 20 Latrobe Street, Montone  
Mountview Avenue Child Care Centre, 3 Mountview Avenue Parkdale  
Stawell Street Child Care Centre, 4 Stawell Street, Montone  
Ashmore Avenue Child Care Centre, 4 Ashmore Avenue, Mordialloc  
Bayside Turkish Community Child Care Centre, 33 Balcombe Road, Montone  
Northcote | Lilliput Lodge, 329 St. Georges Road, Thornbury  
Aladdin Child Care, 57 Cunningham Street, Westgarth  
Fairfield Hospital Child Minding Centre, Fairfield  
Hospital, Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield  
Matrakis Tiny Tots, 13 Woolton Avenue, Thornbury  
Perry Street Child Care Centre, Corner Separation and Perry Streets, Northcote  
Nunawading | Golden Creche, 21 Walwa Streets, Mitcham  
Pine Corner Child Minding Centre, Corner Whinehorse and East Doncaster Roads, Mitcham  
Surrey Kinderhaven, 118 Surrey Road, Blackburn  
Blackburn South Child Care Centre, 20 Richmond Street, South Blackburn  
Tinkerbelle Child Minding Centre, 11 Hills Parade, Mitcham  
Heathdale, 121 Brunswick Road, Mitcham  
Cuddle Pie Child Minding Centre, 30-32 Livingstone Road, Vermont South  
Oakleigh | Oakleigh Child Minding Centre  
25 John Street, Oakleigh  
Peter Pan Child Minding Centre, 1075 North Road, South Oakleigh  
Clayton Child Care Centre, 42 Prince Charlie Street, Clayton  
Andy Pandy, 1653 Dandenong Road, Oakleigh  
Churton Hall Nursery and Pre-School Centre, 24 Post Road, Hughesdale  
Monash Community Family Co-operative Ltd., 7C Beddoes Avenue, Clayton  
St. Dominic Savio Child Care Centre, 19 Donald Street, Clayton  
Port Melbourne | City of Port Melbourne Child Care Centre, 106 Clarke Street, Port Melbourne  
Prabran | Kindland, 90 Punt Road, Windsor  
Lancaster House and Hartley House, 694-700 Malvern Road, Prabran  
Leprechaun Child Minding Centre, Scout Hall, 135 Malvern Road, Prahran  
Prahran Child Minding Centre, Plenty Road, Prahran  
Preston | Kookaburra Play Centre, Methodist Hall, George Street, Preston  
Lyndale Play Centre, Methodist Hall, Corner Goodwin and Robeson Streets  
West Preston  
Whitehorse Children's Centre 41 Edwards Street, Reservoir  
Red Robin Day Nursery, 97 Hickford Street, Reservoir  
Latrobe University Children's Centre, Plenty Road, Bandooora  
Delaware Child Minding Centre, 89 Delaware Street, Reservoir  
Preston and Northcote  
Community Hospital Child Minding Centre, 2 South Street, Preston  
Reservoir Child Care Centre, 6-8 Kenilworth Street, Reservoir  
Quisperina Child Minding Centre, 26 Lawley Street, Reservoir  
Richmond | Rosary House, 319 Church Street, Richmond  
Debbies Day Nursery, 12 Vesper Street, Richmond  
Richmond Child Care and Family Centre, Corner Cornsair and Fraser Streets, Richmond  
Ringwood Child Minding Centre, 9 Pratt Street, Ringwood  
South Melbourne | Albert Park Day Nursery, 12 Canterbury Road, Albert Park
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<td>Shady Vale, 11-13 Hooker Avenue, Springvale</td>
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<td>Anna's Play School, 8 Clarke Road, Springvale</td>
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<td>Hillmartin, Church of England Hall, Corner Old Dandenong and Centre Dandenong Roads, Dingley</td>
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<td>Brown Owl Child Care Centre, 43 Paterson Road, Springvale South</td>
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<td>Mornington Child Care Centre, 334 Lunn Road, Mulgrave</td>
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<td>Pinewood Child Care Centre, 28-30 Chivers Avenue, Glen Waverley</td>
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<td>Monash Community Family Co-operative Ltd, 1 Duerrin Avenue, North Clayton</td>
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<td>Academy Child Care, 8 Academy Avenue, Mulgrave</td>
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<td>Whittlesea</td>
<td>Tinkers Inn, 6 Dorothy Avenue, Thomastown Lalor Child Minding Centre, 28 Curtain Avenue, Lalor Burkes Child Care Centre,</td>
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Legislative Council
Tuesday, 5 May 1981

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade) took the chair at 4.4 p.m. and read the prayer.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL
This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government), was read a first time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE
The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—The Minister for Local Government will recall having given an undertaking to the House in a Ministerial statement read to the House on 10 December last that it was the Government’s intention to introduce legislation granting universal adult franchise for municipal elections. Can the Minister advise the House when it is proposed to introduce such legislation, and whether it will be done in time for the forthcoming municipal elections?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—The Leader of the Opposition is correct in saying that on 10 December last I indicated that the Government had accepted certain recommendations in the Bains report, of which the proposal to introduce universal franchise at municipal elections was one. I also indicated to the House subsequently that those proposals accepted by the Government would be translated into legislation as expeditiously as possible. That proposed legislation is still in the process of being drafted, and will not see the light of day in the current sessional period of Parliament.

WATER SHORTAGES
The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—Is the Minister of Water Supply aware of the critical water shortage in many parts of Victoria which is affecting towns and individual property holders due to the long dry spell that the State is at present experiencing? If so, will he seek a full report from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission on the situation in Victoria and on the current storage of water, and will he consider the possibility of providing an early run of water where it is essential to towns and communities for stock and domestic purposes?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—Certainly, I am aware of the critical water situation in a number of Victorian country towns. I do not know what a Ministry can do to overcome the problem other than, perhaps, what Mr Dunn has suggested. I can obtain a report and recommend that a run of water be made available to any towns that are in a critical situation. It is a situation in which one does not like to see people placed.

However, the water storages of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission are probably only about 200 000 megalitres down in total this year from last year, which is not bad, considering the all-time record amount of irrigation water that has been supplied.

Nevertheless, I will obtain the report and make recommendations to the Water Commission for a run of water for any town where it is desperately needed. I assume this would apply in the Wimmera-Mallee area for stock and domestic purposes.

MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL COMMISSIONERS
The Hon. CLIVE BUBB (Ballarat Province)—Is the Minister for Local Government aware of the extravagant statements made in the press recently regarding the salary which will be paid to the chairman of the commissioners of the Melbourne City Council and to the part-time commissioners? If so, will he inform the House of the true position?

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER (Minister for Local Government)—I shall be pleased to inform the House of the true position. I have noted, as has Mr Bubb, some extravagant statements made in certain newspapers as to the salary to
be paid. It was stated quite definitively in one well-known journal that the salary would be in excess of $100 000 a year.

I am pleased to inform the House that as clause 5 of the Local Government (City of Melbourne) Bill, states in part:

Each of the Commissioners shall be paid out of the Town Fund of the City of Melbourne such remuneration and expenses as the Governor in Council may from time to time determine.

The Governor in Council has determined that the salary of the chairman of commissioners to be paid from the Town Fund shall be $60 146 a year with an allowance, also to be paid from the Town Fund, of $3000. The salary that will be applicable to the part-time commissioners will be $25 166, with an allowance also from the Town Fund of $1250.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY COURSES

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province) — Does the Minister of Education support the proposals to phase out the Deakin University's engineering courses, which are extremely valuable and necessary to the industrial City of Geelong? If the Minister does support the proposal, why and what will he do in regard to those students already embarked on sandwich courses; and if he is opposed to the proposals, what steps does he propose to take or has he taken to retain the courses at Deakin University?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education) — I am naturally as disappointed as is the honourable member and other members from the Geelong area about the Commonwealth Government's decision in respect of the engineering courses at Deakin University. As the honourable member is probably aware, I had discussions with the Acting Vice Chancellor, who supplied further information to me with a view to assisting the Government to resist this possibility. It has however eventuated and was announced last week by the Federal Government.

It does, in the view of the Victorian Government, overlook the extent of engineering demand in the Geelong region, with the major works and factories that exist there, and the growing demand, too, which will occur also at Portland. The Victorian Government believes it is very regrettable indeed, and will continue to press the case for the engineering faculty at Deakin University with the Commonwealth Minister for Education.

ROAD TOLL

The Hon. K. I. M. WRIGHT (North Western Province) — I direct a question to the Attorney-General concerning the road toll and the manner in which the figures show an unusual proportion of young drivers being involved. An interested constituent put a proposition to me that seems to have a lot of merit, that is, because so many car loads of young people are involved in fatal accidents, consideration ought to be given to a restriction of only one passenger in a car driven by a "P" plate driver. I ask the Attorney-General whether this particular question has been considered by the Government.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General) — I am sure that everybody regrets deeply the tragic loss and injury caused to young people in road accidents in our community, and any steps that can be taken to elevate that are worth while. Whether this proposition is acceptable in practical terms is another question. I am not aware the suggestion has been examined, but I will certainly pass it on to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for his consideration, if it has not already been considered, but if it has, to inform the honourable member of what consideration has been given to it and what view has been taken.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Hon. D. K. HAYWARD (Monash Province) — I direct my question to the Minister for Conservation representing the Minister of Health. I refer to the situation of low income families who do not fall within the so-called disadvantaged category, but who are without health insurance. Will these people be refused hospital treatment if
they are unable to demonstrate their inability to pay hospital accounts, and what will be the position if hospital accounts remain unpaid as a result of this situation?

**The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON**

(Minister for Conservation)—The thrust of the new policy on health, as I understand it, is that those who can afford to pay will be asked to pay for their health services.

They always have had to pay for their health services of course. The cost of health services will be no different tomorrow to what it was yesterday.

**The Hon. Joan Coxsedge**—Do you reckon?

**The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON**—I reckon. It is a matter of how those costs are to be met. All the changes in health insurance, and health schemes since 1970, have been involved with the question of how is the bill to be paid; is it to be paid by the taxpayer as a taxpayer, or is it to be paid by the person who seeks the service? Every scheme that has evolved since then has allowed for a mix of those two factors.

As I understand it, it is proposed that pensioners will not be liable for the cost of their health services; those people who cannot meet the standard of the means test will not be required to meet the cost of their health services, but others will be.

**TECHNICAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA**

**The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE** (Melbourne West Province)—I direct my question to the Minister of Education. In view of the Minister's reply on 10 April to a letter from the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria drawing his attention to the serious shortfalls and staff in this division, especially in mathematics—science and following a well documented claim for replacement teachers and his subsequent meeting with union officials on 22 April when he confirmed their claim, I ask the Minister: Are these shortfalls a result of deliberate policy or shoddy planning and will he indicate to this House how such miscalculations occurred? What further cuts does the Minister intend to make in the Teaching Service, whose heads will roll, and what plans, if any, does he have to rectify this appalling situation?

**The Hon. A. J. HUNT** (Minister of Education)—The question by Mrs Coxsedge is based on a whole series of misconceptions. I turn first to the question of my letter dated 10 April in reply to the letter from the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria. I had received, prior to 10 April, notice from the association that it was in the course of preparing a claim and that it proposed to go on strike in support of that claim after Easter. It should be noted that the union was still in the course of preparing the claim; it should also be noted, that the claim could not, and had not, been presented to the Government.

In my response to the union of 10 April, I indicated that I regarded it as a very strange thing to call a strike in support of a claim that at that stage had not even been prepared, let alone been discussed. I invited the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria to think again and not to use a strike as a weapon of first resort rather than last resort. As honourable members know, the strike subsequently took place.

On Easter eve I happened to receive the union's claim. It was a large document that required detailed analysis by my department. I received it on the Thursday prior to Easter, too late to have any study of it made over Easter by the officers concerned. On the first working day after Easter, I met the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria for its regular monthly meeting. We discussed a number of issues. The question of this claim was mentioned, and I explained that it had been impossible, as yet, to analyse it.

That claim has been raised in this House since. I have been questioned about it. It predicts a shortage of 550 trade instructors in various fields and I have informed the House already that it is itself based on a misconception.

I have explained to the House that vacancies have been filled as they have arisen this term, vacancies will also be
filled as they arise next term. I have explained that teachers are held in reserve in many of the schools in which vacancies will occur next term, and other vacancies will be filled by transfer.

I have also informed the House that next term, in several limited fields, teachers are going on leave and it may not be possible to replace them with teachers who have full qualifications in the subjects in which absent teachers are specialist. That is indeed regrettable. The fault lies in failing to object to the granting of leave to teachers in shortfall areas during term 2 which is the popular time for leave. The effect of the strike is to draw this to attention and to ensure, as happens in other industries and professions, that in the future long service leave will have to be taken at a time mutually convenient to the employer and the employee. In the Education Department, the practice has grown up of teachers taking their long service leave when suitable to them, regardless of the interest of the children.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—How will you do that?

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—By objecting to the granting of leave at a time when positions for teaching in certain subjects cannot be filled. Meanwhile, the result will be that in some of the shortfall areas a small number of positions may be filled by teachers who do not have full specialist qualifications, but who are nevertheless trained and registered teachers.

LOGGING IN CATCHMENT AREAS

The Hon. D. M. Evans (North Eastern Province)—I address a question to the Minister of Water Supply relating to reports in the newspapers last week quoting the Premier as saying that logging in Melbourne’s catchment areas will not be allowed to proceed. Can the Minister advise whether this decision was taken following a report from a consulting group or committee and, if so, who were the members of this group or committee and will the Minister make their report available in full to the House and the Parliament?

The Hon. F. J. Granter (Minister of Water Supply)—The decision was taken by Cabinet that no logging would be undertaken in the Melbourne water supply catchment area. Cabinet considered a number of reports made available to it over the years and in particular the FIRM Group report and the hydrology report of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. The Cabinet made its own decision and is not bound by any committee report.

SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE IN SCHOOLS

The Hon. N. F. Stacey (Chelsea Province)—The Minister of Education is aware of the concern expressed by smaller primary schools about the need for additional secretarial assistance. Will the honourable gentleman indicate to the House that he will approach the Treasurer with a view to increasing funds available for full time secretarial services in schools of below 500 and increasing part time assistance in smaller schools needing secretarial help?

The Hon. A. J. Hunt (Minister of Education)—I am aware of the need for further secretarial assistance in smaller primary schools. Budget submissions were made last year and I will have to consider whether Budget submissions are to be made again this year. I now have some indication, in the light of yesterday’s events, of the parameters that my department will be facing next year. My colleague, the Minister of Educational Services and I, intend to proceed to seek an improvement in the formula for teachers in primary schools. That is our first priority and we are led to believe that it is likely to be granted, but that if so it will be unlikely that we will be able to obtain relief on the secretarial side in the same year.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FACTORIES

The Hon. G. A. Sgro (Melbourne Province)—In view of the “razor gang’s” proposal to close a number of Commonwealth Government factories in Victoria and particularly in view of the proposal to sell the Australian Government Clothing Factory in Coburg which employs 750 people,
will the Government condemn this action of the Federal Government and pledge its support to the workers in those factories to maintain them open?

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—The Victorian Government would certainly be most concerned if the proposal were to close down the factory. On the contrary, the proposal is to sell the factory as a going concern. It is hoped that the factory will be maintained open, and the Victorian Government would be happy to assist in seeking a purchaser for it.

BOARD OF WORKS WATER STORAGES

The Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province)—Does the Minister of Water Supply personally monitor the current level of storages in the Board of Works area and, if so, is he aware that at present the Board of Works storages contain less than 4000 megalitres of a storage capacity of 705 000 megalitres? Is the Minister aware that currently the level of water supply in the storages as a proportion of the total capacity is less than the level in October 1972 when water restrictions were last introduced? If so, can the Minister indicate to the House the prospects for Board of Works ratepayers in respect of the provision of water and possibility of water restrictions in 1981?

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—I do not envisage any possibility of water restrictions in 1981. Mr White is probably fairly accurate in the figures for water levels that he has quoted. The capacity at present is probably about 63 per cent.

The levels cause a little concern at this stage of the year. However, as I stated before, Victoria has experienced the driest period for 30 years and no water restrictions have applied in the metropolitan area. In view of the total capacity of 705 000 megalitres, we are dependent on good rain next year and if it does not eventuate, there could be problems. However, there is usually rain in June, July, August, September and perhaps October and there is every possibility that the storages will be replenished to full capacity.

HERBICIDE 2, 4, 5-T

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I address a question to the Minister of Lands and refer to a letter that he wrote to a colleague of mine in another place this year in which he indicated that it is Government policy to preclude the use of the herbicide 2, 4, 5-T in a residential area. Can the Minister state what is defined as a residential area in these terms and what is defined as a non-residential area, what is the minimum distance between areas sprayed and dwellings and does it vary according to weather conditions?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—There are various ways of defining residential areas. For planning purposes another term is often used—a built-up area. It could be an area described as being lit by street lights.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—What is your department's definition?

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—My department's definition is that if there is any danger likely to residential buildings, the spraying of 2, 4, 5-T will not be undertaken. It is fairly easy to ensure that areas are not sprayed within a reasonable distance of residential areas and wind direction is taken into consideration.

PRINTING COMMITTEE

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

That the Printing Committee be empowered to meet during the suspension of the sitting for dinner this day.

It may come as a surprise to honourable members to know that the rule precluding Parliamentary committees from sitting whilst Parliament is sitting applies during the suspension of the sitting for dinner. I have been informed, however, that on a strict ruling of the Constitution, the suspension of the sitting for dinner is regarded as a time when Parliament is still sitting. It is a mere suspension of the sitting rather than a non-sitting period. I have moved
the motion to enable the Printing Committee to conduct its urgent business this day.

The motion was agreed to.

**COMMONWEALTH–STATE FINANCIAL RELATIONS**

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the failure of the Government to honour its repeated promises to the people of Victoria that it would obtain a better deal in funding in real terms if a Liberal Government was elected to the Commonwealth Parliament.

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

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

If ever the Victorian public needed another example of a broken promise, the past week has clearly brought to the surface the true nature of the Fraser and the Hamer Conservative Governments both nationally and within this State. It was indeed a week in which the Prime Minister was told by the honourable member for Kooyong that he had a mania for getting his own way in centralizing power. It was a week in which the Federal Government, led by the Prime Minister, who had promised to maintain Medibank, introduced its fifth attempt to castrate it. It was a week in which the so-called “razor gang” delivered its report detailing the decisions of the national Government’s review of the structure of government. It was a week in which the Premier went, as usual, weak and cap in hand, to his Federal master to be told that Victoria was, once again, being sold out.

That past week, and the years that preceded it since November 1975, have to be seen against the backdrop of an unashamed embracing of the concept of so-called new federalism by the Victorian Premier. Indeed, in a radio programme on 28 September 1975, the Premier told Victorians:

What any federation requires to work properly is a clear definition of the responsibilities of the partners and matching financial resources to carry them out. This is exactly what will happen under the next Liberal–National Party Government in Canberra.

During the 1975 Federal election campaign, the Premier appeared in an advertisement, apparently at least, sitting alongside the Prime Minister’s wife and the Prime Minister and the full page advertisement read:

A vote for Malcolm Fraser is a vote for Victoria. The return of Malcolm Fraser as Prime Minister will result in greatly increased co-operation between Canberra and my Government. It will be a tremendous boost for the future prosperity of Victoria.

The advertisement appears to be signed by the Premier of Victoria or at least R. J. Hamer and signed “Dick Hamer”. That was in 1975.

However, after that election, in February 1976, the Premier then said to this State:

We support wholeheartedly the new approach to federalism. This is by far the most important concept in Federal relations taken this century and it will mark the end of the era of the oriental bazaar.

In 1977, during that Federal election campaign, despite the extraordinary poor economic record of the Fraser Government and the shabby way in which the Victorian people had been dealt with by that Government, the Premier persisted with his unashamed support of the Fraser Government. I again quote from an advertisement in the *Age* of 9 December 1977, which was the height of that campaign. The advertisement was not signed. I am unsure of whether the multi-million dollar Liberal Party machine was game enough to ask the Premier to sign the advertisement which speaks about:

The Liberal tax cuts in February mean more jobs for others and are essential to our economic recovery.

That advertisement appeared, despite the Premier saying on 10 June 1976, which was well prior to that election and after the Premiers Conference:

Our objective at present and in the present circumstances all round Australia ought not to be to increase real public expenditure but
to at least maintain current levels. To do anything else is not to transfer resources to the private sector but to cripple that section of private industry which normally depends on public contracts.

On any shred of the definition of the word "honesty" the decisions of the national Government and the statements in the House last week demonstrated that the Liberal Party is both dishonest and incapable of governing. It is clearly being used and is using the Parliament both nationally and in the State as a vehicle for the privileged and a force for the entrenched conservatism of this nation. The decisions that have been recently announced, with not one real word of serious protest from the State Government, mean that Victoria will have increased unemployment generated particularly but not necessarily exclusively in the public sector. Victoria has had transferred to it, without any real say, if the Minister of Health is to be believed, additional responsibilities from the national Government, but without the necessary resources to match that responsibility.

The Government has abandoned both the direct public interest involvement in many effective areas of Government activities. This Government almost without question across the Liberal Party structure of this nation has inextricably redistributed income without receiving one word of caution or complaint from the Premier or the Liberal Government of this State.

The State and Federal Governments, despite repeated promises, have substantially reduced the real income of nearly all wage and salary earners. I remember in 1975 the Prime Minister and the Premier saying that the decision on wage indexation was in fact open and shut and that wage indexation would be maintained. Within months of taking office the Prime Minister, aided and abetted by the Victorian Government, set about to destroy the concept of wage indexation. Wage and salary earners have not had wage indexation since virtually 1976.

The trade-off, as the Prime Minister refers to the tax rebate on health insurance, is deceitful. I will take the House through that swindle. The introduction of a tax rebate for health insurance premiums is merely an attempt to deceive the people of Victoria and Australia about the abolition of tax indexation. The 38 per cent tax indexation, which has survived the financial year 1980–81, is of itself a significant departure from full tax indexation. However, the abolition of even this element of indexation will have significant effects on the disposable income of the many hundreds and thousands of wage and salary earners in Victoria. There has not been one word of protest from the Premier, even though he has persistently and consistently over the past six years enthusiastically embraced the concept of new federalism.

The suggestion that the abolition of tax indexation was a trade-off for the introduction of tax deductability for a proportion of health fund contributions is nothing more than a political sleight of hand. It is a trick that should be exposed throughout the community, and the Premier and the Minister of Health bear that responsibility on behalf of all Victorians.

Indeed, changes to the health system forcing responsibility onto Victoria constitute an abrogation of Federal Government responsibilities. The increased costs will adversely affect individuals and families in this State and across Australia who seek to obtain hospital and medical care.

The statisticians tell me that more than 3.5 million people will be forced to go back into health insurance schemes and that many others will require to upgrade their cover. It is no small thing that within hours of the announcement of this terrible change to be made to the Medibank scheme—yet another change to the Medibank scheme by a Government led by a Prime Minister who promised to maintain it—some of the private insurance companies which operated in this field under the guise of being associations had placed announcements in the daily press to tell the poor and underprivileged that they were under yet another obligation to join a health fund and that they would
require cards to demonstrate to some bureaucrat that they are poor. Clearly a substantial proportion of the Australian and Victorian people will face critical increases in the cost of hospital and medical care insurance. The economically disadvantaged in the community will be subject, as they have been constantly subjected by the Fraser and Hamer Governments, to even greater economic disadvantages.

A patent inequity results from the combined effects of the regressive redistributive effects of the combination of the health financing changes and the abolition of tax indexation. Low-income earners who were promised protection by the Prime Minister and the Premier under the so-called new federalism will suffer a far greater percentage reduction in real disposable incomes than high and middle-income earners. A medium wage earner with a dependent spouse and children may expect to suffer a 6 per cent reduction in real disposable income in the financial year 1981-82, and a person on the mythical average weekly earnings will suffer a reduction of 3·5 per cent in the same circumstances.

Recently I listened with interest to a back-bench member of the Government party who moved a motion which suggested that he had sold out his ambitions to be a member of Cabinet and had given away much of the standing that he had built up, particularly in the industry in which he had worked. While speaking about the Government’s so-called new directions policy, he juggled the unemployment figures. I have not heard the honourable member refer to the current unemployment figures that are now available for the month of March. Having announced a series of proposals at a national level designed to attack the real living standards of wage and salary earners in this country, the national Government launched an attack on employment and employment opportunities in the public sector.

I shall turn briefly to the statistics on unemployment in Victoria. According to bulletin No. 6201 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in the preliminary estimates period which it surveyed for March 1981 the number of full and part-time job seekers, 112 500 such persons were listed in Victoria. The percentage variation from March 1980 to March 1981 showed an increase of 6·9 per cent—almost a 7 per cent increase in unemployment in that period. By comparison, in New South Wales and particularly, Queensland, the number of unemployed people substantially decreased.

On a national basis, having regard to the economic difficulties through which the Liberal Party Government in South Australia has led that State, for the whole of Australia in March there was a 0·6 per cent reduction in the number of people unemployed, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In Victoria there was an increase of 6·9 per cent, which means that 112 500 people out of a total of 410 000 people in Australia are unemployed, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for Victoria.

It is not surprising that the report of the so-called razor gang will result in the cutting out of the next group of statistics to which I shall refer, because the figures are substantially different. I refer to the figures of the Commonwealth Employment Service. The criteria used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics are completely different from those used by the Commonwealth Employment Service, although they set out to look at the same groups of people.

According to the criteria that the Australian Bureau of Statistics is directed to use, if a person works for 1 hour in one week, that person is employed, but the Commonwealth Employment Service figures for full-time job seekers show a far more interesting picture. These are not people looking for a few hours work or for temporary or casual work; they are full-time job seekers. In the month of March this year in Victoria the number of full-time job seekers was 115 785, which is an increase of nearly 5 per cent over the figures for the previous March.

Nevertheless, members of this House told Parliament some weeks ago that Victoria was going through a period of economic regeneration; it was a myth...
to say that people were leaving the State in droves; Melbourne was not really the evacuation capital of Australia; the unemployment figures were misleading, and anyone who wanted to find work could do so. Another promise of the Premier and the Prime Minister was that anyone in this State who wanted to find work would find it.

The potpourri of decisions made by the razor gang must ultimately result in unemployment for thousands of Government employees and will create uncertainty for thousands of other workers. Nevertheless, the Premier stated that unemployment would follow if the level of Government expenditure that was current in 1976 was reduced. He has now said, if he has been correctly reported in the Melbourne Age, that the law has been broken by the Prime Minister and that despite the 39.87 per cent guarantee of income to be distributed to the States, the total that will be available is less than that amount. However, one has not heard one word from the Premier suggesting that the Prime Minister should resign and that the Government should go to the people. All this is happening in an environment in which nearly one in ten of people who wish to find work cannot do so.

Those decisions are callous and without economic justification, let alone social justification. It is clear that the so-called new federalism of Malcolm Fraser's Government, so enthusiastically supported by the Victorian Government, is embodied in the irresponsible shedding of Federal Government authority and direction almost without regard for the welfare of both the Victorian and Australian people. Despite the political aspirations of some members of the back-bench of the Government, they will no doubt vote with their feet against the motion. Yet if ever the House should adjourn to discuss a matter of public importance, it should do so now to protest about the fact that the State Government has failed to live up to its repeated promises to the Victorian people.

During question time I heard an almost limp response from the Leader of the Government about the sale of one of the major assets of this city that belongs to the Australian people when a question was asked about the Government clothing factory. The proposed sale of Government enterprises in a number of areas throughout Australia and their implied discontinuation of operation if not sold is a sell-out to private commercial interests, to the mates of the Liberal Party and their friends in the commercial world. It is a rejection of the right of the people to have a direct say in the operation of many areas of industrial importance.

The cumulative effect of the Fraser Government's economic decision will be to increase the degree of social and economic division in Australian society. It is no secret that responsible people on both sides of the national political fence are accusing the Prime Minister of being divisive and of deliberately setting out to divide the community, one section from another. The total impact is a manifestation of a manic Government which is insensitive to the problems and priorities of working people, the hardships of the unemployed and the demands of the changes that are taking place in the community.

These other insensitivities will lead to an increase in pressure and further division will occur within our community. These divisions are growing as a result of a deliberate policy of the Fraser Government supported by the quisling Premier of this State, who is very enthusiastic at election time for the Prime Minister but who goes weak-willed, almost limply, to Canberra after claiming publicly before going that Victoria must have more money. After the Premiers Conference before last, the Premier told the public that although he voted for the proposal he did not really accept it.

What sort of leader has this State? Much as I disagree with the philosophies of Sir Henry Bolte, I cannot imagine Sir Henry Bolte going to Canberra and standing for what occurred. In this State we have a hypocritical Premier who says one thing publicly—

The Hon. J. V. C. GUEST (Monash Province)—Mr President, I draw your attention to the word “hypocritical” and
not long before that the word "quisling", which words were applied to the Premier. I suggest the words are offensive and the honourable member should be ordered to withdraw them.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Standing Order No. 131 states:

No Member shall use offensive or unbecoming words in reference to any other Member. I request the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the adjectives he used with reference to the Premier of this State.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—In deference to you Mr President, I do so, but I repeat again that it is hypocritical for one man to say publicly that he does not support a proposition and then to come back after a meeting and state that he voted for a proposal even though it was not accepted by him. That is what has occurred because the Premier indicated to the people of this State that really the Government had no alternative but to accept something it did not want to accept. To my mind nothing could be more hypocritical but in deference to you, Mr President, I shall not use those words which I used previously when referring to the Premier.

As honourable members know the Premier supports new federalism and the Liberal Party in this State gives blind support for that principle. It was claimed that this State would go ahead under the so-called new federalism. However, honourable members should examine what is happening at this stage. During the years of the Whitlam Government, Government supporters were continually criticizing the Whitlam Government's decision to establish controls over tied grants. However, I have not heard one supporter of the Government criticize the way in which the present Prime Minister has not only tied the States to decisions but also ignored the needs of the States. I remind honourable members that the formula for tax reimbursement was worked out in the days of the Whitlam Government and that formula has been a backdrop for this Government. That formula was worked out prior to the election of the present Prime Minister of Australia and if it had not been worked out, this State and every other State would be in a far worse situation because every proposition put to the Premiers at every Premiers Conference or Australian Loan Council meeting since then has been on the basis that they would have received substantially less than under the formula that was agreed to prior to the present Prime Minister being elected.

In fact, Malcolm Fraser has given the Liberal Party Government in this State nearly six years notice of his intentions. The Government supported Mr Fraser in 1975 and again in 1977 and 1980, but I submit that there was no basis for that support because this State was not being treated fairly, given its contributions to the coffers of the Federal Government compared with what it was getting back by way of tax reimbursement.

In 1976, 1977 and 1978 honourable members heard Mr Hamilton and others berate the Federal Government under Mr Whitlam, but those honourable members did not blame the Fraser Government. If those honourable members were to be consistent in their approach, then they should have been consistent in their arguments and should have berated the Fraser Government, but Government supporters did not state anything about the present approach of the Federal Government.

Quite clearly the Premier of this State has led Victoria into a situation where despite assurances given that new federalism would be for the good of Victoria and that Victorians would be able to maintain their living standards, such has not been the case.

On 17 October 1980 the Premier had printed in the newspapers a testimonial in favour of the Prime Minister. The Premier listed the record of the Government—this was in a non-election year—and stated publicly his support for the Prime Minister. In the advertisement which appeared on that date the Premier listed the record of the Government and was speaking about the future of Victoria but the Premier did not state
anything about the enormous cutbacks in Federal resources which were then made available to this State. There was no announcement of the enormous problems that would be created not only for this State but also for the other States as a result of the policies of the Fraser Government with respect to the resources that were available to the people of this country, especially those resources which were off its shores.

There was nothing about the effects of new federalism on practically every facet of the community, except when it comes to the rural sector. New federalism affects the interests of the average person in this State but there was no announcement that there were to be wholesale sackings and cutbacks under new federalism.

It is all right for the Minister of Education to bleat about new moves being made by his Federal colleagues to do something about it. Honourable members should support a proposition to go to the Premier and state that honourable members, as a House, as members of the Parliament, should go to the Federal Government and indicate that it cannot sit by any longer and watch the combined incompetence of Federal and State Governments destroy the economic basis of this State. Honourable members cannot sit any longer and see a Prime Minister so determined to get his own way that he appoints his own stooges to carry out his wishes and then insist that all Premiers accept proposals which are not to the advantage of the people in this State.

Why cannot honourable members make a bipartisan political decision to go to Canberra as a House of Parliament and state to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet that Victoria has had enough of this nonsense and it cannot allow any longer the total impact of the Fraser Government's economic policies, combined with the present Liberal Government in this State, to destroy and destruct the economy of this State.

I turn briefly to what I believe was the point I was endeavouring to make earlier: That in 1975 the States enjoyed, under the Whitlam Government, which was described in all sorts of emotional language as a Socialist tiger, an insult to the Australian people, a Government that was trying to do too much too quickly, a Government that had lost the confidence of the Australian people, uniform tax-sharing arrangements, grants which increased annually by 3 per cent faster than the growth of population and the real average earnings.

**The Hon. B. P. Dunn—** What was the Federal deficit at that time?

**The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—** Mr Dunn wants to speak in terms of Federal deficit! I remind Mr Dunn what occurred in the first year of the Fraser Government. During the first full financial year of the Fraser Government, it was operating on a deficit which was bigger and higher than under the former Whitlam Government. After the Liberal Party had got rid of the Hayden Budget, the first real Budget of the new Liberal Government was designed to run this country into a bigger deficit than that which had been the basis for the Whitlam Government making arrangements to borrow funds from overseas, which action led to the so-called loans affair. The amount of the Fraser Government deficit was higher than the amount of money which the Whitlam Government had instructed Rex Connor and others to borrow. I remind honourable members that those funds were to be used for the development of this country and for the benefit of the people who lived in it.

In 1976 and 1977 under the formula the States were to receive and share 39.87 per cent of all personal income tax collected in the previous year, excluding the effects of special levies or rebates. This arrangement proved irrelevant since the Whitlam Government guarantee operated as a backstop on almost every occasion. In fact every time there was a proposal from the Prime Minister and his Treasurer to the States that represented a substantial reduction in the funds to be made available to the States, there was this backdrop which protected the States from any further savagery that those people tried to implement. They are the money
managers; the people who understood how to solve the economic problems. They said, “If you want a job, elect us. We will solve it for you. There will be work for all those who want it. Medi-bank will be maintained. There will be a wage indexation policy for at least three years.” All those policies were thrown out. It is no secret that the Premier of this State produced promises, and almost allowed political students to coin the phrase “the man who invented the disposable promise”. He makes promises at election time.

Some of the promises that the Premier made in 1970 still have not been implemented. Remember the transport revolution, and all the things that this Government was going to do! They are monuments. There was the Government’s great education revolution—all the things that this Government was going to do. What about local government—the Government was going to revolutionize its approach to local government. It swapped Ministers half way through that nonsense, and then the policy was thrown in the wastepaper basket.

This Government has a deplorable record. It says one thing at election time and does something different. When it comes to its responsibilities in State and Federal relationships, it could not care less.

If honourable members read some of the statements of the present Treasurer, or his predecessor, or of the Premier at election time, they would think that their political enemies were sitting on the Treasury benches in the national Parliament. In fact it is the opposite. It is the very Government, the very party that is in power, that the Premier goes around the State campaigning for at Federal election time, and campaigns for in the mass media to ensure that his party is re-elected. It is absolute nonsense, having regard to the so called new federalism—which is really new centralism that has been developed by the cowyard Cabinet and completely inappropriate—for the Fraser Government to say to this State that this new federalism is working and that this is part of its responsibility.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou

As every Liberal Party politician knows of new federalism, the Government has not had the courage or the guts to say to the people of Victoria, finally and honestly, that the Federal Government has so far cut back the resources available to the Government in this State that it will have to introduce an income tax. Of course not a word will be heard about that prior to the next State election; not one syllable, other than denial and denial. This State Government will say, “We will not do that”, just as Mr Fraser said, “I will not abolish Medibank”. But Mr Fraser has had five attempts—five unsuccessful attempts. Mr Fraser said he would not abolish wage indexation. He has broken promises, just like this Premier has broken major promises in employment, economic management, public transport and planning, and he goes on unchecked and unchallenged by the Premier and the Government of this State. They could not care less about the problems that have been created for the unemployed in this State, for the average family man, or for the average public servant trying to administer this State.

One has only to look at the increasing burden of responsibility that has been put on some of the members of the Public Service of this State, simply because of the autocratic stupidity that masquerades as economic policy under the banner of new federalism. Even private individuals, and some members of the Liberal Party appointed to the car licence manufacturing committee, have said in a report to this Parliament, “You are being stupid. Give us some of our own money we are raising from our own local industry so that we can employ more people to make more money and eliminate a number of breaches of the Act that this Parliament has charged this committee to supervise.”

That is just one small example of the sort of stupidity that is running riot in the Liberal Party, the so called philosophy of new federalism. It means that this Government, this State—as long as Mr Fraser remains Prime Minister of this country—will have to raise its own revenue. Even though the Premier has denied it, and the Treasurer
has denied it, this Government is preparing, before the next State election, to impose on the Victorian people a State income tax. The Government will not say that prior to the next election, because it knows what happened to Sir Henry Bolte when he suggested a turnover tax in this State. Sooner or later there has to be a day of accounting, and it is nonsense that the Government should continue to borrow time by rejecting its responsibility as a Government to provide services to the people of this State if the Federal Government will not finance those services. It leads to no other conclusion—either the services go completely, or the Government must raise its own tax.

When the Minister read through a statement in respect of supply and said that the Government was looking at other areas of raising tax indirectly, there was not one whimper from the back-bench about how unjust that would be on the poor. There was not one whimper from the Premier in 1976 when he was embracing the concept of new federalism, and urging everyone to accept it as the fairest way of raising tax. In that short four or five years, the Premier has done another complete somersault. That is another promise disposed of other than in an election year. It is an extraordinary record. The Government of this State has the worst record of any Government in the history of this country with respect to promises. It makes them up at election time; sometimes recycles them at another election, but never bothers to implement them except those which satisfy their rich and powerful friends.

I do not believe the Victorian people will be silly enough to elect the Hamer Government at the next election, or a Borthwick Government, an Austin Government, a Maclellan Government, or a Hunt Government for that matter. However, I do believe that a Wilkes Government will lead this State in a responsible way. The Minister of Education is jocularly interjecting. Why does he not say that, in exercising the responsibility of raising finance and the method by which the finance is raised in terms of the loan borrowing programme, the State should take advantage of the very low rating of the national Government, and avoid the present situation of the States guaranteeing the borrowings of semi-government authorities, and bearing the interest charges involved, if the Prime Minister can be persuaded to assume the responsibility of the national Government—with its 000 rating. The financial burden then would no doubt be substantially lower. Yet Government spokesmen state that the Government is concerned about interest rates. That elementary step has not been taken or advocated by the Government.

There has been no suggestion by the Government that the amount of money to be made available to local government ought to be increased. The infrastructure of the Fraser Government is not under scrutiny by the Liberal Government of this State because it is now locked into the concept of so-called new federalism, which will be its own undoing. The Government thinks it can off-the-cuff make political word-picture promises at election time; off-the-cuff embrace new slogans like new federalism without really understanding its implications, or, if it does understand, not being honest with the Victorian people. At least Sir Charles Court has come out honestly and said precisely what he thinks of it. I once read to the House the comment of the Premier of Queensland. Even he was moved to say that new federalism is not exactly what the States were led to believe when they heard about it, but no such comment falls from our own Premier because once again he believes this great mirage can be 'built up, promises of everything and anything, and can say whatever is necessary, “As long as we win we will get through to the next election.” The patience of the Victorian people is almost exhausted with the extraordinary and almost non-ending capacity of the Liberal Party to tell lies and make promises when it suits it, and to forget them after the election, only to trot them out again when an election or a by-election is again in the offing.

The Government stands condemned, and the House should adjourn in protest at the failure of the Government to
honour its repeated promises to the people of this State that they would obtain a better deal in funding in real terms if a Liberal Government were elected to the Commonwealth Parliament. I have not bored the House by reading the statistics associated with that assertion but I have quoted from the Premier, as reported in this morning's newspaper, that this State is not only worse off in real terms than in the previous days but also will be worse off as the years progress, under the new federalism.

The Premier stands condemned for his in-between-election attitude and his lack of decency in not being frank and honest with the Victorian people at election time.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I listened with interest and, I trust, courtesy, to what Mr Landeryou said for more than 40 minutes but I felt a little upset at the end when he endeavoured to write a speech for me and suggested that I should say this or that. I do not propose to allow him to determine what I will say in response to a speech which consisted of political polemics and very little else. Although the words were directed at the Victorian Government, the gravamen was certainly an attack on the Fraser Government and, in particular, a commentary on the events of yesterday. If Mr Landeryou expects me, the Premier or any other member of the Government party to support the decisions of yesterday made by the Commonwealth, he is greatly mistaken. I agree with Mr Wran, Mr Lowe, the Premier of this State and the Premiers of other States that what occurred yesterday indicated a failure of recognition of the role of the States. This is common to Federal politicians, regardless of parties. Despite the policies that they adopt initially they seem to be led by the Federal Treasury and to see the point of view of the Commonwealth to the exclusions of the States.

The Victorian Government rejects categorically the suggestion that any States are better off as a result of yesterday's decision. They are not better off, nor is Victoria better off vis-à-vis the Commonwealth. Many people in the community share the view of the Commonwealth Government that the cost of Government should be contained to the minimum necessary to allow it to undertake its role successfully. I share that view. The Victorian Government shares that view but if costs are to be cut, the cuts should be shared equitably and the simple fact is that this State and the States in general, as a result of yesterday's decisions, are left with a lower percentage of the national taxation income than they previously had. We do not agree with that. We fought against it as a Government and we will continue to seek a fair share for Victoria of the total national revenues of this country.

I do not propose to seek to answer in any detail the matters raised by Mr Landeryou because they were just straight political attacks. I will merely challenge him to put the record of election promises fulfilled by this Government against that of the Whitlam Government. The Victorian Government has nothing to be ashamed of there. It previously published a booklet showing the progress of implementation of promises made at the last election and it will publish the further progress of implementation of promises. The record is a proud one and the Government is prepared to make these publications available periodically to enable the people to judge.

In another place this week the Premier will make a detailed statement on the events in Canberra yesterday. He is the proper person to make that statement. The debate in this House today is an endeavour to pre-empt him and it is not proposed to do that. I ask the House to object to this motion.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—For as long as I can remember, this almost annual ritual has occurred of the Premiers going to Canberra with the usual story of receiving a hard time during the afternoon and, after dinner at the Lodge, coming back—and obtaining a slightly larger slice of the cake. The Premiers have then returned to the States and stated that the
situation looked grim in the afternoon but that they were able to salvage what they could. Ministers in this place and another place tell the Parliament and the people how terrible the Federal Government is and what a disastrous effect the financial cuts will have on the State, but they then proceed with their programmes without considering them further and they continue all the inadequacies of their administration until the next Premiers Conference when they repeat the whole procedure.

I agree with the Minister of Education that Mr Landeryou’s motion was strong on rhetoric and was a good story. Honourable members have heard a few of those from Mr Landeryou who puts up a convincing argument, but I ask myself, “What is the alternative that Mr Landeryou would put forward for Australia other than the present Federal Government?” Everybody, including the Labor Party, wants increased spending in almost every field of Government endeavour. Every day demands are made for increased spending on health, education and welfare. If, by some strange twist of fate, Labor found itself to be in office, where would that money be found? It would be necessary to raise the taxes or to run the nation into a greater deficit. During Mr Landeryou’s comments, he made play about the advantageous funding of State and other programmes during the Whitlam era, and I asked him what was the level of deficit for the nation during that period. He countered by asking what it was during the subsequent year. A Government’s programme and policies exists long after the Government is removed from office, and it has taken a long time for changes to be made in the total economic situation to divorce this nation from the Whitlam era.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—The Federal Government is obtaining nearly $3 billion a year from petrol tax.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I am coming to that. Australia experienced a period that could have led to a disastrous economic situation. It is important for either a Federal and or State Government, to be prepared, in any circumstances, to look at its own programmes, to spend the people’s money wisely and, if necessary, to make cuts in certain programmes. Of course, any cuts are opposed by the community. As members of Parliament we are told every day that more money needs to be spent on almost everything, but we must never lose sight of the fact that someone has to provide the money.

Mr Landeryou mentioned world parity pricing. I hate to think of where the present Government in Canberra would obtain finance to maintain its present programmes, even in a reduced form, if it did not raise extra revenue from that source. As I said, the Federal Government has to consider the way it spends money. The people of Australia should be prepared to accept that there may have to be cuts, that there may be luxuries that we as a nation can no longer afford and that may need to be cut.

Every Government must be prepared to look at its programmes and, if necessary, make cuts. That is what the Federal Government is doing. Perhaps that makes the position a little more palatable to the Premiers. If the Federal Government were spending money regardless of how much was available and then offered the States a reduced allocation, that situation would be completely unpalatable.

The point is that the States—particularly Victoria—have lived in a fool’s paradise. They have been able to blame the Federal Government for all their shortcomings, and still do—even tonight the Leader of the House was still blaming the Federal Government for the shortcomings of this State—but they seek to take credit for everything good that happens. It is a two bob each way—a fool’s paradise type of attitude. The State Government must be prepared to examine its own programmes.

During the Supply debate a few days ago I stated that Victoria must review its priorities. Although it can complain about the amount of money it receives from Canberra it should be prepared to consider the way it spends the money. We find that the Government, almost on the decision of the Premier, commits itself to projects involving huge amounts
of expenditure that are achieving very little in productivity or benefits for future generations.

As I say, the State must consider its expenditure and must be prepared to make cuts and examine its own efficiency. We can no longer have the situation where the Federal Government may be placing restraints on the State while the State expects to be funded so that programmes can continue regardless.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—Are you suggesting large cuts by the State Government too?

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—I am suggesting that Mr Taylor and the Government should examine some of the programmes under their responsibility, and if they are not doing that now, I would be very disappointed. It has been suggested that the State should have its own razor gang.

The Hon. J. A. Taylor—We have had it for years—it is called State Treasury.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—If it has, I do not know how effective it has been because there are many State expenditures that need to be examined. That is a real challenge for them, I personally believe that as a result of the Premiers Conference the States are not getting a fair deal. It is fair to make the comment. We would all like to see the three levels of government—local, State and Federal—each get a share of the cake under federalism so that they can all carry out their responsibilities. After all, that is what federalism means.

As I see the situation, the Federal Government is passing more and more responsibilities onto the States which are not being matched by extra funds and the States are passing more and more responsibilities to local government which are also not being met by additional funds. Almost everywhere one goes one can see difficulties for the future, from ambulance and health services to education where we as members of Parliament are being told daily that unless the situation improves there will be a severe falling off of services. Frankly, I believe we as a people have extremely high expectations and we need to readjust those expectations and be prepared to accept that some of the services from which we have benefited may have to be reduced.

The National Party cannot support the motion moved by Mr Landeryou mainly because of the terms in which it is written, which are extraordinary. The National Party does not like the cuts—no one likes to have expenditure cut, be it personal or Government expenditure—but we have to face the fact that the State has to share the responsibility for reducing expenditure. We must accept that Governments will have to raise more and more funds and they are coming from fewer and fewer taxpayers in Australia.

The National Party joins with Mr Hunt and the Government in expressing concern about this situation but believes it is part of the State and Federal Government responsibilities to examine their programmes and, if necessary, reduce them. It is hoped that the State will be given sufficient funds to enable it to carry out the extra responsibilities that it appears will be allotted to it by the Commonwealth in the years ahead.

The Hon. D. R. White (Doutta Galla Province)—The starting point in support of Mr Landeryou's motion has to be a statement made by the Premier during the 1975 and 1977 election campaigns that a vote for the Fraser and Liberal-National Party Government would mean a better deal for the States. There is no point in the Minister of Education or Mr Dunn walking away from that commitment. What has transpired is that there has not been a better deal for Victoria. There has been a significant reversal in the economic policies of the Fraser Government from the day it assumed Government, compared with the promises it made during 1975. The question is, "What is the response of the State Government?"

One would expect that, during the course of the Supply debate, and there was a Supply debate last week, and during the announcement of the new directions policy late last year, some indication would be given by the State
Government of its attitude to the commitment by the Fraser Government to the resources boom and the implications that has for the public sector, particularly the metropolitan areas of Melbourne and Sydney. On October 18 last year Victoria recorded its greatest vote ever for the Labor Party because there was a growing perception by the people of Victoria that Victoria would not benefit from the resources boom. There has been a continuation of the Fraser policies and in response to them we have had the weak, vacillating, sycophantic leadership of a tired, worn-out Government led by a sycophantic Premier.

In the past week, two events have occurred that have compounded the problem. The first event was the decision that a number of tertiary institutions would be closed. They not only include State colleges but the engineering facilities of the Deakin University at Geelong and the Preston Institute of Technology. At page 24 of its report the “razor gang” indicated to Federal Parliament that engineering courses in Victoria would be rationalized. That is a euphemism for saying they would be reduced in number. The Commonwealth Government has decided to accelerate this proposal and intends that the engineering schools at Bendigo, at the present college of advanced education, and at Deakin University will be closed.

Those decisions will be put into effect by the Fraser Government because of the weak, sycophantic, vacillating leadership of the Government, compounded by the weak, vacillating leadership of the Premier. As a result of that weak, vacillating leadership, these schools will be closed. The State Government can be taken to the electorate on its record and it will lose the marginal seats of Bendigo and Geelong and others in the south-eastern perimeter of Melbourne.

I know that the Liberal Party in Victoria and federally is so preoccupied with its internal differences that it cannot recognize the political climate that is beginning to come about in Victoria, which will produce a resounding re-action to the weak, vacillating leadership, not only by the Premier, but also the Minister of Education, who is prepared to kowtow and allow these programmes to be implemented without any conspicuous or formidable defence of the institutions that are essentially for the benefit of this economy. The reason why these institutions are being closed is that Mr Fraser has made an economic commitment, not only one to the Friedman monetarism, but also an open-ended commitment that $29,000 million will be raised over the next five years and spent on capital intensive resources for capital intensive industries. That open-ended commitment was unqualified.

It will not produce staged growth. It will create inflationary pressure, not only on the housing and building industries, but also on the small business sector. It will create incredible pressure on the public sector, particularly on capital works programmes. It will bring about the sorts of closures that have been announced in the last week on a continually accelerating basis until Australia has a considered Federal policy that is sensitive to the needs of the community as a whole and a resources tax imposed on mineral resources beneficiaries. I draw attention to the beneficiaries of the boom and of staged economic growth throughout the country. Unless Australia has staged and maintained economic resources development, it will produce what has been described as the Gregory effect. As long as the resources boom continues unchecked, without any sound economic management federally, and open-ended commitments are made in which everything else is secondary, the Gregory effect will occur, which will mean further unemployment. The insensitive, weak-kneed approach and ignorance of economic realities of the Government will compound the problem.

The Minister of Education, the Attorney-General and all other non-economists on the front bench of the Liberal Party in both Houses of Parliament are prepared to allow this situation to continue, open-ended. In 1975 they were prepared to go to bed with Mr Fraser. Who are they in bed with...
now? They are being thrown out of bed on the floor and have not produced anything for the people of Victoria. Victoria has a growing sense of nationalism and appreciation that this is not only a worth-while and good State but it also deserves better leadership than it is currently receiving.

If Government Ministers stop the internal fights in the party room and get into the real world and find out what is going on, they will realize that this State urgently needs firm decisive leadership, which it is currently not getting. The history of the Premiers Conferences over the years has been that, until the mid-1970s, general purpose revenue grants were said to be related to the growth of population, the growth in average weekly earnings and a betterment factor which was 1·2 per cent until the mid-1960s and 1·8 per cent thereafter. In 1979 the Whitlam Government increased the betterment factor to 3 per cent. The Whitlam formula for Premiers Conferences provided that real resources were available to the States by way of general purpose revenue grants, which guaranteed an increase at the rate of 3 per cent. If the Fraser Government, in the name of new federalism, and the Hamer Government had maintained a continuation of the Whitlam formula, a real growth component would have occurred in the commitment of revenue grants to the States.

In 1976–77 the Fraser Government replaced general purpose revenue grants by the personal income tax sharing arrangement under an agreement with the States that income tax sharing would be introduced in two stages. The first stage introduced in 1976–77 was that the States were to receive an average of 39·87 per cent each year of the net personal income tax collection of the previous year, excluding the effects of any State tax levies or rebates, such as the petrol tax levy.

The relative share of each State was determined on a wages and population basis. It is important to point out that in that context the relative share of each state was determined on a weighted population basis. The Labor Party is extremely concerned that 29 per cent of the total personal income tax pool comes from Victoria, and yet Victoria receives only a 23 per cent allocation. The monkeys around the country, such as Sir Charles Court and Mr Bjelke-Petersen, claim they are the saviours of and are subsidizing the rest of Australia. The fact is that Victoria is still subsidizing the States where resources booms are occurring. A few mealy-mouthed statements have been made by the refugee from Changi prison, the current Treasurer of Victoria.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! I ask Mr White to withdraw those words.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE—I withdraw the words in respect of the current Treasurer of Victoria, Mr Thompson. I merely say that he is a person who is fully deserving of being superannuated out of Parliament in the near future, because it is clear that he does not have the physical strength, knowledge of his portfolio or capacity to employ men at senior levels who are competent and worth-while economists. Probably only one or two people in State Treasury, due to the decrease in the bureaucracy over the past 25 years, are able to stand up to the likes of Mr Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Charles Court and put forward a formidable case in Canberra on behalf of the people of Victoria.

Not once in the past five years since 1976–77 has either the Premier or his successor as Treasurer, Mr Thompson, made any statement along these lines about the 29 per cent of the personal income tax pool that comes from Victoria. The Government has spent $65 000 on a public relations campaign for the new directions policy, which went to water with Mr Smith. The Government has carried out other publicity campaigns like that since those of 1975 and 1977 which promoted Mr Fraser. However, where is the promotion on behalf of the people of Victoria explaining these facts? Where is the money that is being spent throughout Australia? Victoria is receiving the worst deal of any State in the Commonwealth because of the mean geriatrics on the front bench.
of the Government. Victoria is going down the trough because of the men who are still at the helm. They are the least able group of Ministers one has ever seen.

Honourable members are privileged to be in the House today and note the historical consequence of a declining group of men. One should take a last look at them because they will not be here in twelve months time. They are geriatrics who will no longer be here and one should take a photograph of them. It is unfortunate that the Minister of Water Supply is not here as he is one who will not be here next year. The honourable member for Geelong Province, Mr Jenkins, is on the way out. He was down 1500 votes, but it is now 4000 votes. However, he will rely on personal charisma to make up the difference. He is going to stand apart from the Liberal Party and rely on his personal charisma.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—Order! Mr White should address himself to the motion.

The Hon. D. R. WHITE—The Bjelke-Petersens and the Courts walk around the country untrammelled, putting forward their lies and saying that they are subsidizing the rest of Australia. There is not one firm, decisive leader in the Government of Victoria who is prepared to put up a case to Canberra saying that Victoria is losing because it is paying 29 per cent of the total personal income tax and receiving back only 23 per cent. Who is making the stand on that issue? Not one of the people who go to Canberra to represent the people of Victoria has done so. Instead, the State colleges of Victoria at Burwood, Coburg, Frankston and Hawthorn, the Institute of Catholic Education, the Institute of Early Childhood Development and the State Colleges of Victoria at Melbourne, Rusden and Toorak under the auspices of the Minister of Education will all suffer severely as a result of the activities of the razor gang, which will be profound and severe in Bendigo, Geelong and all the eastern and south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

The Premier is still committed to his statement of 4 February 1976 when he said:

We support wholeheartedly the new approach to Federalism. This is by far the most important step in Federal relations taken this century.

It is certainly the most important Federal step. It will go a long way, under the Premier's weak, vacillating leadership, to bankrupt the people of Victoria. The Premier went on to say at the Premiers Conference on 10 June 1976, and has not repudiated the statement:

Our objective at present and in the present circumstances all around Australia ought not to be to increase real public expenditure but to at least maintain current levels. To do anything else is not to transfer resources to the private sector but to cripple that section of private industry which normally depends on public contracts.

Did the Premier refer to the housing industry? Did he reiterate that yesterday? Did he take it up with Mr Howard or the Prime Minister? He laid down on his back—he has a habit of doing that, as he did over Alcoa—and let the whole world walk over him. The people of Victoria are not prepared to take it any longer. As soon as the next election is held—and it can be held in October this year, July next year or at any time in between—there is no doubt what the result will be. The Victorian Liberal Government will be thrown out through the door.

For those reasons I support the motion.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—I support the remarks of my two colleagues on the motion and shall speak briefly on what I consider to be the blatant dishonesty of the Victorian Government because of the promises it made in its policy statement when it went to the Victorian people in 1979 seeking a mandate to carry out certain works. The Victorian people responded and gave the Liberal Party the opportunity to do so; the public took the Government at its word and believed what its members said.
I turn to the education policy put forward by the Minister of Education, Mr Hunt, and shall read through some of its items in that statement which he promised.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—The items which I promised?

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—Did the Minister support the Liberal Party policy during the last State election or did he have a separate policy of his own?

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—You referred to the policies put forward “by Mr Hunt” and the items which he promised. That is not true.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—The Liberal Party policy was put to the people of Victoria and it was said that these things would be done. If that is not a promise, I do not know what is.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Be accurate instead of inaccurate.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—The policy stated that $10 million would be provided over three years to improve library facilities in schools.

The Hon. A. J. Hunt—Why can't you tell the truth?

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—The Minister told the Victorian people in 1979 that a special allocation of $10 million would be provided over three years for school building maintenance. How much of that has been spent?

The people of Victoria were told that $6 million would be spent over three years on alterations and extensions to staff-rooms and office accommodation in older schools. That has not been done, either. When one visits the schools in areas where people took the Government at its word in stating its policy, one finds that the Government has not only completely ignored its promises, but has also decreased the allocations in some areas. I cannot get over the fact that a Government could be so blatantly dishonest with the people of Victoria. It is no good for the Government to say that the Commonwealth Government did not do this or the Commonwealth Government would not do that. Members of the Commonwealth Government are the colleagues of members of the Victorian Government, and one would have thought some consultation would have taken place between them before the Victorian Government prepared policies like this to ensure that the Commonwealth Government would support the Victorian Government, instead of going off half-cocked. But the people of Victoria are going to wake up to what has been going on and will realize how dishonest the Victorian Government is.

A whole list of education proposals was put forward by the Minister. It was stated that $1 million a year would be provided to eliminate outmoded school toilets. I could take the Minister to several schools in Geelong and surrounding districts where not one penny has been spent in this regard. The policy statement also stated that a special grant would be provided for migrant education for five suitably located intensive language centres for the benefit of both child and adult migrants. The Government went to the migrant population and told people this. Where are these five centres? A great deal of work will need to be carried out in the next few months if all these promises are to be fulfilled.

It was also stated that the Government would increase by 100 the number of ethnic teacher aides for the provision of interpretative services and assistance to teachers, parents and children in schools of high migrant density. This programme is being phased out in Geelong. The Government claims that it is carrying out the policies which it put to the people of Victoria. One could go on all night with this list, and this is the Government's policy on education only.

For these reasons I support my colleagues, Mr Landeryou and Mr White, on the motion, and I call on the House to adjourn as a protest at the failure of the Government to honour its election promises.
The House divided on the motion (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade in the chair).

Ayes .. . .. . .. 12
Noes .. . .. . .. 28

Majority against the motion .. . .. . .. 16

AYES
Mrs Coxedge Mr Trayling
Mr Eddy Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy Mr White
Mr Kent
Mr Landeryou Tellers:
Mr Mackenzie Mr Butler
Mr Sgro Mr Walton

NOES
Mr Bubb Mr Jenkins
Mr Campbell Mr Knowles
Mr Chamberlain Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier Mr Long
Mr Dunn Mr Radford
Mr Evans Mr Reid
Dr Foley Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Granter Mr Storey
Mr Guest Mr Taylor
Mr Hamilton Mr Ward
Mr Kaiser Mr Wright
Mr Hayward
Mr Houghton Tellers:
Dr Howard Mrs Baylor
Mr Hunt Mr Block

PAIR
Mr Thomas Mr Baxter


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

That supplemented reports of the Teacher Housing Authority for the year 1979–80 and the Housing Commission of Victoria for the year 1979–80 be laid upon the table, and be accepted in lieu of the reports already laid on the table by the Clerk on 2 December 1980 and 10 March 1981 respectively.

The reports are identical in text to those already laid upon the table but are now supplemented by adding, in the first case, a number of photographs and, in the second case, by both graphs and photographs to further explain the work of the two bodies concerned and to make the report, when printed, a better and more comprehensive document for members of Parliament. I am assured that the text is identical to those reports already laid upon the table.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—This seems an extraordinary procedure and, Mr President, I seek your advice. Those are two important reports. If the context is the same it would be wrong for me to move that the reports in lieu be taken into consideration because that has been done and they exist on the Notice Paper. If there are graphs and photographs they also should be taken into consideration. I seek guidance as to the wording I should use so that the extraordinary additions by the Minister and the method of adding the material to the reports can be taken into consideration in the normal way.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grimwade)—In answer to Mr Walker, I advise that we should deal with the motion moved by the Minister so that the reports are in fact laid upon the table; then the honourable member should move a further motion that these supplemented reports be taken into consideration.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—It seems to be an extraordinary situation, but I shall not make a great song and dance about it. It is not an unusual procedure for the report of the Chief Commissioner of Police and others that come before the Parliament to be in a different form from that which is finally printed with photographs and other material. I wonder whether this is a new procedure which suggests that we should be as attentive to it as to the rest of the Minister’s portfolio.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—It was quite common some years ago for reports to be laid upon the table and then at the time of printing be supplemented with graphs
and photographs. The Crown Solicitor has since advised that that course is erroneous and that the printed document ought to be as laid upon the table. In ensuring that reports are laid upon the table within the time or at the earliest possible moment of the House, a number of Ministers have dispensed with the photographs and found, to their sorrow, that they could not add this material in the printed version.

The Minister of Housing desires his report to be comprehensive by including added photographs and graphs, and that is the sole reason for the procedure adopted today. It will make the report more comprehensive whilst not changing the text in any way. As the motion I moved included the proposal that the supplemented reports be accepted “in lieu of” the reports already laid upon the table, in my view the motion for consideration of the reports of the Housing Commission and the Teacher Housing Authority will be covered in any event. I have no objection to the motion moved by Mr. Walker if he believes that will doubly safeguard his rights.

The motion was agreed to, and it was ordered that the reports be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—In order to assist honourable members with a debate that is likely to take place later this day, I move, by leave:

That in relation to the development of Victorian colleges of advanced education during the 1982-84 triennium, there be laid before this House a copy of—

Recommendations to the Minister of Education about relationships among a number of Victorian colleges of advanced education;

Summary of recommendations to the Minister of Education about relationships among a number of Victorian colleges of advanced education;

A telex message (No. 2214) of 30 April 1981 to State Ministers of Education from the Commonwealth Minister for Education.

Copies of these documents have already been supplied to the spokesmen for the other two parties.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education) presented the documents in compliance with the foregoing order.

GEELONG LANDS BILL

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to revoke the reservations of certain lands at Geelong and for purposes connected therewith.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PETITIONS

Cara House—Funds for school councils

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province) presented two petitions from certain citizens of Victoria: 1. praying that funds be provided to ensure the continued operation of Cara House, and for the commitment to accelerate the provision of alternatives to institutional care to be honoured; and 2. praying that sufficient funds be provided to school councils of State primary, technical and high schools so as to ensure that no charges are made against parents and pupils. He stated
that the petitions were respectfully worded, in order, and bore 18 and 21 signatures respectively.

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

STATUTE LAW REVISION COMMITTEE

Pecuniary interests of municipal Statute councillors—Statute Law Revision Bill

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province) presented reports from the Statute Law Revision Committee on pecuniary interests of municipal councillors, together with extracts and summaries from the proceedings of the committee, appendices and minutes of evidence; and the Statute Law Revision Bill together with an appendix and minutes of evidence.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table and that the report upon pecuniary interests of municipal councillors, extracts and summaries from the proceedings of the committee and appendices, and the report upon the Statute Law Revision Bill and the appendix be printed.

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

PUBLIC BODIES REVIEW COMMITTEE

Future structures for water management

The Hon. Dr FOLEY (Boronia Province) presented a report from the Public Bodies Review Committee on future structures for water management, together with appendices and a summary of extracts from the proceedings of the committee, including a report to the committee from the Public Service Board of Victoria, Consultancy and Management Review Division, on the performance and structure of local water and sewerage authorities in Victoria.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table and that the report on future structures for water management, the appendices and the summary of extracts from the proceedings of the committee, be printed.

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

PAPERS

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

Education Act 1958—Resumption of land at Daylesford—Certificate of the Minister of Education.
Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament:
  Health Act 1958—Nos. 162 and 163.
  Public Service Act 1974—PSD Nos. 56, 58 and 60.
  Supreme Court Act 1958—No. 136.
  Supreme Court Act 1958 and Companies Act 1961—No. 137.
Town and Country Planning Act 1961—
  Ballarat—Shire of Ballarat Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 10.
  Buninyong—Shire of Buninyong Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 12.
  Croydon—City of Croydon Planning Scheme 1961—Amendment No. 101.
  Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 168 (with map).
  Mildura—City of Mildura Planning Scheme—Amendments Nos. 38 and 40, 1980.
  Port Fairy Planning Scheme 1959—Amendment No. 10.
  Shepparton—City of Shepparton Planning Scheme 1953—Amendment No. 55, 1980.
  Tambo—Shire of Tambo (Lakes Entrance) Planning Scheme—Amendment No. 33.
  Warragul Planning Scheme 1954—Amendments No. 36, 1979; and No. 40.

On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), it was ordered that the reports and Statutory Rules under the Public Service Act
1974 and the Supreme Court Act 1958, No. 136, be taken into consideration on the next day of meeting.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL**

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It gives the Government a direct and proper involvement in the implementation of the policies laid down in the recently released “Victoria’s strategy for the eighties”. It provides for the declaration of certain projects or developments judged to be of special significance to the economic development of the State as “special projects” and requires that the reasons for declaration be specified.

Such declaration, which will include reference to the various Acts, regulations, departments and authorities administering them, will give power to the Minister for Economic Development, with the consent of the Ministers for Conservation and Planning, to request such authorities to carry out their functions within a specified time. I emphasize that the Minister is not authorized to reduce any time prescribed in any Act of Parliament.

The Bill also provides that the Minister for Economic Development, subject to consultation with other Ministers, shall be able to formulate policies for the economic development of the State and for the Governor in Council, on the advice of the Minister, to approve such policies.

Where implementation of policy affects the responsibilities of authorities and departments the Minister is able to confer and seek the co-operation of his colleagues responsible for those authorities and departments.

In the event of any question or difference clause 12(3) provides for its resolution finally and conclusively by the Governor in Council where, after all, it properly lies, which leads me to the fundamental principle embodied in the Bill. Responsibility must eventually rest with the Ministers of the Crown duly appointed and constituting the Government of the State. The quasi-autonomy of councils, and semi-Government authorities and to a lesser extent that of departments, has resulted in incomprehensible complexities and inexcusable delays. This must stop.

In addition to these major features several other initiatives are contained in the Bill. Clause 4 provides for a Director-General for Economic Development. When incentives are necessary for the securing of a project, clause 9 allows any rating authority to remit in whole or in part rates payable for a maximum of five years. The Treasurer is given similar discretion in respect of land taxes.

The power to declare a decentralized establishment is to be repealed from the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act 1958 consequent upon the Transport (Deregulation) Act. So as to permit the benefits available to such establishments under the Decentralized Industry Incentive Payments Act 1972 to continue, appropriate amendments have been incorporated into clause 13 of the Bill.

The Bill includes provision for the Development Fund and the Tourist Fund, which are presently part of the State Development Decentralization and Tourism Act. This Act is due to be repealed upon proclamation of the Victorian Economic Development Corporation Act.

The provisions relating to the purposes for which the Development Fund may be used have been widened to include assistance to special projects and reference to the Port of Portland has been deleted as it is no longer necessary. The provisions relating to the Tourist Fund remain unchanged.

Powers for the Minister to delegate authority is included and an annual report is required to be prepared. There is also the power to make regulations.

Mr President, the Bill establishes a means for the Government to actively assist development get off the ground
in Victoria. Whether it is fact or fiction there is widespread community belief that development is stifled in this State. The Bill provides the opportunity to alter that belief and to demonstrate this Government's commitment to economic growth and the jobs for Victorians that growth creates. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. Eddy, for the Hon. D. R. WHITE (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LAND LIABLE TO FLOODING) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 28) on the motion of the Hon. D. G. Crozier (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—This is a Bill to authorize, subject to certain safeguards, the construction of buildings on flood-prone land. The Bill is consequential upon a Bill that was passed in December 1979, which created a number of problems. The Bill is related to the Local Government Act 1958 and the Local Government (Land Liable to Flooding) Act 1979, which involved the Drainage of Land Act 1975 and the Dandenong Valley Authority Act 1963.

The reason for the 1979 Bill was to ensure that municipalities could make decisions on the construction of buildings on flood-prone land. The essence of that Bill was that dwellings could be erected on land that is no less than 1 foot or 300 millimetres below the flood level based on the record of 100 years of known flooding. However, one of the provisions of the Bill ensured that when a municipal council obtained a building permit, it was necessary to obtain an indemnity from a permit applicant against any unknown flood factor that was not on record. Many delays in obtaining building permits were caused because of the number of authorities involved in issuing exemptions from liability.

The Bill provides that a council will no longer have to obtain an indemnity from a permit applicant but will be given a “statutory exemption” from liability, which will be backdated to the proclamation of the Local Government (Land Liable to Flooding) Act of December 1979.

Although the Opposition does not oppose the Bill, honourable members on this side of the House are a little concerned that, subsequent to the Act being passed in 1979, regulations for the Uniform Building (Amendment) Regulations were finalized and approved in June 1980. The Minister for Local Government and his advisers are now of the opinion that the regulations appeared to be “beyond power” of section 927 of the Local Government Act, hence clause 4 of the Bill inserts a new sub-section (4) into section 927 of the Local Government Act to permit the making of regulations to revoke or amend the Uniform Building Regulations.

There is a Bill before the House which deals with the Uniform Building Regulations, which represent a complex set of procedures. That Bill has been deferred, but will be dealt with in due process.

Clause 5 validates regulation 6 of the Uniform Building (Amendment) Regulations 1980 No. 9. The Opposition does not oppose that clause. However, it appeared that the Minister for Local Government was assuming more authority than was necessary. As stated by the Opposition before, it is time the Local Government Act was overhauled. The Opposition appreciates the difficulties the Minister would face in trying to do that, but it would be much easier if the Local Government Act were consolidated into one bound volume. The Opposition does not oppose the Bill.

The Hon. K. I. M. WRIGHT (North Western Province)—This Bill provides for further legislation on land liable to flooding. Honourable members, and certainly the Minister of Education, will recall the conflict that arose with clause 1701 of the Uniform Building Regulations and a section of the Health Act
which differed with that clause. Clause 1701 of the Uniform Building Regulations stated that the lowest floor of flood proofing measures should be 300 millimetres above the flood level. Trouble arose in determining what was the flood level. Was it the highest flood level or the usual flood level that occurred every three or four years?

I am reminded of something I read about a castle in the Rhine Valley. Apparently, various levels of floods were marked on the wall. One flood was 20 or 30 feet higher than the previous highest, which was recorded in the 1400s. It is hard to predict at just what height floods will occur.

In any case, a Bill was eventually brought before Parliament to permit buildings to be built below flood level. The Bill contained two main provisos. The first was that unreasonable risk should not be involved and the second was that anybody building on land should do so with full knowledge of the risk involved. Land liable to flooding was defined as land likely to be flooded by water from any river, creek and so forth. Proposed new section 925AA allowed a permit to be issued for construction of buildings on land liable to flooding above, at, or below the "specified" flood level. The applicant was required to provide an indemnity to the body granting the permit, which was usually the council. However, difficulties arose in establishing the specified flood level. In the City of Horsham, controversy and difficulty has arisen. In efforts to resolve the issue, well attended public meetings were held. Local members and also Mr Mackenzie of the Opposition were present and visits of Ministers and senior officers of the Water Commission took place. A study called the Wimmera River Flood Study was undertaken. The study cost $83 000, of which the council contributed 20 per cent, or $16 000. Building development was virtually halted and land sales were at a record low level in Horsham.

The study found that the major flood that had occurred in Horsham was in August 1909. Evidence was given that this flood could reoccur within the next 300 years. The Water Commission recommended that the level chosen should be the 1 per cent probability, that is, for a flood which occurred once every 100 years.

In Horsham, the level recommended by the city engineer was similar to the level of the 1957 flood. Since then, the Horsham City Council has granted ten building permits and none of these have been at a level greater than 150 millimetres, or approximately 6 inches below the 1909 flood level. The Shire of Mildura presented some difficulties. Several ratepayers visited my office and said that they understood that under certain circumstances they could now get a permit when building below the 1956 flood level. One of them already has a planning permit. For the benefit of the member who interjected, I state that everybody who is a constituent is not necessarily a ratepayer.

Mr Arbuthnot, the shire secretary, is a capable and experienced officer and has been overseas studying these matters. He informed me of the reason there has been so much difficulty in not issuing the permit even when a planning permit had been issued. He told me that the council had come to the conclusion that it was not possible to get a valid and proper indemnity from the person who was taking out the particular permit. In fact, the council had referred the matter to its legal advisers, Messrs Maddock, Lonie and Chisholm, who considered the problem. I shall not quote the advice to the shire too extensively, but it stated:

We do not propose to make any detailed comment on the extensive, onerous and complex nature of the responsibilities, duties and obligations variously placed on the Surveyor, the Engineer and the Council, save to say that if anything the possibilities for honest but possibly negligent mistakes are if anything increased in the new formulation, with a corresponding increase in the possibility of successful legal action against the Council...

The two real and basic practical problems for the Council now concern Section 925 AA (4) (b); is it safe for the Council to issue permits if it gets the indemnity? And secondly, if so, can Council obtain and effectively enforce such an indemnity?

In our opinion, the answer to the first question is not clear, but it is at least strongly arguable that the answer is "no".
I state that this is not a letter, but an opinion from a legal adviser. The advice also states:

Further, we have very considerable doubt as to whether the Council can in practice obtain an effective and enforceable indemnity in any event. The basic problems are two-fold:

(a) the indemnity is presumably to be given by the permit applicant personally. The potential value of that indemnity is obviously limited if the applicant is a $2.00 company. Even in the case of natural persons, it is very difficult to ascertain their real financial standing at any time, and it is impossible to prevent it changing.

(b) the second and, in our opinion, the major problem is to ensure that the indemnity remains in force if the ownership of the land changes. In our opinion, whilst Section 925 AA (4) (b) makes it clear that the indemnity is to extend to future liability, we have considerable doubt as to whether the Council can insist on any more than a personal indemnity from the applicant. Even if the Council does have the power to insist on an indemnity from future owners, it is difficult to see how this can be effectively obtained.

Messrs Maddock, Lonie and Chisholm concluded by saying:

In conclusion, we do not consider that the new scheme of the Act and the Regulations materially improves or eases the Council's position and we still believe that the Council would be unwise to issue building permits in flood prone areas.

At the request of the Shire of Mildura, I informed the Minister of the problem and forwarded him a copy of the legal opinion.

As a result of these representations, and no doubt others, the Minister introduced this Bill. Firstly, the Bill provides for a statutory exemption from liability. My advice is that this appears to have overcome the problem. Secondly, doubt exists on the regulations contained in the Local Government Act and the Uniform Building Regulations as applied to appropriate Government departments, municipalities and public authorities. The Bill gives the Government power, without reference to other bodies, to correct errors and omissions, and the National Party agrees with that provision.

Finally, I thank the Minister for promptly correcting the error that was pointed out by my party and the obvious problems that municipalities have encountered. On behalf of the National Party, I express satisfaction with the Bill. All honourable members will be pleased that people will now have every opportunity of building homes on land which is subject to flooding perhaps once every 100 years or so. The National Party believes it is appropriate where houses are built up to a safe level or where satisfactory levy banks are constructed. My party supports the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and, by leave, the House proceeded to the third reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a third time.

I listened with interest to the comments of Mr Butler, on behalf of the Labor Party, and Mr Wright, on behalf of the National Party. I thank both of them for their support and that of their parties. As has been pointed out by those two honourable members, this small Bill makes some necessary changes. The history has been well canvassed by Mr Wright. I have taken considerable interest in this matter because I have, as he points out, received vigorous representations on it. Naturally enough, it is my intention and that of the Government wherever possible, to facilitate the legitimate wishes of citizens throughout the State.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—You had better say that again!

The Hon. D. G. CROZIER—I shall say it again. There is a propensity of Government to over-regulate for various reasons. It is the aim of the Government, and myself as a member of it, wherever possible, to deregulate and to facilitate the carrying out of any legitimate activity by any citizen. The previous Bill was aimed at correcting a situation which had arisen because at that stage, prior to December 1979, there was no power in the Local Government Act to correct a deficiency or an interpretation in the regulation to
which Mr Wright referred, that is, regulation 1701(e) of the Uniform Building Regulations. The Local Government (Land Liable to Flooding) Act 1979 did that, but it also prescribed, as Mr Wright points out, the necessity for an indemnity. That was the principal deficiency. It is now considered that no practical means exists of guaranteeing that a satisfactory indemnity can be provided. Therefore, the opinion of the firm of Maddock, Lonie and Chisholm, which was quoted by Mr Wright, is endorsed. The simplest way of dealing with the matter is to remove the requirement under section 925AA(4)(b) of the Act, which was inserted by the Local Government (Land Liable to Flooding) Act of December 1979, under which the applicant for the permit must, to the satisfaction of the body granting the permit, indemnify that body against any liability which that body may incur. That is the principal aim of the Bill.

It has two other subsidiary aims. The first of those is to validate regulation 6 of the Uniform Building Regulations, No. 9 of 1980, which was considered to have possibly been out of power and to give the Minister the small discretionary power which Mr Butler has discussed. I believe this is a perfectly rational extension of Ministerial power. It is by no means a wide power and simply relates to the revocation or the correction of an error or omission.

I believe this amendment will give municipalities, as the appropriate planning authorities, the flexibility and the power that they need. Clearly, the interpretation of the specified flood level will always be a potential matter for dispute. Nevertheless, the 1 per cent flood criterion is nationally and internationally accepted. The Bill will provide the further necessary flexibility which is welcomed by municipalities and by the Government and will allow many sensible developments to proceed. Again, I thank honourable members for their support and indicate that the Government hopes and expects that the Bill will provide the assistance and the flexibility which have previously been lacking.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a third time.

The sitting was suspended at 6.36 p.m. until 8.8 p.m.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Victorian Colleges of Advanced Education

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I wish to make a Ministerial statement with respect to the future of Victorian colleges of advanced education.

Since 1979, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, VPSEC, has engaged in studies in depth, to provide a proper data base for determining policies for post-secondary education in Victoria during the 1982–84 triennium. During those studies it has considered not only objective evidence, but also widely divergent views, and has consulted with post-secondary institutions and with Tertiary Education Commission and its councils.

One of the most important topics has been the question of the proper provision of courses of teacher education in Victorian colleges of advanced education. In the heady days of educational expansion of the sixties and early seventies, the Victorian Education Department and subsequently teacher education institutions, readily accepted the pressures to provide new places which then appeared desirable.

Late in the seventies it became clear that some levelling, and even reduction, was required in provision for teacher education in the light of declining school enrolments, and modest action was taken towards achieving it. What could not be anticipated, however, was the dramatic fall in the "wastage" rate of teachers—through resignation, retirement, and death—which as percentages of classified teachers in Government schools fell from 8.6 per cent primary, 11.0 per cent non-technical and 6.6 per cent secondary, technical in 1976 to 4.9 per cent, 5.1 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively in 1980.
Over a slightly longer period the wastage rate has reduced by 8 per cent overall! When it is realized that each 1 per centum reduction in wastage rate reduces the number of new positions for teachers by approximately 500 places in any one year, the dramatic effect on the balance between supply and demand for teachers is readily understood.

In the light of this completely unexpected development, firm remedial action was clearly required, and in its May 1980 "Advice to the Advanced Education Council" about planning for the 1982-84 triennium, VPSEC proposed that in teacher education there should be a reduction in student load from 14,000 equivalent full-time students in 1981 to 12,000 equivalent full-time students in 1984, and that the consequent reduction in places in advanced education should be compensated for by increased provision in science and technology, business studies, humanities and social sciences. VPSEC also proposed that non-teacher education courses should be introduced in a number of teacher education institutions to broaden the range of educational provision.

Further recommendations were made for closer relationships between Prahran College of Advanced Education and State College of Victoria, Toorak, and between Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, State College of Victoria, Coburg and State College of Victoria, Melbourne. The amalgamation of Prahran and Toorak was agreed to by the institutions, but the proposal with respect to Lincoln Institute, SCV Melbourne and SCV Coburg, after extensive consultations, was modified to a proposal for movement towards close co-operative arrangements between SCV Coburg and SCV Melbourne.

On 26 November 1980, the Advanced Education Council (AEC) wrote to VPSEC stating the council's view that the proposals for restructuring advanced education in Victoria did not provide adequately for the most efficient use of facilities in the metropolitan area. Subsequently, VPSEC reviewed its position but, pending clear guidance upon Tertiary Education Commission policy on student load and financial recommendations for the new triennium, maintained its view.

Late in March this year, volume 1 of the Tertiary Education Commission's Report for 1982–84 Triennium, provided recommendations to the Commonwealth Government on guidelines for the triennium. That report accepted VPSEC's recommendations about reduction in teacher education, but did not recommend planning figures which would compensate for the consequent net loss of places in advanced education. The report also affirmed the AEC's view that there was no justification for diversification into non-teacher education courses by specialized colleges of teacher education. The planned over-all 1984 target student load in Victorian colleges of advanced education was set at 41,500 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) which represents a net loss of over 1,000 student places—and of financial resources proportionately—as against present student numbers and the recommendations of VPSEC. In addition, the planning figures in humanities, social sciences and business studies provided little opportunity for expansion of student places in courses for which there is a need and a strong demand in Victoria.

Immediately following the TEC report, VPSEC held a series of urgent special meetings to review planning policies in the light of that report. Members of VPSEC believed that their proposals provided for difficult changes to be effected with a minimum of disruption. They considered that the Tertiary Education Commission proposals were less satisfactory in this regard. They were convinced that the total number of student places ought to be maintained in a country which desperately needs new and advanced skills and which is underprovided with advanced education when compared with the Western World as a whole.

Nevertheless, financial and political realities had to be faced, and further consultations with Commonwealth authorities made it clear that the proposals advanced by the TEC represented the
best which Victoria could hope to attain at present. The only alternative to substantial rationalization in the metropolitan area was the closure of some institutions. Without either occurring, it was clear that the result would be massive loss of funds for tertiary education in this State.

Sensible and sensitive rationalization, taking proper account of community needs and the long-term interests both of students and staff, was the preferred course. The nature and extent of the required rationalization has, since publication of the TEC report, been fully and frankly discussed with the AEC and support has been expressed for the general direction which VPSEC has proposed.

Immediately after Easter, the Victorian Government received recommendations from VPSEC about proposed new relationships between a number of Victorian colleges of advanced education. These proposals are:

Proposal 1—

1.1 That a new multi-campus and multi-discipline college of advanced education be established by amalgamation of the existing colleges of SCV Burwood, Prahran College of Advanced Education, SCV Rusden, and SCV Toorak.

1.2 That progressively all advanced education activities of the new college be re-located on three campuses.

1.3 That the central, administrative unit of the new college be located at the Burwood campus.

1.4 That the total 1984 target student load of the new college be 4920 effective full-time students.

It is appropriate at this point to note that the councils and staffs at Prahran College of Advanced Education, and SCV Toorak, have already done much work to effect their amalgamation and it is expected that this work will now be of value in proceeding to a wider amalgamation.

The new college would have a strong base in teacher education, encompassing both primary and secondary teaching and associated specializations, art and design, business studies, humanities and social sciences. It would also have the capacity to move, if required, into other fields of study.

Proposal 2—

2.1 That a new multi-campus, multi-discipline college of advanced education be established by amalgamation of the existing colleges of Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, SCV Coburg and SCV Melbourne.

2.2 That progressively all advanced education activities of the new college be re-located on two campuses.

2.3 That the central administrative unit of the new college be located at the Melbourne campus.

2.4 That the total 1984 target student load of the new college by 4945 effective full-time students.

The new college would encompass courses currently offered in early childhood, primary and secondary teacher education, and associated specializations, courses in social welfare and allied fields and education in the allied health sciences. The college would be encouraged to develop pilot advanced education courses in applied science, which would make special provision for students who lack an adequate background in sciences and mathematics. As the need arises, the new college could also offer courses in other fields of study.

The council of the new college would be requested to give early attention to plans for re-locating students in the health sciences, who for far too long have been housed in expensive, leased, sub-standard accommodation, in more suitable permanent accommodation so that existing and planned courses can be taught more effectively. It is believed this could be substantially achieved on the SCV Melbourne campus.

Proposal 3—

3.1 That the Council of SCV Frankston be dissolved.

3.2 That Caulfield Institute of Technology be requested to accept responsibility for the provision of advanced education in the Frankston region by establishing a campus of the institute at Frankston.
3.3 That the target total of 1984 student load for the Caulfield Institute of Technology on the two campuses be 4600 effective full-time students of whom approximately 800 effective full-time students are to be located on the Frankston campus.

Following the recommendations of the Weber report and the later recommendations of the Steering Committee on the Establishment of a new Multi-Discipline College of Advanced Education in the Frankston Region, chaired by Sir Louis Matheson, it had been planned to broaden the base of the Frankston campus and to provide academic support for its development from a number of tertiary institutions. However, in the light of the attitude of Commonwealth authorities, it became clear that this alternative was not available. The proposed establishment in its place of Frankston as a campus of the Caulfield Institute of Technology will make available the administrative and academic strength of that institute to satisfy the region's advanced education needs, and will mean that some courses now available only at Caulfield may become available at Frankston. The provision of courses in teacher education will be maintained.

Within the next decade it is envisaged that the growth of advanced education activities at the Frankston campus and the demand for them in the growing south-eastern region will be such as to enable the possible re-establishment of Frankston as an independent college of advanced education to be assessed as part of the continuing review of the post-secondary education system.

The current VPSEC proposals acknowledge the view also contained in the TEC report that specialist teacher education colleges should in general become part of larger units with a broader range of courses. Larger institutions are believed by the TEC to be capable of handling problems associated with change more flexibly and satisfactorily than smaller single purpose institutions. They can not only offer a wider range of options and of occupational choice to their students, but they can also contribute to development of a broader perspective amongst students than is sometimes the case with those educated in narrowly specialist institutions. In addition, some strengths and economies of scale can be expected.

Rationalization is rarely popular amongst all those affected by it, yet rationalization is clearly preferable to the phasing out of colleges and the sudden termination of the services of their staff. It is vastly preferable to the substantial loss of funds which would result if neither course were adopted and which would undoubtedly lead to a continuing decline and progressive loss of viability of the college system generally. Furthermore, the Victorian Government is fully aware that although no solution of an issue such as this will ever receive unanimous support, the most urgent need of all is to make prompt and clear decisions to relieve to the maximum degree the distressing uncertainties which currently exist for staff, for students and for institutions; and to provide a clear basis upon which detailed planning for the future can be undertaken—as well as to ensure the unimpeded flow to the Victorian college system of the Federal funds available.

In the circumstances facing us, the Government has accepted VPSEC's recommendations with respect to the amalgamations, and proposes that they be implemented as soon and as effectively as possible with maximum involvement of the institutions concerned which should in turn consult fully and promptly with their internal organizations. VPSEC will be requested immediately to make arrangements for ongoing consultations with institutions and to report regularly to the Government on the progress of implementation.

Each group of colleges proposed to be amalgamated will be requested, in consultation with VPSEC, to form a planning committee whose members should be predominantly drawn from the present institutions to make recommendations for the resolution of the
practical problems which will be encountered in the course of implementation. The greater the degree of consensus which can be achieved, the greater the certainty that the amalgamations can be effected in a manner generally acceptable to those concerned. The Government has not at this stage considered it desirable to accept the recommendations as to the location of the central administrative units under proposals 1 and 2, upon the grounds that these are issues which ought, if practicable, to be agreed on by the planning committees or, if not determined by them, by the governing bodies of the new institutions.

The new governing bodies should be established to operate by the beginning of 1982 and they will accept the responsibilities and obligations of the councils they replace. In particular, it is vital that they should plan properly ahead for academic developments during the triennium, ensure provision for students to complete courses for which they are enrolled and ensure that the interests of staff are dealt with sensitively and equitably.

On that issue the Government proposes without delay to establish a small committee to advise upon the resolution of staffing and superannuation problems which will arise during the triennium. Amongst others, staff will certainly be represented on that committee, for their interests are vitally affected and the Government recognizes their right to a proper opportunity for adequate input in the process leading up to decisions concerning them. Clearly there will need to be some reduction in total staff during the triennium, but it is hoped that this can be achieved so far as possible through retirements and resignations. Above all, the bringing of staff into balance with academic requirements and available resources must be effected in a way which is both fair and seen to be fair.

The planning committees and the committee on staffing and superannuation issues will specifically need to give early attention to any proposals for legislative change which may be thought desirable to assist the transition. As such legislation would need to be presented and passed during the spring session of Parliament this year, advice from these committees will be needed by 31 August 1981 on this aspect.

On behalf of the Government I express appreciation of the vigour with which VPSEC has addressed these problems in the short period since the release of the TEC report. The dedicated efforts of the part time commissioners who have set aside other commitments in order to attend a number of meetings to work these problems through ought particularly to be recognized. They have contributed materially to assist the Government in reaching the position which has been announced today. So too have the consultations of the full-time members with their counterparts at the Federal level.

The degree of consensus which had been reached between Commonwealth and State authorities would in any event have led to an announcement this week by the Victorian Government. Instead, a unilateral, blunt, insensitive and ill-considered announcement—which disclosed no appreciation whatever of the problems involved for staff, for students and for institutions—was released in Canberra last week. It was an unnecessary announcement, for the problems which it addressed had been virtually resolved and the steps necessary to achieve the results desired by the Commonwealth were already in course of discussion with the colleges concerned in a consultative way. It was a misleading announcement for it gave the impression that wholesale closure of colleges was likely to result, or that their funds would be withdrawn. In doing so it fueled the fires of uncertainty and was quite unnecessarily damaging to morale.

It was a surprising announcement in that it gave for the first time an indication that the State College of Victoria Hawthorn, the Institute of Catholic Education and the Institute of Early Childhood Development should somehow respectively be merged with some
other unspecified institution or institutions. This had never been put to us by or on behalf of the Commonwealth, and we have been unable since Thursday to ascertain any rational basis for it or to undertake any definitive consultations which might assist us to reach that result. It may be that the names of those institutions were included in the Commonwealth list solely because of some generalized policy decision that metropolitan teacher training institutions should be merged with broader based tertiary institutions.

Although this approach may have its attractions as a broad general principle it ought not to have been raised to the level of an inflexible rule, imposed as a *fait accompli*, without regard to consequences.

The Victorian Government does not therefore at this stage accept the "suggestions" of the Commonwealth with respect to those institutions. It will seek the reasons, it will invite their review, it will ensure that consultation takes place before there are any decisions. A further announcement will be made with respect to those colleges as soon as it is possible to do so, but honourable members will appreciate that this is likely to be when the House is not sitting.

Meanwhile, the Government invites all those affected by today's announcements to work together in a spirit of goodwill to ensure that the advanced college system in Victoria not only maintains its high standards, but also gains in breadth and strength and ability to respond effectively to new and changing needs. As a Government we will continue to press the case for greater recognition by the Commonwealth of the growing need for new and enhanced skills in the decade ahead and hence for adequate funding to provide increased rather than reduced places for tertiary education in this State and Australia as a whole.

I would like to conclude this statement by expressing the Government's appreciation of the dedicated work of the present members of councils of the institutions concerned, and it looks forward with confidence to their continued co-operation in implementing these proposals.

On the motion of the Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province), it was ordered that the statement be taken into consideration forthwith.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I move:

That the Council take note of the Ministerial statement.

I have never heard a more politically inept statement than the one just made by the Minister of Education. It is clear that the future for tertiary education in Victoria, particularly in relation to teacher education, will be a subject for the "razor gang" because that is the group that is now planning tertiary education in Victoria. It is a total wipe-out of whatever the Government had in mind over the past eighteen months or two years.

The nice words honourable members heard from the Minister mean nothing but show he is incompetent and is trying to pass the buck. The reality is that he cannot get in touch with his counterparts in Canberra to find out what they mean. They were lovely words. I should like to read some words that sound similar, words spoken in the Legislative Assembly on 25 October 1972 by the then Minister of Education, the Honourable Lindsay Thompson, when he was speaking to the State College of Victoria Bill. As reported at page 1406 of _Hansard_, the then Minister, late in his speech, stated:

Finally, clause 56 ensures effective co-ordination within a given area. Some fears have been expressed that our teachers' colleges and advanced colleges might move along diverse fields in certain areas and that this could lead to overlapping and duplication. For that reason this clause has been inserted. It gives the Governor in Council power to establish an advisory body where, in a particular area, there is more than one tertiary institution or there is a proposal that there should be more than one, and that body will advise the Governor in Council on the co-ordinated development of those tertiary institutes. It is most important that our tertiary system should develop as a co-ordinated whole, and not be disjointed, and this clause will help to achieve such an aim.
I stress the importance of the last sentence of that quotation. The then Minister went on to say, in his colourful fashion, that there had been some landmarks in this State. He mentioned the 1872 Act and the Act of 1910 which gave the State the power to move into secondary education—a very important move—and the 1945 Act which set up the Teachers Tribunal. He then stated that the 1972 Act—which was to result from the Bill to which he was speaking—could well become one of the great landmarks in education in Victoria. In a nasty fashion, I think he was probably correct, because nine years later we are seeing almost the demolition of the intent of the State College of Victoria Act 1972.

I shall read another few lovely words spoken by the then Minister. At the end of his speech he stated:

Certainly it will be instrumental in elevating the status of teachers in this State. In addition, it will enable more adequate provision to be made on a short-term and long-term basis for the children of Victoria. Finally, without any doubt, it will allow teachers' colleges to take their place with pride alongside the other sections of tertiary education in Victoria, the universities and the colleges of advanced education.

What a sell-out! What marvellous words! The reality is that the Government should probably never have moved in that direction in the first instance. Mr President, you and I remember the debates that took place on the question that there should be a third stream of tertiary education in Victoria. I suspect that the present Minister of Education would agree that the wrong decision was made. Melbourne had one university in the early fifties and that grew to four during the early seventies. Senior technical colleges were grouped together to become the Victoria Institute of Colleges in 1965—66 and there was extraordinary development in tertiary education. In 1972 teachers' colleges were brought under the umbrella of the State College of Victoria. The decision to bring that about was probably stupid. The point is that at that time intelligent people, including the intelligent people in teachers' colleges, knew that it was a stupid decision. That was in October 1972.

There was then a change of Federal Government and it was obvious that at last money would flow to the States for education. This Government, if nothing else, is opportunist and it channelled funds made available by the Whitlam Government, from 1972 to 1975, into education. There was a tripling of funds for education. For once, the Government in Canberra gave decent priorities to education.

With the regrettable removal of the Whitlam Government from office—which occurred with the help of this Government—the problems began. By 1977 warnings were being sounded—in fact earlier than that—by the Technical Education Council and the Advanced Education Council and a call was made for rationalization. A number of reports were commissioned, including the Partridge report in Victoria and the Williams report on the Federal scene.

The Partridge report appeared to be pushed to one side but its ghost is appearing this evening because a lot of the comments made by the Minister go back to the Partridge report. Let me now refer to the recent Advanced Education Council and technical education reports which are dated earlier this year. I do not wish to quote at length from those reports but I shall quote an extract from the advice of the Advanced Education Council Vol. I part 3 which at page 154 under the heading Victoria at paragraph 8.67 states:

In its Advice for 1978 and in each volume of its Advice for the 1979–81 triennium the Council has drawn attention to the need for a review of the provision of advanced education in Victoria—particularly in the metropolitan area of Melbourne. In May 1980 the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission (VPSEC) provided its advice on these matters to the Council and to the State Minister for Education. In summary the proposal called for a consolidation and reduction of teacher education enrolments and the better use of some of the buildings now available. It was proposed that SCV Melbourne and SCV Coburg should consolidate their teaching activities and that
the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences should be partly re-located on the present SCV Melbourne campus. It was also proposed that the Prahran College of Advanced Education and SCV Toorak should enter an arrangement so that the two colleges should make optimum use of their capital and staff resources. The future of SCV Frankston was made the subject of a special inquiry.

It is with that phraseology that the Minister suggests that what is now happening was already in train. He makes it appear that the decisions and the decision-making process that the Government undertook at that time have naturally led to what is now happening. It is a sleight of hand trick and the Minister glossed across from that to the present situation.

The reality is that those suggestions were worked through thoroughly. Honourable members all know that the Lincoln Institute, the State College of Victoria at Melbourne and the State College of Victoria at Coburg plan was seen not to be suitable and the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission advised the Victorian Government and the Federal Government that it was not a suitable plan.

It also happens that the State College of Victoria at Toorak and the Prahran College of Advanced Education saw sense in what they have been offered and had for about eighteen months tried to make it work. The Minister tells the House that what is being forced on the Government is a natural outcome of the work of the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission and the Government. That is nonsense. They had earlier rejected the bulk of the proposals. The Prahran and Toorak colleges will form the basis of an extraordinary four-headed monster that is about to be created. What is happening now is not useful and one must go back further than square one and start again.

It is ridiculous for the Minister to suggest that the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission and State Government recommendations were taken into account; they have not been. Members of the Government have been walked all over. The "razor gang" took hold of them and has simply become the planning body for tertiary education in Victoria. The Advanced Education Council report also states:

In the Council's view this leaves Victoria without any current strategy which will enable the resources applied to teacher education to be reduced and consolidated in a way which is consistent with the agreed reduction in enrolments, and without a strategy to make the optimum use of the sites and buildings now available to advanced education in Victoria.

What kind of statement is that in a Government report? In the council's view, nothing could be more direct and insulting. On the basis of what I have read—I will not read the intervening part because it is statistical and runs through what the Advanced Education Council understood was happening—and the withdrawal of Victoria from earlier proposals, there needs to be another body of education training in Victoria under the current strategy.

The "razor gang" has told Victoria what it will be doing. That is the problem. The Government has not planned and Victoria does not have a strategy. A senior Federal body has told Victoria that it does not have a current strategy, but the State thought it had presented one. The Government knows that it is in trouble and knows that it will be in trouble when the next action is taken by Mr Lynch. How can the Minister say that this is a logical development? The colleges do not say it is a logical development. Those who were trying to follow the rationalization on a sensible basis, in a sensible time-frame, have been told to forget it. They will be made to do that in eight months' time and the Government does not have a say on that. The Minister cannot get in touch with his Federal counterpart. He cannot discuss the proposals and he said that he does not know what is happening. What I have referred to is the Federal Government report on education.

The Tertiary Education Commission report reflects some of the comments made in the Advanced Education Council report because the Tertiary Education Commission is the senior body. It is an important document and what I have read to the House appears again. Amongst other things, it makes fascinating reading. I shall refer to a
publication of early this year, which is an extract from the report for the 1982–84 triennium, volume 1, part 1, chapter 5—Rationalization in Higher Education. Paragraph 5.62 states:

The Commission has noted the view of the Advanced Education Council that the original VPSEC proposals for restructuring the college system could be seen to be conservative and could only be regarded as the first stage of a process of consolidation.

The report uses milder terms than the Advanced Education Council report. The Minister has tried to convince the House that that was all planned and if another week had been allowed it would have worked out. However, one cannot wait that long. The report tells the Government how to do it. Paragraph 5.64 states:

At the time of writing this Report the Commission had not received a formal proposal from the Victorian authorities relating to this specific proposal for redevelopment of SCV Frankston.

It pointed out that it did not have the information and that Victoria has not come to the party. The only chance it has is to tell Victoria how to do it.

If one considers the “razor gang” proposals of last week, it is significant that Victoria is the State that is mentioned far more than any other State in relation to the tertiary education field. The references to Victorian colleges outnumbered the other States by two to one. The Federal Government is telling Victoria that the Victorian Government is incompetent and does not know how to manage education and the Minister slides over that as if it were a national secret. It is not, and the story is not over yet. He does not know the end of it. He is waiting for further direction. He is not sure what is to come and is trying to make it sound as if it is what he planned. For a break, I shall read a couple of sentences from the Liberal Party platform of 1979—which was a sketchy document—the education policy statement. The party is not well-known for its policy formulation processes. However, clause 13 states:

Victoria has the most highly developed system of Colleges of Advanced Education of any State.

The Hon. E. H. Walker

The Victorian Government will not say that again.

Enrolments in Victoria’s Colleges of Advanced Education far exceed those of any other State.

The Liberal Party was boasting. It will not be able to boast again. Some interesting points are made later in that document. In Section H1, Post-Secondary Education, it states that the Liberal Party will:

... Co-ordinate the development of our Post-Secondary Education through the newly established Post-Secondary Education Commission.

If the record so far is anything to consider, there is little co-ordination and the system is falling apart. The policy also states that the party will:

... retain and where possible expand existing post-secondary institutions in country areas.

That is the sort of hollow promise given by the Liberal Party at every election time.

The Tertiary Education Commission report refers to the lack of current strategy. There is no strategy. Has there been any real consultation with the institutions involved or their staff bodies or students? If there has been, has it been of any use? What will happen to the special needs of teachers and students in industrial suburbs? If one considers the way teacher education functions in this State, the Coburg College was doing an excellent job. It is one of the institutions that should not have been touched. It should have been given special extra assistance. It has some of the most advanced programmes in migrant language work, but it will be sliced up as a result of the recommendations. The Government does not give a damn.

The other college serving Melbourne's northern and western suburbs is the Melbourne college. The Melbourne and Coburg colleges are both under attack. The Melbourne college provides primary teacher training and it was the only college in the State with a conjunction of primary and secondary teacher training. That was important. The Coburg college is being forced to abandon the programmes that
it has carefully and slowly built up, which is directly related to the needs of the northern and western suburbs. One should consider the composition of these colleges, not only of the students, but also of staff. Extraordinary circumstances exist. A high proportion of staff at the Coburg college are also from the northern and western suburbs. However, the Government does not give a damn.

It is going to attack head-on, not on an educational or social basis, but on some transferred, telegraphed, economic basis from the "razor gang". What about the time scale? It is ridiculous to attempt the forced amalgamation in eight months. It will lead to chaos and disruption, particularly in existing courses. It involves direct threats to both tenured and contract staff. One must now forget a career structure in which one can have job security in the teaching profession. The State College of Victoria staff, both tenured and contract, are under attack. The threats are very real. One might have said that, if there were a decent time sequence, one could work on resignations and attrition. The rate of attrition has been low because the job threat has been great. No wonder the attrition rate is low. People do not transfer now because of the threat of unemployment, but if they had been given enough time, the rate of attrition might have been allowed for. It cannot be within the space of eight months.

How will the students know what courses to look forward to next year? Nobody else knows; the Minister does not know. There is no educational content and no basis for the decisions that have been made. They are superficial, arbitrarily imposed decisions to try to administer the colleges from now on.

How will the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission function? It has been told to go and suck eggs. Its work has been for nothing over the past few years; it is as if it did not exist. Have these amalgamations been forced for economic or educational reasons? There is no doubt about the answer; the Minister's comments make it clear that educational factors did not even get a look in, and that is shameful. The system has been built; it may not have been sensible to start it in 1972, but it now exists and it had begun to function. One would have imagined that in tight financial circumstances educational factors would have been considered and an educational decision would have been made, but there is no sense of educational factors in this decision. The "razor gang" said, in effect, "Sorry boys, no money. We will cut out these colleges and cut out the other four later on; we haven't told you about those yet". There is no educational base in that decision.

One might look at colleges such as those at Rusden or Toorak. The Minister makes it sound as though they are up for grabs and that they will be administered from Burwood or Prahran. How can that be done? One might as well suggest that colleges at Euroa and Mildura be administered from Frankston.

Is it cheaper to administer those colleges as if they were part of a multi-function campus without spending money on each of those campuses to make them multi-functional? If that is not done students will have to travel by bus from here, there and everywhere. It will not work.

I give the Government credit for knowing that it would not work because it was not headed that way; it has been pushed that way. The four campuses make up a four-headed monster, and the proposal cannot work. One cannot have an administration at Burwood and expect it to cover the other colleges successfully. If it works, it will cost more money and that is not what the amalgamation is about. The document states that the purpose of the amalgamation is to reduce costs. Nobody has thought it out.

It is my view and that of the Labor Party that this approach will cost more. It does not have an educational basis, and the economics of the scheme are ludicrous. God help the students in teacher training at the moment; they will not know where they are going.
The Minister cannot answer any of the questions we asked, and what is worse, there are many more questions to come than even he has posed or we have posed. The Minister has given honourable members a couple of hours to look at a most important statement. I appreciate the couple of hours but I am staggered by what the document contains. I am amazed that the Minister has the gall to make it sound as if he had some part in arranging it.

I shall quote from the document prepared by the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, which gives some indication of how the dislocation has occurred. The document is entitled “The Development of Victorian Colleges of Advanced Education during the 1982-84 Triennium—Recommendations to the Minister of Education about Relationships among a number of Victorian Colleges of Advanced Education”. It is dated April 1981—it could not be more recent. Under the heading of “Introduction” the document states:

In Volume I, Part I, of its Report for 1982-84 Triennium the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has proposed that, during the triennium, for Australia as a whole, there should be relative stability in higher education (universities and colleges of advanced education) and moderate growth in technical and further education.

The proposal for stability in advanced education contrasts with proposals for the 1982-84 Triennium by Victoria’s twenty-two colleges of advanced education which in aggregate sought an increase in total student load from the planned student load(1) in 1981 of 42,180 equivalent full time students (EFTS) and 55,730 persons enrolled(2) to a target student load in 1984 of 47,770 EFTS...

There is an immediate dislocation. The report states that although the Tertiary Education Commission is talking about a stable situation, Victoria was planning for and had banked on a marked increase in student numbers. I should have imagined that the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, in preparing this document, did extrapolations of what was needed. I do not believe it was irresponsible. There has been a lot of talk about reducing student numbers, but that is a short-term drop. One must consider the long-term aspects, because trained teachers will be needed. The Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission probably did its homework.

Further down the document states:

The VPSEC therefore proposed that between 1981 and 1984 student load in teacher education should fall from 14,000 EFTS to 12,000 EFTS and that the consequent reduction in availability of student places should be replaced by increases in the 1984 target student loads in science, technologies, business, humanities and social sciences, particularly the latter three fields of study which are suited to the academic background and interests of students now unable to obtain places in teacher education courses, and of whom approximately 70 per cent are women.

I give credit here; the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission was forced into making a report on teacher training numbers, and it saw a capacity to move the numbers over into other fields. That is responsible planning and I give credit for that. But what happened? It has been wiped out; there is to be no transfer of those numbers.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—It is a good decision.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Whose decision is it? This is not the decision that is being carried out; Mr Saltmarsh should listen more carefully. I am stating what the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission said should be done, and it is not happening. There was to be a transfer of students into the science, technology, business, humanities and social sciences, but this is not happening. It is a straight cut-out, and 70 per cent of the students being cut out, according to this document, are women.

It is outrageous for the Government to have agreed to this proposal. The Government members have just laid down in the face of their brother party members in Canberra. They constantly bow and scrape as if Malcolm Fraser and his henchmen have to be correct; they do not stand up for their rights. The Government does not go in to fight. The Minister suggested that he cannot even telephone his counterpart to have a chat about it.

Honourable members are being sold a bill of goods. There has been no proper planning for tertiary education in Victoria. We are being forced into...
accepting arbitrary changes to colleges that have fought to build a decent base, and I do not think the educational community of Victoria will stand for it. The teachers, administrators and students will not stand for it. They will start to tell the Government what it ought to do, and in about a year’s time they will have a chance to vote on it.

The Labor Party is highly disappointed with the Ministerial statement. It hopes that soon some sanity will again enter into tertiary planning in Victoria, but with the evidence contained in the Ministerial statement, one sees no hope, and it is hoped that in a year’s time members of the Opposition will have a chance to fix it up.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—Honourable members have not had much time in which to study the implications of the Minister's statement and therefore my comments will be fairly brief and general. If there is one thing that can be seen at a cursory glance about education in Victoria over the years, it is the lack of planning that has taken place over decades and has led to many of the difficulties that have confronted the education system in that time. It has led to deficiencies in various areas of the Teaching Service at a time when the Minister talks of large surpluses. It has led to the Government now, under a new Ministry and new directions, almost completely changing direction across the whole front of education.

At present no part of the Victorian community involved in education knows where it is heading or what the future holds for education. People involved in education are so uncertain about the future and where they are being led that much confidence is being lost, and it is no wonder, because almost weekly—and I have said before, I give the Minister credit for making decisions and usually standing by them—a Minister in either this House or the other House makes a statement, whether on health and human relations or on putting physical education teachers into schools or, as a couple of weeks ago, to take technical and further education out of the mainstream of the Education Department and to set up a separate administration for it, and nothing further happens.

People do not know where they are being led. I think the Minister is coming to grips with parts of the education portfolio. Sometimes I wonder whether we are having a complete overview and looking at each component that is being dealt with in relation to the total education scene. There have been green papers, white papers, the lot, and, if anything, the last few Ministers have at least come to grips and had a look at each of them. However, I think they are dealing with each part, piece by piece, without necessarily putting the whole lot together to form a package of where education is supposed to be heading in this State.

There is no doubt that we need to take a longer view of the education needs of the Victorian community. We have suffered from a lack of planning which took us to the stage of a disastrous shortage of teachers in the State. Then almost overnight the Government, without doing its homework properly, had a complete change of heart and there was a massive increase in teacher numbers. Now, only a few years later, there is a severe cutback and the Government is heading in the other direction.

I am inclined to agree with Mr Walker’s comment. We have to look at the future needs of staff in Victoria and at movements in the population and in the school population generally. I sincerely hope the Minister has done that with the moves he has announced for the colleges of advanced education in Victoria, because in another decade or even longer the State may need teachers and may certainly need them in specific subject areas. What has probably concerned me most about the teacher training system is that it has not necessarily been fulfilling the needs that are current and projected. Almost every year there is a deficiency in some subject areas, whether it be in English, history, maths-science or in French. Those shortages exist and the teacher training system needs to take a long overview of the position and plan for those specific areas.
With Mr Ward from this House, I was a member of the interim senate of the State College of Victoria when it was first established. They were very heady days, as has been suggested, during the earlier part of the 1970s, when money for education simply seemed to appear. At that time there was plenty of money about and it used to alarm me on occasions when I saw the amount of money that was available for teacher training and tertiary education or education in general. Clearly there was a tremendous responsibility to ensure that that funding was kept within some perspective. I do not think many honourable members will disagree that we face a position in Victoria where there must be rationalization, but rationalization by whom? I am deeply concerned that a group from Canberra could be imposing rationalization on the colleges of advanced education in Victoria, the colleges under the control of the State Government. It is an alarming situation when a group from a Government in Canberra can decide what is going to happen with Victoria’s colleges of advanced education, its teacher training colleges, and almost issue a straightout ultimatum to do this or else, and to make these changes within a period of about eight months so they can come into operation for the commencement of 1982.

I object to that sort of procedure because it takes away from the States the enormous responsibility they have of planning their education needs and requirements and seeking to carry out their own rationalization. Admittedly, the Commonwealth Government was probably disappointed at the rate of progress with which this Government was coming to grips with those problems. There is considerable procrastination by the Victorian Government in making many of these decisions and a lack of effective decision-making. Therefore, the Federal Government forced the issue, but I cannot agree with the contention that the Federal Government should have that power.

The Minister has even described the Federal Government’s “razor gang” decisions as ill-considered, insensitive and blunt and I think they are all of that. Over the course of the next few months no doubt Mr Walker will have input from the colleges affected, and I certainly hope we do as a party. There will be a lot of comment and discussion and we as a party will be seeking to encourage that and seeking comment from the colleges that are concerned and recommended for rationalization under this programme. I hope the Minister’s offer of further consultation is real and that it leaves room for some flexibility.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—I would not bet on it.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn—According to his statement, I would not bet on it either, but I am suggesting to the Minister that that is the way the matter should be approached. Over the next few months there should be discussions between the colleges concerned and the Government because unless the matter can be thrashed out properly it has no hope of working. I will never know how one can expect to achieve economies by putting four campuses together, as Mr Walker said, under the one administration, because merely making a bigger administrative unit does not necessarily mean better efficiency, better performance or improvements in any way, apart from giving the Government some satisfaction that it might have reduced a few staff and administrative positions here and there, and cut down on the cost.

However, in the end we have to look at the effectiveness of the system and how it can best be provided. I caution the Minister on that point, but I do not necessarily believe that by amalgamating numbers of colleges of advanced education we will improve them or make them more efficient. We as a party are prepared to accept the need for some rationalization. As I said before, I do not think anyone can expect to continue on regardless when the trends and the figures clearly show the dramatic fall off in enrolments in the school system and the dramatic fall off in enrolments in the State system compared with the private schools and other sectors, which reflects a lack of confidence in the State system.
is also a considerable reduction in wastage and turnover in teachers due to retirement and the fact that they are now holding on to their jobs for longer periods and there is nowhere near the number of opportunities for new teachers to take up positions. At this time there is a need for some rationalization but we should keep our eyes on the long-term future of the State and make sure that in a decade or two people are not looking at the decisions made today and blaming us for a lack of planning in the same way as former Ministers have been blamed for a lack of planning.

I am particularly concerned at the suggestion of the "razor gang" concerning the State College of Victoria at Hawthorn at a time when we face a shortage of trade teachers in our technical system and considerable difficulties in our technical schools with a teacher shortage, particularly in those trade areas. Hawthorn college has a significant part to play in providing those courses from people from the trades who want to move into the teaching profession. One of our major challenges in the immediate future is to overcome the shortage that exists in the technical field and, even more, to try to attract people from the trades to teaching and to the technical division because a severe shortage exists and that shortage will grow because of the increasing demand for technical type education. I hope the recommendations about the Hawthorn State College will be reviewed because of that need.

My comments on the Ministerial statement can only be taken as initial comments. The National Party will undertake an enormous amount of homework on the statement and undertake consultation with the colleges concerned.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—It is too late!

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—It may be, but I do not think it is ever too late. The Government is in a sensitive political position and has been placed in an almost untenable position by the Federal Government. The Victorian Government has less than a year to go before the next election and it is open to—

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—You don’t feel sorry for them do you?

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—The Government is open to negotiation and I hope the National Party can use the opportunity.

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH (Waverley Province)—In the first instance I commend the Minister of Education for the statesmanlike statement that he presented to the House tonight. I have been impressed by the attention to detail that has been given by the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission and by the Minister over a long period of time. It was incredible to listen to Mr Walker base his whole speech on the absurd assumption that the Ministerial statement was made as a reaction to last Thursday's announcement from Canberra. If Mr Walker knew the truth he would know that that is absolute nonsense because many people have been involved for a long time in extensive discussions about the need for rationalization of educational services within the various colleges. We are fully aware that, in the interests of Victoria as a whole and teachers and students as a whole, there is a need for an effective rationalization of an enormous problem, to provide a secure basis for planning ahead.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—are you talking about Rusden?

The Hon. D. N. SALTMARSH—I am constantly in touch with that college and I know there is a great deal of support for rational planning. A few months ago the possible demise of that college was anticipated, but now the college will be strong, vibrant and vital and will continue to provide outstanding services for the south-eastern sector of Melbourne. I am delighted with the report, which provides a basis of great strength that will be built on and provide flexibility for future planning as well as providing for effective operations now.

Those of us who have been aware of the constraints facing education, particularly teacher education, consider
that there has been an immorality in the fact that a vast number of young people have been trained as teachers only to find that no teaching appointments were available. It is clear that a reduction had to be made in the number of students engaged in teacher training in order to cope with the decreasing demand, which has been highlighted through the decrease in school population and also, as pointed out by the Minister, a decrease in the wastage rate of teachers through resignation and so on. The numbers of teachers required has been reduced and it is proper and essential therefore that the Government take appropriate planning action to ensure that the demand for teachers is consonant with the numbers of pupils.

Anticipating that there would be a "razor gang" response, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, the Ministry and other interested persons worked to achieve the desirable results which have now been reported in the Ministerial statement. It is of some interest to note that realities, constraints and skills required in the real world or workplace. This requirement for relative stability was contrasted with the over-all demands presented by Victoria's 22 colleges of advanced education for the years 1982-84. As had been indicated, these demands were to provide a considerable increase in the number of students in our educational institutions. Some argument could be sustained for the growth of enrolments in certain courses, particularly in the areas of science and technology, but to plan for an increase in the number of pre-service teacher training places would no doubt be irresponsible, even reprehensible, if it meant again that more young people would only be given the false expectation that if they were trained in those areas there would be jobs after graduation.

The Ministerial statement demonstrates the impact of a rational examination, a review and a decision-making process which takes account of the various constraining factors not only of finance but also of demand as evidenced by population patterns and the needs of the community for particular skills. The Minister has stated over the past few months or more during this review process that the decisions to be taken at this time necessarily must be based on professional input, advice and interpretation and therefore the various reports that have already been outlined by Mr Walker have helped to form the basis of a professional judgment by those who are responsible for the decision-making process here in Victoria.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh

The Minister has listened to the reports and recommendations from these advisers in order to ensure that it is not simply a political process—it is a professional process—now supported in the political arena. This review process has been most commendable and I am sure its impact will be reflected in sensible, reasonable decisions affecting the life of our tertiary institutes over many years.

As has been indicated in the Tertiary Education Commission report, there is a need for relative stability in higher education in Victoria and a need for moderate growth in technical and further education. This is a view which many honourable members can support with ease, if for no other reason than that it is easy for people in bureaucratic positions—including teachers, principals and administrators of our institutions—to let their imagination run riot at times and plan to develop larger bureaucracies.

We need to constantly relate the expectations of these people to the realities, constraints and skills required in the real world or workplace. This requirement for relative stability was contrasted with the over-all demands presented by Victoria's 22 colleges of advanced education for the years 1982-84. As had been indicated, these demands were to provide a considerable increase in the number of students in our educational institutions. Some argument could be sustained for the growth of enrolments in certain courses, particularly in the areas of science and technology, but to plan for an increase in the number of pre-service teacher training places would no doubt be irresponsible, even reprehensible, if it meant again that more young people would only be given the false expectation that if they were trained in those areas there would be jobs after graduation.

We know there will not be jobs available for increased numbers of teachers until at least the mid-1980s and again in the early 1990s. It seems to me that the type of establishment that has been outlined gives flexibility to respond to the situation as it arises.
in the future. The new arrangement that has been indicated for the southeastern area, including Burwood, Toorak and Rusden, means that as the mid-1980s approach we will be able to increase the number of students in primary teacher training opportunities and by 1990, with some flexibility, will be able to make greater response in the secondary teacher training area.

The recommendations made in the report of the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission and the Ministerial statement will provide a flexibility in course design and management such that, whilst the number of teachers will be realistically contained in the light of decreasing demand, the proposed structure of the multi-campus college will in fact, with its multi-discipline courses, mean that new opportunities for new courses will be provided in these institutions. By the early 1990s the intake of students will demonstrate that effective planning now has a long-term impact that, in turn, will be very important.

Obviously, the aspect of the report that concerns me particularly relates to the State College of Victoria, Rusden. The south-eastern suburban area of Melbourne has experienced a rapid growth in population over the past two decades and, along with Monash University, Rusden is strategically located to serve this very large residential area. The possibility of Rusden being incorporated with Frankston and made redundant as a separate campus, was suggested and, as a result of the very fine representations from Rusden and—may I say with modesty—by this member for the Waverley Province to the Minister of Education, full recognition has been given to Rusden. Fortunately, those representations achieved effective results.

The Hon. E. H. Walker—Are you taking credit for this schemozzle?

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—I am taking credit for some involvement and I am sad that it means that the basic argument of the Labor Party again falls flat on its face, because there has been a much longer lead time to this recommen-

dation than the Labor Party dares to admit. Progressively, all advanced education activities and the new college will be established in a style that will result in very small reductions in the total number of students at Rusden, which will have approximately 200 students fewer by the end of 1984 and that approximately 20 of the present staff will need to have alternative employment—and during that period up to 1984 there will be some resignations, retirements and transfers so that a small number of those persons will be affected. These new arrangements, therefore, will build up the morale and expectations of the staff and give a greater continuity of course content and duration for students involved in the programmes at Rusden. It is known now that the programmes will continue and that knowledge is the important basis on which effective planning within each campus of the new college will be made.

It is important for Rusden that it has no reduction in the post-secondary teacher-training area and I indicate that, for Rusden to remain viable as a campus, this area should not be affected. Further, it must be ensured that the home economics segment of the course is not lost, because there is a very important interpretation of a whole range of subject-matter on home economics that reaches to other courses, which, if that component of home economics were lost with the cessation of Larriook, Rusden would have difficulty in maintaining its present types of programmes. It must be insisted that the home economics unit of Rusden remains an effective and viable part of its programme. I hope the new council will surely take these recommendations into account when forming its opinion and final recommendation as to the structure of the new multi-campus college.

When the initial dust settles on these changes, the recommendations will be nowhere near as bad as Mr Walker has indicated. Already there has been a deal of acceptance by the administration of Rusden of the inevitability of changes in the teacher-training programme and in the institution. The fact
that it is now a viable part of a new college programme is accepted, and it was deemed by industry and commerce and by Governments representing those interests to be necessary.

It has been very much a political philosophy in this and other centuries that the one thing conservatives fear above all is that the community will be educated to a stage where it has the capacity to reason, think and question. That philosophy has been behind the trend in educational services. The National Party, of course, would like to continue that, since it has never thought.

I commend the Minister of Education, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, and particularly its chairman, Dr Allen, and those involved in the intensive preparation of the document and the speed with which they have worked over the past several months so that, following the announcement of the "razor gang" report from Canberra, an effective long-term planning process initiative was undertaken that will lead the way into the future for Victoria's post-secondary colleges.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—This is a significant and sad stage in the history of tertiary education in Victoria which reflects the culmination of a series of developments that have occurred in Victoria. Over the past decade, great emphasis has been placed on the philosophy that the maximum education should be made available to individuals in order to develop a society of intelligent persons in a broad range of education in the humanities and technology to be equipped for the significant changes occurring in society, so that this generation and succeeding generations are prepared for those changes. In the early and mid-1970s marked emphasis was placed on the fulfilment of aspirations of many persons to a degree never experienced before and the further development of education at all levels was supported by all persons generally.

Since 1975 there has been a sustained and effective campaign to persuade the people of Victoria and Australia that the real purpose of education is to provide only a sufficient number of technically-trained persons to carry out the industrial and commercial activities...
The educational explosion of the 1970s caused developments that were not rational. Some of those developments were the result of political pressure and perhaps a lack of understanding of what types of education would best serve the needs and the requirements of the community in general. One of the major political events was the establishment of Deakin University, which has had a considerable effect on advanced education and opportunities for development throughout Victoria.

It is interesting to note that the Ministerial statement makes no reference to the colleges of advanced education in country areas. Those colleges of advanced education have experienced a long period of uncertainty and a period of promises made and broken. I have been a member of the council of one college of advanced education for a number of years and I know of the paralysis that has developed because of the changes in direction and in the security that have developed amongst principals, lecturers and staff in general. I emphasize that there is a tendency to believe that the management and staffs of the institutions should be considered more important.

Those institutions deserve consideration, which, it is to be hoped, they will receive, although massive reorganizations will have to be made, which will undoubtedly have a serious effect on many staffs. However, the real purpose of these institutions is initially not to provide security for staff, but to provide education for students of all ages. Those institutions should not merely provide employees for industry and commerce that may require those people at some time in the future.

The belief is still held that there is a surplus of teachers and that that number should be drastically reduced. I cite the glaring example where, three or four years ago, the authorities considered that there were far too many places in engineering being made available in tertiary education institutions. Within a short space of three or four years there has been a complete reversal from a situation where there was a surplus of engineers to the present extreme shortage of engineers to service industry and the resource development which, the public is told, will be so beneficial for Australia. It has had its consequence upon the staffing problems of various institutions who may have difficulty in competing with private enterprise in obtaining the necessary staff. The staffing situation is not in every respect and in every category one of surplus at all.

The Ministerial statement makes no reference to the Gippsland, Warrnambool, Bendigo or Ballarat institutes of advanced education. The Federal Government, in a typical political move, is of the opinion that it can isolate country people from the turmoil, the protests, the distress and the uncertainty through the proposals outlined in the Ministerial statement. The Federal Liberal Government is a top class exponent of dividing the community. The Government believes if it can satisfy some people that they are doing all right, that that will take away much of the heat of the injustices that are being meted out to other people.

Rationalization should be based upon the provision of the fullest educational opportunities for the entire community. Figures for any of the colleges would demonstrate that the majority of enrolments are not from students who have just left secondary school, but from mature-age students. They are forming an increased proportion of enrolments at almost all of these colleges. Many people are undertaking external studies and part-time courses in some instances to further their qualifications and, in some instances, in an attempt to provide themselves with useful knowledge that will better equip them for the trying times that lie ahead. Those students may not be seeking qualifications for the purpose of entering the work force.

It is highly desirable that, so far as possible, society should provide for the advancement of learning in institutions at this level. These institutions will suffer considerably because of the emphasis the Education Department is
placing upon the employment opportunities for the near future. The department has failed to take account of the immense challenge. It is impossible to forecast particular jobs and the nature of employment that will occur because of technological changes that are accelerating at a faster rate than most people realize. Consequently, I believe it is crucial in this period that people, whether for their own personal fulfilment or for the purpose of fulfilling the needs of society in the future, should be given the broadest possible opportunity of mastering the changing skills which will be required if they are to serve society as they should be able to do.

These are important issues. We speak of rationalization. Proposals have been made that various colleges and their administrations amalgamate. This is another set of proposals in line with various proposals that have been made over the years. There is nothing positive at this stage. No machinery has been worked out as to how it will be done and whether there will be decentralized administration; whether particular courses will be concentrated on one campus where a college consists of several campuses. Where a wide range of small courses are separated out, there will be inefficiency. If we have limited courses at colleges where there are small numbers of people, transport problems for students will result. I could tell the House of problems in the outer suburbs of Melbourne where the State College of Victoria at Frankston is regarded as being eligible for an enrolment of 800 full-time students or the equivalent of 800 full-time students. A large number of the students at that college would be part time and the number of full-time students would be very small indeed. That area has a huge population and the people living there have transport difficulties in reaching centralized areas.

I accept that, with the extensive resources which are necessary for many advanced courses, a case exists for rationalization, but I regret that we have reached another stage of compromise which is claimed to be the result of discussion and agreement between the people concerned. The Labor Party knows that it is the response of people who have been pressurized to come to some sort of accommodation under the terms put to them. One could say that it is like people being told that food will be rationed and, irrespective of whether it is sufficient, they have to adjust to what is available. It is not a voluntary agreement which has been worked out in the best interests of the colleges; it is something which they will accept because it is all that they have been offered and they will make the best of a bad deal. We, as a Parliament representing the people of Victoria—and on this side of the House I for one—certainly will not accept the principles which are behind this backward step in education in Victoria.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—This is the third time this week that I have risen to speak on the State College of Victoria at Rusden, which is vitally concerned in this matter. A little over a year ago, a large and successful function at that college was attended by members of Parliament from both the major parties. The principal of Rusden college—then, as now, Dr Paul Wisch, an eminent educationist—made an apt quote, and I think it was his own. He said, “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance”. We are reaching that stage here.

The Hon. Robert Lawson—Give us an example.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY—I will give Mr Lawson plenty of examples in a moment. I only hope he will have something to say on this matter. I was interested to note that Mr Saltmarsh spoke on this vital matter of the fate of Rusden college. However, one would have thought that he spoke more as a candidate for preselection for a safe Liberal mark, an Assembly seat rather than Waverley Province, the seat he will lose next year.

Proposal 1 is:

1.1 That a new multi-campus and multi-discipline college of advanced education be established by amalgamation of the existing
colleges of SCV Burwood, Prahran College of Advanced Education, SCV Rusden, and SCV Toorak.

That proposition is utterly unworkable. The next section of proposal 1 is:

1.2 That progressively all advanced education activities of the new college be re-located on three campuses.

Which one misses out? It may be interesting to examine that more closely, in terms of educational politics or whatever. The State College of Victoria at Burwood is in a marginally safe Liberal seat; Prahran is in a marginally safe Labor seat, which is becoming safer all the time; Toorak is in the electorate of Malvern, which is so far a safe Liberal seat; the State College of Victoria at Rusden at Blackburn Road is on the border of the marginal Labor seat of Springvale and the marginal Liberal seat of Syndal. A swing of less than 200 votes would lead to a change in either of those seats.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—What has that to do with education?

The Hon. C. J. Kennedy—It has a lot to do with politics! We could end up with a game of Russian roulette and Rusden could be the winner or it could be the loser. I quote again from the statement:

1.3 That the central, administrative unit of the new college be located at the Burwood campus.

How can that work unless it means that Rusden College loses its total administrative set-up and dwindles to a skeleton?

The next section of proposal 1 is:

1.4 That the total 1984 student load of the new college be 4920 effective full-time students.

That would mean that about 2000 opportunities would be lost.

It concerns me, and it ought to concern every person living in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne where the seats are marginal, that Rusden currently has approximately 2000 students and approximately 160 teaching staff, and my information is that this will probably drop to 1000 students and that the number of staff will be halved to 80. That will represent a substantial loss of educational facilities in the eastern suburbs. Rusden is the most easterly of all Melbourne’s tertiary institutions. If it dwindles or disappears, people will have to travel miles to go elsewhere.

The Hon. D. N. Saltmarsh—It will not disappear. Can’t you read the report?

The Hon. C. J. Kennedy—You need only to read an application for nomination for the Liberal Party preselection. If within the next few months the student intake at Rusden college drops by 1000 and staff numbers are reduced from 160 to 80, this will have an enormous effect on the business conducted at the shopping centres located at Pinewood, Clayton, Glen Waverley, Syndal, Mount Waverley and other shopping centres within the locality. Of necessity, Rusden college must spend millions of dollars a year buying the necessary requisites of a large educational institute. That spending will disappear and I should imagine that the shopping centres which I have mentioned would not be happy with the representation they receive from Mr Saltmarsh, who is supposed to speak for the business interests in that locality. I am sure that this loss in business will result in an increased number of bankruptcies within the Waverley Province.

I point out that another oddity is contained within proposal 2, in that 2.1 provides:

That a new multi-campus, multi-discipline college of advanced education be established by amalgamation of the existing colleges of Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, SCV Coburg and SCV Melbourne.

That is totally impossible. The Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences is providing tertiary education for nurses and has nothing to do with the operation of the other colleges. In no way is it compatible. Proposal 2.3 provides:

That the central administrative unit of the new college be located at Melbourne campus.

How that would work, Lord only knows.

Proposal 3 provides:

That the council of the State College of Victoria Frankston be dissolved.
Proposal 3.2 provides:

That the Caulfield Institute of Technology be requested to accept responsibility for the provision of advanced education in the Frankston region by establishing a campus of the institute at Frankston.

That is a farcical situation and it would be fair to state that this is one of those proposals which the Minister of Education has put up, the end result of which will depend very much on how organized are the staff and students at that college.

Having been a student of this politically-motivated Government for many years, I am convinced that when the Government looks like losing too many seats, it will move those colleges in areas where it will receive votes. If it looks like losing seats, the Government will do everything to save them. We will be faced with the situation where the community may have an education system working entirely on political expediency. I quote once again the principal of Rusden college: If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

The motion was agreed to.

GEELONG LANDS BILL

The Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister of Lands)—I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its main purpose is to provide for the headquarters of the Institute of Educational Administration to be established on certain land at Geelong. At the same time it will allow for the re-development of adjoining land for public recreation.

The land comprises 8.9 hectares being the old Corio Oval and Friendly Societies Reserve located at Limeburners Road, East Geelong. The Corio oval reserve fell into disuse following the transfer of trotting and greyhound racing facilities to another site and the total parcel of land is presently in a state of disrepair. Control of the reserve, previously vested in trustees or in a committee of management, has been returned to the Lands Department.

The area to be occupied by the institute for buildings and immediate surrounds will not exceed 1.6 hectares with the balance of the 8.9 hectares being developed by the council of the institute for sporting fields and park land for public recreational purposes. The total cost of the development will be about $3 million of which $250 000 will be expended by the council of the institute on the provision of these recreational facilities.

The building development will comprise three residential blocks and an administration-education centre. It will attract not only State but also inter-State and overseas visitors and consultants.

The site abuts Eastern Park and the development will be so designed and landscaped to be compatible to the park environment. No building will be more than one storey in height.

The Bill revokes the present reservations of the Corio Oval and Friendly Societies Reserve in order that the land can be re-reserved in the manner I have mentioned.

The site of the institute's complex will be managed by the council of the institute. The recreational land, when developed at the expense of the council of the institute, will be managed by the Corporation of the City of Geelong. This over-all community project will be of great benefit to the City of Geelong, and 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 later this day.

PORT FAIRY LAND BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 29) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie (Geelong Province)—Even though this is only a small Bill it is interesting because in some ways it gives an indication of the new directions policies which the Government proposes to
introduce. It is also interesting to note the way it has come about as it raises quite a few unusual propositions.

At the outset I indicate that the Labor Party does not oppose the Bill. However, it proposes an amendment, and I move:

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof "this Bill be withdrawn in order that other areas of land in the vicinity may be investigated as to their suitability for leasing; any proposed granting of leasehold of Crown land in the area to be subject to public exhibition, comment and objection before legislation is prepared."

In this instance, a parcel of Crown land has been passed over to a private industry and there is nothing in the Bill to state for what period the lease is being given. There is nothing in the Bill to indicate that any charge is being made. It is being given directly to a private business.

In Port Fairy there is a viable fishing industry and viable boat-building industry, which is a one man business that employs four or five people. This man is recognized as one of the best boat builders, especially of timber boats, in Victoria. His work is highly regarded and it is essential to Port Fairy that his services be retained in the area. The Labor Party agrees with that and supports very strongly his staying in Port Fairy.

However, what has taken place in the preparation of this Bill is remarkable. This boat builder, Mr Stewart, has received an offer from the South Australian Government to set up his business in Robe, South Australia. This created a deal of consternation because the business is situated in the electorate represented by the Minister for Economic Development, one of the new direction Ministers, and the embarrassment of an industry in the electorate moving out of the State has been impossible for the Minister to bear, so he has rushed this Bill into Parliament to ensure that the industry stays at Port Fairy.

In doing so, the Minister has not given a great deal of thought to how other people in the Port Fairy area have been affected. He even wrote to the local yacht club three weeks ago stating that the boat shed was to be built on this Crown land and that he would put a Bill through Parliament to that effect and that that would be the position. At that stage, I understand he had not consulted with the other Ministers, namely the Minister of Lands and the Minister for Public Works, who were also involved because it was on the foreshore.

The Hon. D. G. Crozier—Has the local council agreed?

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—Yes, the local council has agreed. This parcel of land has not been in existence very long. During the dredging operations of the Public Works Department, this area was filled in. It is not parkland; in fact it has quite a lot of rubbish on it. It is on the side of the river, which is opposite to where the boat-building operations take place and where the fishing fleet ties up.

I went to Port Fairy two weeks ago, before I knew this Bill was being introduced, because I was contacted by several local people who were concerned about these rumoured moves by the Government. While a great many people wish Mr Stewart to stay in Port Fairy, they are concerned that the land is being passed over to him in this manner. The yacht club has been after this land for five or six years to build a yacht club pavilion, but the club has not received any word from the Lands Department and no decision by the Government. I believe a yacht club building would be more compatible than a boat-building enterprise.

The people who live opposite this parcel of land are concerned that boat building on this land will obstruct their view and cause depreciation of their property. Other people in the area believe that to set a large boat shed building in that area would be a retrograde step, particularly in view of the fact that Mr Stewart chose to build a new residence in front of his existing boat shed, making it impossible to extend the shed and preventing him from taking a slipway into the river. Mr Stewart has in some ways caused the present dilemma.
I have been to Port Fairy and investigated this matter and I have spoken to fishermen and members of the local council, to the harbor master, and to the Ports and Harbors Division. Adequate land is available elsewhere for the setting up of this boat-building business. There is a parcel of land, partly owned by the Public Works Department. The harbor master said that if the land were cleared, the Public Works Department could store its equipment elsewhere, but there is an objection to this because it is opposite the country home of one of the Liberal Senators, Senator Austin Lewis, and he has objected to it. It appears that consultation does take place between State and Federal members if it suits their own ends. The Minister has rushed in and treated the Parliamentary system with contempt. He has told everyone he has made this decision, without the Bill going through Parliament.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—Is he a fellow Liberal, Mr Stewart?

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—I am not talking about Mr Stewart. I am talking about Senator Lewis. Mr Jenkins is not listening. The Labor Party is very much in favour of Mr Gary Stewart keeping his building in that particular area.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—Would you tell us why?

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—I have already stated why but Mr Jenkins was not listening. I will go through it again for Mr Jenkins, who appears to be hard of hearing. I will have to speak in words of one syllable. Alternative sites are available. The Minister has chosen this land without consultation with the other Ministers concerned, without consultation with people in the area, and without any indication of what this company is to pay for it and how long the lease is for. He has treated the whole system with contempt, in my view, just as a matter of panic because there was some chance of an industry moving out of his electorate.

In the Minister's second-reading speech he states:

Field inspections made by officers of the Public Works Department, the Lands Department and the Port Fairy Borough Council disclose that the only suitable alternative site available for the purpose is an area of Crown land reclaimed by the Public Works Department.

That is not true. There are several pieces of land adequate for this purpose and all it needs is for the various parties in Port Fairy to consult with each other. I thought the Government would have gone about it in this way. With proper consultation, a parcel of land could have been agreed on that would have suited everybody but the Minister has rushed this Bill in to hand over a parcel of land to provide to a citizen, without any leasehold, without any terms of how long the lease is to be for or what payment is to be made. This is the way in which the Government operates under its new directions policy. It overrides the wishes of the people of Port Fairy and treats everybody with contempt. I have received letters from people at Port Fairy indicating grave concern that they were not consulted on this matter. Members of the Opposition know that Mr Gary Stewart has a business that ought to be extended. The fishing fleet will require larger boats and one is in the process of being built now.

It is hoped that the talents of Mr Stewart will not leave this State. However, the Government has rushed in without thought or consultation, against all the proper processes of planning and has given a private citizen an open-ended contract. I cannot understand how members of the Government party can support that action. It indicates that at the helm of the Ministry for Economic Development Victoria has an arrogant Minister who believes he can railroad Bills through this House, making public statements about what they will provide, even before the Parliament has had the opportunity of debating them. That Minister treats his colleagues with arrogance and contempt.

The terms of the amendment are in accordance with common practice used by most planning authorities when any area is to be rezoned. The Geelong Regional Committee uses this practice, as Mr Jenkins knows. The people of Port
Fairy believe the boat-building company should stay in the district. Land is available and there is a need for a developed plan of the area.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—From this point, honourable members will be speaking to the original motion and the amendment.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—This appeared to be a routine matter until the issues raised by Mr Mackenzie were brought before the House. Some research that I was able to do and some contacts that I have made with local people indicate that it is not just a simple issue. The area of land involved is about 2 acres. The proposed development of a slipway for Mr Stewart would be right in the centre of that area of land. At present the land is used for tourist purposes with tables, lawns and so forth, and the local Apex Club would like to develop it further. People who live in the vicinity describe the facility as attractive and have stated that it should not be used for the development of a shipyard.

It is recognized that industry should be given every opportunity to develop, prosper and to maintain its existence in an efficient way, particularly industries such as this which are of importance to the fishing industry. Alternative sites may be available on which the works could be established. This concerns me because the matter may have been rushed and the public may not have been given a proper opportunity of making a judgment. Mr Stewart may have desired this piece of land and may have caused the Minister to panic in his desire to save an industry. Surely sufficient time should have been taken to ascertain whether an acceptable alternative site was available to retain the viable industry in the district. With that in mind, the National Party will not equivocate in the matter and will support the amendment moved by Mr Mackenzie because there is some common sense in it. There is a reason for additional consultation with the community. Substantial concern exists, with good reason, that the matter should not be hurried through the Parliament and the House should not agreed to a process which may not be in the best public interest.

I understand that inducements have been made to Mr Stewart to establish in South Australia and, no doubt, he has used that factor quite effectively to place before the local member of Parliament and the Minister a stronger case for gaining the piece of land as an appropriate position for his shipbuilding and repair works. Again I am concerned that, under that pressure, perhaps a correct decision has not been made by the Minister. The amendment should be supported. It does not provide that the shipyards will never be established on this site. It may well be that after properly examining alternatives, it will be found that the present site is the only one suitable, and the community will accept it. However, the matter should be considered properly. I believe that may not have been done, and surely two or three months will not make much difference to proper consultation.

The Hon. D. G. Crozier—Mr Evans is not taking into consideration that the borough council has supported the proposition.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS—Yes, I am, and I am also aware that the procedure precludes the possibility of appeals against, or objections to, a planning permit being issued to Mr Stewart. It is a back-door way of dealing with the matter and I do not like that. I like to take things head on and say precisely what I mean and, if there is criticism, I wear it.

This action is being taken in an unreasonable way and for that reason the National Party will support the amendment.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—If ever I heard a two-bob-each-way speech, it was the speech that Mr Mackenzie has just made. In more polite circles it would be called an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, he suggested that it was a good idea for Mr Stewart to have a boat-building
yard on that site but, on the other hand, he suggested that the Government should take some account of local attitude. Mr Mackenzie forgot to mention that the Government goes for its local attitude to the municipal and local councils who represent local opinion. Mr Kent is interjecting. Does he suggest local councils do not represent local opinion? The local council supports the proposition. In his amendment Mr Mackenzie suggests that the Bill should be withdrawn and that alternative sites should be examined.

Mr Mackenzie has visited the area and does not have any suggestion about an alternative site because there is no alternative site suitable for this purpose. This boat-building business needs to be beside the river. Furthermore, the Government's new directions policy clearly states—I cannot quote it word for word—that Crown land ought to be used, where appropriate, for development and for business purposes. That is precisely what it is doing in this case.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—Without public consultation.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—There is nothing fresh about this proposal because it has been going on for four or five years. The Government decided to make this piece of land available in the light of its new directions policy.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (the Hon. W. M. Campbell)—Order! Mr Mackenzie has said enough on this matter, both standing on his feet and sitting in his seat.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON—The Government does not propose to support the amendment moved by Mr Mackenzie because community opinion has been canvassed, the new directions policy of the Government has been considered with respect to this piece of land and a boat-building enterprise on a site at such a river as the River Moyne is of very great public interest, much more public interest than a waste piece of land would generate.

The Hon. D. E. KENT (Chelsea Province)—I was deeply moved by the remarks made by Mr Mackenzie and shocked by the remarks made by the Minister who claimed that Mr Mackenzie was ambivalent. I suggest he was not. We are not merely talking about the opinions or interest of the Borough of Port Fairy or even the Shire of Belfast which might be more controversial but the concern of thousands of people who see Port Fairy as one of the most attractive and desirable tourist areas in Victoria. Apparently this Government intends to deny recreational facilities to a large number of people because this move will reduce the recreational amenities available to a large section of the community.

I do not know what sort of ticket Mr Stewart carries or whether Senator Lewis is a card-carrying Liberal, but undoubtedly Mr Stewart is a successful businessman who knows the value of bargaining and Senator Lewis is an unsuccessful lawyer. Mr Stewart knows that he is dealing with a weak Government which is prepared to sacrifice Crown land if it thinks it can contribute something towards a seemingly attractive industry.

Mr Mackenzie made it clear that there is a strong case for a thorough investigation into a more appropriate site which would not interfere with an area reserved as a public amenity in the beautiful area of Port Fairy. This matter concerns much more than the Borough of Port Fairy.

I am surprised that two Ministers have had the audacity to say in this House tonight that they accept the view that elected councillors represent the will of the people in an area. That is a disgraceful thing to say when one remembers the actions of the Government which were consummated yesterday relating to the Melbourne City Council.

The Opposition is not fighting for any particular group but is acting on behalf of the people of Victoria whom it believes should have the right to retain Crown land which is of importance to recreational opportunities and the tourist industry.
The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Mr Mackenzie to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. W. M. Campbell in the chair).

Ayes .. Noes ..
23  15

Majority against the amendment ..

AYES
Mrs Baylor Mr Knowles
Mr Block Mr Lawson
Mr Crozier Mr Long
Dr Foley Mr Radford
Mr Granter Mr Reid
Mr Hamilton Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Hauser Mr Stacey
Mr Hayward Mr Storey
Mr Houghton Mr Ward
Dr Howard Tellers:
Mr Hunt Mr Bubb
Mr Jenkins Mr Chamberlain

NOES
Mr Butler Mr Sgro
Mr Dunn Mr Thomas
Mr Eddy Mr Traylor
Mr Evans Mr Walker
Mr Kennedy Mr White
Mr Kent Tellers:
Mr Landeryou Mrs Coxedge
Mr Mackenzie Mr Wright

PAIRS
Mr Guest Mr Walton
Mr Taylor Mr Baxter

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Power to Governor in Council to grant leases of certain land permanently reserved)

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—Clause 2 deals with section 134 of the Land Act and relates to leases granted. There is no indication in the Bill of how long the lease will be. There is power to ask for a minimum payment but the Government has not indicated what the lessee will have to pay. The Bill gives no indication of what the Government will actually do with the Crown land and what control it intends to take. Does it intend to take control at a later date and does the person have the land for life or 99 years? Can the Minister explain to the House what terms the Government has arranged for the lease of the land?

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—it is proposed that the lease will be for 21 years.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—it has been established that the lease is for 21 years. Can the Minister also indicate under what terms the lease will be given and what cost the lessee will pay for that land per annum or each 21 years?

The Hon. W. V. Houghton—the cost will depend on the valuation of the land.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—it is apparent that the Minister does not know a great deal about the Bill. He does not know anything about the Crown land, having never visited the area. One would have thought he would be able to provide some answers to simple questions on the Bill. The Opposition and the people of Victoria require some indication of how much is to be paid under the terms of the lease.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 3 (Provisions as to auction, &c. not to apply)

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—Clause 3 states:

The provisions of section 135 (3) of the Land Act 1958 shall not apply to or with respect to any lease to be granted under this Act.

Section 135 (3) of the Land Act states:

Before any lease is granted for such purposes as aforesaid any Crown land situated within the metropolis or the boundaries of any city town or borough, the right to such lease shall be offered for sale by auction, and notice of such auction shall be given in the same manner as notice with regard to lands to be sold by auction in fee simple is to be given as hereinf berefore provided. The person who offers the highest rent shall be entitled to the lease.

The Minister is responsible for the Land Act. The Bill completely deletes that important section and means that control of the land is being handed over to a single person without anybody else having the right to put in a bid.
The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—I thought it would have been clear from the debate that the Government's intentions are to establish the boat-building business of Mr Gary Stewart on this piece of land.

The clause was agreed to, as was the schedule.

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

HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General), for the Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply), was read a first time.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 7) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—On 7 April this Bill was referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination and report. I commend the committee for the speed with which it examined the Bill and reported back to the House, because it reported back today and advised that none of the items in the Bill was of a substantive nature; it set out the classifications of the items in the Bill and recommended a number of amendments to the items in the schedule for the various reasons set out in the report.

The Government accepts the committee's report, and during the Committee stage I shall propose that the amendments recommended by the Statute Law Revision Committee be adopted.

The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING (Melbourne Province)—The Opposition offers no opposition to the Bill. It amends 264 statutes in minor ways such as by correcting spelling and punctuation mistakes, typographical errors and so on. The Bill contains no matters which touch on policy, and it could almost be described as a machinery Bill because it brings a large number of statutes up to date in a grammatical form.

No doubt similar Bills will continue to appear before the House periodically for the same reason as this Bill appears tonight.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—The subject-matter of the Bill was referred, as has been indicated, to the Statute Law Revision Committee, and I had the honour of presenting the report on this Bill to the House tonight.

As the Attorney-General and Mr Trayling stated, the Statute Law Revision Committee agreed that with certain amendments the Bill could pass. An interesting point came up in the report of the committee on item No. 211 in the schedule. The committee recommended that paragraph (g) of section 3(2) of the State Co-ordination Council Act 1975 be omitted from the Bill. That was done on the recommendation of Parliamentary Counsel, and paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the report referred to this matter. Paragraph (g) amends the State Co-ordination Council Act 1975 by correcting the title of the Director of State Development, which is shown in the Act as the Director, Department of State Development, whereas the correct title is the Director of State Development.

The reason for omitting that amendment from the Bill is that another Bill which is to come before the House, if accepted, would make that amendment inappropriate. The Statute Law Revision Committee was asked to make this amendment in anticipation of a decision of the House. Although the Statute Law Revision Committee, as a matter of convenience, accepted that decision, if the Economic Development Bill,
which is to come before the House shortly, is not passed, paragraph (g) referred to in item 211 will have to be amended.

The point I make is that that provision was amended in anticipation of a decision of the House, and attention is drawn to it in the report of the committee. This is an important matter of principle and one about which I was a little concerned at the time. However, I recognize that as a matter of convenience the measure should be passed at this time. If the will of the House has not been correctly judged by the Statute Law Revision Committee this matter will have to be amended. The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

The clauses were agreed to.

Schedule

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—During the second-reading debate I indicated that the Government accepted the recommendations of the Statute Law Revision Committee that a number of amendments be made to the schedule. Those amendments and the reasons for them are set out in the report of the committee.

Mr Evans in his second-reading speech explained the reasons why one of the amendments is being moved which anticipates legislation being passed later, and said that if that legislation is not passed, a further amendment will have to be made to correct the situation. However, I think the course suggested by the Statute Law Revision Committee is a sensible one to save subsequent amendments being made. Because these amendments and the explanation of them appeared in the report of the Statute Law Revision Committee, unless there is any objection from members of the Committee I propose to move the amendments in globo and refer honourable members to the report for the explanation of the amendments. I move:

Schedule, page 5, item 26, fourth column, after the expression "3(1)" insert—"(a)"

Schedule, page 6, item 45, fourth column, omit "195 (4)" and insert "197 (4)".

Schedule, page 7, item 49, fourth column, paragraph (c), omit "substituted the following sub-section" and insert "inserted the following sub-section".

Schedule, page 7, item 49, fourth column, omit "Statisticians" and insert "Statistician".

Schedule, page 8, item 59, fourth column, paragraph (a), after "magistrates' court" insert 'and for the expression "courts of petty sessions" there shall be substituted the expression "magistrates' courts"'.

Schedule, page 10, item 79, fourth column, before "In" insert (a) and at the end of the item insert—

(b) In section 17 (c) after the expression 'for the word 'practising" there shall be inserted the expression "(wherever occurring)".'

Schedule, page 13, item 119, fourth column, paragraph (b), omit "Health" and insert "Health".

Schedule, page 17, item 180, fourth column, omit "performance" and insert "performance".

Schedule, page 19, item 206, fourth column, omit "occurs" and insert "occurring".

Schedule, page 20, item 211, fourth column, omit paragraph (g).

Schedule, page 20, item 213, fourth column, omit "paragraph—" and insert "paragraphs—".

Schedule, page 21, item 215, third column, omit "Statue" and insert "Statute".

Schedule, page 22, item 235, fourth column, omit "the Minister" and insert "Minister".

Schedule, page 23, item 257, fourth column, omit "Court" and insert "Courts".

The amendments were agreed to, and the schedule, as amended, was adopted.

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

STATUTE LAW REVISION COMMITTEE

Statute Law Revision Bill

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—I move:

That the following Order of the Day, General Business, be read and discharged—

Statute Law Revision Committee—Report on Statute Law Revision Bill.

The motion was agreed to.
HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to improve the operation of the Ministry of Housing so that the provisions of the Housing Act and the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement which are schedules to the Act can be carried out more effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the people of Victoria. Apart from some minor provisions of the Bill which are of a procedural or a clarificatory nature, there are several significant provisions.

The Chief General Manager of the Ministry of Housing is to be acknowledged under the Act and in the case of the absence or illness of the director or in the event of the office of director becoming vacant shall have automatically all the rights, powers and duties of the director. This provision shall overcome difficulties caused to the Housing Commission and the Ministry by the absence of the director.

The powers and duties of the Minister of Housing shall be amplified to allow the leasing of land and houses thus increasing the range of measures available to assist in satisfying the present and future housing needs of the people of Victoria.

Further, with a view to overcoming a weakness in representation on the Housing Advisory Council, it is seen as appropriate that bodies providing finance for housing purposes should be represented by two persons rather than one because of their relative importance to the council. The Bill therefore provides that the banking industry be represented specifically on this body.

The Government has been a world leader in the provision of leasing movable units, so-called "granny flats", to private property owners. So that this privilege may be extended to occupants of tenanted properties, the Bill makes provision for a tripartite agreement amongst the commission, the owner and the tenant in regard to the hiring of such units.

Finally and most innovatively this Bill allows for the Ministry of Housing to assist certain eligible persons who find themselves temporarily in need of housing assistance by providing a rental subsidy which will enable such persons to remain in privately rented accommodation.

The provision of the Bill emanates from the Green Paper on Housing, 1980. It is aimed at assisting single parent families "in crisis", that is, at the time of family breakdown, in the initial stages of adjustment, when one parent, usually the mother, is left without the marital partner, supporting the children of the broken marriage.

At present, the only means by which the Ministry of Housing can assist such families is to place them on the priority list or the waiting list for accommodation, whereupon the family is moved into the only available form of housing which is frequently a high-rise unit. This results in a complete disruption of the family's life pattern: the family must move, learn to cope with a new environment, children have to be shifted from their schools to new schools, and any previous family-friend-neighbourhood support system must be broken down or, at best, maintained with extreme difficulty. Any possibility of reunion of the parents and resumption of the family's normal life is also rendered more difficult.

The rental subsidy scheme, therefore, is intended to overcome all of these effects by assisting the family to stay in its existing private rental accommodation in the locality where the family has been residing. By offering a rental subsidy to such families, the scheme increases the family's income sufficiently to meet the gap between what the family income can afford for housing and the cost it is required to pay in the private rental market.

The benefit to the Ministry is that persons eligible to be housed by the Ministry are assisted in private accommodation and, therefore, the assistance is given at less cost than if the assistance were given directly in the
form of the Ministry's housing stock. Furthermore, because the supply of the Ministry's accommodation is under extreme pressure, with people in need unable to be housed, the support of certain eligible persons in private accommodation, where these eligible persons have a reasonable chance of overcoming the conditions which have caused them to become eligible (whether by resumption of the marriage, employment, or some other means) frees the Ministry's housing stock for eligible cases who have fewer prospects of overcoming their disabilities and are, therefore, more likely to be in need of long-term housing support.

The Ministry intends to use the provisions of the Bill to conduct a pilot project involving 100 eligible families. The pilot project will be monitored and evaluated with a view to assessing how many of the assisted families are able to recover sufficiently to avoid having to become long-term recipients of housing assistance. The scheme is designed to give eligible families assistance for a period of no longer than one year. This period is considered sufficient to allow time for the family 'crisis' period to be resolved. Built into the scheme will be a reducing payment scale to make the recipient of the assistance aware of the condition that the assistance is short term.

Eligibility criteria would be the same as for other single parent families and selection of suitable families would be carried out by housing liaison officers who would assess the suitability of the applicants, the 'crisis' nature of their situations and their prospects for overcoming their difficulties in the prescribed period.

The Ministry would pay the subsidy directly to the recipient and under no circumstances would payment be made directly to the landlord or the agent for the landlord so that there would be no likelihood of the landlord/agent becoming aware of the tenant's 'improved' financial situation and thereby being subjected to increased rent charges. To ensure that the subsidy was being used by the recipient for rent payment, a statutory declaration would be required initially from the recipient and subsequent random checks on rent receipts would be made.

This provision of the Bill will provide an opportunity for the Ministry of Housing to provide support in a thoroughly humane and economic way.

Notes on the clauses are attached to the second-reading notes. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. J. EDDY. (Thomastown Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

**GEELOONG LANDS BILL**

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) on the motion of the Hon. W. V. Houghton (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—The Bill is to revoke the reservations of certain lands at Geelong and for other purposes. The Labor Party has given a lot of attention to the development of the Bill. It is an important measure and relates to the Institute of Educational Administration and a search for a site to build a permanent facility for that body. The Labor Party fully agrees that the right location for the body is Geelong and in searching Geelong for a site many became available, most of which were private lands which would have cost an initial amount of money for purchase.

One of the more favoured sites was a piece of land that one could say has fallen into a derelict condition because it had previous uses of racing and football—it is the old Corio field site where the Geelong team once played, and includes lands associated with it known as the Friendly Societies Reserve. A great deal of negotiation has occurred. The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill. However, I do make certain comments and ask for certain assurances from the Minister of Lands.
The Labor Party is not happy with the procedure that in the last few weeks of a Parliamentary sessional period a Bill of this description is rushed through. Unfortunately, that happens too often and another Bill will be similarly treated within a day or two that will cause even more debate and also concerns the Geelong area.

The land is Crown land and it is zoned special use. It is adjacent to the very large handsome Eastern Park in Geelong. Essentially, it is parkland; in other words, it is Crown land that was zoned when planning occurred and a zoning scheme was applied. As it had a racing track on it, it was zoned special use. The development is in fact an alienation of parkland. Not much land is being taken away and, on discussion with the institute's representatives, the Geelong Regional Commission and local members, it became apparent that there was a reasonable trade off and that certain moneys would be made available by the Government of the institute for the development of the site that is not needed for building—the remainder of the site—for sporting facilities and park for the general use of the people of Geelong, which is a reasonable trade off.

I make the complaint that a Bill of this type should not be rushed through Parliament because it causes concern and difficulty. Members of the Labor Party have been back and forth between Geelong and Melbourne to ensure that what meets the eye is happening. It is a pity that these arrangements must be made in order to get parkland developed but, nevertheless, that is what has happened. The Labor Party has looked for real commitments from the Government on what will happen to the land outside the land needed by the institute and on the kind of development that will occur on land taken by the institute.

The Bill transfers responsibility from what was once a committee of management back to within the ambit of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act and, from then, one portion of it will be administered by the institute and the larger part will be administered, at least for maintenance and other purposes, by the City of Geelong. I have received letters from the institute and the council assuring the Labor Party that they are happy with this arrangement and that the commitments that have been asked for will be honoured by them. The council says that once development of the land occurs it will be happy to maintain the land as parkland and it would like to take some part in the planning of the recreational land. It is reasonable that the body that is to maintain it should take some part in the planning.

Responsibly, the Labor Party called for other requirements and I note that those requirements have been included in the second-reading speech of the Minister and commitments made. The Labor Party wanted a commitment from the Government that the $250,000 suggested as a reasonable figure for the development of land other than the land to be built on would be spent in the first stage of development. The second-reading speech of the Minister does commit that expenditure. It comes from the $3 million that is being put into the project by the Government and therefore the commitment technically comes from the institute but the assurance is given in the second-reading speech that the Government has agreed to that sort of money being used.

The Labor Party asked also that the land set aside for construction and development be limited in use to no more than 1·6 hectares of a total of 8·9 hectares and that assurance has been given in the second-reading speech. The Labor Party wanted an assurance also that the buildings designed will be compatible with the park environment and that no building will be more than one-storey in height. The intent is that in no sense will any building or construction go above tree height and that the institute will be designed to integrate and fit well within the environment around it. That was probably always the intention, but the Labor Party had asked for an assurance of that kind and it does
appear in the second-reading speech. The last point that the Labor Party had asked for was that there be a commitment to proper maintenance of the public lands. That commitment has been given by the Geelong City Council and is accepted.

The Opposition would have liked to see one or two of those important provisions actually written into the legislation. I understand from the Acting Secretary for Lands, to whom I spoke last week, that it is not really possible to write all of those provisions into the measure. I had hoped that especially the 1.6 hectare provision would have been written into the Bill.

However, since time is of the essence and because the Labor Party does not wish to hold up the progress of the Bill, I have had a word with the Minister of Lands and asked him to reassure the Labor Party again, at a suitable time, in Committee, of those provisions that the Labor Party has called up and I have asked that the Minister restate the Government's commitment to that expenditure, to that amount of land and to that type of building. The Labor Party will accept that as a commitment from the Government and expect the Government to follow through that commitment.

The Labor Party wishes the Institute of Educational Administration well. I particularly commend the hard work that has been put in by Mr Keith Andrews, who has done an extraordinarily good job in ensuring that everybody was well informed; that there was no sense of anything untoward happening and that there was nothing but full information provided all around. I appreciate that. Mr Andrews also took to heart the points that the Labor Party made and saw to it that those points were handled quickly and expeditiously. He is to be complimented on his skills as a lobbyist because about a week ago this Bill did not look like having much chance of passing through both Houses. The Bill can pass both Houses because it is now in this House and some reasonable accord has been reached on the provisions the Labor Party asked for. With those comments, I wish the Institute well and indicate that the Labor Party offers no opposition to the Bill.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN (North Western Province)—The Bill contains an interesting concept. The National Party supported the establishment of the Institute of Educational Administration and is particularly delighted that the institute will be developed in an area such as Geelong. Following closely behind the agreement of this House to establish the institute, there are moves to provide the institute with a base to commence the physical provision of its needs.

It is an interesting concept because it allows for the institute to occupy part of a site that will be developed for community use in Geelong. For the Geelong community this represents an excellent way of obtaining improved facilities at a reasonable expense. I have had the opportunity, as has Mr Walker, of seeing the plan for the area. I was impressed by that plan. To describe the area as being derelict would be an understatement.

The area is in a poor state of repair and needs something doing with it. The land can be put to much better use. It is a good proposal to provide a site at a relatively low cost and one which will allow the institute to develop. The Bill will allow the institute to landscape the area and develop it and, in turn, provide community use of the parkland area.

It is good that an institute such as this, by developing the area, will identify itself with the community and become part of the community. It will not be seen as an institute and merely an establishment that is operating in Geelong, but is not part of Geelong. The concept of development of the area will mean that the institute in Geelong will be seen by the community of Geelong as being part of the community.

The Hon. B. P. DUNN—That is a good thing, particularly because it will attract people from interstate and from overseas. The institute is to be commended.

In order to facilitate a speedy passage of the Bill, the National Party has had to accept assurances that have been given to it by the Minister of Lands and the Government. The National Party has not had the opportunity of considering the Bill in detail, but as education spokesman, I have had the opportunity of discussing the matter with the officers concerned and of being familiarized with the terms of it. I am satisfied that the development is a good one.

The National Party does not oppose the Bill. The National Party has supported the institute. The idea of the development is innovative and it will be good for Geelong and the institute. The National Party will watch with close interest the development of that particular area in the future and wishes the institute well.

The Hon. GLYN JENKINS (Geelong Province)—I support the Bill. I am pleased to note that the Institute of Educational Administration has been established in the Geelong region. It will add yet another facet in the development of the Geelong region as an area for education and research. It affords the institute the use of the other facilities and the other academic facilities in the region and it will enable them to be in close contact with industry and commerce because one of the functions of the institute is to encourage those who attend the courses to gain some understanding of industrial relations and management expertise. For this reason, it was necessary for the institute to be sited reasonably close to a large centre of population, industry and commerce.

When Dr Colin Moyle and Mr Keith Andrews first came to see me on the question of siting the institute in this particular place, I had some reservations about it, but as we discussed the matter and examined the alternative methods of developing the site, they conceded that they would only occupy approximately one-sixth of the total area of 9 hectares and the rest of the area would be made available as open space for the use of the public. The over-all development would be an excellent addition to the recreational facilities within the Eastern Park.

For probably 80 or 90 years at least these areas have been fenced in and have not been freely available to the public. The development proposed by the institute will open up again some 7 hectares to the public and I have been assured that the institute will not be fenced and it will be developed as an open area. Because of the limitations placed on the actual area in which the institute will develop and because of the limitations placed on the single storey construction of the buildings because of the way they will be sited in relation to the Eastern Park, it will add to and enhance the general area. The people most critically involved in the operation will be the Geelong City Council because it is the committee of management of the Eastern Park. I quote from the committee’s letter to the institute, dated 29 April. The second paragraph reads:

Council at its meeting held on 28th April, 1981 resolved to support the proposal by the Institute to establish itself on part of Corio Oval, subject to the Institute agreeing that no further encroachment will be made in Eastern Park beyond that foreshadowed. The Council further agreed to maintain the proposed recreation areas to be developed by the Institute including the present Friendly Societies Reserve.

The institute assured me that it agrees wholeheartedly with and will observe the conditions laid down by the council. The other important organization interested in the planning and development of the Geelong region is the Geelong Regional Commission and, by letter to Dr Moyle, the director of the institute, on 8 April, Mr Colin Atkins, the chairman of the commission, concludes by saying:

The Commission endorsed the proposal and the actions taken by officers of the Commission and the Institute and commended them on the expeditious manner in which the project has been handled.
That letter also lays down the same sort of conditions and general acceptance of the proposal as have been outlined by both Mr Walker and the Minister.

The third letter the institute received from the President of the Geelong Environment Council, Ms Joan Lindros, stated:

The Geelong Environment Council has discussed the proposal to locate the I.E.A. on the disused Corio Oval.

We approve in principle of the concept with the provision that we are consulted on specific details.

She then listed a number of proposals, all of which have been mentioned tonight and agreed to.

The area is currently in a derelict state. During the second world war, the Geelong Football Club went into temporary recess and after the war it commenced operations at Kardinia Park, and no work of any consequence has been undertaken on Corio Oval for some time except to develop it as a trotting track.

When I was a member of the Geelong City Council, the council was concerned about the facilities there. The Department of Health was critical of the toilet and other facilities available to the public and demanded improvements. At a later stage, the Geelong Trotting Club moved to its new complex in Corio and later still the Geelong Greyhound Coursing Club moved from Corio Oval to a site adjacent to the Geelong Trotting Club. Since then, the facilities have deteriorated until they are a blot on the area generally.

Mr Walker's comment that the Bill represents some form of a trade-off is correct. Development is normally a compromise or a trade-off; the citizens of Geelong will get benefit in exchange for giving up this small public area.

When the Geelong City Council indicated some years ago that it would be interested in examining propositions for the area, the only worthwhile proposal it received, which was completely unacceptable, was that the area be developed as a commercial caravan park, so little interest was demonstrated by either the public or commercial interests in developing the public facilities either Corio Oval or the Friendly Societies Reserve. The alternative to the proposal submitted by the institute is to allow the area to deteriorate even further.

Some slight objection has been raised to the institute's proposal by two or three individuals in Geelong. I have not received any letters opposing the proposition; I have received some phone calls supporting it. Generally speaking, I believe the citizens of Geelong accept this proposition. They welcome wholeheartedly the establishment of the institute in Geelong and, looking at it from a community point of view, I believe the passage of this Bill and the establishment of the Institute of Educational Administration on that site will be for the over-all benefit of the area I represent.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province)—This has been a night of considerable contrast. Honorable members have seen two Bills before the House treated in entirely different ways. It is said that the art of politics is the art of compromise, and this Bill represents compromise whereas the Bill before the House earlier tonight demonstrated a complete disregard for public opinion and the opinion of the Opposition party. This Bill is an example of how Government should work, of people giving and taking a little and achieving a solution which is satisfactory to all.

I should like to place on record the Labor Party's role in this project. It began some twelve months ago when the Geelong City Council called all local members, both Labor and Liberal, to have discussions regarding the proposition put forward by the Institute of Educational Administration. The council, the institute and the Geelong Regional Commission asked for support for the proposal. Members of the Liberal Party agreed to that proposition but the Labor Party said that it is philosophically opposed to the alienation of Crown land and could not support such a concept. This view was
made clear to the institute and it was pointed out that the only way the Labor Party could support the move would be if the institute could demonstrate that the people of Geelong would be given access to more public area than they currently had. Members of the Australian Labor Party suggested that it may be possible to negotiate for some of the land owned by the Commonwealth in the adjoining animal health laboratory.

I pay tribute to the work of the institute’s officers, principally Mr Keith Andrews, who took our proposals seriously, went back to the drawing board and came up with a proposal which not only provided far more accessible parkland but which also provided an area of which the people of Geelong will be proud. Approximately 5000 native trees will initially be planted in this project; Geelong will now have two ovals and three sports fields. The institute has looked favourably upon the Geelong Environment Council’s idea of putting in a lake which may attract water birds to that area as well. It has gone out of its way to see that the people of Geelong will benefit and I should like it to be placed on record that it was the initiatives of the Labor Party that led to that plan.

The only thing that concerns me a little is that some of the three points made by Labor Party members have not been included in the Bill. The Government has given assurances on numerous occasions and has broken them. I hope that, when the Minister gives his word on these matters, it will not be broken. Members of the Labor Party have put their necks out with Labor supporters in Geelong and have been prepared to compromise on the assumption that the Minister’s word will be his bond on this occasion.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—It always is; you know that.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—I will not enter into that argument. Finally, much work has been done by many people at the institute and a compromise has been reached which I believe to be agreeable to a large majority of the people of Geelong. It indicates that, if the Government is prepared to negotiate and to listen to the ideas of the Opposition, it is possible to achieve a result which is agreeable to all parties and to everybody concerned.

The Hon. R. J. Eddy (Thomastown Province)—I support speakers from both sides of the House. This project on the disused Corio reserve, where the trotting club and the greyhound racing club once operated, will be an important acquisition for the city of Geelong. Those functions have now been transferred. If I may say so, the present trotting and greyhound racing facilities at Geelong are among the best in Victoria.

Trotting facilities similar to those developed at Geelong should be developed in other country areas by the Government. I support this measure. I know my colleagues have expressed some concern about it, but I hope the Government will carry out the intentions contained in this measure.

The Opposition has been prepared to debate the Bill immediately because it concerns the citizens of Geelong. The area of 8·9 hectares which will be developed will contain sporting fields and public parkland which can be used for recreational purposes. No better facilities could be provided for any person in any country or metropolitan area.

The people of Geelong will benefit from this legislation which has been introduced at this late stage of the sessional period. It is a pity the Government has taken so long to introduce this important measure. The Bill is important to the people of Geelong but Opposition members have had little time in which to pursue the measure. However, the Labor Party supports it wholeheartedly because it benefits many people who reside in the City of Geelong. I applaud the efforts of the Government to improve the recreational facilities for the people of Geelong.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.
Clause 2 (Revocation of Crown grant and Orders in Council)

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—I thank those honourable members who have spoken in support of this measure. Honourable members will forgive Mr Eddy for stating that it is a pity the Government did not introduce this measure earlier. If Mr Eddy knew the history of this matter he would know that the Government had acted with remarkable alacrity. Honourable members could be forgiven for thinking that it was only Mr Mackenzie who had been involved for that was the impression one could have gained from his contribution to the debate. However, honourable members from all parties have been closely involved in the approval of this measure.

I am surprised that the matters which were canvassed in the second-reading speech and the assurances that were given in that speech should be asked to be given again. So far as I am concerned it is one of the axioms in politics that one has something, the best thing to do is to keep quiet about it. If one commences to speak and argue about it, one might lose it. In this case it is nearly as axiomatic as theorem 39 in trigonometry, that is, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.

However, I do reaffirm, as was stated in the second-reading speech, all the assurances that were given.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I am not entirely satisfied with the assurance given by the Minister of Lands. I did ask the honourable gentleman to read the assurances into the record, and the honourable gentleman agreed to do so. I point out again that there was an agreement in this regard. The Bill is going through this place and another place with the approval of the Labor Party only because certain assurances were made, but I invite the Minister to record those three assurances at this point as I would not like to make it hard by the Opposition not agreeing to the Bill.

The Committee divided on the clause (the Hon. P. D. Block in the chair).

Ayes... 26
Noes... 10

Majority for the clause 16

AYES
Mrs Baylor Mr Knowles
Mr Bubb Mr Lawson
Mr Chamberlain Mr Long
Mr Crozier Mr Radford
Mr Dunn Mr Reid
Mr Evans Mr Saltmarsh
Mr Granter Mr Stacey
Mr Guest Mr Storey
Mr Hauser Mr Taylor
Mr Hayward Mr Ward
Mr Houghton
Dr Howard Tellers:
Mr Hunt Dr Foley
Mr Jenkins Mr Hamilton

NOES
Mr Butler Mr Walker
Mrs Coxsedge Mr White
Mr Eddy
Mr Kent Tellers:
Mr Landeryou Mr Kennedy
Mr Sgro Mr Mackenzie

PAIRS
Mr Baxter Mr Trayling
Mr Campbell Mr Walton

Clause 3 (Land to become unalienated land of Crown)

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—Clause 3 refers to the diagram in the Bill. It talks of the land delineated and shown hatched on the plan in the Schedule. One of the most important assurances that the Labor Party asked for, and one which it intended to move an amendment for, but by agreement did not do so, is related to this plan. The plan does not show an area of 1·6 hectares to the northern end of it, which is the limit of the building site for the Institute of Educational Administration. By agreement with the Minister, I did not have an amendment drafted this evening, but I underlined for him in his second-reading speech what he was going to read into the record as commitments personally from him. If he is willing to say that is not the case, the Opposition will oppose the Bill until such time as he does what he says he will do.
The Opposition has withdrawn from the amendment procedure to allow the Bill to go through in a reasonable time. The Opposition does not trust the Government. Too often promises that have been made in a second-reading speech have simply disappeared. The Opposition wants read into the record that 1.6 hectares to the north of this site is the limit for building, that $250 000 will be spent on land outside of that 1.6 hectares for landscaping, and that no building will be more than one storey in height. If the Minister is not willing to say those things again, the Labor Party will continue to oppose the Bill.

The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister of Lands)—I am sure the Committee would be astonished at what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just said. In the second-reading speech I said:

The area to be occupied by the institute for buildings and immediate surrounds will not exceed 1.6 hectares with the balance of the 8.9 hectares being developed by the council of the institute for sporting fields and park land for public recreational purposes. The total cost of the development will be about $3 million of which $250 000 will be expended by the council of the institute on the provision of these recreational facilities.

Then on page 2, I stated:

The site abuts eastern park and the development will be so designed and landscaped to be compatible to the park environment. No building will be more than one-storey in height.

During the course of the debate in the Committee stage, I reaffirmed what I said in the second-reading speech. So what I have been asked to do I have done, and I did it before the division was called. As a matter of record, let me say that the Opposition is opposed to the passage of this Bill.

On clause 3, I again said, as I stated in the second-reading speech, and affirmed in the Committee stage, and I affirm once more, that 1.6 hectares will be used for buildings.

The Hon. E. H. WALKER (Melbourne Province)—I accept the Minister's comments other than the one that indicates that the Opposition has opposed the passage of the Bill. That is a complete misinterpretation. What the Opposition has done is to ask the Minister to do something that he had previously refused to do. I do not accept the admonition of the Minister in the sense that the Opposition has been in any way opposing the Bill. If the Opposition had wanted to oppose this Bill it could have been opposed in such a fashion that the Institute of Educational Administration would have been forced to move to another site.

The Opposition has agreed that this week this Bill would go through the House and it has been done on a reasonable basis. If the Minister wants to play fast and loose by having put into Hansard the fact that the Opposition is opposed to the Bill, then he will get the opposition he is calling for. It is possible to invoke opposition to such a Bill.

The Labor Party was unhappy about this Bill in the first instance as it represented alienation of parkland, and we had made agreements that were to be held, and I simply ask the Minister that they be so. The Opposition has not opposed the passage of the Bill. It called for a division so that the Minister could meet the agreements that he had made, and he should have done so.

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

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

MOTOR CAR (MASS AND DIMENSION LIMITS) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 28) on the motion of the Hon. Haddon Storey (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomastown Province)—It is almost as if the nightshift has just come on. I have been waiting since 8 p.m. to deal with this Bill. If the trade union movement was run in the way that this House is, and things shifted back and forth, it would not last too long. However, that is beside the point.
This is an important Bill. It is technical in nature and contains 39 clauses. It revises the mass and dimension limits for motor car controls as recommended by the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities and adopted by the Australian Transport Advisory Council. It provides for the separate registration of a prime mover and a semi-trailer and increases penalties relating to overloading of motor cars and trailers. At present a semi-trailer and prime mover are registered as one entity. This Bill has had much consideration because it involves the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Country Roads Board, the Motor Registration Branch and Parliamentary Counsel. It therefore carries some weight of authority.

The basic purpose of the measure is to bring this section of the Act into conformity with the States of South Australia and New South Wales. It flows on from deregulation Bills which were passed during the last sessional period of Parliament. The Bill increases penalties for overloading, which have been causing some concern. At present, if a driver is caught with an overloaded vehicle, the penalty he receives is not sufficient deterrent. He would make more money from bringing in the extra tonnage than the cost of the fine. The updating of the provisions relating to penalties is to be commended.

Some people argue that deregulation will result in many more trucks using the roads. Others claim that with increased load capacity, the number of trucks will decrease. I believe that, even with increased load capacity and the modern day prime movers and semi-trailers, there will be more trucks on the roads across Victoria. The deregulation Bills passed during the last sessional period will bring that about. It is therefore pleasing to note that in this respect Victoria will have some conformity with other States and that in the future it will not be necessary for Transport Regulation Board officers to wait this side of Wodonga to catch the drivers of trucks from New South Wales on the basis that although they were obeying the law in New South Wales, when they crossed into Victoria they were breaking the law. A similar situation applies to South Australia. I move:

That all the words after “That” be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof “this Bill be not read a second time until an examination of the effects of the proposed changes to mass and dimension regulations on traffic problems in Melbourne's northern and western suburbs has been made and a report presented to Parliament as to intended measures of alleviation of those problems”.

The remarks that I propose to make will be parochial, and I am not suggesting for one moment that honourable members who represent the eastern and bayside suburbs or the Doncaster region do not have problems regarding heavy vehicles and ordinary mass of traffic. I simply direct my remarks to the areas with which I am conversant. I shall not bore the House with a lot of details but shall refer to some issues, of which the House should be aware. They highlight two matters with which I am personally concerned—the traffic flows on Pascoe Vale Road via the Tullamarine Freeway, north and south, to and from the Hume Highway; and the intersection of Camp and Mahoneys roads and Sydney Road.

On 7 April the Broadmeadows City Council conducted a survey of traffic movements on a 12-hour basis between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. One of the matters to emerge from that survey was that in a 12-hour period from the take off from Tullamarine Freeway into Pascoe Vale Road there were about 11228 vehicles. Coming to the freeway there were 12213 vehicles. Those figures balanced out in relation to the movement of heavy vehicular traffic. Some 1686 vehicles headed north and 1609 headed south. That means that about 3295 heavy duty vehicles leave and enter the freeway using Pascoe Vale Road as their access to the Hume Highway and/or related local areas. Unfortunately the council was not able to indicate caller destination because it would have been necessary to stop each truck and inquire about destination. However, the conclusion has been drawn that such a survey must be done in the future unless steps are taken to alleviate the problems.
Pascoe Vale Road is a purely residential shopping centre complex main road. It is not a freeway. However, it is one of the three out accesses—Mickleham Road on the western side, Pascoe Vale Road in the middle and the Hume Highway. Nobody with an ounce of brain would try to drive a truck up Royal Parade to the Fawkner area.

At the intersection of Camp Road in Broadmeadows and Mahoneys Road between Reservoir and Whittlesea and the Hume Highway, about 24,500 vehicles travel south of Sydney Road, about 26,000 travel north, about 26,000 come from the east and 15,000 come from the western approach. That gives a total of approximately 83,000 vehicles on a 12-hour count either moving east to north, west to south or whatever.

I would be surprised if it could be demonstrated that there is another intersection in Melbourne that takes such a massive load of traffic. I do not wish to go into other areas of Broadmeadows but to merely highlight the fact that a comprehensive report has been made available and is available to every honourable member who wishes to write to the Town Clerk, Broadmeadows Town Hall. The City Engineer has also been helpful in this matter.

I wanted to demonstrate that Broadmeadows is one of the suburban areas that cops the heavy traffic flow and that something should be done to alleviate that situation. When one looks at the attitude and proposals of the Country Roads Board one finds with some disgust that although there has been a massive increase in the total amount of money spent by the board, its construction costs have increased astronomically. The lowest factor is the labour costs which amount only to an increase of 26 per cent, bitumen is increased by 50 per cent, distillate by 55 per cent, sand fill by 46 per cent and crushed rock and projects in urban areas by 30 per cent.

In other words, some years later, the body charged with the construction of roads finds it is inhibited by tremendous rising costs. The Country Roads Board proposed a number of solutions to traffic flow problems. I note from the Country Roads Board report that the board received something to the tune of $130 million, or approximately 43.86 per cent of its income in Commonwealth grants. That leads me to believe that in this current year the board will be lucky if it can get much from the Commonwealth for road construction. That means that any project to alleviate these traffic problems, bearing in mind that the standards that are now being described will, if the total number of vehicles is not increased, increase the weight ratio of those vehicles. If those vehicles continue to use secondary roads—and that is what Pascoe Vale Road is—there will be problems with major repairs. In fact there have been problems with constant major repairs in the past.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works suggests, in its strategy of planning report that any outlet in the northern areas is in the fourth category, that is, of key long-term options. The priority option seems to be how to get around the city. That does not resolve anything. It does not provide a ring road, the E14 or F5 freeways. It provides no solution, but that is the considered opinion of the board regarding priorities.

The Country Roads Board has different reasons and a different sense of priority with its strategy planning report. The point I make is that it is clear that the biggest problem facing Melbourne is the movement of traffic from the western district and Geelong to the northern freeway system—in other words, the Hume Highway.

The biggest problem facing the central business district is moving heavy haulage tractors from the docks and major industrial complexes that exist in the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne, and yet there is no sense of priority regarding the flow of those vehicles which get bigger and bigger all the time. That is why I mentioned the western and northern districts. It is high time the Government gave some priority to alleviating that problem.

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It is the view of the Labor Party—although there are different views held by party members because we are fundamentally opposed to the freeway concept—but it is a fact of life and there are 8000 or 9000 trucks dashing up and down the Tullamarine Freeway every day that end up in a bottleneck at Alexandra Parade.

Many plans have been mooted and it disturbs me that the Minister seems to be inconsistent in his correspondence and statements to the media. Suddenly we have gone back to the proposition that there will not be a bypass road to Cranbourne and Fitzroy North via the Merrie Creek because it will stop at Powlett Street. The Minister is now suggesting to the Brunswick, Coburg and North Melbourne city councils that one of the alternatives to closing the Upland line would be to construct a deviation road or a minor road following the rail line. That would push 10,000 trucks into Sydney Road north of the Fawkner Cemetery.

Last night the Minister attended a meeting at the Broadmeadows council chamber and had the opportunity to get the views of the local people on the question of trams, rail and roads. Of course, it is of no pleasure to the citizens of Broadmeadows. They will ultimately end up with a major freeway because that is the only way of shifting heavy duty transport out of the State.

It was, with reservation, that I proposed to the Minister that he follow the concept of the E14 Freeway north of Essendon Airport, following the State Electricity Commission transmission lines—part of the outer ring road—proceeding through Westmeadows and linking up with the Hume Highway north of Somerton Road. One would hope that might ultimately lead to a link to the Geelong Freeway and the Westgate Bridge without going through the residential area of Sunshine. The proposed E14 Freeway would go through virgin land. There is a Housing Commission estate in the middle of the Westmeadows Heights area.

Having made those points in respect to the amendment, I return to the Bill. The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill, which is forward looking. It has been given a lot of consideration and it will not be without its flaws. The first flaw that comes to mind is that the height restriction in Victoria is 4 metres, whereas, unfortunately, in New South Wales and South Australia, the height restriction is 4.3 metres. One of my colleagues will deal with that matter later. Victoria has many more lower bridges and power lines than other States have. It is part of the old Colonial system. The Labor Party supports the Bill and I commend the amendment to the House.

The sitting was suspended at 12.10 a.m. (Wednesday) until 12.34 a.m.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—With the exception of one or two minor matters, which I will refer to shortly, the National Party supports the Bill because the principle in one of the three major sections with which this Bill deals is one with which the National Party heartily concurs, and that is the aim of achieving some degree of uniformity and conformity between the various States, which is a constant concern particularly for those honourable members who represent areas that border South Australia and New South Wales.

There is a real problem for people who live only a short distance apart, separated in many cases by an artificial barrier and yet suffering annoying differences of regulations with which they have to conform.

I cite one example of a difficulty that has come about in the area that I represent. The firm of Blunts Homes moved from a South Australian location to Shepparton a couple of years ago because of a major market it had developed and has since further developed for relocatable homes. The firm finds some difficulties in exporting its product to New South Wales even though it can design a house of a particular dimension specifically for the New South Wales market. It has a few miles of Victorian road to traverse and it encounters width, height
and dimension problems in transporting those homes. It is silly not to bring about that conformity and, therefore, the National Party agrees with that provision of the Bill.

As I have mentioned, there is one point the National Party is concerned about, and Mr Butler did refer to it briefly and that is the matter of height. According to the Bill, the maximum permitted heights of vehicles in Victoria is to be 4 metres and in other States of Australia, particularly New South Wales, the permitted height is 4.3 metres. I foreshadow an amendment to that provision.

There is another small matter to which I refer and that is proposed new section 33 (1A)(q), the provision dealing with tyres, does not make mention of wire. Many of the tyres at present in use in Victoria are "steel belted" and, therefore, the Bill is not complete. That provision reads:

If the motor car or any trailer attached thereto is fitted with any pneumatic tyre which is so worn or damaged as to expose the canvas fabric or cord;

It does not mention wire. Unless the Bill is amended, a prosecution may not succeed. It may well have been drawn to the attention of the Attorney-General that that point does need some attention.

It is a sensible provision that semi-trailers and prime movers be registered separately. Obviously with the modern methods of transportation, it is convenient to take a prime mover off and change it over to another semi-trailer or another carriage unit. The fact that the law did not allow that previously in Victoria was a real inhibition. It is eminently sensible to straighten that matter out.

The third major provision in the Bill deals with penalties, which will be substantially increased. The reason for this is that heavy loads, beyond the normal ones permitted in the Bill, can cause substantial damage to road surfaces. One wonders whether the fines imposed for those offences find their way directly into the road system. If those who are damaging the roads were penalized and the penalties put to work to the repair the damage created, that would be sensible. However, one wonders what will happen. I suspect the penalties go into Consolidated Revenue and become part of the Budget and are not set aside to deal with the particular problem. Those are the major matters to which I wish to refer on behalf of the National Party.

The Bill is extremely detailed with a large number of amendments to other legislation, and it is to be hoped that all of the matters that have been dealt with by a series of committees and by consultation with senior officers have been properly dealt with. I cannot suspect that, apart from the two matters I have mentioned, there are major problems with the Bill, but no doubt some will occur from time to time and further amendments will be necessary. In a Bill of such complexity, that must be expected. Generally, however, the National Party agrees with the Bill.

I understand quite clearly the reasons why Mr Butler has moved his amendment. It gave him the opportunity of canvassing some problems which are very real and which may reasonably be brought before the House tonight. Those matters relate to heavy loads and the problems created by heavy and increasing traffic, not only as to weight but also as to numbers. Many road systems, particularly in the metropolitan and suburban areas, were not designed to cope with the heavy load factors now being placed upon them.

The corners and the geometry of road intersections do not make for ease of transport. As I travelled to Melbourne on Monday morning, I came past Pentridge Prison. The vehicle, a semi-trailer, in front of me made a left turn into Bell Street in the way that such a turn must be made by a large semi-trailer and I noticed the rear wheels of the vehicle passed over the kerb. The driver was quite entitled to make that manoeuvre but was unable to do so without the three rear sets of tyres on the left hand or near side of the semi-trailer crossing

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the kerb, clearly indicating that the geometry of that intersection was not designed to cope with a vehicle of that size. Many intersections pose similar problems.

Again, to indicate that Mr Butler's concern is reasonable, even though his amendment cannot be supported, I point out that similar problems occur in many country towns where big and dangerous loads pass through in large numbers. Fortunately, up until now there has not been a major disaster of the type that has cost many lives; perhaps such a disaster will occur one day.

A further matter which is of concern to a council in my electorate, as recently reported in the local press, is that damage is being caused to buildings as a result of vibration and other problems caused by heavy vehicles. The vibrations are almost of earth tremour proportions with consequent cracking of masonry in buildings built many years ago which are not able to withstand that sort of stress. Many honourable members will recall that, during the period when the Tasman bridge in Hobart was down, similar problems occurred in the township of Richmond when heavy trucks were rerouted through that area and many historic buildings were in some danger of damage.

Although the National Party believes the Bill before the House is reasonable and should be supported, the members of my party cannot support the amendment moved by Mr Butler. Nevertheless, we understand his sentiments and support many of them, believing that they must be of continuing concern to Parliament and the Government. However, it is a question of whether it is reasonable to support the Bill at this time. It is of overriding importance to allow the passage of the Bill so that more conformity between the States can be achieved. For that reason, the National Party supports the Bill.

The Bill has been a long time in production. The actual mass and dimensions have been laid down since 1976 when the National Association of Australian State Road Authorities first established those dimensions. They were accepted by Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania in 1978. I do not understand why the Victorian Government could not have acted similarly at that time. It has had a battle in bringing forward this Bill and has taken three years longer than the other States to get the proposed legislation before the House. I should like to know why Victoria has been so lax in regard to the matter. There has been a demand for this type of legislation for some time and the other eastern States have accepted it. The delay has caused much extra expense and trouble to many Victorian drivers.

As has been pointed out by Mr Butler and Mr Evans, the height dimension specified in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania is 4'3 metres; whereas in Victoria it is 4 metres. That means that any vehicle constructed in those States or travelling down from Queensland or New South Wales may be subject to a fine because it will not comply with the Victorian requirement.

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—It could get hooked on a bridge.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE—Mr Stacey is correct in what he says. I know vehicles will become hooked on the power lines because the State Electricity Commission in Victoria has a minimum height of 4 metres at the kerb. At the present time, vehicles travelling under a National Association of Australian State Road Authorities permit are permitted to travel only on certain roads and it is claimed that this Bill will mean that they will be permitted to travel anywhere on Victorian roads. However, many problems could occur with overhead wires. In fact, this situation has already arisen in an area of Geelong which trucks over the specified dimensions are not supposed to use but they use it as it is a short cut, and they are constantly bringing down overhead wires. I have written to the State Electricity Commission in regard to the matter and I received the reply.
that the minimum height for wires in Victoria is 4 metres. Consequently, interstate trucks will still be confined to OD routes. I see nothing in the proposed legislation to cover that matter.

A problem also arises as to length. Victoria is supposedly adopting a national code, according to the second-reading notes attached to the Bill. In that case, why does the Bill provide a maximum length of 17·8 metres for an articulated vehicle in Victoria, whereas the maximum length in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania is 16 metres?

The Hon. N. F. Stacey—That makes up for the lack of height, I guess.

The Hon. R. A. Mackenzie—The stipulated length for a car and trailer is 16·8 metres in each of the other three States and 17·8 metres in Victoria. Once again, a Victorian vehicle travelling interstate to New South Wales may fail to comply with the law by being over the specified length. This Bill is not a step towards accepting a national code at all. The situation will be no better than it is at present. I cannot follow the Government's reasoning on this matter.

On examining the Bill, one finds further confusion because the explanatory notes indicate that clause 29 provides the maximum length and dimensions of an articulated motor car and increases the over-all length from 14·5 metres to 17 metres. However, the Bill stipulates 17·8 metres, so the Bill does not even agree with its own notes. It is obvious that much work needs to be done on it.

One other area of considerable concern relates to omnibuses and their dimensions. The situation is extremely serious in that many route buses now in operation will not conform to the new dimensions and they will have until 1984 to comply. What that means is that virtually all the vehicles will have to be taken off the road or an extra axle has to be fitted. It has been estimated that at present there are 909 or almost 1000 charter buses which will be breaking the law. Those buses are valued at approximately $36·5 million, and it has been estimated that to replace those vehicles with new vehicles, on current prices it would cost approximately $66 million. The Bill should contain a provision which, rather than setting a deadline for buses to be changed over, should allow for them to be phased out over the life of the vehicle. Many bus operators will be faced with enormous expense after 1984 if they have to carry out these expensive alterations to current vehicles or take them off the road completely. There is no indication that the Government has given any thought to this aspect and I ask the Attorney-General to examine this matter.

Most of the other clauses deal with the imposition of extensive fines. I notice that an additional fine is to be imposed for overloading. The Government should look at the cause for much of the overloading. I suggest one of the reasons is the low freight rates which many operators are receiving. Honourable members are aware of the problems facing the trucking industry. I have received considerable correspondence, just as has Mr Jenkins, and I understand Mr Jenkins raised the matter in Parliament many years ago when he referred to what was happening to truck operators.

It is a big problem. What has happened is that there has been an escalation in fuel prices and freight forwarders charges have risen considerably, together with increased wages. However, truck freight rates have fallen far below the increases in the other factors. Over a six-year period the consumer price index has risen by something like 100 per cent. Freight forwarders charges have risen by the same percentage but truck operators rates have only risen by about 30 per cent.

The Government should look at the possibility of setting standard freight rates because this is one of the reasons why much overloading occurs. I am sure the Attorney-General will agree that if the Government looked at the cause of overloading rather than imposing heavy fines, it would ascertain the reason why truck operators are breaking the law.
I suggest this problem could be overcome. The main reason why a standard freight rate cannot be set is that it requires a national transport commission to make that judgment. Legislation has been enacted by the Federal Parliament to establish a national transport commission to make regulations in regard to freight rates. However, that legislation has never been proclaimed and the Government should pressurise the Federal Government to proclaim the legislation to ensure that a national transport commission can exercise some control over freight rates. This would enable truck operators to make a good living and therefore they would not be forced to overload their vehicles in order to make a living by making their freight journeys pay.

Those are some of the things I believe have been overlooked in this measure. I do not see how the Government can claim that it is adopting a national code when in actual fact vehicles can come from interstate and still be fined for being over the required height. Victorian vehicles travelling interstate can also be booked by the authorities over the border for being too long. I cannot understand how the Government can claim that it is introducing a national code when the reason why the height has been kept down is because of State Electricity Commission wires. The State Electricity Commission should be made to investigate that aspect with a view to ensuring that new connections will be installed at a height which will conform with the national code of 4.3 metres.

I also ask the Attorney-General to examine the position of charter buses because it would cost the enormous figure of something like $66 million to replace those buses in 1985.

I support the remarks of my colleague, Mr Butler, who canvassed the Bill. I support the amendment because—especially with regard to the length of vehicles—there will be a need to undertake research but honourable members do not know what will happen. If the Government had proceeded along lines similar to the Governments in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, this legislation would have been enacted three or four years ago and all these things would have been sorted out then.

Nevertheless, there is still time to do so and as Mr Butler has said, the Government should have another look at the question to ascertain what effect this Bill will have on traffic travelling through the streets of Victoria.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—On the amendment moved by Mr Butler, it appears obvious that Mr Mackenzie and Mr Butler have not spoken to one another about this Bill because that is the impression that one gains from the contribution of Mr Mackenzie. Mr Mackenzie indicated that Mr Butler had moved his amendment to have the Bill withdrawn so that it could be redrafted in some way. That is not the intent of the amendment. Mr Butler indicated that he supported the Bill but asked for it to be withdrawn to have an examination made of certain problems. I can understand that point of view for undoubtedly these traffic problems do exist but Mr Butler is to be commended for the way in which he approached those problems and explained them clearly and fairly to the House.

If one accepts that these problems do exist, nonetheless it seems undesirable not to proceed with the Bill, which is dealing not so much with traffic problems but with mass and dimension limits, despite what Mr Mackenzie said in apparent contradiction to Mr Butler. The Bill introduces into this State mass and dimension requirements which are uniform with those to be applied or which are already applying in the other States.

The Government does not consider that this Bill should be postponed whilst these problems have to be looked at. The Bill should go forward to at least enable that part of the uniform regulations to be introduced into this State. In the meantime, the traffic problems referred to by Mr Butler can be examined with a view to ensuring that it will be possible to achieve the results which are desired in due course.
For those reasons, the Government opposes the amendment.

The amendment was negatived, and the motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 28 were agreed to.

Clause 29 (Maximum limits applicable to conforming motor cars)

**The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)**—As I indicated in the second-reading debate, I intend to move an amendment. I move:

"Clause 29, line 28, omit "4" and insert "4\(^3\)".

This amendment simply continues the process which the Bill begins of trying to regularize and make similar provisions for all States for dimensions, masses and so on, of motor vehicles. The anomaly was found that in Victoria the height limit for a motor truck is 4 metres whereas in the other States the height limit is 4·3 metres.

I recognize that people might state that there are difficulties in increasing the height in Victoria because of bridges and certain overhead projections. I suggest that there may well be bridges and obstacles under 4 metres in height which motor vehicles need to traverse. In such instances care must be exercised. I suggest that not many cases would exist where a height of 4·3 metres would be much less appropriate than 4 metres. For that reason, on behalf of the National Party, I recommend the amendment to the Committee.

It is clear that the Victorian Government wants to have similar provisions to other States. The Bill makes such provisions and the National Party intends to carry that process on and bring it to its obvious and full conclusion.

**The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)**—The Government certainly agrees with the principle enunciated by Mr Evans in moving his amendment. Indeed, it is desirable to bring Victoria into line with the other States in that respect as well as other respects. However, the Government has taken advice from specialists from a number of departments and it is thought that it would be unwise at this stage to increase the height limit on the basis that the increase could be dangerous and could cause road accidents.

Certainly the Government intends that this provision should also be made uniform along with the other provisions in due course, but at this stage, on the basis of the advice that the Government has received, it is certainly undesirable and I do not think members of the Committee would want to introduce the measure for the sake of uniformity if it meant the risk of accidents occurring and consequent loss of property or life. For those reasons, and in the light of advice received, the Government is not prepared to accept the amendment.

**The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)**—I am interested in the comments made by the Attorney-General that there were dangers. The honourable gentleman stated that there were dangers in the sense of believing that there may be dangers beyond those of simply running into obstructions which would not allow vehicles of 4·3 metres in height to pass through. Is the Minister suggesting that there may be greater risk of overturning or similar dangers in increasing the height?

What efforts were made, in what was obviously a fair degree of consultation with other State departments in this matter, to induce conformity in other States with a road load height limit? Was that angle canvassed, again with the idea of uniformity? I am not expressing a particular concern with 4 metres or 4·3 metres, but rather uniformity. Otherwise we find problems associated with interstate transport and these become acute if one lives close to the border. I cited examples during the second-reading debate.

**The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)**—It is desirable to have uniformity between the States; after all that is the object of the Bill as a whole. On this aspect of the clause, the Government received advice and, as I indicated, I am not able to give the
honourable member the technical details of that advice or whether the reasons were the risk of overturning or simply because of the risk of too high a load running into an obstruction.

I have been informed by the Minister who has responsibility for the Bill that he has received that advice and, in the light of that advice, the Government did not consider it could move to have the same height as the other States at this stage. In the course of the discussions which have taken some considerable time, before arriving at legislation to be introduced in all the States, I have no doubt that the question of height was discussed along with other items for reasons which obviously commend themselves to the other States. They were prepared to have the height which is in effect a foot more than is provided for in the Bill on the basis of advice, given at the time. As I have already indicated, the responsible Minister informed me that the position will be examined and once advice is received that it is not dangerous, the Government will move to amend the legislation to bring it into line with other States.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province) — If the amendment moved by Mr Evans were successful, I take it that would not affect interstate travel. As the Bill stands, can the Minister explain what would happen in the event of an interstate driver crossing the border? Would he be convicted of an offence if he has a load of 4·3 metres, which is allowed in other States?

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General) — I have not received any protection on the offering of legal opinion so I shall do my best to answer the question. In a case like that it would be incumbent on the driver or operator of the interstate vehicle to seek a special permit to operate with a height which is higher than that provided in the Bill.

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

The Hon. D. M. Evans — The provision is in the Bill.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY — I thank the honourable member. I believe there are provisions in the Bill which permit the obtaining of such a permit. If the driver did not obtain a permit he would be committing an offence against the Bill.

The amendment was negatived.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE (Geelong Province) — With regard to the discrepancy in the length of vehicles, as explained in the explanatory notes, I take it that the actual measurement is as contained in the Bill and that 17·8 metres will be the actual length?

The Hon. Haddon Storey — Could the honourable member direct me to the relevant clause? I could not find it when he raised the matter during the second-reading debate.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE — I refer to clause 29 (f) (i). The explanatory notes to the clause refer to 17·8 metres.

The Hon. Haddon Storey — Where is that?

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE — It is in the explanatory notes to the Bill, at page 4.

The Hon. Haddon Storey — That states 17 metres, too.

The Hon. R. A. MACKENZIE — The Bill states 17·8 metres.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General) — I should not have conducted a cross-conversation, but I cannot find the discrepancy.

The Hon. B. P. Dunn — The Bill was amended in the Assembly.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY — The Bill states 17·8 metres. The explanation is that the honourable member is referring to what appeared in the Assembly print of the Bill which was amended in the Assembly so that the Bill before the Council states 17 metres. I am grateful for Mr Dunn's interjection pointing out what happened in the other House.

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

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.
URBAN RENEWAL (AMENDMENT) BILL

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply), was read a first time.

TRANSPORT REGULATION (ASSIGNMENT OF LICENCES) BILL

The debate (adjourned from April 30) on the motion of the Hon. D. G. Crozier (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. A. S. BUTLER (Thomas-town Province)—The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill. It was first introduced in the previous sessional period and deals with the question of a holder of a taxi licence. It tries to rectify a situation where, either through illness, infirmity or death, a licence may be re-assigned. Widows and widowers will now have that right. The Bill can be described as compassionate. A number of negotiations were held between all three parties and the ultimate result was the measure before the House. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. D. M. EVANS (North Eastern Province)—The National Party supports the Bill. As Mr Butler mentioned, there has been considerable consultation between the three parties to make a better Bill than the one originally initiated. This is a process that I am sure all parties will welcome because it makes for better legislation. The Bill is a product of that consultation and is one with which the National Party concurs.

The motion was agreed to.

URBAN RENEWAL (AMENDMENT) BILL

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to make a number of amendments to the Urban Renewal Act 1970, which is the principal Act. The Bill addresses specific shortcomings in the existing Urban Renewal Act which have been identified over a period of eight years of operation of the Act. The amendments have been prepared as a remedy to these shortcomings. The alterations are intended to achieve the following aims.

As per the recommendation of the Bains report on local government activities in Victoria, the Bill provides for municipalities to become renewal authorities as of right. Experience has shown that councils are generally in a far better position to implement any proposal than is generally currently the case where the Housing Commission of Victoria acts as the renewal authority. This applies from the aspects of both planning and the gaining of
agreement between affected parties in any proposal. The operation of urban renewal procedures includes a strong emphasis on public participation and the commission has, in the past, experienced a distinct remoteness which a local council, acting as a renewal authority, could obviate. Currently, municipalities are required to be authorized by the Governor in Council under section 755A of the Local Government Act prior to their preparing and implementing urban renewal proposals.

Much of the time-consuming provisions relating to the preparatory procedures of a proposal have been repealed. These procedures were not essential to the preparation of a viable proposal and effectively created a one year delay between the decision to commence proposal preparation and actual work on the proposal itself.

A new provision relating to the termination of any proposal at any stage is included. This gives the renewal authority the opportunity to quit the preparation or implementation of a proposal if the renewal authority considers no benefit is to be gained from completion of the proposal.

No provision currently exists for the termination of proposals and in certain instances this has led to incongruous situations. For example, an area may be declared a renewal area and although no further action may be wanted or warranted for various reasons, the status of the area remains. The inclusion of this provision is seen as assisting in the removal of uncertainty in the minds of landowners within renewal areas where procedures have halted.

On exhibition of the proposal, the period within which objections, and so forth, may be made has been shortened to 30 days and a requirement has been included whereby the renewal authority must inform any objector of its determination within 60 days of the hearing of the objection. These have been introduced to speed up the current time-consuming process of public participation in the preparation of a proposal.

The preparation of a planning scheme is to be included only where it is considered necessary to facilitate the implementation of all or any part of a proposal. This will remove the lack of clarity that currently exists regarding the obligation of providing a planning scheme in each and every proposal.

The powers of the renewal authority are amended to the effect that the renewal authority may purchase prospective properties where owners are experiencing difficulties in selling due to the existence of a proposal. Further, a renewal authority may make loans for "works" as distinct from the previous "repairs, alterations or renovations", to municipalities as well as to persons who may carry out such works. This will effectively allow municipalities to carry out building works on behalf of the commission. Thus where the latter acts as a renewal authority, it will now be able to transfer certain responsibilities to local government.

Details of the clauses in the Bill are contained in the second-reading notes which have been circulated to honourable members. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Sunbury Primary School — Police Special Operations Group—Logging in catchment areas—Motor Registration Branch—Hughesdale Primary School

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I move:
That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until this day, at a quarter to eleven o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—I move:
That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU (Doutta Galla Province)—I raise a matter of Government administration for
the Minister of Education concerning the Sunbury Primary School. I declare an interest—not a pecuniary interest, but a parental interest—in that school. As the Minister is aware from various matters I have raised with him privately, the school currently has an enrolment of 243 pupils and employs eleven teachers. The headmaster, the school principal and the school council, as well as the parent organization, have been endeavouring to persuade the Minister and the Education Department that it is necessary to increase the number of teachers allocated to the school.

It has been doing so in confident expectation, following assurances given to it, that once the school enrolment passes a certain figure, the number of teachers allocated to that school will be increased. Despite correspondence between the Director of Education and the school, no assurance to increase the number of teachers at that school has been given. The Minister received letters in April of this year from the school indicating quite clearly rapid growth in that area.

By way of self objection, I say that the area is part of the development of a satellite city project of the Government in which about $12.5 million has been spent by local government organizations on behalf, not only of the people who live in the area, but also of the direct development plan of the area by the Government. Nevertheless the Education Department, the Director-General of Education and the Minister have so far refused to acknowledge the need for granting yet another teacher.

As I understand the position, even under the revised formula the school would be entitled to another teacher if the school population was increased by four. However, the department and the Minister will not agree to an increase in the number of teachers at the school despite the fact that welfare housing money has been spent on a grand scale in developing the so-called Goonawarra estate, although the population of that estate is increasing almost weekly with a corresponding increase in the number of students attending or likely to attend the school.

Therefore I raise with the Minister of Education the need for that school to be treated on the basis of the development policies of the Government for the expansion of the area, having in mind that the school has planned—correctly in my view—both at an educational employee level and at the point of involving—

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. F. S. Grime wade)—Order! Mr Landeryou is tending to debate the matter. He has asked a question and perhaps has spoken enough.

The Hon. W. A. LANDERYOU—I appreciate that, Mr President. I was about to conclude by putting to the Minister—and I am not trying to debate the matter—certain salient points. The school is subject to what will be rapid growth if the Government's policy of spending $12.5 million to assist in development of the area is correct. It is stupid and bureaucratic for the Government—

The PRESIDENT—Order! Mr Landeryou is now debating this matter. He has asked a question and he should wait for the answer.

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE (Melbourne West Province)—I raise with the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, a serious matter concerning false information supplied to the House about the Special Operations Group of the Victoria Police. To substantiate my complaint it will be necessary for me to review briefly the questions I have asked about this group.

I first raised the matter on 18 March 1980 when I asked a question without notice relating to a press report that the Special Operations Group had been undergoing military training with help from the Army and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service. The Attorney-General was not able to give an immediate answer to my question, and, to assist him in his inquiries, I later asked a number of questions on notice about the Special Operations
Adjournment

The Special Operations Group was established early in 1978 by the Chief Commissioner of Police with the authority of the Premier and the then Chief Secretary. The group was established in the aftermath of the Sydney Hilton bombing in 1977.

On 28 October 1980, I asked a further question on notice, No. 138. Part of my question was:

On what date in 1978 was the Victoria Police Special Operations Group formed?

It was only after a reminder by question on notice No. 238 that the answer was given at last on 14 April 1981. It had taken more than a year to drag out of the Government the admission that the Special Operations Group was officially established on 12 January 1978, one month before the Hilton bombing occurred. I repeat that the Sydney Hilton explosion took place not in 1977 but on 13 February 1978. The Victoria Police Special Operations Group was set up not in the aftermath of the Sydney Hilton affair but 32 days before the explosion. The answer is therefore incorrect and I submit that it is a matter of some concern to the House that the Attorney-General has provided inaccurate information.

The Hon. Glyn Jenkins—That is a lot of rubbish.

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Can’t you shut him up?

The Hon. JOAN COXSEDGE—This is further damning evidence for my contention that the Sydney Hilton explosion was the result of a conspiracy to manufacture a state of public alarm and to justify a series of repressive measures which were already underway, such as the new ASIO Act, the new Federal police, paramilitary groups in all police forces, increased funding and powers—

The Hon. W. A. Landeryou—Unfair.
HG motor car from a car sales firm in High Street, Preston. The lady to whom I refer is separated from her husband and has two children. She asked for the registration papers for the vehicle to be forwarded to the Motor Registration Branch and was informed by the car sales company that this had been done on 14 December last year. She later checked with the company and was informed that papers had been sent. By the end of January, when the papers had still not arrived, she telephoned the Motor Registration Board to inquire what had happened to her registration papers and why she had not received them. By that time the registration payment was due. The lady wrote to the Motor Registration Board and received no reply. She waited a few more weeks and at the end of February forwarded further correspondence asking for a reply to her letters. She asked what happened to her registration papers, and she again received no reply. She telephoned the Motor Registration Branch and a girl there said that they had been overworked, her registration papers were in the system, and she would receive them within the next few days.

I admit that this person should not have been driving her vehicle when she knew it was not registered and she had not received the registration papers, but that was not her fault. She was informed that they were on the way. I applaud the action of the motorcycle constable who booked her and removed the plates from her car, but I believe this lady has been done an injustice by the Motor Registration Branch. She reported to the Motor Registration Branch on Monday of this week and an employee produced all the documents, including her correspondence, and she was informed that the registration papers were forwarded to 684 High Street, Preston, instead of 854 High Street, Epping. She now has to face a charge of driving an unregistered vehicle, and I should like the Attorney-General to ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is responsible for the Motor Registration Branch, to investigate the complaint.

The Hon. C. J. KENNEDY (Waverley Province)—My question is asked of the Minister of Education. It refers to the Hughesdale Primary School where there are 300 children of Greek descent. The Greek parents of that school have been trying for four years to get a bi-lingual teacher for the school. It is a matter of considerable urgency, because they have problems to deal with, and I bring it to the Minister's attention.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT (Minister of Education)—Mr Landeryou raised a question that goes to the very basis of staffing formulae and staffing policies of primary schools. While I have readily conceded in this House on a number of occasions that secondary and technical schools are better staffed than our primary schools, and that the next relief must be given to primary schools rather than secondary and technical schools, nevertheless, in one respect, the staffing formulae for primary schools operates much more satisfactorily to the schools concerned than any other divisions.

I am informed that in the past, the system once was that to get an additional teacher one had to fulfil the whole quota that was required of that teacher. In secondary and technical school divisions, if one has the quota for a teacher, that is that, but if one has say, seven in a technical school above it one gets an allotment of .5 of a teacher.

In primary schools, however, as soon as the school passes, as in the case of Sunbury, 246, it gets an extra teacher. It moves from eleven to twelve, even though the quota for twelve—

The Hon. D. R. White—Could you be concise for a change, Mr Minister? Just surprise us.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT—I am happy to leave the answer there, Mr President.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY (Attorney-General)—Mrs Coxedge raised a matter concerning answers given to two questions on notice concerning the Special Operations Group. If the date of the bombing was not in
1977 but in 1978, on the date that Mrs Coxsedge mentioned, then there is an inconsistency in those answers. I am prepared to assume that Mrs Coxsedge had checked out the date of the bombing and that it was in 1978 and not in 1977. If that is so, there does appear to be a discrepancy in those answers, and I certainly will check with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services who supplied the answers, find out what the position is and have it corrected.

Having said that much, I am amazed at the conclusions that the honourable member then goes on to draw. They are fanciful in the extreme.

The Hon. Joan Coxedge—A lot of people share my views.

The Hon. HADDON STOREY—They are not only fanciful, they not only betray an absolute obsession with this question of the Special Operations Group, they are not even logical, because the logic of Mrs Coxedge’s case is that this bombing was somehow a conspiracy in order to justify the setting up of this group. If what she says is correct, then the group was set up before the bombing. It makes absolute nonsense of what Mrs Coxedge went on to say.

However, if there is an error in the facts given, then that is a matter for regret, and I certainly will take that up with the Minister.

Mr Eddy raised a matter concerning the Motor Registration Branch. I must say, on the basis of the facts that Mr Eddy gave, it sounds as though this lady has a very good defence for any action taken against her for driving an unregistered car.

If Mr Eddy gives me details, I will take the matter up with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to see what he can do to correct the situation.

The Hon. F. J. GRANTER (Minister of Water Supply)—The matter raised by Mr White is a paper of comment made by Mr M. C. Feller, who comes from the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and is an unsigned document. Nevertheless, has a covering letter which was forwarded to the Premier, and a copy was forwarded to the Chairman of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and the Chairman of the Land Conservation Council. It deals with the report made public by the Forest Industries Resource Management Group, FIRM, commenced by Dr F. R. Moulds and it supports the closed catchment policy made by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and adopted by the Government last week.

The comments are critical, one might say, of the FIRM Group, or the matters raised by the group in its report, and also is critical of forestry at times. Mr Feller has taught forest hydrology at Melbourne University and is currently, as I indicated, teaching at the Faculty of Forestry in British Columbia.

I shall make the paper available to the honourable members. It is not signed, and contains no indication that Mr Feller has made it, but I am certain that it is correct.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.50 a.m. (Wednesday).

QUESTION ON NOTICE

SWINBORNE LODGE
(Question No. 172)

The Hon. G. A. SGRO (Melbourne North Province) asked the Minister for Conservation, for the Minister for Community Welfare Services:

Is he aware that the Youth Service Programme, Swinborn, run by the Melbourne City Council in Carlton is in danger of being closed due to lack of funding; if so—(i) what action is proposed to continue the programme; and (ii) why is the Government not meeting its 1975 agreement of 85 per cent of the total costs of the programme?
The Hon. W. V. HOUGHTON (Minister for Conservation)—The answer supplied by the Minister for Community Welfare Services is lengthy and I seek leave to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave was granted and the answer was as follows:

In 1975, a funding formula was introduced to assist with the operating costs of hostels for young people under the care or supervision of my Department. The formula was based on a system of subsidies for staffing costs and per capita board subsidies for the young hostel residents. It was envisaged that the formula would meet approximately 85 per cent of the operating costs of hostels funded under the Voluntary Hostels Scheme.

The Government has now raised the board subsidies for residents from $20 per week to $27.50 per week, an increase of 37.5 per cent, payable from 1 July 1980.

Swinborn Lodge, 4 Canning Street, Carlton, is one of three voluntary hostels specifically catering for young people with severe emotional and behavioural problems.

In addition to the general board subsidy increase, these hostels have been granted an additional $10 per capita subsidy and a $5000 grant for the current financial year.

As a result of these measures, the Director of Melbourne City Mission, which is the auspice body of Swinborn Lodge, has informed me that immediate closure of that hostel has been averted.

In addition to these increased subsidies, my Department is further reviewing its overall subsidy payments to voluntary hostels to further promote and develop high quality and efficient alternatives to institutionalized care for adolescents in need of special assistance.
Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 5 May 1981

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman) took the chair at 4.5 p.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr WILKES (Leader of the Opposition)—In view of the significant cutbacks by the Federal Government in funds earlier stated by the Premier as being required for Victoria if the Government is to maintain the existing public services it now provides, will the Premier indicate what State Government services are to be curtailed and/or what charges are to be increased to compensate for the shortfall?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The matters covered by the Premiers Conference in Canberra yesterday are of such scope that the best course to follow is that I make a Ministerial statement to the House, which I shall do on Thursday.

Mr Roper—Honourable members will not have an opportunity of debating it fully on Thursday.

Mr HAMER—Although the honourable member for Brunswick may not be aware, arrangements have been made to allow for debate and the Government will facilitate those arrangements. The statement will need to cover a whole range of the matters discussed.

It suffices to say now that the Federal Act covering these matters prescribes that an amount of 39·87 per cent of Federal personal income tax collections for the previous year shall be divided among the States on an agreed formula. The proposal ultimately made by the Federal Government at the conference yesterday, and not accepted by any State Government, would amount to a reduction from 39·87 per cent to 38·3 per cent, which is a reduction of 1·5 per cent of total income tax collections. This appears to be based on the fact that income tax collections this year are running at high level and would have led to a 13·5 per cent increase to the States in the forthcoming year. This has alarmed the Federal Government, which has sought to cut the total back. I shall refer to this matter more fully in the Ministerial statement. The difference is large and will be approximately $61 million to this State and comparable amounts to other States. Therefore, the concerned reaction of all State Premiers and Treasurers and their refusal to accept the proposal is understandable.

MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATORS

Mr ROSS-EDWARDS (Leader of the National Party)—Will the Premier formally advise the House who the administrators of the Melbourne City Council will be as from midnight tonight and what remuneration they will be receiving, respectively?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—I had intended making a formal statement tomorrow when the actual term of office commences but I shall announce the administrators informally now. The chairman is Mr Peter Thorley, who is the former Town Clerk and Chief Administrator of the City of Brisbane. The City of Brisbane has a budget of approximately $270 million, which is comparable with that of Tasmania, and it has about 8000 employees. It is involved in a wide range of activities, not only in local government but also in water, sewerage and urban transport. Obviously, Mr Thorley, in his eight years as chief administrator, has gained valuable experience in a wide field of activities and the Government has great confidence in his ability.

The two part-time members are, respectively, Mr Neil Smith, Chairman of the Gas and Fuel Corporation and Mr Ken Allston, who is the Deputy General Manager of Henry Jones (IXL) Ltd and formerly Managing Director of Barrett Brothers and Burston and Co. Pty Ltd. Mr Allston has a fine record in company management and organization and is a well-known company “doctor”. The
three are well balanced which will give the City of Melbourne, in the years during which they are operating, a good administration. They will make sensible suggestions on proposals on how the city council can be restructured to carry out its duties properly.

In answer to the second part of the question regarding salaries, the chairman will receive, in round figures an amount of $60,000, plus an allowance of about $3,000 a year. The two part-time members will receive $25,000 each, plus an allowance of $1,250 a year.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Mackinnon (Box Hill)—In view of the proposed cuts in funds to be made to Victoria by the Commonwealth at yesterday’s Premiers Conference, can the Treasurer advise the House what capacity Victoria has to make cuts in its expenditure, compared with the Commonwealth?

Mr Thompson (Treasurer)—The Commonwealth has an immeasurably greater capacity than the State of Victoria to make cuts of the type announced last week. First of all, under a number of Commonwealth Governments over past decades there has been a tendency, particularly under the Whitlam administration, to build up Government departments to administer tied grants. The Commonwealth Government is now moving to remove some of those which are unnecessary, costly and delay producing.

Secondly, during the years 1973 to 1976 there was a build-up in Commonwealth Government expenditure of 129 per cent cumulative during those three years. Obviously, starting from a level of very high expenditure, there was far greater capacity for the Commonwealth to cut back than there is for Victoria, a State which for 40 years has been getting the lowest tax reimbursement per head of any State in the Commonwealth.

STATE TAXATION

Mr Jolly (Dandenong)—In the light of the Premier’s statement that he will not introduce an income tax to make up for the shortfall in Federal tax receipts required by Victoria, will the Premier give a similar assurance that there will be no increase in taxes which fall heaviest on low income earners during the coming financial year?

Mr Hamer (Premier)—Is it impossible to give that sort of assurance to such a generalized question. The Government is not introducing a second income tax, but in respect of charges and taxes generally, this is part of the Budget process. The first step must always be to know exactly what the tax reimbursement supposedly from the Federal collections of income tax is going to be for each State. Actually this year we are a bit over a month earlier than usual because normally we hear what the figures are to be at the Premiers Conference in June. We now know on 4 May. It is only the first step.

The next step must be to assess Victoria’s sources of revenue and expenditure. I can assure the House that on the expenditure side the Government is going to be even more rigorous than it has been in the past, because it has no alternative. Furthermore, it welcomes the general approach for smaller government and the cutting out of any unnecessary or otiose functions as soon as possible. In that spirit, the Government will be reviewing the whole of its Budget strategy.

FEES FOR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY STUDENTS

Mr Whiting (Mildura)—Can the Minister of Educational Services inform the House whether, in the light of the budgetary restrictions that are obviously going to take place, fees will be charged for tertiary or secondary students in Victoria for 1982?

Mr Lacy (Minister of Educational Services)—The matter raised by the Deputy Leader of the National Party in fact suggests something that may not even have been thought of. However, all matters concerning secondary students would have to be reviewed at this times as a result of the decisions taken at the Premiers Conference yesterday and the subsequent meeting of the Australian Loan Council to take place in a month’s time.
ELDERLY PERSONS' UNITS

Mr A. T. EVANS (Ballarat North)—Will the Minister of Housing inspect Housing Commission units at Creswick constructed for elderly persons a number of years ago? I bring to the attention of the Minister the fact that those units were built with only one outside door and this causes a dangerous situation. I ask the Minister whether he will review this condition with a view to altering these units to provide for two outside doors? The Deputy Leader of the National Party interjects and states that the Housing Commission cannot afford two doors, but the honourable member apparently does not realize the danger that exists. I ask the Minister of Housing to inspect the units at Creswick with a view to making those units a prototype project for the alteration of all units located throughout the State?

Mr KENNETT (Minister of Housing)—I can give the honourable member an assurance that the Housing Commission will certainly investigate the claim that he has made. However, I remind honourable members that the first priority of the Housing Commission must be to use whatever funds it has to provide as much housing and shelter as it can for those people throughout the community who are in need of Housing Commission accommodation. The Housing Commission will be looking at these elderly persons' units in the course of the review anyway, but it seems that the first priority in relation to the units will be the replacement of some of the hip baths which have been installed in the units and which elderly folk, as they become infirm, have difficulty getting into and they have asked for the replacement of those baths with showers as a first priority. However, the Housing Commission will be looking at all these aspects in reviewing its housing stock.

VICTORIAN ECONOMY

Mr ROWE (Essendon)—In view of the fragile nature of the Victorian economy and the high level of unemployment, will the Treasurer confirm to the House that the cutbacks in Federal activities, announced last week by the Razor Gang, combined with the results of the decisions taken yesterday at the Premiers Conference, will lead to a deterioration in the Victorian economy and a further loss of jobs in Victoria?

Mr THOMPSON (Treasurer)—I have been asked to express an opinion and I am not prepared to express an opinion because that would offend Standing Orders. However, I am prepared to indicate that Victoria expected to receive, under the formula which has been operating for the past five years and which has produced for the States 39.87 per cent of personal income tax collections, an amount that would have led to an increase of 13.5 per cent for Victoria instead of which 9 per cent was granted. The Government believes the amount to be totally inadequate, said so yesterday, and will continue to say so in the interests of Victoria.

MINING VENTURE AT STAWELL

Mrs CHAMBERS (Ballarat South)—Can the Minister for Minerals and Energy inform the House whether the gold mining venture proposed for Stawell will go ahead and, if it does go ahead, will it have any benefits for the local community?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I was able to announce today that the Governor in Council has accepted a recommendation that will permit the two companies, Western Mining Corporation Ltd and Central Norseman Gold, to proceed with a joint venture of underground mining in the township of Stawell. Honourable members will no doubt recall that in the early history of Australia Stawell was a major gold producing town in Victoria. It is with considerable pleasure that the Government notes this renewed exploration activity in Victoria. The two companies propose to commence the project in June this year. It will be a $10 million exploration programme and it also marks the resumption of underground mining in Victoria, which is significant.
The two companies have previously informed the community that the diamond drilling programme that Western Mining Corporation Ltd has been undertaking since 1947 in that area has identified economic reserves and, as a result, the two companies are sufficiently encouraged to proceed with the development. It will involve the initial employment of 40 people and, in the second year of operation, 70 people. The circulation of wages in Stawell will be at least $5000 to $7000 a week and, in addition, there will be a spin off to surrounding areas, such as the area represented by the honourable member for Ballarat South, which will be considerable. As honourable members are aware, mining activities involve small engineering shops and machinery firms which will be asked to provide and participate in the provision of machinery and activities for this venture.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FACTORIES

Mr ROPER (Brunswick)—Is the Premier aware that because of decisions announced by the “razor gang”, nearly 2000 jobs are threatened, either directly or indirectly, at the Bendigo Ordnance Factory and the Commonwealth clothing factory in Coburg? If so, what steps has or will the Premier take to ensure that these jobs are not lost? Will he join the Leader of the Opposition in organizing and participating in a deputation of employees affected to the Prime Minister?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The honourable member for Brunswick has misunderstood what was intended by the "razor gang". It is intended that the Bendigo Ordnance Factory and the clothing factory should be offered for sale to private enterprise. It is far from meaning the retrenchment of people; it may well lead to increased employment. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition waits and sees what happens because my information is that a number of firms may be interested in this proposition and, if they are, that may lead to increased economic activity in Bendigo and Coburg.

BRIDGE IN ECHUCA

Mr HANN (Rodney)—Does the Minister of Transport recall giving an assurance three years ago to the Echuca City Council that a new bridge between Moama and Echuca had second priority with the Country Roads Board, the New South Wales Department of Main Roads and the Government?

Can the Minister reconcile that statement with a recent statement that the priority has now been amalgamated with Tocumwal, and can he confirm that the Echuca bridge is still the second priority?

Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport)—Yes, I do recall the situation when I visited Echuca, and the honourable member's statement is accurate as at that time. I think the two projects now have to be regarded as equal, but equal only to the extent that I understand that the Country Roads Board, with its usual efficiency, is well under way with the design of the bridge for Echuca, whereas the design of the bridge for Tocumwal is still in the hands of the New South Wales Government. I am doing my best to expedite the matter, but I do not think New South Wales will be able to catch up with the Country Roads Board.

PRISON COSTS

Mr McArdUR (Ringwood)—Can the Minister for Community Welfare Services indicate to the House the number of prisoners currently being held in Victorian gaols on Federal offences?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—I ask the honourable member to repeat his question and I ask the honourable member for Brunswick to cease interjecting. I should like to hear the question.

Mr McArdUR—Will the Minister indicate to the House the number of prisoners currently being held in Victorian gaols on Federal offences, the cost to the State and whether reimbursement of those costs is made by the Federal Government?

Mr JONA (Minister for Community Welfare Services)—The number of prisoners being held in Victorian gaols on
Federal offences as at the end of March this year was 40, the vast majority of whom were being held awaiting deportation through the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. In respect of those who were being held at the request of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, my department was being reimbursed by the Commonwealth at the rate of $40 a day. That is an arrangement that the Department of Community Welfare Services has with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. There is no arrangement for the reimbursement of expenses so far as Federal prisoners are concerned for offences other than those associated with breaches of the immigration laws.

Accordingly, I propose to have early representations made to the Federal Attorney-General seeking reimbursement from the Commonwealth Government for the cost of retaining Federal prisoners in Victorian gaols. Those costs are estimated at something of the order of $260 a week per prisoner, and that figure relates to only the recurrent expenditure involved. This will be a matter of discussion with the Federal Government.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr SIMMONDS (Reservoir)—Is the Minister of Labour and Industry aware of the effect that the decision of the Federal Government to close the Bendigo Ordnance Factory will have on apprenticeship training? Is he aware that 127 apprentices are in training at that plant, 27 of whom were seconded from private industry? Can he advise the House of the action he has taken to protect the rights and the training of those apprentices and of the action he is prepared to take in the future to provide for the maintenance of skilled training programmes in Bendigo?

Mr RAMSAY (Minister of Labour and Industry)—If changes in relation to the Ordnance Factory at Bendigo lead to the displacement of apprentices, the honourable member can rest assured that the Industrial Training Commission and the Government will take every possible step to ensure that the training of apprentices is continued without interruption. That is precisely the reason why the Government has established a Ministry for Employment and Training—to ensure that training opportunities for young people in Victoria are maintained at the maximum level.

PLANNING

Mr COLLINS (Noble Park)—I refer the Minister for Planning to that part of amendment No. 138 which would have affected the area known as Keysborough and which was recently rejected by the Board of Works at a meeting of objectors in Melbourne. Will the Minister in future give to the residents of that area and to the City of Springvale the opportunity of submitting a preferred development plan for the area known as Keysborough, prior to the Board of Works taking any further steps with relation to this matter?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—The question raised by the honourable member relates to an amendment proposed by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works which, after exhibition following submission both for and against from local people was not supported by the board. The honourable member is correct in saying that a number of people in his electorate are concerned at the consequences of this amendment not being dealt with in the way which they regard as being appropriate. I am happy to give him the assurance that, if the local community wishes to advance any submissions which in its view would represent a better balanced planning philosophy for its area, the Government will be pleased to have dialogue with those people and to discuss the matter with the Board of Works and the local council.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr FORDHAM (Footscray)—In view of the already abysmal proportion of Australians undertaking studies in the various fields of post-secondary educa-
tion, in comparison with North America, Japan and most countries of Western Europe, and given that the partial re-introduction of fees at tertiary institutions will inevitably lead to a further deterioration of the position in Victoria, what steps does the Victorian Government intend to take to convince the Federal authorities to pull back from this act of madness?

Mr LACY (Minister of Educational Services)—The Minister of Education will make a statement on this subject tonight at 8 p.m.

TEACHERS' CONFINEMENT LEAVE

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley)—Because of the continuing problems created by confinement leave provisions provided by the Education Department, can the Minister of Educational Services indicate whether the Government is contemplating changes to this system, which acts against students in schools within Victoria?

Mr LACY (Minister of Educational Services)—After considerable consultation with teacher and parent organizations and others, the Minister of Education had the department prepare a submission to the Teachers Tribunal on the question of confinement leave. The purpose of that submission is threefold. Firstly it sought discretion for the Director-General with respect to the length of time for which a teacher may take confinement leave, in particular, to allow a period longer than eighteen months. What was envisaged was a period of up to seven years for confinement leave. Secondly, it proposed that all teachers on confinement leave would be restricted to returning only at the beginning of a school term. The third proposal was that, if a teacher was on confinement leave for longer than twelve months that teacher would lose her position on the classified roll.

These measures are designed—if accepted by the Teachers Tribunal—to substantially diminish the interruption to students at primary, secondary and technical levels as a result of the confinement leave provisions that have prevailed to date.

CORIO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr BIRRELL (Geelong West)—Is the Minister of Public Works aware of the serious fire that occurred at the Corio Primary School at the week-end? If so, can the Minister indicate the level of damage and whether the fire is believed to be the work of an arsonist? Further, what progress has been made towards restoring the school?

Mr WOOD (Minister of Public Works)—I am fully aware of the serious fire that took place in the early hours of Saturday morning at the Corio Primary School. I, together with the director-general, the Regional Director of Education and other officers of the Public Works Department, inspected the scene on Saturday morning. The amount of damage has not yet been fully assessed, but it is believed that it will be considerably in excess of $1.25 million. The main class-room area of the building has been totally destroyed. The Arson Squad is investigating the matter and, to my knowledge, has not yet come up with a finding. At the meeting on Saturday morning it was determined that every effort should be made to have the school back into operation as soon as possible. To this effect, one relocatable for staff and administrative use was sited at the school yesterday and ten other double relocatable class-rooms will be taken to the school within the next week or so. It is the aim of the department to have the school back in operation on the first day of the second term, which is 25 May.

HEALTH FUNDING

Mr WILTON (Broadmeadows)—In view of the decision made by his Federal colleagues to absorb funding for community health services and school dental services into the over-all health funding and given the significant decrease in this funding, can the Minister of Health advise what steps will be taken to ensure that Victorians have access to these services and that no reduction in services takes place?
Mr BORTHWICK (Minister of Health)—The question raised by the honourable member for Broadmeadows is a matter that will be considered in the light of the over-all financial situation of this State and will be finally determined after the further meeting of the Australian Loan Council in a month's time.

VICTORIA'S ENERGY SUPPLIES

Mr COX (Mitcham)—Is the Minister for Minerals and Energy aware of an article in the Age newspaper by Mr Ken Davidson which refers to power shortages and claims that the lack of energy for Victoria's development is inescapable? Can the Minister inform the House whether his department has conducted a forward projection of energy needs to meet the energy requirements of Victorians for Victoria's inescapable further development?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—I am aware of the article by Mr Davidson and, of course, his comments—which are somewhat in a doomsday sense, that it is inescapable that Victoria will be short of power—and I think, an over-reaction by him. On the other hand, Mr Davidson is touching on an issue of which all Victorians and all members of Parliament should be very conscious. The Government has encouraged the State Electricity Commission to plan and develop for adequate energy supplies for Victoria.

There is no doubt that there is adequate provision of energy for Victoria, but there is equally no doubt that if the construction programme of the State Electricity Commission with respect to Loy Yang is interrupted and Loy Yang is not completed, then, of course, the position could be quite critical for Victoria. In that sense, Mr Davidson's sentiments are shared by me, but I believe the work force in Loy Yang is reacting very favourably and positively and working with the State Electricity Commission and the contractors. Progress is fairly good with Loy Yang and I am confident that with teamwork, co-operation and a regard for the effect on Victoria and its future, the Loy Yang project will come on stream and adequate supplies of energy will continue to be available for Victoria.

The honourable member's question also involves an appreciation of this Government's philosophy in relation to Victoria's future. We see it as absolutely integral to Victoria's future development that Victoria should be a place where energy is available efficiently, safely and at reasonable prices to both the people who make Victoria their home and also to the industries that are here and the industries that we hope to attract here.

It is absolutely fundamental to this Government's approach to jobs and growth in the 1980s that the energy programme that we have mapped out, and of which the State Electricity Commission has given details to the Public Works Committee's inquiry into Driffield, is supported and understood. It will not be easy to achieve everything but we are sure the general philosophy is worthwhile for Victoria.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The Minister must not debate the question.

PRICES JUSTIFICATION TRIBUNAL

Mr EDMUNDS (Ascot Vale)—In view of the decision by his Federal colleagues to abolish the Prices Justification Tribunal, will the Premier examine the establishment of a State's prices commission to prevent unjustifiable and excessive price increases in the immediate future in respect of such important items as petrol, food and clothing? If the Premier will not establish such a commission, why not?

Mr HAMER (Premier)—The honourable member is inquiring about a matter of policy which will be answered in due course. All I can say at the moment is that the withdrawal of the operations of the Prices Justification Tribunal is a decision that I regret because I believe by and large the tribunal exercised a restraining influence, not because it had power but because it had a persuasive influence. I regret that it will be withdrawn. Nevertheless, the general approach of
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the Government and of all Liberal Governments is that competition is the best regulator of prices.

GRANTS TO YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Mr McGrath (Lowan)—Is the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation aware of the substantial cuts in grants to the Young Men's Christian Association and other youth organizations in the State and, if so, because of the importance of those organizations in youth activities, will he explain the reasons for the cuts?

Mr Dixon (Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation)—The Youth Fund of the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation has been subject to some policy changes that basically enable all organizations to apply, provided the programmes will be of benefit to all young persons of Victoria. Honourable members will be aware that existing parent organizations cater for only a particular group of young persons and, in endeavouring to make the funds available within the Youth Fund to cover the whole range of young persons who would benefit from those programmes, then some of the parent organizations, who previously as of right have received funds, will now have other bodies with which to compete.

The policies that have been put forward by the Youth Council of Victoria and adopted by the Government to enable programmes to go to those most in need are worthy of support and all parent organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association have equal capacity to apply for support and will receive it if their programmes merit support.

ALCOA SMELTER FOR PORTLAND

Mr Richardson (Forest Hill)—Is the Minister for Economic Development aware of an article published in the Age of 21 April 1981 which stated that a Monash University study has effectively discredited the analysis on which the Australian Labor Party has misguidedly based its objections to the Alcoa of Australia Ltd project at Portland and, if so, will he inform the House whether the Government will vary its approach to State administration of the exploitation of natural resources?

Mr I. W. Smith (Minister for Economic Development)—The Australian Labor Party has been very keen to grasp at straws to try to knock the initiative of the Government in creating the balanced development of the State and, as it recently discovered when it visited Portland, the people of Portland are very grateful for the Alcoa of Australia Ltd development.

The question of the pricing of electricity to Alcoa of Australia Ltd was raised in a study by Professor Swan and refuted by his peer, Professor Porter. No member of the Australian Labor Party will disagree with the standing and independence of the study group at Monash University. In any case, the State Government, which, with the State Electricity Commission, was satisfied by its own sources on the price of electricity, can justify the programme at Portland; the project will add to the better use of the port of Portland and provide potential for downstream industry allied to the aluminium development.

In typical style, the only suggestion the Australian Labor Party has ever come up with that is constructive is to take money from the various statutory authorities and use it for its own purposes if and when it ever achieves Government.

The Speaker (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honourable gentleman is straying beyond the bounds of the question.

Mr I. W. Smith—The Australian Labor Party has not put forward one constructive suggestion for the development of the State because it is devoid of any constructive ideas.

Mr Mathews (Oakleigh)—I ask the Minister for Minerals and Energy a question about his claim that the additional cost of gas firing of electricity to Alcoa of Australia Ltd at Portland is less than 1 cent a kilowatt hour, and the fact that this claim can
be correct only if the average contract price paid by the State Electricity Commission to Esso-BHP for natural gas is now 75 cents a gigajoule. I ask: As the last two annual reports of the State Electricity Commission and the Auditor-General's supplementary report disclosed that the average gas price was $1.93 a gigajoule, can the honourable gentleman inform the House whether it is his claim and the basis on which it was calculated that it is correct, or the information given in the two official reports?

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Minerals and Energy)—The honourable member's question can, I think, best be explained by first indicating that the reports to which his source of research relate are based on an assumption that the supply of gas to Newport and Jerralang power stations, part of which would produce energy for Alcoa until Loy Yang is completed, will be at a cost which compares with the cost of supply from Esso-BHP in the years that the honourable member for Oakleigh has referred to as being covered in these various reports.

The explanation is simply that the amount of gas supplied by Esso-BHP to the State Electricity Commission to fire the Jerralang and Newport stations and the prices, terms and conditions under which the gas is supplied, are the subject of new contractual arrangements that are different from those that are covered by the reports referred to by the honourable member for Oakleigh.

The State Electricity Commission was able to re-negotiate with Esso-BHP for the supply of gas to those stations and the effect is that the price is nowhere near what is being asserted by the honourable member for Oakleigh or the extrapolation of price which the Auditor-General's report reflects, if the prices on which the Auditor-General was commenting were still applicable. The simple answer is that that price is not correct. The cost of generating the power which will be used by Alcoa before Loy Yang comes on stream from the gas-fired elements of the State's system will in fact be less than 1 cent a kilowatt hour.

I have been very concerned about the misunderstanding by the Opposition and other members of the community and their interpretation of this point. As a result, I have arranged for briefings of the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues next Tuesday. I also intend to discuss with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party, if he so desires—after the honourable members have had a chance to examine and consider the material that is to be given to them at this briefing—the elements of the contract which the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting, by interjection, does not reflect what I have just told the House. It is my intention to have that discussion and to brief the honourable members on the elements of the contract. At the end of that, I am confident that they, like me, will be satisfied that the price is as I have stated it.

In addition, I have undertaken the task of contacting the various journalists, including Mr Davidson of the Age, who wrote articles concerning this issue, and I have invited them to be briefed by me and my officers on these elements and to put further questions to me which they consider require analysis. The purpose of this action is simple. It is about time the Victorian people were able to assess that the present approach in the provision of power to Alcoa and other industries and people in Victoria is based on a balanced reasonable formula. I cannot stress that point too highly. The tariffs available to Alcoa and other industries are published and have always been available.

The Victorian Government is the only Government in Australia in the State sphere that has made tariffs available, warts and all, for criticism, be it constructive or otherwise. They receive mostly destructive criticism, from the Opposition. I am glad to say that recently the New South Wales Premier has seen fit to publish tariff figures. He is obviously emulating the example of the Victorian Premier.
The final point I make is that the people of Victoria can rest assured that the cost of generating power in Victoria, whether it is used by Alcoa or any other industry, will be regularly reviewed. The tariffs are regularly reviewed and, as costs increase, as they inevitably must, the cost will be absorbed and passed on in the reviewed tariff charges.

PETITIONS

Kindergarten medical examinations

Mr TREWIN (Benalla) presented a petition from certain citizens praying that action be taken to ensure that the children attending the kindergartens at Victoria Street and Pollard Street, Seymour, receive the promised medical examination without delay. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 320 signatures.

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

Upfield railway line

Mr GAVIN (Coburg) presented a petition from certain citizens praying that action be taken to reverse the decision to close the Upfield railway passenger service and to provide funds for the service to be improved. He stated that the petition was respectfully worded, in order, and bore 253 signatures.

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

STATUTE LAW REVISION COMMITTEE

Pecuniary interests of municipal councillors—Statute Law Revision Bill

Mr AUREL SMITH (South Barwon) presented reports from the Statute Law Revision Committee on the pecuniary interests of municipal councillors, together with extracts and summaries from the proceedings of the committee, appendices and minutes of evidence; and the Statute Law Revision Bill, together with an appendix and minutes of evidence.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the report on the pecuniary interests of municipal councillors, extracts and summaries from the proceedings of the committee and appendices, and the report on the Statute Law Revision Bill and the appendix be printed.

PUBLIC BODIES REVIEW COMMITTEE

Future structures for water management

Mr CRABB (Knox) presented a report from the Public Bodies Review Committee on future structures for water management, together with an extract from the proceedings and appendices, including a report to the committee from the Public Service Board of Victoria, Consultancy and Management Review Division, on the performance and structure of local water and sewerage authorities in Victoria.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the report on future structures for water management, extract from the proceedings and appendices Nos. 1 to 4 be printed.

PAPERS

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

Education Act 1958—Resumption of Land at Daylesford—Certificate of the Minister of Education.

Housing Commission—Report for the year 1979–80. (Substituted in lieu of report tabled on 2 December last.)—Ordered to be printed.

Teacher Housing Authority—Report for the year 1979–80. (Substituted in lieu of report tabled on 10 March last.)—Ordered to be printed.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

- Health Act 1958—Nos. 162, 163.
- Public Service Act 1958—PSD Nos. 56, 58, 60.

Town and Country Planning Act 1961:

- Ararat—City of Ararat Planning Scheme, Amendment Nos. 25, 26 (two papers).
- Ballarat—Shire of Ballarat Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 10.
- Bunninyong—Shire of Bunninyong Planning Scheme, Amendment No. 12.
Mr MACLELLAN (Minister of Transport) By leave, I move:

That the Printing Committee be empowered to meet during the sittings of the House on Tuesday, 5 May 1981.

By way of explanation I add that this will enable the committee to meet during the dinner recess.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr LIEBERMAN (Minister for Planning)—By leave, I move:

That the Printing Committee be empowered to meet during the sittings of the House on Tuesday, 5 May 1981.

By way of explanation I add that this will enable the committee to meet during the dinner recess.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr CAIN (Bundoora)—The House should be clear about the process that has led to this abortive situation that honourable members are now faced with. The Minister for Planning says that is not abortive but it is for many people. It is all right for the Minister to be contrite and apologetic about the extra work he has caused people but if he had gone about his business properly, at least when he became Minister, honourable members would not be facing this hiatus today. After three weeks of quite frenzied horse trading on the Bill, honourable members are now told that it is to be withdrawn.

The Bill relates to matters that were the subject of the suggested negotiation between the Government and interested parties almost seven years ago when the measure was first introduced. In 1974, the people of Victoria were told after the Act had been in operation for a time it would be reviewed and per-
haps the matters to which it referred be extended to areas, precincts and streetscapes. In September 1974 an assertion was made in the Governor's speech—prepared by the Government—that the legislation would be introduced for this extension. On several occasions, in the weeks, months and years that have already passed, undertakings were given about discussions between the Government and various interested groups. None of that discussion took place. There was never any attempt to talk to interested people about the Bill or any other matter concerned with the administration of the 1974 Act.

The Bill was introduced four weeks ago without any discussion taking place with those interested parties. The Minister for Planning says, "That is not so". I rely for my authority on the letter circulated to honourable members by the Chairman of the Historic Buildings Preservation Council, Mr Lonie. It was an open letter in which he told honourable members that there was no discussion with his organization about the matter. I also rely on the discussion I had with the Chairman of the National Trust, Mr Davidson, that his organization had not had discussions with the Government before the Bill was introduced.

So far as I am aware, from discussions I have had with other interested groups—and there are many—no discussion has taken place. The Bill was introduced four weeks ago and then the act started. The Minister for Planning ran around to all the daily papers, trying to sell the Bill. A large public relations exercise took place, but the Minister wonders why there was widespread opposition to the Bill which he did not discuss with interested groups.

There are people in this city who are uncharitable or cynical enough to suggest that the Government is trying to buy votes with the introduction of the Bill, because it is in desperate trouble. The Bill contains the recipe for the massive structure of historic buildings.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. S. J. Plowman)—Order! The honourable member is going far beyond the question before the Chair which is that the Bill be discharged.

Mr CAIN—I am endeavouring to canvass the issue—

The SPEAKER—The honourable member is not speaking on the motion before the Chair.

Mr CAIN—The motion is that the Bill be discharged.

The SPEAKER—The honourable member would be perfectly correct in canvassing these matters during the second-reading debate. The Minister for Planning has indicated that he intends to introduce the Bill later this week when the second-reading debate will take place.

Mr CAIN—I believe I am entitled to canvass the issues that have led to the House being in the situation where it is asked to discharge a Bill. In so doing, I believe I am entitled to canvass the background to the introduction of the measure. The background indicates that there has been no attempt by the Minister or the Government to properly consider the matters that should be considered before a measure is introduced.

The SPEAKER—Order! I believe the honourable member has well canvassed that matter. When the honourable member speaks of the issues regarding the Government being desperate to buy votes he is way beyond the scope of the motion.

Mr CAIN—I concede that that is a piece of rhetoric.

The SPEAKER—That is noble of the honourable member, but I ask him to adhere to the motion before the House.

Mr CAIN—The Government is seeking to discharge the Bill because it was not presented to the House following discussions with interested groups. Instead the Government presented a Bill that could not be regarded as a reasonable measure. Because of the Government's failure to do those things opposition was voiced on the matter and that led to 88 amendments being proposed to be introduced by the Gov-